

INSPECTION REPORT

SHEPHERD PRIMARY SCHOOL

Rickmansworth

LEA area: Hertfordshire

Unique reference number: 117096

Headteacher: Ms L Cannon

Lead inspector: Mrs M Gough

Dates of inspection: 24th – 27th January 2005

Inspection number: 267653

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3- 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	200
School address:	Shepherd's Lane Rickmansworth Hertfordshire
Postcode:	WD3 8JJ
Telephone number:	01923 773478
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Y Ryan
Date of previous inspection:	June 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The school is situated in Rickmansworth in Hertfordshire. There are two hundred pupils on roll between the ages of three and eleven, including thirty five children who attend the Nursery on a part-time basis. The socio-economic circumstances of the pupils are very mixed. Almost all of the pupils are of white ethnicity, and only one child has English as an additional language. Thirty pupils are on the school's special educational needs register. This represents 15% of the school population and is below the national average. One pupil has a Statement of Special Educational Needs. The school provides 'wrap around' care for the pupils in partnership with Little Shepherds Day Nursery and BASE. Although levels of mobility are average, with twenty pupils joining the school other than at the usual point of admission and eighteen pupils leaving the school other than at the usual point of transfer, the levels of mobility within different year groups vary significantly with levels of mobility in some year groups at around 40%. The school is involved in a range of initiatives, including the Primary Leadership Programme, and has received several national awards, including the Investors in People and the Healthy Schools Award. The attainment of the children when they join the school is broadly average.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
22361	Mrs M Gough	Lead inspector	Mathematics, science, art and design, design and technology, music, physical education,
15181	Mrs M Hackney	Lay inspector	
16493	Mr N Sherman	Team inspector	English, information and communication technology, religious education
8839	Mr M Egerton	Team inspector	Foundation Stage, geography, history, art and design, design and technology, personal, social and health education and citizenship, special educational needs

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a **good** and rapidly improving school. The leadership and management of the current headteacher are very good and, as a result, past weaknesses have been overcome, and standards are now starting to rise again at the end of Key Stage 2. Standards for the current Year 6 group are above national expectations in mathematics and in line with national expectations in English and science. Younger Key Stage 2 pupils are on course to achieve higher standards than this by the time they leave school at the age of eleven. Overall, teaching is good throughout the school. Pupils are very enthusiastic learners who enjoy coming to school. The governing body is highly effective, and very supportive of the school's aims. The school gives good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The headteacher provides very good leadership for the school and is very well supported by a very good deputy headteacher, hard-working and enthusiastic staff, and a very effective governing body.
- The school is very inclusive and caters very well for pupils of all abilities, including higher attainers, and those with special educational needs.
- Provision in the Foundation Stage is good and children in the nursery and reception classes have a good start to their education.
- Teaching and learning are now good throughout the school, but are not always consistent in all subjects.
- Achievement is good throughout the school, with the exception of Year 6 where achievement is satisfactory.
- The school provides very good levels of support and guidance for the pupils.
- In Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, the organisation of the morning sessions does not make best use of the available curriculum time.
- The school provides a very good range of additional learning experiences for pupils of all ages.
- Resources are barely adequate in music, physical education, science and religious education, and some are in need of replacement.

The school has made very good progress since the appointment of the current headteacher just over two years ago. Following a difficult period immediately after the last inspection, standards dropped in Key Stage 2, and some of the good features identified in the last report started to deteriorate. The new headteacher has focused very well on raising standards in the core subjects and, through staff changes, has addressed the significant weaknesses that existed in the teaching of Key Stage 2 pupils. The appointment of a very effective deputy headteacher has strengthened the leadership and management of the school still further, and the school is very well placed for continued improvement.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

*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.*

Overall, the pupils' achievement is **good**. Attainment is at the expected level at the end of the Foundation Stage, and above the nationally expected level at the end of Key Stage 1. The pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 is in line with national expectations. Pupils in Year 3, Year 4 and Year 5 are on course to attain standards that are significantly higher than those attained by the current Year 6 group.

The 2004 end of Key Stage 2 national test results show that pupils' attainment is below the national average in English, above the national average in mathematics and in line with the national average in science. Based on their prior attainment, the pupils' performance is well below average in English and science, and below average in mathematics. This group of pupils did not make the progress expected of them because of past weaknesses in teaching in some Key Stage 2 year groups, which have now been fully addressed. Over the last few years, the overall picture of attainment has been very mixed, mainly because of the shortcomings in teaching, but also because in some year groups there are very high levels of mobility.

The 2004 end of Key Stage 1 national test results show that pupils' attainment is above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics, and that their performance is above average when compared with that of pupils from similar schools. The 2004 teacher assessments show that standards in science are above the national average. Standards have been steady over the last few years, with slight differences attributable to the proportion of pupils in each group with special educational needs. The inspection findings show that pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 is above national expectations in reading, writing, mathematics and science. Pupils of all abilities achieve well from their different starting points.

Throughout the school the girls' attainment in English is higher than that of the boys. The school has already started to address this issue. Standards in information and communication technology, music and physical education are in line with national expectations at the end of both key stages. Standards in religious education are in line with the expectations of the Locally Agreed Syllabus at the end of both key stages. Overall, pupils achieve well in information and communication technology and satisfactorily in music, physical education and religious education.

By the end of the Foundation Stage, the children's attainment is above the expected level in personal, social and emotional development, and at the expected level in communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, physical development, creative development and knowledge and understanding of the world.

Behaviour is good throughout the school. Pupils have very positive attitudes to learning. Attendance is satisfactory. Punctuality is satisfactory. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **very good** overall with particular strengths in social and moral development.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The school provides a **good** quality of education for all pupils. Teaching and learning are **good** overall. Assessment is very good in the Foundation Stage and satisfactory in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. The curriculum for Foundation Stage children is very good and the curriculum for pupils in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 is satisfactory. The school provides a very good range of enrichment activities. Accommodation is good and resources are satisfactory. The school provides very good levels of care, satisfactory support and guidance and effectively seeks and acts upon the views of the pupils. Links with parents are very good and links with the community and other schools are good.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are **very good**. The headteacher provides very good leadership and management, and is well supported by key staff. The governance of the school is very good. The governing body ensures that the school fulfils its statutory duties.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are very pleased with the school and appreciate the way in which they are welcomed. They agree that they receive good levels of information about events in the school and about their children's progress. Pupils thoroughly enjoy coming to school and take an active part in its life and work.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- imaginatively develop the curriculum for Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 so that better use is made of the morning sessions;
- improve resources in physical education, music, science and religious education;
- ensure that the quality of teaching and learning is more consistent across all year groups and subjects.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Overall, the pupils' achievement is **good**. Attainment is at the **expected level** at the end of the Foundation Stage, and **above** the nationally expected level at the end of Key Stage 1. The pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 is **in line** with national expectations, although younger Key Stage 2 pupils are on course to attain higher standards by the time they leave school at the age of eleven.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Overall, achievement is good throughout the school, with the exception of Year 6 where there are gaps in the pupils' learning because of past weaknesses in teaching.
- Standards in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science are above national expectations at the end of Key Stage 1, and are rising well in Key Stage 2.
- Teachers match work closely to the needs of individual pupils so that pupils of all abilities can achieve their potential.
- Test results show that the performance of the girls is significantly better than that of the boys in reading and writing in Key Stage 1 and in English in Key Stage 2.
- Although satisfactory, standards in music, religious education, physical education and information and communication technology could be even higher in Key Stage 2.

Commentary

Foundation Stage

1. The children's attainment when they start school in the nursery class is broadly average, although there are some weaknesses in their language skills and their knowledge and understanding of the world. The children's self-esteem is often low when they first join school, and teachers and other adults work very hard to develop the children's confidence through the good and consistent use of praise and encouragement. Nursery and reception children benefit from good teaching, and as a result children of all abilities achieve well overall. Their achievement in terms of their personal, social and emotional development is very good.
2. By the end of the Foundation Stage, the children's attainment is above the expected level in personal, social and emotional development, and at the expected level in communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, physical development, creative development and knowledge and understanding of the world.

Key Stage 1

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 – average points score in 2004

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	16.7 (17.0)	15.7 (15.8)
Writing	15.6 (16.3)	14.6 (14.4)
Mathematics	17.2 (17.1)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 25 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

3. The 2004 end of Key Stage 1 national test results show that pupils' attainment is above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics, and that their performance is above average when compared with that of pupils from similar schools. The 2004 teacher assessments show that standards in science are above the national average. Standards have been steady over the last few years, with slight differences attributable to the proportion of pupils in each group with special educational needs.
4. The inspection findings show that pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 is above national expectations in reading, writing, mathematics and science. Pupils of all abilities achieve well from their different starting points. In reading and writing, the standards attained by the girls are significantly better than the boys. However, boys and girls make similar progress and achieve well from their different starting points.
5. In information and communication technology, music and physical education, pupils' attainment is at the nationally expected level at the end of Key Stage 1. In religious education, pupils' attainment is in line with the expectations of the Locally Agreed Syllabus. Pupils achieve well in information and communication technology, and satisfactorily in religious education, music and physical education.

Key Stage 2

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 – average points score in 2004

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	26.4 (24.0)	26.8 (27.0)
Mathematics	27.9 (26.6)	26.8 (26.7)
Science	28.4 (28.3)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 21 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

6. The 2004 end of Key Stage 2 national test results, show that pupils' attainment is below the national average in English, above the national average in mathematics and in line with the national average in science. Based on their prior attainment, the pupils' performance is well below average in English and science, and below average in mathematics. This group of pupils did not make the progress expected of them because of weaknesses in teaching in some Key Stage 2 year groups, which have now been fully addressed. Over the last few years, the overall picture of attainment has been very mixed, mainly because of the shortcomings in teaching, but also because in some year groups there are very high levels of mobility. Although in mathematics and science the performance of the girls and boys is generally similar, in English the performance of the girls is often higher than that of the boys. This is a whole-school issue which the headteacher and staff are tackling in a variety of ways.
7. The inspection findings show that the attainment of the current Year 6 pupils is in line with national expectations in English and science, and above national expectations in mathematics. The attainment of Year 6 pupils is not as high as it should be and the achievement of these pupils over their time in school is only satisfactory. Although the pupils have benefited from some good teaching as they have moved through Key Stage 2, they have also been in classes where the quality of teaching has had some significant weaknesses. These weaknesses have now been fully addressed through staffing changes. The headteacher and deputy headteacher are working very hard to address the gaps in the learning of Year 6 pupils by providing additional classes for them and, as a result, they are now making rapid gains in their learning.

8. The attainment of the Key Stage 2 pupils in Year 3, Year 4 and Year 5 in English, mathematics and science is already at a higher level than expected for their age, and is much more reflective of the standards that these pupils should achieve given their attainment at the end of Key Stage 1. These pupils have not had the disruption to their learning that the Year 6 pupils have experienced, and their achievement is good, and their progress steady.
9. Standards in information and communication technology, music and physical education are in line with national expectations at the end of Key Stage 2. Standards in religious education are in line with the expectations of the Locally Agreed Syllabus. In information and communication technology, pupils achieve well throughout Key Stage 2, with the exception of Year 6 where their achievement is satisfactory because of gaps in their knowledge and skills. In religious education, music and physical education, the pupils achieve satisfactorily throughout the key stage. Although standards in the foundation subjects and religious education are satisfactory, given the ability of the pupils, they could be higher. Since the appointment of the current headteacher two years ago, the school has justifiably focused on raising standards in the core subjects. Whilst the foundation subjects and religious education have not been disregarded during this time, they have not received the same emphasis in terms of monitoring, staff development, and resourcing.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Behaviour is **good** throughout the school. Pupils have **very positive** attitudes to learning. Attendance is **satisfactory**. Punctuality is **satisfactory**. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **very good** overall with particular strengths in social and moral development.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils have very positive attitudes and they enjoy school.
- Behaviour is good and behaviour management is consistent and fair.
- Very good relationships and well established routines help pupils to learn.
- The very good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education makes a strong contribution to their personal development.
- There are very good procedures to monitor and promote attendance.

Commentary

10. The school has worked hard to improve the standard of behaviour which dipped just after the last inspection. Behaviour is good in classrooms, and pupils move around the school in a very orderly and sensible manner. They behave well in the dining room, during assemblies and outside in the playground, where they are very caring towards each other. The majority of pupils are attentive during lessons and they listen well to their teachers and to each other. The school's systems for managing behaviour are very good, and almost all teachers deal consistently and fairly with occasional misdemeanours. Pupils have a clear understanding of the school's high expectations and respond very well to the system of rewards and celebration for good work and behaviour. Pupils know that bullying or harassment of any kind is not tolerated. They feel strongly that bullying has almost been eradicated and that the school deals promptly and very effectively with any inappropriate behaviour. There have been no exclusions in the past year.
11. Pupils of all ages have very good attitudes to school and to work, and they are interested and keen to learn. They are enthusiastic, and eager to take part in all of the

activities that are provided for them. Pupils are polite, friendly and helpful towards adults and they are very welcoming to visitors. The very good relationship between the pupils and with staff encourages pupils to want to learn, and creates a very positive atmosphere.

12. Overall, the provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. During lessons and whole-school assemblies, pupils often reflect on aspects related to their own lives and the world around them. For example, as part of the Holocaust Memorial day assembly, pupils reflected quietly on the meaning and implications of genocide. Moral and social education is promoted very well with a focus placed on happy and respectful relationships. Pupils are encouraged to take responsibility for various tasks around the school and this develops their sense of initiative and self-esteem. Older pupils take their role as library and assembly monitors very seriously and they provide valuable help as buddies for younger pupils in the playground. Pupils of all ages represent their class as members of the School Council and others willingly help as classroom monitors. Cultural development is strong and the school promotes pupils' awareness of Britain as a multicultural society well. In areas of the curriculum such as art and design, music and the humanities, pupils gain a good understanding of their own and other cultures and faiths.

13. Overall attendance is satisfactory, but it falls below the national average because of the persistent and prolonged non-attendance of just a very small number of families. The school works hard to improve attendance and follows very good procedures to monitor absence and to promptly follow up all unauthorised absence. Most pupils are punctual and are keen to attend school on a regular basis.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data:	6.1	School data:	0.6
National data:	5.1	National data:	0.5

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 school provides a **good** quality of education for all pupils. Teaching and learning are **good** overall. Assessment is **very good** in the Foundation Stage and **satisfactory** in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. The curriculum for Foundation Stage children is **very good** and the curriculum for pupils in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 is **satisfactory**. The school provides a **very good** range of enrichment activities. Accommodation is **good** and resources are **satisfactory**. The school provides **very good** levels of care, **satisfactory** levels of support and guidance based on monitoring, and **effectively** seeks and acts upon the views of the pupils. Links with parents are **very good** and links with the community and other schools are **good**.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are **good** overall. Assessment is **very good** in the Foundation Stage and **satisfactory** overall in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers are very effective in the way in which they manage pupils' behaviour and develop the pupils' self-esteem.
- In the Foundation Stage very good use is made of assessment.
- Throughout the school good use is made of teaching assistants to work with individual pupils and small groups of pupils.
- Teachers are effective in the way in which they recap pupils' previous learning.
- Although teaching is good overall in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, there is variation in the quality of teaching from class to class, and in different subjects.
- Relationships between adults and pupils are very good.
- Assessment is good in English, mathematics and science, and the school makes very good use of data to track and monitor the pupils' progress and attainment in these subjects.
- At times, too much time is spent on discussion and this limits the time available for pupils to carry out their tasks.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 36 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
	7 (19)	19 (53)	10 (28)			

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

14. There has been good improvement in the quality of teaching since the last inspection, especially in Key Stage 2 where there were some significant weaknesses. The process of improvement has been brought about by some staff changes, and by the rigorous monitoring of classroom practice by the senior staff.
15. The quality of teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage is of a consistently good standard. The nursery and reception teacher work very closely together to provide a wide range of exciting and stimulating activities that progressively develop the children's skills, knowledge and understanding across all areas of learning. Assessment information is used very well when planning the next stage of the children's learning, enabling tasks to be matched very closely to the needs of individual children. There is a good balance of activities that the children choose themselves and those that are led by an adult.
16. The quality of teaching and learning in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 is good overall, but is inconsistent between classes and in different subjects. Over the past two years, the school has justifiably focused on raising the quality of teaching in the core subjects in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. As a result, teaching in the foundation subjects, although at least satisfactory, is sometimes not at the same high level as teaching in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology. At times in subjects such as music and physical education, teachers' subject knowledge is not fully secure, and teachers lack confidence. Teachers use resources well to enhance teaching and learning, but in music, physical education, science and religious education, the lack of good quality learning resources tests the teachers' organisational skills to the full, and sometimes hampers learning.

17. Throughout the school, teachers make good use of questions to probe the pupils' understanding, and to recap on their previous learning. Teachers give pupils 'thinking time' so that lower attaining pupils in particular have time to formulate their answers and to organise their thoughts. Where teaching is at its best, teachers match questions very well to the ability of individual pupils, challenging the highest attaining pupils well, and giving additional support to those with special educational needs. In all classes teachers share learning objectives with pupils at the start of lessons so that they know what is expected of them. However, not all teachers refer back to these learning objectives at the end of the lesson to give pupils the opportunity of evaluating the extent of their learning.
18. In general, lessons move at a good pace, and contain a good variety of activities that successfully capture and maintain the pupils' interest and attention. Where teaching is at its best, there is a very good focus on the pupils learning through practical experience and investigation, and pupils of all ages respond enthusiastically when they are given problem-solving activities which enable them to choose their own approach. At times, introductory discussions are overlong, and this reduces the amount of time for pupils to carry out their tasks.
19. Relationships between adults and pupils are very good, and as a result pupils enjoy working in a purposeful and secure learning environment where their achievements are celebrated and where they are encouraged to feel proud of their progress. Pupils generally have very positive attitudes to learning, and are keen to start their work. Teachers have a very consistent approach to the management of behaviour, and lessons proceed smoothly and without interruption.
20. Teaching assistants are used effectively to support and enhance the pupils' learning. This is especially the case in English and mathematics where teaching assistants have been trained to deliver the intervention strategies for literacy and numeracy which boost the learning of the lower attaining pupils. During these sessions teaching assistants work with a small group of pupils, helping them with their work, and doing much to raise their self-esteem and confidence. Teaching assistants who work specifically with pupils with special educational needs are very effective, and provide sensitive and unobtrusive support enabling full inclusion and access to all areas of the curriculum.
21. Assessment in English, mathematics and science is good and procedures are firmly established. The school is very effective in the way in which it tracks the progress and attainment of pupils in these subjects, and data are used very well to set challenging targets. In the foundation subjects the assessment systems are secure, but they have only recently been implemented and are not yet having their maximum impact. Marking throughout the school is satisfactory, and practice is consistent with the agreed policy. However, teachers do not always give enough suggestions for ways in which pupils can improve their work further.

The curriculum

The curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage is **very good**. The curriculum for Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 pupils is **satisfactory**. The school **very effectively** enriches, extends and enhances the statutory curriculum. The accommodation is **good** and resources are **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum for the Foundation Stage children is exciting and stimulating.

- Opportunities for enrichment are very good throughout the school.
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good.
- In Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, the organisation of the morning sessions does not make best use of the available time.
- There are weaknesses in resources in science, music, religious education and physical education.
- The school has a good programme for promoting pupils' personal and social development.

Commentary

22. Overall, there has been good improvement in the curriculum since the last inspection. The curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage is very good. Teachers provide a very good mix of activities that the children choose for themselves and those that are led and directed by an adult. The range of activities is exciting and motivates the children very well in their learning. In Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, statutory requirements are met in respect of teaching the National Curriculum and religious education. In addition, the school provides a good programme for ensuring the pupils' ongoing personal and social development, and makes good provision through the curriculum for sex education, and for ensuring pupils are aware of the dangers of drugs misuse. Currently in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 the morning sessions are given to English and mathematics. Given the work that has had to be done in Key Stage 2 in terms of raising standards in the core subjects this has been a justifiable use of time. However, now that standards are starting to rise, the school needs to allocate more time to other subjects by reorganising the morning sessions so that maximum use is made of the available time.
23. The school provides very well for pupils with special educational needs and this has been an area of major improvement since the last inspection. Teachers are now skilled in identifying pupils with special educational needs as soon as possible so that additional support can be provided. Targets in individual education plans are achievable and realistic.
24. The school enriches the curriculum with an exciting range of visits and visitors and an extensive number of extra-curricular clubs. The visits the pupils make give them real experiences that bring learning to life and effectively enhance their cultural development. The range of extra-curricular clubs offered to pupils is very good, and contains some imaginative activities such as sword-dancing. Pupils are very keen to take part in extra-curricular activities, many of which enhance their social and physical development very well.
25. Since the appointment of the new headteacher, a considerable amount of money has been invested into making physical improvements to the school and to improving learning resources. This money has been very well spent and has improved the learning environment for the pupils and the staff. The accommodation is good overall and has some very good features, such as the new library. Whilst resources are satisfactory overall, there are some areas of the curriculum where the lack of resources adversely impacts on the pupils' learning. This is particularly the case in science, music, religious education and physical education.

Care, guidance and support

Provision for pupils' care, welfare, health and safety is **very good**. Pupils receive **satisfactory** advice and guidance based on monitoring. Pupils have **good** opportunities to have a voice in the life of the school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school is a safe and happy environment where pupils are well cared for.
- Pupils' health and safety at school are assured through very good procedures.
- Pupils are encouraged to share their ideas for improvements to the school environment.
- Very good induction arrangements help children to settle quickly.
- Pupils with special educational needs receive very good support and are well integrated into the life and work of the school.

Commentary

26. Since the last inspection the school has improved its policies for pupils' care, welfare and behaviour management. Parents speak highly of the level of pastoral care their children receive at school. The staff and governors follow very good procedures to monitor all aspects of health and safety, and the school is committed to ensuring that pupils learn in a safe and secure environment. Child protection procedures are very good and all staff are fully aware of their responsibilities. Pupils have very trusting relationships with their teachers and support assistants which make a strong contribution to their overall quality of learning.
27. The staff know pupils well and assessment and monitoring of their personal achievements, although satisfactory, are at present on a largely informal basis. The school provides counselling facilities at lunchtime and these are successfully helping individual pupils to develop their awareness of self-discipline and to gain in self-esteem. Pupils with special educational needs are very well supported with individual education plans which are reviewed regularly. During lessons, teaching assistants provide very good support for individual pupils and groups and this ensures that pupils of all abilities are included in the full range of activities. Induction arrangements are very good in the reception class and the school works closely with parents to ensure that children settle quickly into school routines. Pupils joining the school at different times are welcomed and receive a good level of care and support.
28. The school makes good arrangements to involve pupils in ideas and decisions for improving the school environment. Pupils are involved well in discussions during personal, social and health education lessons when they are encouraged to share their views and suggestions. Pupils feel that their ideas are valued and that the school listens to what they have to say. The School Council has recently been very proactive in developing an improved anti-bullying charter. Pupils are proud that their idea resulted in a successful 'anti-bullying week', and the distribution of laminated self-help cards to every pupil in the school, designed by the pupils themselves.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has a **very good** partnership with parents. Links with the community and with other schools are **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school warmly welcomes parents and is committed to working closely with them to support their children's learning.
- Parents' views are sought and valued in the development of the school's work.
- Regular communication keeps parents well informed.
- The strong links with the community and other schools very effectively enrich the curriculum.

Commentary

29. The school's links with parents are a strength and the partnership has been well maintained since the last inspection. Parents have confidence in the school and speak very highly of the current headteacher and of the quality of education the school provides for their children. Parents value the fact that their views are regularly sought and where possible are included in the School Improvement Plan. A good number of parents help out in school and on visits. The school has an active Parent/Teacher Association which raises much appreciated funds for the purchase of resources. Parents are very satisfied with the regular, good quality and helpful information they receive from the school. Annual reports of pupils' progress are satisfactory. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are well informed about individual education plans and assessments.
30. The school's links with the community are good and help to enrich the curriculum and to foster the pupils' personal development. Pupils benefit from the opportunity to take part in local music festivals in Rickmansworth, Watford and Wembley. There are close links with the local church and members of the clergy and local community often visit to lead assemblies and to support topics within the curriculum. The school has very close links with BASE, the 'wrap around' care provision which leases one of the school's buildings, and many of the pupils from the school attend the breakfast and after school clubs.
31. There are good links with other schools which extend pupils' opportunities and development. The school works closely with the Little Shepherds' Day Nursery so that the induction of children to the school nursery class is smooth and stress free. The close links with the secondary sports' college enables pupils to take part in regular sports activities and enhances their learning in physical education. Teachers and support staff meet regularly with staff from other schools for joint training days and the sharing of good practice.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are **very good**. The headteacher provides **very good** leadership and management and is **well** supported by key staff. The governance of the school is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Since her appointment, the headteacher has implemented a rapid programme of development which is bringing about the necessary improvements in standards at the end of Key Stage 2.
- Staff in key positions of responsibility carry out their duties well. The deputy headteacher is very effective.

- The School Improvement Plan is very good and provides a clear rationale for continued school development.
- The monitoring role of subject co-ordinators in subjects other than mathematics and English is at an early stage of development.
- The governance of the school is very good and all statutory requirements are met.
- The headteacher's vision for the future development of the school is excellent.

Commentary

32. The leadership and management of the headteacher are very good overall. Since her appointment, the headteacher has implemented a well paced programme of educational development that has brought about rapid improvements in the overall quality of education provided by the school. Together with the governing body she has tackled some difficult issues in order to bring about the necessary improvements in teaching in Key Stage 2, and as a result, standards are now starting to rise. The headteacher's continued vision for school improvement is excellent, and her high aspirations for the school are shared by the staff and governing body. The headteacher works very closely with the two management teams she has set up, to highlight the main whole-school areas of development, and to ensure that planned initiatives are effectively implemented, monitored and evaluated. The deputy headteacher has a key management role, and her very good classroom practice sets a very clear model of very good practice for other staff.
33. The leadership and management of key staff are good overall. Co-ordinators are in place for all subjects, and the mentoring of new co-ordinators by the headteacher is very good, and ensures that they are fully confident about taking on their leadership and management roles. In subjects and aspects where staff have experience, the leadership is often very good. However, many of the staff are relatively newly qualified and, although very enthusiastic about their role, are still on a sharp learning curve. Much of the monitoring of classroom practice that has taken place over the past two years has been carried out by the senior staff and, as a result, younger co-ordinators have not fully developed this aspect of their work. The main focus of monitoring activities has been the core subjects and, whilst this has been necessary in order to drive standards up, minor inconsistencies in teaching in other subjects have not been identified and addressed. The school has firm plans to extend the monitoring role of all staff in order to improve the overall good quality of teaching still further. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very well led and managed.
34. The School Improvement Plan is very good, clear and detailed. It is the result of full discussion and consultation with staff and governors. Progress towards the targets of the School Improvement Plan is regularly measured, and priorities are very much geared towards raising standards. Action points are carefully costed and care is taken to ensure that the best value for any planned incurred expenditure is achieved. Very good use is made of the school budget to fund educational developments, and spending is closely aligned to income.
35. The governance of the school is very good, and the governing body's role as a critical friend to the school has been very well developed since the previous inspection. The chair of the governing body meets weekly with the headteacher to discuss school issues and to develop a clear overview of day-to-day provision. The governors visit on a regular basis and are very knowledgeable about the school's life and work. Individual governors monitor the school's work closely and work very well with co-ordinators so that they fully understand all aspects of the subjects for which they are responsible.

36. The school is very well managed. There are regular opportunities for staff training, and arrangements for the performance management of teaching and support staff link closely to the action points in the School Improvement Plan. Induction arrangements for new staff are very good.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	615 134
Total expenditure	624 446
Expenditure per pupil	3 061

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	19 152
Balance carried forward to the next year	9 840

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Provision is **good** in the Foundation Stage.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is never less than good and is often very good.
- Very good use is made of ongoing assessment when planning the next stage of the children's learning.
- Joint planning between the nursery and reception staff ensures very good levels of continuity and progression in the children's learning.
- Relationships between adults and children are excellent and create a very warm and secure learning environment.
- Very good links with parents ensure that children quickly settle into the routines of school.

Commentary

37. The Foundation Stage provides a good start to the children's learning. Children attend the nursery class on a part-time basis before transferring to the reception class. The children's attainment when they start school is broadly average, but a number of children have poorly developed language skills and a poor understanding about the world in which they live.
38. The children achieve well in all areas of learning, with the exception of personal, social and emotional development where their achievement is very good. By the time they leave the reception class, their attainment in communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical development and creative development is at the expected level overall, and their attainment in personal, social and emotional development is above the expected level.
39. Teaching is good overall and has some very good features. Nursery and reception staff plan very well together so that the children's learning builds on what has gone before. Activities are exciting and stimulating, and fully meet the needs of all children, including those with special educational needs. Rigorous assessments are made to check that the children are making the progress that is expected, and to monitor the children's learning. Relationships between children and adults are excellent, and promote a very secure learning environment where the children's successes are celebrated and valued. The curriculum is very good, and staff continually seek ways of further improving the provision. Very good links between different areas of learning provide a meaningful context for the children's learning. Links with the parents are very good and, as a result, the children are confident about starting school, and happy to leave their carers at the start of each session. The Foundation Stage is very well led and managed by an experienced and thoughtful co-ordinator. There has been good improvement since the time of the last inspection.

Personal, social and emotional development

The provision for personal, social and emotional development is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children of all abilities achieve very well, often from a low starting point.
- Excellent relationships promote very positive attitudes to learning.
- Children are confident to work on their own or as a member of a group.
- The children are encouraged to develop independent learning skills from an early age.

Commentary

40. By the end of the Foundation Stage, the children's attainment is above the nationally expected level for their age in terms of their personal, social and emotional development. Children of all abilities achieve very well because of very good teaching. Adults work very well together to ensure a consistency of approach, and are particularly successful in the way in which they encourage the children to make choices and decisions about their work, and to develop independent learning skills. Adults skilfully interact with the children, prompting them to talk about their work, and encouraging them to share resources and to take turns.
41. Relationships between adults and children are excellent, and staff use praise very effectively to motivate the children, and to encourage them in their relationships with one another. Teachers and support staff have very high and consistent expectations of behaviour to which the children respond readily. The children work well with one another, and show good levels of confidence both when working as part of a group, or independently. The children have very positive attitudes to their work, and behave well. They are happy and secure in their learning, and keen to try out new activities.

Communication, language and literacy

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children of all abilities achieve well.
- Every opportunity is taken to improve the children's speaking and listening skills.
- The attractive range of books captures the children's interest.

Commentary

42. The spoken language of some children is at a low level when they start school. Teaching is good and children of all abilities achieve well. Overall, the children's attainment in communication, language and literacy is at the age expected level by the end of the Foundation Stage. The promotion of spoken language skills is rightly seen as a main focus in the nursery and reception classes. Teachers and support staff provide very good opportunities for the children to talk about their work, and to listen to the ideas of others. Staff intervene well during structured play activities to extend the children's vocabulary, and to encourage them to use dialogue in their role play. In discussion sessions, teachers insist that the children take turns to contribute and that they show respect for the views of their classmates.

43. The school has a very attractive range of books which successfully capture the children's interest. Reading is promoted as a pleasurable activity, and the children enjoy looking at books by themselves, and sharing class stories. The teaching of early reading skills is good, and the children have very positive attitudes and a belief in themselves as 'readers'. Parents are encouraged to support their children at home and are given good advice about shared reading techniques and strategies. Early writing skills are effectively taught and there is a good balance of formal activities where children learn how to form letters and 'free-choice' activities where the children use writing to support their play.

Mathematical development

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A wide range of practical activities in mathematics helps the children to gain a good understanding of numbers.
- Children enjoy their work in mathematics.
- Adults are very effective in the way in which they promote the children's mathematical vocabulary.

Commentary

44. The children achieve well and most attain the early learning goals in terms of their mathematical development by the end of the Foundation Stage. The direct teaching of mathematical skills is good, and in addition, teachers provide a very good range of 'free-choice' structured play activities which successfully extend and enhance the children's mathematical thinking, vocabulary and knowledge.
45. Every opportunity is seized to involve the children in counting activities so that they become familiar with the notion of number. During registration, counting the number of children present and absent provides an ideal opportunity for extending the higher attaining children as they use simple addition and subtraction skills. Staff make very good use of a range of counting songs and rhymes to present number to the children in an exciting manner, and the children join in enthusiastically. In all mathematical activities the teachers and support staff are very diligent in using the correct vocabulary so that the children are able to express their mathematical ideas clearly and precisely. Good adult intervention when the children are working in the sand and water areas helps to develop the children's understanding of measure, as they make comparisons of size, and to develop their thinking through the use of focused open-ended questions.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The use of high quality topics provides excellent links between areas of learning.
- The children's information and communication technology skills are very well developed.
- The children make at least good progress from their individual starting points, and children of all abilities achieve well.

- Activities effectively support the children’s spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Commentary

46. Because of good teaching, children of all abilities achieve well in terms of their knowledge and understanding of the world. By the end of the Foundation Stage, most attain the expected level for their age. The children make particularly good progress in information and communication technology and use computers with high levels of confidence and enthusiasm, both in the classroom, and in the main school computer suite. They are gaining good control of the mouse, and higher attaining children confidently move from one program to another.
47. The children in the nursery and reception classes are currently engaged in an ongoing topic about weather which is providing a real and meaningful context for their learning, and which enables them to successfully develop their observational and language skills as they describe the daily weather conditions. Some of the activities, such as when nursery children learned about Buddhist prayer flags blowing in the wind, effectively foster the children’s spiritual and cultural development and provide good opportunities for reflection. Teachers use pictures and signs well in the classroom to reinforce the children’s language development, and to support their learning.

Physical development

Provision for physical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The outdoor play area is used very effectively to enhance the children’s large movement skills.
- Teachers provide a very good range of ongoing activities that encourage the development of the children’s fine-motor skills.
- More formal lessons for reception children effectively extend their learning.

Commentary

48. The children achieve well in their physical development and most attain the early learning goals by the end of the reception year. Teaching is good and has some very good features. The outdoor play area presents children with an exciting and challenging range of activities that develop their gross motor skills. There are endless opportunities for the children to climb, jump, throw and catch, and for them to use a wide variety of wheeled toys. Adults skilfully intervene when the children are at play to help them to develop their imagination and extend the scope of their physical activities. In both the nursery and the reception class there are many opportunities for the children to develop manipulative skills. As well as handling pencils, scissors, brushes and other tools, they model with clay and experience the joy of fixing different things together. Reception children enjoy more formal sessions when they go into the main school hall for dance lessons. Here they listen well to the music, and try hard to match their movements to the beat and to respond to the different sounds the teacher makes on the tambourine.

Creative development

Provision in creative development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children have access to a wide range of daily experiences that very effectively enhance their learning.
- The outdoor play area is a very good resource which is well used.
- Children of all abilities achieve well.

Commentary

49. Children of all abilities achieve well from their different starting points. By the end of the Foundation Stage, most children attain the early learning goals in terms of their creative development, and their overall attainment is at the age expected level. Teaching is good overall, and staff provide a wealth of exciting and stimulating play activities that very effectively promote the children's creativity. The direct teaching of key skills, such as paint mixing, is balanced very effectively with 'free-choice' activities. Adults intervene very effectively when the children are working to develop their vocabulary, and to help them master newly learned skills.
50. The outside play area is a strength of the provision, and is used well throughout the day by Foundation Stage children. A good choice of attractive resources encourages the children to work outside, and to take part in role play activities. However, even more could be done to link the inside and outdoor play areas so that role play started in one environment could be taken further and developed in another environment.
51. Throughout the day the children have the opportunity to take part in music making activities, and they are confident singers who enjoy singing rhymes and jingles. Ongoing access to paint and craft materials encourages the children to develop fine-motor skills, and to express themselves creatively. Large construction bricks in the classroom provide endless opportunities for imaginative building, and this area is a popular choice for many children.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGE

French

52. Not enough evidence was gathered during the inspection to make firm judgements about the school's provision for French, the quality of teaching and learning, or the standards pupils attain. French is taught on a weekly basis to Year 6 pupils. The pupils benefit from the input of their classteacher who has experience of teaching of modern foreign languages. The school follows a syllabus that is recommended by one of the main receiving high schools so that there are good levels of continuity in the pupils' learning when they transfer to secondary education at the end of Year 6.

English

Provision for English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are rapidly improving in Key Stage 2.
- Past weaknesses in teaching have led to gaps in the learning of Year 6 pupils.
- The school is successfully addressing the difference between the attainment of the boys and girls in Key Stage 1.
- Assessment is used well to track and monitor the pupils' progress and attainment.
- Some lessons are overlong and as a result pupils start to lose concentration.
- Very effective leadership and management have secured many improvements in a short period of time.
- Very good use is made of support staff to work with pupils who find aspects of their learning difficult.

Commentary

53. The 2004 end of Key Stage 1 national test results show that pupils' attainment is above the national average in reading and writing. In comparison with similar schools, the pupils' performance is above average. The inspection findings closely mirror the test results and show that the pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 is above national expectations. Pupils of all abilities achieve well from their different starting points.
54. The 2004 end of Key Stage 2 national test results show that pupils' attainment is below average in English. Based on their prior attainment, the pupils' performance is well below average. This group of pupils did not make the progress expected of them between the end of Key Stage 1 and the end of Key Stage 2 because of weaknesses in teaching that have now been addressed. The inspection findings show that pupils' attainment at the end of Year 6 is in line with national expectations. Pupils in Year 3, Year 4 and Year 5 achieve well, and are on course to attain standards that are well above average by the time they leave school. However, the past weaknesses in teaching have led to gaps in the knowledge, skills and understanding of the oldest pupils in the key stage, and over time, the achievement of Year 6 pupils is therefore only satisfactory.
55. Pupils' speaking and listening skills are developed well. Strategies such as the use of 'response partners', where pupils are given regular opportunities to talk briefly with their classmates, give them good scope to refine their ideas orally before sharing them with the rest of the class. The school places good emphasis on developing the pupils' reading skills, and a systematic approach to the teaching of phonics, and regular opportunities for pupils to practise reading with adults, lead to good achievement for the vast majority of pupils. The standard of pupils' writing is above average in Key Stage 1 where pupils sustain and develop their ideas well, and write in a good range of styles. In Year 3, Year 4 and Year 5, pupils have good opportunities to develop their writing skills, and the standard of their work is often good. In the past, Year 6 pupils have not had enough experience of writing at length, or for a sufficiently wide range of purposes and, despite the good efforts of senior staff in recent months, these gaps in the pupils' learning affect their overall attainment.
56. Teaching and learning are good overall. The teaching of reading and writing skills is well planned and systematic, and teachers use assessment information well to build

on the pupils' previous learning. Teachers make particularly good use of the skills and expertise of learning support assistants to help lower attaining pupils. Teachers make good use of literature to stimulate learning, and have high expectations in terms of the presentation of the pupils' written work, to which the pupils respond readily. Although individual lessons are often well paced and contain a good variety of activities, most lessons are overlong and, as a result, pupils' concentration starts to falter. Where teaching is satisfactory, the expectations of the pupils are not always sufficiently high. Teachers provide satisfactory opportunities for pupils to use information and communication technology to support their learning. Pupils throughout the school have very positive attitudes to their work and work well with others on shared tasks.

57. The subject is very well led and managed. Although only recently appointed, the co-ordinator, who is effectively guided and supported in her role by the headteacher, has a very clear idea of what needs to be done to maintain the good improvements that have already been made, and to ensure that standards at the end of Key Stage 2 fully reflect the capability of the pupils. The overall pace of improvement since the last inspection has been good. Very good use is made of assessment data to identify areas of whole-school development, and to highlight strengths and weaknesses in teaching and learning. The test results show a sometimes marked difference between the attainment of boys and girls, with girls attaining higher standards overall. The school is successfully addressing this issue, using a variety of different strategies.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

58. Overall, the school makes good use of other subjects to promote pupils' language and literacy skills. There are many opportunities for pupils to use speaking and listening skills and for them to use their reading skills as they carry out research. Although there are good opportunities for the pupils to write accounts in some subjects, even more could be done to promote writing across the curriculum.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Throughout the school pupils have a very good knowledge and understanding of number and their mental arithmetic skills are very secure.
- Good use is made of intervention strategies in Key Stage 2 to boost the learning of the lower attaining Key Stage 2 pupils.
- Very good leadership and management have led to good improvements in standards.
- Assessment is good, and the tracking of pupils' progress as they move through the school is very good.
- There are not enough opportunities for Key Stage 2 pupils to solve open-ended investigations.
- The homework programme for Year 2 pupils is very good.
- Pupils have very positive attitudes to learning and work well together.
- Some lessons are too long.

Commentary

59. The 2004 end of key stage tests show that at the end of Key Stage 1 and at the end of Key Stage 2, pupils' attainment in mathematics is above the national average. In Key

Stage 1, the pupils' performance is above average when compared with that of pupils in similar schools. In Key Stage 2, the pupils' performance based on their prior attainment is below average. This shows that the pupils did not make the progress expected of them between the end of Key Stage 1 and the end of Key Stage 2. This lack of progress is attributable to weaknesses in teaching, which have now been fully resolved.

60. The inspection findings paint a very similar picture to the 2004 test results, and show that pupils' attainment is above national expectations at the end of both key stages. In Key Stage 1, pupils of all ages and abilities achieve well. In Key Stage 2, the achievement of pupils in Year 3, Year 4 and Year 5 is good. The achievement of Year 6 pupils over time is satisfactory. This group of pupils is now being taught well, and is benefiting from a range of additional activities that are addressing the gaps in their learning arising from the past weaknesses in teaching. However, given their starting point at the end of Key Stage 1, their attainment should be higher than it is currently. Younger Key Stage 2 pupils are on course to attain much higher standards than the current Year 6 pupils by the time they leave school at the age of eleven.
61. Throughout the school, very good emphasis is placed on the pupils gaining a secure grasp of number facts. As a result, pupils of all ages and abilities confidently and accurately manipulate numbers, both mentally and on paper, and older Key Stage 2 pupils have a good range of strategies for checking the accuracy of their answers. Pupils generally have a good grasp of aspects of shape, space and measure, and are confident about making estimates. Key Stage 1 pupils are learning good skills of problem-solving through their homework which is very practical and fun for them to do. However, in Key Stage 2, pupils do not have enough opportunities to creatively solve open-ended problems through a process of investigation. There are some opportunities for pupils to use information and communication technology to support their learning, such as when Year 6 pupils used spreadsheets, but even more use could be made of computers for interrogating, recording and organising data.
62. Teaching is good throughout the school, and the judicious intervention by the headteacher and deputy headteacher in Year 6 is enabling gaps in the pupils' learning to be identified and addressed. Good use is made of teaching assistants who have been trained in the use of national intervention strategies designed to support lower attaining Key Stage 2 pupils, and to raise their self-esteem. Teachers plan lessons thoroughly and pace them well so that the pupils' interest is maintained. However, some of the lessons are overly long. Good use is made of questions at the start of sessions to recap the pupils' prior learning and to probe their understanding of new ideas. Activities are well matched to the pupils' individual needs, enabling higher attainers to be fully challenged. Pupils learn well and are enthusiastic about tackling problems and confident when faced with new learning.
63. The subject is very well led and managed by an experienced and very enthusiastic co-ordinator who has led a rigorous programme of monitoring in the subject so that a whole-school action plan can be formulated. She has a very clear idea of what the next stages of development are, and is fully aware of the need to continue to drive standards up in the upper part of Key Stage 2. Assessment is good, and the co-ordinator has a very good picture of the pupils' progress and attainment as they move through the school, and makes very good use of test data to set challenging but achievable targets for groups of pupils. In the last two years the school has made very good progress in terms of raising standards and addressing the weaknesses in teaching in Key Stage 2 that existed.

Mathematics across the curriculum

64. Pupils make satisfactory use of their numeracy and mathematical skills in other areas of the curriculum.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- With the exception of Year 6, where there are gaps in pupils' learning, the pupils' achievement is good.
- Teachers place very good emphasis on the pupils learning through practical activities, and as a result, pupils' investigative skills are strong.
- Year 6 pupils do not have a secure knowledge and understanding of physical processes.
- Resources are unsatisfactory overall.
- The newly appointed co-ordinator provides enthusiastic leadership and has a very clear idea of how the subject can be further developed.
- Assessment is used well when planning the next stage of pupils' learning and for highlighting whole-school strengths and weaknesses.
- Pupils of all ages have very positive attitudes to science and enjoy their work.

Commentary

65. The teacher assessments show that standards at the end of Key Stage 1 are above the national average. The 2004 end of Key Stage 2 national test results show that pupils' attainment is in line with the national average. However, based on their prior attainment, the pupils' performance is well below average indicating that the progress for this group of pupils between the end of Key Stage 1 and the end of Key Stage 2 was unsatisfactory. The lack of progress is attributable to significant weaknesses in teaching in Key Stage 2 which have now been fully addressed by the current headteacher.
66. The inspection findings show that pupils' attainment is above national expectations at the end of both key stages. Key Stage 1 pupils achieve well from their different starting points and make good gains in their knowledge, skills and understanding. Key Stage 2 pupils in Year 3, Year 4 and Year 5 achieve well and are making good and steady progress. These pupils are on course to attain standards that are well above national expectations by the time they leave school at the age of eleven. However, the legacy of the past weaknesses in teaching remains for the Year 6 pupils, and despite good intervention by the senior staff to provide an additional boost to the pupils' learning, there are gaps in the pupils' knowledge, especially in the aspect of physical processes.
67. Teachers throughout the school place very good emphasis on the pupils learning through practical experience. In this aspect of learning, the co-ordinator has had a very good influence, and she leads the staff well through her own very good classroom practice. Pupils have good opportunities to explore new ideas and to follow through their own lines of enquiry. As a result, they are confident scientists who enjoy the prospect of a new challenge. The vast majority of pupils have a secure scientific knowledge and use appropriate vocabulary to explain their ideas clearly. The

exception is Year 6 pupils who are not sufficiently secure in their knowledge of forces, light and sound, and the earth and beyond.

68. Teaching and learning are good overall and have some very good features. Lessons provide a good mix of practical activities and discussions where teachers probe the pupils' knowledge and understanding and recap on their prior learning. Pupils are given good prompts to help them to record their investigations in the form of suggested plans, and these are progressively developed as pupils move through the school. Teachers effectively model scientific vocabulary for the pupils and encourage them to use the correct terminology in their explanations. Good use is made of ongoing assessment to plan the next stage of pupils' learning and to ensure that tasks are well matched to the pupils' levels of ability. Pupils have very positive attitudes to science and work very well together on shared activities, willingly sharing ideas and resources.
69. The leadership and management of the subject are good. The newly appointed co-ordinator has been very well prepared for the role, and has a clear idea of what needs to be done to improve the provision still further. She is aware that the resources are inadequate in range and quality and is building them up gradually. Data from tests are used well to highlight whole-school strengths and weaknesses and to ensure that pupils are making the progress that is expected. There has been a good programme of monitoring pupils' work, and there are firm plans in place for classroom observations in the near future. Currently, satisfactory use is made of information and communication technology to support the pupils' learning, but even more links could be made between information and communication technology and science. There has been good overall improvement since the last inspection.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well and make good progress in using and applying their skills as they move through the school.
- Teachers set exciting and stimulating tasks for the pupils.
- There are missed opportunities to extend pupils' learning of information and communication technology through other subjects of the curriculum.
- The effective leadership and management of the subject have led to much recent and rapid improvement.
- The computer suite is a good resource, and is used regularly by all classes.

Commentary

70. Standards are at the nationally expected level at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. The pupils' achievement is good overall, with the exception of Year 6. These pupils have gaps in their learning because of past weaknesses in teaching and resources. Although many of the gaps have now been addressed, the achievement of Year 6 pupils over time is satisfactory. Pupils in Year 3, Year 4 and Year 5 are on course to attain standards that exceed national expectations by the time they leave school at the age of eleven. There has been good improvement since the last inspection in terms of curriculum development, the quality of teaching, and the overall level of resources. The computer suite has a positive impact on the pupils' learning and their achievement, and enables the teaching of key skills to whole-class groups.

71. Throughout the school pupils make satisfactory use of word-processing programs to produce pieces of text. They become progressively more efficient in terms of changing the style and size of the font, and older Key Stage 2 pupils confidently merge text and graphics, and use 'spell-checkers' to ensure their work is accurate. Not all pupils see computers as a 'tool' for learning, and there are missed opportunities in some classes for pupils to use computers for drafting and editing. Pupils make satisfactory use of data-handling programs. In Key Stage 1, pupils confidently produce simple charts and graphs, and in Key Stage 2 create spreadsheets from which they produce complex graphs and tables. Most pupils are familiar with the Internet as a source of information, and understand the value of email in the world of work for communicating information speedily. In both key stages, pupils have a satisfactory understanding of control technology.
72. Teaching and learning are good overall. The computer suite is used well for class lessons, enabling teachers to explain new skills which the pupils can then practise. Teachers have good subject knowledge and understanding, and work well with the part-time technician, who provides valuable specialist input. Lessons have a clear focus and are well paced so that the pupils are well motivated. Teachers create a positive learning environment that encourages the pupils to be confident in their learning and to take risks. Pupils have very positive attitudes to information and communication technology and work very well together on shared activities, taking turns, and supporting their classmates.
73. The subject is well led and managed, and the co-ordinator has a clear action plan detailing the next steps that need to be taken to raise standards still further. In recent years the school has invested well in terms of improving the range and quality of resources, and a good programme of staff training has led to increased teacher confidence. Satisfactory assessment systems are in place, but they are not yet sufficiently well established to provide a whole-school picture of attainment and progress.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

74. Satisfactory use is made of information and communication technology across the curriculum, but there are missed opportunities in most classes for pupils to use computers and other equipment throughout the day as 'tools' for learning. Lessons in the computer suite often make good links with other subjects, such as when spreadsheet work is linked to ongoing mathematics topics, or when pupils explore repeated patterns to reflect work in art and design.

HUMANITIES

75. The inspection focused on **religious education**, and not enough evidence was gathered to make secure judgements about the provision for **geography** and **history**. However, evidence from discussions with pupils and staff indicates that the subjects are taught regularly, although they have only a minimal amount of curriculum time because of the current emphasis placed on English and mathematics. Pupils' learning in geography and history is supported and enhanced by a very good range of visits to places of interest, and by the input of visitors to the school who talk about their own experiences. The subjects are both satisfactorily led and managed.

Religious education

Provision for religious education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good use is made of visits and visitors to bring the pupils' learning to life.
- The co-ordinator has a clear idea as to how the provision can be developed further.
- Assemblies make a valuable contribution to the pupils' understanding of different faiths.
- Year 6 pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to record their work and, as a result, their recall of past learning is weak.
- Pupils throughout the school have difficulty in understanding the impact of religion on their own lives and those of others.
- The school does not have enough good quality learning resources.

Commentary

76. At the end of both key stages, standards are in line with the expectations of the Locally Agreed Syllabus. Pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs, achieve satisfactorily. There has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection.
77. The pupils' knowledge of different faiths is satisfactory overall, although some Year 6 pupils have difficulty in recalling their previous learning. Most pupils in both key stages understand the significance of the main events of the Christian calendar, and recognise that some of the symbols, such as light, are features of faiths other than Christianity. Most pupils know that Jesus taught His followers through parables, and recognise that the morals of these stories are relevant to their lives today. Pupils' knowledge of people and events of the Old Testament is not as secure. Pupils in Key Stage 2 draw comparisons between Christianity and other world faiths, and recognise for example, that many religions live by a set of agreed rules, such as the Ten Commandments and the Five Pillars of Islam. A weakness throughout the school is the pupils' ability to understand how religion influences the way in which people lead their lives.
78. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Teachers make very good use of the local area to extend the pupils' learning, and pupils are frequent visitors to the local church. The input of visiting speakers and members of staff has a very positive impact on the pupils' learning and motivates them well. For example, during the inspection, a member of staff talked to the pupils about her own faith, and explained to them how the Qu'ran guides the spiritual development of Muslims. In some lessons, not enough time is provided for pupils to reflect on their learning. In Year 6, there are not enough opportunities for pupils to record their work, and this makes it difficult for them to recall what they have learned previously. Pupils have positive attitudes to work and are keen to express their own ideas. They show good levels of respect for the views of others.
79. The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory overall. The co-ordinator has devised a clear action plan for the subject which will improve the current provision still further. The co-ordinator has carried out some monitoring, but this has not yet had enough impact in terms of ensuring consistency in the quality of teaching and learning between classes. The school has developed a good programme for assemblies where religious themes are explored, and world faiths celebrated, on a

regular basis. Resources for the subject are limited, and there are not enough good quality artefacts and audio-visual resources.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

80. The inspection focused on **physical education** and **music**. Not enough evidence was gathered to make secure judgements about the provision in **design and technology** or **art and design**. Evidence from discussions with pupils, displays of pupils' work, and teachers' planning indicates that pupils take part in a wide range of relevant activities. Design and technology and art and design are taught regularly in both classes, and good cross-curricular links are made with other subjects. However, because of the large amount of time that is dedicated to literacy and numeracy, the time available for design and technology, and art and design is limited. Assessment is satisfactory. Appropriate systems are in place to measure and track the pupils' progress, but they are newly implemented and are not yet having their maximum impact. The school make very good use of visits and visiting speakers to enhance the pupils' learning, and art and design and design and technology activities have a positive impact on the pupils' cultural development.

Music

The provision for music is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A good amount of time is given to music in all classes, and a commercial scheme ensures that there are good levels of continuity and progression in the pupils' learning.
- Although teaching is satisfactory overall, some teachers lack confidence and expertise.
- The subject effectively promotes the pupils' social, cultural and spiritual development.
- Singing is of good quality throughout the school.
- Pupils have very positive attitudes to the subject.
- There are not enough resources to support learning in some aspects of the curriculum.

Commentary

81. Standards are in line with national expectations at the end of both key stages. The achievement of pupils of all abilities is satisfactory.
82. Pupils take part in a good range of activities in both key stages. Singing is of good quality, and pupils are enthusiastic when learning new songs. Key Stage 2 pupils show a satisfactory awareness of the form of music as they talk about the pattern the verse and chorus make when listening to an African song. Throughout the school, pupils have a secure sense of rhythm, and Key Stage 1 pupils confidently repeat rhythmic patterns, and generate their own. Pupils listen attentively to the work of their classmates and to recorded music, picking out the key features, and making sensible suggestions about how the music makes them feel. Older Key Stage 2 pupils thoughtfully compare and contrast different styles of music. Teachers provide good opportunities for the pupils to compose their own music, but the lack of good quality musical instruments restricts the pupils' creativity.
83. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, and some good teaching was seen during the inspection in both key stages. Teachers make good use of a commercial scheme of work to ensure that lessons build progressively on what the pupils already

know and can do, but some lack confidence because of lack of expertise and experience. Where teaching is at its best, all elements of the music curriculum are interwoven, providing a real context for the pupils' learning. In these lessons, pupils have the opportunity to compose and perform, and to listen to and appraise their own work and that of others. Where teaching has some weaknesses, the management of pupils is not as good as it should be, and the pupils' learning is interrupted. In the main, pupils have very positive attitudes to music, and enjoy the shared pleasure of singing together, and making music. When pupils are encouraged to make evaluations about the work of their classmates, they are sensitive and positive in their comments.

84. The subject is satisfactorily led and managed. There has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection, but even more improvement could be effected by focusing more critically on classroom practice so that variations in the quality of teaching and learning could be identified and addressed. Assessment systems are in place, but are new and are not yet having their maximum impact. A good variety of additional activities and visits extends the statutory curriculum and provides good opportunity for enhancing the pupils' personal development. The current range of musical instruments is limited and some of the instruments are old and in need of replacement.

Physical education

The provision for physical education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching varies according to the expertise of individual teachers.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to the subject and work very well together.
- There are not enough resources to support learning in some aspects of the curriculum.
- The subject is led by a new but enthusiastic co-ordinator who has a clear determination to drive standards even higher.
- The school provides a wide range of extra-curricular activities.

Commentary

85. During the inspection, lessons were seen in games, gymnastics and dance. Standards in these aspects of the physical education curriculum are at the nationally expected level at the end of Key Stage 1 and the end of Key Stage 2. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils attain the expected level in swimming, with most pupils able to swim twenty five metres. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. There has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection.
86. Pupils show satisfactory levels of co-ordination when they carry out gymnastics exercises, such as putting together sequences of rolls, jumps and balances. They practise movements to improve their performance and show satisfactory levels of confidence in their work. In games, pupils have satisfactory control of the ball, which they pass and receive with reasonable levels of accuracy. They show a good awareness of the rules of team games, and show a good sense of teamwork. In dance, pupils respond satisfactorily to the music, but are hampered in terms of their creativity by the over-prescriptive natures of the commercial taped programmes that are used.
87. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Lessons are well organised and good emphasis is placed on ensuring that the pupils understand the purpose of physical

exercise, and the impact of warm-up and cool-down activities. Teachers often give good demonstrations to the pupils, but there are not always enough opportunities for the pupils to demonstrate their work, or for them to evaluate the work of others. Teachers are not always sufficiently confident in their teaching, and rely too much on commercial tapes for aspects such as dance. As a result, pupils are not always given enough scope to develop their ideas imaginatively. Pupils have good attitudes to the subject, and work very well together in pairs and small groups. They especially enjoy the wide range of extra-curricular activities the school provides which include imaginative clubs such as 'sword-dancing'.

88. The subject is satisfactorily led and managed. The newly appointed co-ordinator is enthusiastic, and has some very good ideas as to how the provision can be further improved. However, she has not yet had enough time to evaluate teaching and learning through the direct observation of class-based activities, and is not yet aware of the variations in teaching across the school. She has identified the need to improve resources in some aspects of the curriculum, especially for games, and progress has been made, although there is still more to be done. In general, the curriculum for physical education is satisfactory, although a large proportion of time is given to swimming, with all year groups going on a regular basis to the local baths.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

89. No lessons were seen in this subject area and it is not possible to give secure judgements about provision, standards or the quality of teaching and learning across the school. However, evidence gathered from discussions with pupils and staff, and the scrutiny of teachers' planning shows that personal, social and health education and citizenship are given a high priority within the school. Pupils show increasingly high levels of maturity as they move through the school, and show high levels of respect and tolerance for the views of others. They gain a good appreciation of how their actions impact on the well-being and happiness of others, and are confident about expressing their feelings and emotions. Every year group has a timetabled session for this aspect during each week of the term and there is an annual long-term plan for every class. Assessment procedures are in place and the work done in personal, social and health education is very effectively enhanced by the school's 'core values curriculum'.

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	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	2
Value for money provided by the school	3
Overall standards achieved	3
Pupils' achievement	3
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	2
Attendance	4
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
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	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	4
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	2
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	2
The governance of the school	2
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	2

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