

INSPECTION REPORT

SHIRLEY INFANT SCHOOL

Southampton

LEA area: Southampton

Unique reference number: 116105

Headteacher: Mrs S Doyle

Lead inspector: Mr M Newell

Dates of inspection: 14th – 17th March 2005

Inspection number: 267658

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant
School category: Community
Age range of pupils: 4 - 7
Gender of pupils: Mixed
Number on roll: 252

School address: Wilton Road
Southampton
Hampshire
Postcode: SO15 5XE

Telephone number: 023 8077 5057
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Appropriate authority: The governing body
Name of chair of Mr S Loveday-Lovell
governors:
Date of previous 18th January 1999
inspection:

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The school is situated in Shirley about a mile from the city centre of Southampton. The school gained Investors in People in 2003 and a Healthy Schools Award in 2004. There are 252 pupils on roll at the school, with a slightly higher number of girls than boys. There is a lower level of pupil mobility than found in other schools. The percentage of pupils who speak English as an additional language and are at an early stage of acquiring English is much higher than found in most schools. The percentage of pupils identified as having special educational needs stands at 13 per cent and this is just below the national average. The percentage of pupils with a Statement of Special Educational Needs is below the national average. The nature of special educational needs includes moderate learning difficulties, emotional and behavioural difficulties, speech and communication difficulties and dyspraxia. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below the national average at 6 per cent. Attainment when children start at the school fluctuates from year to year, covers the full ability range and is overall a little above average.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
10638	Martin Newell	Lead inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Music Physical education
9577	Elaine Parrish	Lay inspector	
22424	Kathryn Taylor	Team inspector	Foundation Stage curriculum Science Religious education History Geography
18498	Denise Morris	Team inspector	Special educational needs English as an additional language English Art and design Design and technology Personal, social and health education and citizenship

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REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6
PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS	
STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS	9
Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL	12
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	17
PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECTS	20
AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE	
SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGE 1	
PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS	37

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a **good** school with some very good aspects. Children and pupils across the school achieve well and attain good standards. The very good leadership of the headteacher, the good teaching, the positive attitudes and behaviour of the pupils and the very strong team and community spirit that permeates the school are all factors that contribute much to the school's many successes. The school provides good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The leadership and management of the headteacher have played a pivotal role in how successful the school is.
- Across the school children and pupils achieve well because of the good and, at times, very good teaching.
- Pupils' behaviour is good and often better, and how much they enjoy school is reflected in the very good attendance rates.
- The school makes very good provision for the personal, moral and social development of pupils and provides a vibrant and exciting range of enrichment opportunities.
- The school provides high levels of care for all pupils, celebrates their individuality and makes sure that pupils' voices are listened to, respected and acted upon.
- The excellent links with parents and good links with the community bring another dimension to the quality of pupils' learning.
- Inconsistent use is made of computers to support pupils' learning in different subjects.
- Although links with other schools are generally good, curricular links with the adjoining junior school are not firmly established.

Improvement since the last inspection has been very good. The headteacher, with the very good support of the deputy headteacher, has been the driving force behind school improvement. Standards, teaching, learning, behaviour, the curriculum, the accommodation and leadership and management of the school have all seen significant improvements and the school is now a far more successful and effective one.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Year 2 results

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

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

Children in the Foundation Stage and pupils in Years 1 and 2 achieve **well**. The above table shows that on the basis of the 2004 National Curriculum tests for Year 2 pupils, attainment was well above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. Teacher assessments in science showed a similar picture. When compared to similar schools, attainment was well above average in mathematics and above average in reading and writing. Inspection findings show that attainment in reading, writing, mathematics and science is above average. This is not to suggest that standards have fallen but rather it is a reflection of the fact that the present Year 2 pupils started school with lower than average levels of attainment. Evidence indicates that the current Year 1 pupils are on target to achieve well above average standards by the time that they leave school. The important factor is that all pupils are achieving well in these subjects. Standards are well above average by the end of Year 2 in pupils' personal, social and health education and citizenship and pupils achieve very well. Standards by the end of Year 2 are above average in information and communication technology, art and design and music and pupils' achievement is good. Standards in physical education are satisfactory overall and above average in dance where pupils' achievement is good. Standards in all other inspected subjects are at an average level and achievement is never less than satisfactory.

Children get off to a good start in the Foundation Stage. Attainment levels fluctuate from year to year, cover the full ability range and overall are a little above average. During their time in the reception classes, children make good progress and achieve well. By the time they join Year 1, most are on course to have at least achieved the nationally recommended Early Learning Goals that are expected of them in all areas of learning. Children's attainment in communication, language and literacy, mathematical development and in their personal, social and emotional development is above that expected.

Across the school pupils with special educational needs and pupils whose first language is not English achieve as well as their classmates because of the good levels of provision and support.

Overall, pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **good**, with moral and social development being very good. The behaviour in class and around the school is good and often it is very good for the younger pupils. Pupils' attitudes to learning are never less than good and often they are better. They are keen to learn and do well and the fact that they love coming to school is reflected in the attendance rates, which are well above the national average. Punctuality is good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The school provides a **good** quality of education. Teaching and learning are **good** overall and at times teaching is very good. Teaching is good in the Foundation Stage because activities are well matched to how young children learn best. Teaching in Years 1 and 2 is often challenging and stretches pupils of all abilities. Across the school, teachers set out to make learning fun and an enjoyable adventure. Throughout the school, teaching assistants make a significant and valuable

contribution to how well pupils learn and achieve. The school has already identified the need to make more consistent and effective use of computers to support pupils' learning in different subjects. Good procedures are in place for assessing and tracking pupils' progress. Good and effective target setting is in place. The curriculum is good and is very well enriched by visits, visitors and extra-curricular activities. The provision made for the welfare, care and well-being of all pupils is very good and this is a school where the uniqueness of the individual is not only recognised, but celebrated as well. Very good opportunities are provided for the pupils to contribute to the decision-making processes of the school and they are proud that their views and opinions are taken on board. The school has established excellent links with parents which impact significantly on the work of the school and their child's learning. Links with the community and other schools are good overall with room for forging stronger and more effective curricular links with the adjoining junior school.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management of the school are **good** overall. The leadership of the headteacher is very good. The management of the school is very good. The headteacher's commitment and vision for moving the school forward have been particularly strong and she has moulded together a strong and effective teaching and non-teaching team of staff who share her desire for high standards and achievement. She is very well supported by the deputy headteacher, subject and aspect leaders and administration staff who together contribute much to the leadership and management of the school. Governance of the school is satisfactory with a number of strong features and the governing body ensures that all statutory requirements are met. Governance has improved significantly since the time of the last inspection.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

The parents are delighted with the quality of education that the school provides. The response at the parents' meeting and to the questionnaires was very positive about almost all aspects of school life with only a very small number of parents registering any concerns. Many parents made praiseworthy comments about the school and are very appreciative of how well their children achieve and the quality of education that the school provides.

Discussions with pupils show that they too are proud of their school and thoroughly enjoy their time at the school. They feel that learning is fun and that the school listens to and acts upon their views. Pupils state that there is always someone to talk to if they have any problems or concerns and that bullying is not an issue at the school.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Ensure that meaningful and relevant opportunities for computers to be used to support and enhance pupils' learning in different subjects of the curriculum are planned for and capitalised on.
- Seek to develop stronger curricular and, where appropriate, other links with the junior school to enhance the quality of pupils' learning and the professional development of staff.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Standards are **above average** by the end of Year 2. Across the school, from reception to Year 2, children and pupils achieve **well**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children get off to a good start to their educational lives in the Foundation Stage.
- Pupils in Years 1 and 2 achieve well and attain above average standards in a number of subjects.
- Pupils with special educational needs and pupils for whom English is an additional language achieve as well as their classmates.

Commentary

FOUNDATION STAGE

1. The attainment levels when children start at the school fluctuate from year to year, cover the full ability range and overall are a little above average. The children benefit from good teaching and curriculum provision and, as a result, all children make good progress and achieve well. By the time that children start in Year 1, most are on course to have at least achieved the goals that are expected of them in all areas of learning. Children's attainment in communication, language and literacy, mathematical development and in their personal, social and emotional development is above that expected.

KEY STAGE 1

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	17.4 (16.4)	15.8 (15.7)
writing	16.2 (15.4)	14.6 (14.6)
mathematics	17.9 (17.6)	16.2 (16.3)

There were 85 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

2. On the basis of the 2004 National Curriculum tests and teacher assessments for Year 2 pupils, attainment was well above the national average in reading, writing, mathematics and science. When compared to similar schools, attainment was well above average in mathematics and above average in reading and writing. The trend in improvement of the school between 2000 and 2004 was broadly in line with the national trend. Inspection findings indicate that standards in reading, writing, mathematics and science are above average. This does not suggest that standards have fallen since 2004 but more

accurately reflects the fact that this particular group of pupils started school with below average levels of attainment. The important factor is that all pupils achieve well in these subjects. A strength of the school is the way that it works hard at trying to ensure that pupils attain and achieve well in subjects other than the core subjects. Its success in its aim is reflected in the fact that standards are well above average in pupils' personal, social, health education and citizenship (PSHE) and pupils achieve very well. Standards are above average in information and communication technology, art and design and music and pupils' achievement is good. Standards in all other inspected subjects are at an average level and achievement is never less than satisfactory with good standards in dance by the end of Year 2 and pupils achieving well.

3. The school has a high commitment to inclusion and works very hard to ensure that pupils with special educational needs and pupils from differing ethnic backgrounds, as well as the higher-attaining pupils, all have full and equal access to all aspects of the curriculum and to all the activities the school provides. These are important factors that help these pupils to consistently achieve as well as their classmates.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils have **good** attitudes to school and to their learning. Behaviour is **good**. The provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **good**. Attendance and punctuality are **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils love coming to school and this is reflected in the high attendance rates.
- The school sets high expectations for good behaviour and the vast majority of pupils rise well to the challenge.
- There are very good relationships throughout the school.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development adds much to the ethos of the school, but occasionally opportunities are missed to promote spirituality and the diversity of different cultures.

Commentary

4. Pupils love coming to school and have good attitudes towards their learning. They are keen to take an active part in all that the school has to offer and to do well. They feel safe and secure in the school's caring, family atmosphere and settle down quickly, even during their first weeks in reception. In many lessons, pupils respond very positively to vibrant and exciting teaching which stimulates their interest and makes them very eager to learn. Pupils with special educational needs and pupils for whom English is an additional language have equally good attitudes to school and respond well to the activities planned because they feel valued members of the school community. Improvement in behaviour, attitudes and pupils' personal development has been very good since the time of the last inspection.

5. Standards of behaviour in class, in the playground and around the school are good and often better. There have been no exclusions in recent years at the school. Pupils show respect for adults and for one another and they generally respond well to the high expectations set by their teachers. A few pupils in Year 2 can occasionally misbehave, but this does not normally disrupt other pupils' learning. Pupils and their parents are happy that the school deals well with any behavioural problems and do not think bullying is an issue at the school. Inspection findings confirm this. Pupils are perfectly clear that they must tell an adult if anything worries them and they are confident their concerns would be taken seriously. This has a positive effect on the quality of life within the school.
6. There are very good relationships throughout the school and pupils develop high levels of independence, self-esteem and sensitivity to others. All adults provide positive role models for pupils. In return, pupils show initiative, learn to make sensible decisions about how to spend their time and take responsibility for tidying up after themselves. Each pupil is treated as an individual with something special to celebrate and their contributions in group work are greatly valued.
7. Pupils' moral and social development is very good and their spiritual and cultural development good. All pupils are taught the difference between right and wrong and pupils have a very good grasp of how their behaviour may affect others. The way in which the school shows pupils that they are valued and rewards their efforts at celebration assemblies leaves them in no doubt about what is right and wrong. Pupils are given the opportunity to talk through situations and to reflect on how they might have behaved differently. Class discussion time enables them to consider making sensible, informed choices. Pupils' social development is equally good. Social responsibilities are very well developed and taken on by the pupils. Very good routines are established in the reception classes where children spontaneously say thank you when, for example, given an instrument to play in a music lesson. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 are provided with a range of opportunities to help in the running of the school, from class-based monitor duties to being members of the school council. All roles are undertaken willingly and responsibly. Everyone is welcoming to newcomers and helps them to settle quickly into school.
8. Many subjects make a good contribution to pupils' spiritual and cultural development when pupils learn about their own and other cultures. Each week the school has an assembly focus, which introduces different religions, beliefs and celebrations and enables pupils to acknowledge the diversity of their multi-cultural society. Pupils from a range of different backgrounds work together well and learn to respect each other's cultures and beliefs and a strong sense of racial harmony pervades the life of the school. Occasionally, opportunities are not seized upon to talk about pupils' own experiences to widen pupils' understanding of how rich the world is in different ideas, traditions and values. Pupils' spirituality is often promoted well in assemblies and in lessons, and pupils openly discuss their emotions and feelings on a range of different issues. Lessons often draw attention to the world in which pupils live although this is often done on an ad hoc rather than planned basis and there are occasions in assemblies and lessons when the time given to pupils to reflect on what they have heard is not long enough.

Attendance

9. Attendance is well above the national average and the school has developed rigorous procedures to ensure that these impressive levels of attendance are maintained. Punctuality is very good and this enables lessons to get off to a prompt start.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year 2003/2004 (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data:	3.6	School data:	0.4
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 school provides a **good** quality of education. Teaching, learning and assessment are **good**. The curriculum is **good** with **very good** enrichment opportunities outside of the formal curriculum. The accommodation and resources are **very good**. The provision made for pupils' care, welfare and safety is **very good**. The involvement of pupils through seeking, valuing and acting on their views is **very good**. Links with parents are **excellent** and links with the community and other schools are **good**.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are **good**. Assessment is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching in the Foundation Stage provides children with a good range and quality of learning activities.
- Teaching in Years 1 and 2 provides pupils with challenging and demanding tasks that are well matched to their individual needs.
- Reading and writing skills are taught well as are investigative and problem-solving skills in science and mathematics and key skills in other subjects.
- Teaching assistants make a powerful contribution to how well pupils learn.
- Good assessment procedures impact well on how well all pupils achieve.
- Although pupils' literacy and numeracy skills are put to good use in other subjects, better use could be made of pupils' computer skills.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 37 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
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0	9 (24)	24 (65)	4 (11)	0	0	0
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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.

10. Teaching and learning are good across the school, with teaching very good at times. Only occasionally is teaching no more than satisfactory. The quality of teaching contributes a great deal to how well pupils achieve and has improved significantly since the time of the last inspection.
11. Teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage are good. All staff work very hard at providing an attractive and stimulating environment. The team work is strong and effective in providing a wide range of learning activities that are fun, practical, exploratory and “hands on” as well as the direct teaching of key skills. A good emphasis is given, from the outset, to allowing children to develop as independent learners. All these factors ensure that children achieve well and get off to a good start in their educational lives.
12. The good start that children get in the Foundation Stage is built on well in Years 1 and 2 where teaching and learning continue to be good and at times very good. Reading and writing skills are taught consistently well. Reading standards are good because phonic skills are developed in a systematic manner and because teachers actively promote a love of literature and provide pupils with every strategy they need to tackle unfamiliar words. Writing opportunities are plentiful and teaching ensures that pupils are equipped with the necessary skills to write for a good range of audiences and purposes. Teachers provide good models for writing which pupils are keen to emulate.
13. Teaching in mathematics and science are good and at times very good because teaching ensures that pupils are provided with many challenging opportunities to learn through carrying out practical and investigative tasks. Pupils are expected to put their mathematical and scientific knowledge to the test when trying to explain why things happen as they do in scientific experiments or to explore different strategies when problem solving in mathematics. Pupils always try to rise to the challenge and are often well motivated and find learning in this manner fun and thoroughly enjoyable.
14. Teachers work hard at trying to capture and keep the interest and imagination of all pupils. Good use is made of visits and visitors to help bring learning to life in subjects such as history, geography, music and physical education. This, together with the regular use of drama, role-play and the local community as a learning resource, all helps to deepen pupils’ awareness of topics that they are studying. Teaching is also effective because a wide and varied range of learning activities is on offer in subjects such as art and design, music and physical education. The manner in which key skills are taught in these subjects, alongside the encouragement given to pupils to be imaginative and creative, brings another dimension to the quality of learning. Teaching is very good in PSHE where teachers enhance learning through high quality presentations and the readiness to listen to and respond to pupils’ views and questions in a sensitive manner.

15. The quality of teaching for pupils with special educational needs and for pupils who speak English as an additional language is good. Individual education plans are good and contain challenging targets. Work is well matched to the individual needs of pupils. Pupils who are at an early stage of acquiring English benefit from good levels of support which sensitively meets their social and academic needs and enables them to participate in all that the school has to offer. Across the school, teaching assistants contribute significantly to pupils' learning and they play a pivotal role in how well pupils achieve. The school clearly identifies higher-attaining pupils and teaching is successful, in most instances, in ensuring that work is demanding and challenging enough for these pupils.
16. Another strength of teaching is the way in which pupils' literacy and numeracy skills are put to good use in other subjects of the curriculum. Teachers identify at the planning stage opportunities that may arise in different subjects where writing and numeracy skills could be put to good use. The opportunities are often meaningful and relevant and add much to the quality of pupils' learning. Although computer skills are taught well in the computer suite and the school is increasingly seizing the chances to put these skills to good use in other subjects, there are still too many missed opportunities. This makes this aspect of teaching satisfactory rather than good.
17. Assessment overall is good. Good procedures are in place for assessing children in the Foundation Stage and the information used well to plan learning activities. Good procedures are in place for assessing pupils' attainment in English, mathematics and science although there is scope for further refinement in science. Information gained from these assessments is used well to set challenging targets and to track pupils' progress as they move the school. Good attention is paid to how well girls and boys are achieving, as well as pupils of differing ability and pupils from different ethnic backgrounds, and to whether similar aged pupils in different classes achieve as well as one another. The school is effective at spotting if a child is not doing as well as expected and then puts in place strategies to tackle the issue. It is the school's attention to detail in assessment that contributes much to pupils' achievement. The marking of pupils' work is good because it makes clear to pupils what they need to do to improve. Although the procedures for assessing and tracking pupils' progress and attainment in subjects other than English, mathematics and science are satisfactory, the school is seeking to make further improvements in these areas.

The curriculum

Provision for the curriculum is **good**. Enrichment of the curriculum is **very good**. The accommodation and resources at the school are **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum on offer provides a stimulating, vibrant and fun range of learning activities.
- Equality of access and inclusion are very good.

- The provision that is made for pupils of different needs, abilities and for pupils from different ethnic backgrounds contributes much to how well pupils achieve.
- Enrichment of the curriculum is a major strength of provision.
- The very good accommodation and resources for learning have a very positive impact on learning.
- The school shows innovation in its desire to improve curriculum provision.

Commentary

18. The school provides a varied and stimulating curriculum that provides a good range of learning opportunities. Appropriate amounts of time are allocated to different subjects and statutory requirements are met in full. Topics that are taught are covered in depth and help to give pupils a good level of knowledge and understanding. Pupils' literacy and numeracy skills are developed well across the curriculum with the school seeking to ensure that computers become a more integral part of learning in different subjects. The school has not yet been wholly successful in this aim. In mathematics and science, investigative and problem-solving skills are covered well. The school makes very good provision for pupils' personal, social, health education and citizenship and gained a Healthy Schools award in 2004. Curriculum planning is good and ensures that learning experiences are consistent for similar aged pupils in different classes. The curriculum in the Foundation Stage is good because it allows children to learn through a range of exciting activities where they explore and find things out for themselves as well as benefiting from the direct teaching of key skills and concepts. The school is always looking at different ways to improve the curriculum and to be innovative in its approach, which goes a long way towards explaining why the curriculum has improved well since the time of the last inspection.
19. The school provides very good equality of opportunity for pupils and the school has a high commitment to inclusion. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. Pupils benefit from good individual education plans which are regularly monitored. The special needs co-ordinator has a clear overview of what assistance each pupil receives and the level of support from teaching assistants is often very good. They are skilled particularly in literacy support and work hard to help pupils achieve their own specific targets. Provision for pupils with English as an additional language is also good. There are good links with the local education authority support services so that pupils at the early stages of speaking English receive the support that they need to achieve well. Classroom support from the school's staff is also good. Higher-attaining pupils are generally, but not exclusively, well catered for within lessons by carefully differentiated tasks to extend their skills and provide suitable challenges. All these factors help to ensure that every pupil in school, regardless of ability, gender or ethnicity takes part in all the curriculum activities on offer.
20. Enrichment of the curriculum through additional activities is very good and has improved significantly since the last inspection, when it was unsatisfactory. Pupils have many opportunities to take part in concerts and regularly benefit from visiting theatre and music groups. Pupils regularly visit places of historical,

geographical and cultural interest and make good use of the local community as a learning resource. Visitors to the school enhance learning in subjects such as history, science and art and design. The after-school clubs are very good. The school runs or supports many sports activities, dance, drama, computer and French clubs. Staff are fully involved in these clubs as well as additional external coaches and experts. For example, coaches from Southampton Football Club visit regularly to help improve pupils' skills. A teacher from the local secondary school runs the computer club for Year 2 pupils, providing additional expertise and skill. The Parent/Teacher Association funds some places on extra-curricular activities, ensuring equality of opportunity at the clubs or on the many visits to places of interest.

21. The accommodation and resources for learning have improved significantly since the last inspection and are now very good. Pupils benefit from a good number of committed, dedicated and enthusiastic teaching and non-teaching staff who work together very well to help bring learning to life. There are many well-presented additional teaching areas that are very well used to enhance learning. For example, the new school library is an oasis of calm that is used regularly by pupils to read and to choose books to take home. There is a good music room, food technology area, resource room and a small ICT suite. The accommodation is very welcoming, and a riot of colourful wall displays celebrate pupils' work and act as valuable interactive learning resources as well as being aesthetically attractive. The accommodation and resources in the Foundation Stage are very good. Resources overall are very good in terms of quantity and quality and are used well to help make learning more enjoyable.

Care, guidance and support

Provision for pupils' care, welfare and health and safety is **very good**. Pupils receive **good** support, advice and guidance. Pupils have **very good** opportunities for their voice to be heard in the life of the school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good provision ensures pupils' welfare, health and safety at all times.
- Procedures to ensure that pupils work in a healthy and safe environment are excellent.
- Very good relationships between pupils and adults mean that pupils are always well supported.
- This is a very caring school that encourages pupils to look out for one another.
- Pupils feel most valued and know that their views matter.
- Induction arrangements enable children to quickly adapt to school routines.

Commentary

22. The way that all pupils are cared for in this very happy school is a significant strength. The good findings of the last inspection report have been improved still further. The good efforts the school makes to guide and support pupils ensure that they enjoy school and find learning fun. There are very good child protection procedures which have children's very best interests at heart and

these are well known to and followed by all staff. Health and safety procedures are excellent and are based on meticulous risk assessments, which ensure that everyone is safe. Induction arrangements for children starting at the school are very good and these procedures help children to settle very quickly into school life and to feel confident and assured from the outset.

23. Relationships between adults and pupils are very good and are warm and respectful. Staff show genuine affection for their pupils, which puts pupils at their ease and makes them feel confident and secure. Staff make every possible effort to get to know their pupils well so that each pupil receives the help he or she needs. Teachers and support staff are very good role models: they are unfailingly kind and work together well to nurture pupils' academic and social development. Pupils learn from these very good examples by supporting one another in class and looking out for one another in the playground. As a result, there are very high levels of trust between pupils and all the adults who work in the school.
24. There are good assessment procedures in place which enable teachers to track pupils' academic progress well. Pupils have individual targets to help them to improve their work and to raise their awareness of how well they are doing. Good procedures are also in place for tracking pupils' personal development. Good use is made of outside agencies to support the learning of pupils with special educational needs and those pupils for whom English is an additional language.
25. The school clearly values pupils' views and opinions and many opportunities are provided in lessons, in assemblies and through the school council for pupils to put forward their views. Pupils are always encouraged to express their thoughts and they do this very well because they know their opinions will be taken seriously. The school also takes great care to acknowledge pupils' achievements, particularly when they have made an effort and tried hard. Pupils told inspectors how much they liked their system of star rewards and how these encourage them to work well and do their best.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The links with parents are **excellent**. Links with the community and other schools are **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school goes out of its way to ensure that parents are fully involved in their children's learning.
- The school is very welcoming and staff listen carefully to parents' views
- There are very good systems in place for informing parents about how well their child is doing.
- A newly established family learning initiative is helping parents to support their children's learning at home very well.
- Although there are good links with the community and with other schools, there is scope for improving links with the adjoining junior school.

Commentary

26. The school shows excellent commitment to working in partnership with parents. Staff go out of their way to welcome parents, to encourage them to support their child's learning and to ensure that everyone feels a strong sense of partnership. Improvement since the previous inspection in establishing links with parents has been very good indeed.
27. At the parents' meeting and in discussions during the inspection, parents could not wait to praise the school. They particularly like the way that their children are treated as individuals and the 'welcome time' at the beginning of each session when they can stay to see their children settled and talk to the teachers. Staff put parents at their ease, dealing sympathetically with their queries, and this quickly breaks down any barriers they may have in coming into the school for the first time. Staff are always available to talk to parents and they will go that extra mile to listen sensitively to any concerns and find solutions to any problems. Parents are consulted extensively and their views are taken into account to bring about improvements.
28. Parents are given very good, regular information about how their child is progressing. Annual reports are very comprehensive and contain targets to help children to improve, as well as guidance to parents about how they can support learning at home. At regular consultation meetings and during informal chats before school begins, parents can learn more about their child's standards and how well they are doing.
29. The school has started an excellent initiative to promote family learning to help parents understand more about how their children learn. There have been a variety of sessions, covering different aspects of the curriculum, which enable parents to learn about the subject with a tutor and then work with their own children in school. As a result, the contribution that parents make to their children's learning is very good and many parents help in school by listening to reading, sewing, cooking and helping with outside visits. The help that parents give, including the fund raising from a very active parents' association, is very highly valued by the school.
30. The school encourages and promotes good links with the local community. These have a positive impact upon the progress pupils make through the provision of additional resources and facilities. Teachers make good use of the local area to extend pupils' learning and there are links with places of worship, the library and the emergency services. Theatre groups and other regular visitors from the local community come into school to speak in assemblies and to support and enhance various aspects of the curriculum. The school works well with the many feeder playgroups in the area to ensure smooth transition and induction arrangements into the reception classes. There are close and productive links with neighbouring infant schools and also with a local secondary school that provides much helpful support for ICT. Although the exchange of information on pupils with the feeder junior school is effective and, despite the best efforts of the infant school, there are insufficient curricular, staff training and other links between the two schools which could impact positively on pupils' learning, transfer arrangements and staff development.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management of the school are **good** overall. The governance of the school is **satisfactory**. The leadership of the headteacher is **very good**. The leadership of other key staff is **good**. The management of the school is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher very successfully inspires, motivates and influences staff and pupils, and ensures that strong teamwork pervades the school.
- The deputy headteacher makes a very good contribution to the way the school is led and managed. Senior managers and subjects leaders all make a good contribution to the way the school is led and managed.
- The school shows a great commitment to including all pupils in all activities.
- Procedures for evaluating the work of the school, and for monitoring teaching and learning are effective.
- Governors are committed to improving the school.
- Finances are managed very well and administration is very efficient.

Commentary

31. The headteacher's drive and vision are firmly based on her steely determination to provide a good education for all of the pupils. Her very good leadership has been key to effecting very good improvements since she joined the school, shortly after the last inspection. The very successful way that she has moved the school forward has won her the respect of staff, pupils and parents. The last inspection report highlighted unsatisfactory leadership and management and major weaknesses in the curriculum, the quality of teaching and pupils' attitudes and behaviour. The headteacher has worked very determinedly with staff, both to address these weaknesses and to develop all aspects of the school. Very rigorous monitoring and evaluation of teaching and the curriculum, combined with judicious staff appointments, good staff induction, training and performance management, have been key factors in bringing about improvements. The headteacher has been very successful at creating a very strong and effective team spirit. The deputy headteacher very ably assists the headteacher and makes a very good contribution to the way that the school is led and managed. Her role in establishing excellent links with parents is a particularly strong feature of her work, and parents really appreciate this.
32. Management of the school is very good. The headteacher has very successfully developed other staff's leadership skills. Consequently, senior managers are now effective. They contribute well to the smooth running of the school and ensure that there is good communication and consistency across year groups. Furthermore, subject leaders are knowledgeable and effective. They receive good training and have regular time out of class to monitor pupils' work and develop the provision in their subjects. A number of subject leaders have had opportunities to monitor teaching and learning in lessons, and other less experienced staff are currently benefiting from training from the headteacher. Performance management systems are all in place and are effective. Good systems are in place for analysing test and assessment data.

Judgements about performance are honest and accurate and the information used well to set priorities for school improvement which are clearly outlined in the good quality school development plan. Leadership of the Foundation Stage, special education needs and provision for pupils for whom English is an additional language are all good. The overall picture that emerges is that this is a school that has developed good self-evaluation skills and quickly and effectively tackles any issues or weaknesses that arise out of this self-evaluation process.

33. The school is committed to inclusion and pays a great deal of attention to ensuring that all pupils, regardless of gender, ability or ethnicity, are fully included in all aspects of the curriculum and everything that the school has to offer. This impacts significantly on how well all pupils achieve and the contribution they can make to the school as a successful and thriving learning community.
34. Governance has improved very well since the last inspection when it was judged to be unsatisfactory. Governors are now better informed and they have a good awareness of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They share the school's commitment to raising standards. The governing body ensures that the school fulfils its statutory responsibilities, including disability, race legislation and child protection, and discussions on workforce reform are well advanced. Governors are actively involved in the school development planning process and regularly monitor spending. Their role in challenging the school and in the strategic development of the school is satisfactory. The governors have recently started to meet with different subject leaders to enable them to get a better grasp of strengths and weaknesses in subjects, but this initiative is not yet firmly embedded in school practice. Most but not all governors visit the school regularly and good use is made of the professional skills of the governors to support the work of the school.
35. Financial planning is very good. This has enabled the school to improve its resources and accommodation considerably since the last inspection. The administrative staff are highly efficient, manage finances very well and assist with the very smooth running of the school on a day-to-day basis. Purchases are made in accordance with best value principles and the school compares itself with other schools and consults with pupils and parents. Taking all factors into account, the school provides good value for money.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	683 431	Balance from previous year	33 292
Total expenditure	672 613	Balance carried forward to the next year	44 110
Expenditure per pupil	2 648		

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

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

36. There are 90 children in the reception classes, all attending full time. When children start school, although attainment covers the full ability range and fluctuates from year to year, it is a little above average overall. Children of all abilities achieve well during their time in the Foundation Stage so that, by the time they join Year 1, most are on course to have at least achieved the goals that are expected of them in all areas of learning. Children's attainment in mathematics, communication, language and literacy and in their personal, social and emotional development is above that expected for a good number of children.
37. Teaching and learning are now good across all classes and each area of learning. This represents a significant improvement since the last inspection. Teaching is based on a very good understanding of how young children learn best, together with high expectations of what they can achieve. All staff work very well as a team. Teaching assistants make a very significant contribution to children's learning. Staff know children well and effectively use their good assessments of children's previous learning when planning new work. Appropriate records are kept of children's progress in each area of learning. Staff work hard to provide a rich, lively and interesting learning environment and attractive displays of children's work and photographs of them at work raise children's self-esteem and encourage them to work harder.
38. The good leadership and management in the Foundation Stage have been instrumental in bringing about very good improvements to provision since the last inspection. At that time, a number of significant weaknesses in the curriculum were highlighted. The curriculum is now good and it follows national guidance. Good emphasis is given to each area of learning and very relevant links are made between the different aspects of learning. Staff provide well for children who have special educational needs and the small number of children who are still learning English. The very good accommodation and resources in the Foundation Stage make a very positive contribution to the provision. Links with parents are very strong and parents also make a very good contribution by helping in school and supporting their child's learning at home.

Personal, social and emotional development

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Staff form very good relationships with children and their parents.

- Staff consistently encourage children to develop good learning habits and to behave well.

Commentary

39. Children's personal, social and emotional development is given high priority and all children achieve well in this area of learning. Teaching and learning are good and, as a result, children achieve well and many will exceed the expected levels by the time they enter Year 1. The quality of provision contributes much to children's very good behaviour and very positive attitudes to school. Children quickly settle into a caring and safe environment where basic routines and high expectations are promoted very well. Children respond well and readily co-operate with staff and other children. The very good working relationships between members of staff and with parents are highly effective in showing children how to relate to one another. Teaching includes many well-planned activities that require co-operation and results in good social development, very good relationships and children that readily play and work together co-operatively. Staff also place great emphasis on the development of children's self-esteem, confidence and independence.

Communication, language and literacy

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The basic skills are taught well and learning in this area is linked well to other areas.
- Teaching assistants extend children's learning very well through their own input and their involvement in children's independent activities.
- Parents and volunteers provide good support.

Commentary

40. Staff know that many children have reasonably good skills for their age when they join the school and set them challenging work from the start. This ensures that all children achieve well and standards for many children are above those expected by the time they join Year 1. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers and support staff make very good use of opportunities to engage children in conversation and extend their communication skills. In daily whole-class teaching sessions children develop good listening skills and good sound and letter recognition. In group activities they work very purposefully with adults to retell and re-enact stories they have heard. Children have many opportunities to write and are taught correct letter formation from the start. Staff also provide many chances for children to develop the fine motor skills that help them to develop good pencil control, for example through tracing, drawing and completing puzzles. When children are working independently on writing tasks, teachers use this opportunity well to reinforce sounds and to encourage children to form letters correctly and spell them phonetically. Children enjoy books and listen to stories well. In discussion with children they make frequent references to stories that they have heard or have read. Parents support their

children's reading very well at home. They and the staff use children's reading records well to highlight what children have achieved, and what they need to practise further.

Mathematical development

Provision for mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve well because teaching is imaginative and often challenging.
- Children's mathematical development is well linked to other areas of learning.

Commentary

41. All children achieve well in this area of learning and standards are above those expected for many children by the time they join Year 1. Teaching and learning are good. Through focused teaching, in mathematics lessons, as well as activities across other areas of learning, children learn well. They develop good counting and calculation skills in mathematics lessons and when, for example, counting the number of children present each day, counting how many children are having school dinners and, therefore, how many must be having sandwiches. Outdoors, they use large carpet tiles to practise ordering numbers up to a hundred and develop a good early understanding of capacity through regular activities using sand and water. Good teaching captures children's interest and effectively links mathematics to other areas of learning. Expectations are often high, as was clearly evident in a very good lesson seen when children were skilfully taught how to collect information, to collate it onto a pictogram and then to interpret the chart. As a result, all children learned very well. Higher-attaining children are able to correctly answer complex questions such as, 'how many more children chose pigs than sheep as their favourite farm animal?'

Knowledge and understanding of the world

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve well.
- Visits and visitors contribute well to the provision.
- Good links are made with other areas of learning.
- Not enough emphasis is given to increasing children's early awareness of different faiths and traditions.
- Children's technology skills are being developed well.

Commentary

42. As a result of the good teaching, learning and provision, all children achieve well and most are on course to attain at least the expected standard by the time they join Year 1. Children enjoy a good range of well-planned experiences that contribute well to the provision. Visits, such as those to the farm and a walk to the common for a teddy bears' picnic, are used well to develop children's

understanding of the world. Children talked animatedly about what they had done on their recent visit to the farm. Visitors also contribute well to provision. As part of the recent topic on "People Who Help Us," children benefited from meeting the vet, the school nurse and a fireman. Children are encouraged to act out roles and do this well. Children plant seeds and gain a good understanding of what conditions are needed for plants to grow and learn well about the lifecycles of tadpoles and other animals. Teachers satisfactorily teach children about different religions and cultures, but this aspect could be even stronger. In ICT, children are taught well and they carry out many tasks with confidence. They learn well about the practical uses of ICT when, for example, they use a dictaphone to record their own story telling and music making and when they are taught to use a digital camera to take photographs to record their visits and later print them. Children learn to operate tape recorders and listening stations and do so well. Many of the children log on to the computers independently and print their own work and a good number of children are also confident to use the classroom smartboard.

Physical development

Provision for physical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Use of the outdoor area and regular whole-class teaching sessions ensure that children have many opportunities to develop their physical skills.
- Good opportunities are provided for children to improve their fine motor skills.

Commentary

43. The quality of teaching and learning is good, all children achieve well and many are on course to attain at least the expected level by the time they join Year 1. Children in all classes have three lessons per week, in dance, gymnastics and games. These sessions are well taught. Staff have high expectations of children's efforts and behaviour and set challenging and enjoyable tasks. Management of children is very good, which ensures their safety when using apparatus. Staff are particularly mindful of children with special medical needs at this time, ensuring that they work in a safe way. The very good relationships established by adults result in all the children having fun as well as learning to use space well. Children also enjoy regular opportunities to cycle, run and climb as part of their outdoor learning. There are frequent planned opportunities during the day to use small tools and instruments such as puzzles, paintbrushes, pencils, scissors and crayons to develop children's fine motor skills well.

Creative development

Provision for creative development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children enjoy activities.
- Children know many songs and sing very well.

Commentary

44. Teaching and learning are good and all children achieve well. Most children are on course to at least attain the standard expected for their age by the time that they start in Year 1. Their creative development is successfully fostered through a wide range of experiences such as role-play, painting pictures, making constructions and exploring materials. Children have regular opportunities to make music and to sing. They know and remember many songs and the quality of their singing in the assembly was good. Displays around the classrooms indicate that children are encouraged to be imaginative and creative in their work and are good at mixing colours and choosing different media to work with to help produce the desired effect.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGE 1

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well in all aspects of English.
- Teaching assistants and other support staff contribute significantly to how well pupils achieve.
- Just occasionally, higher-attaining pupils are not challenged well enough in lessons.
- The rigorous approach to assessment and the manner in which the subject is led impact most positively on standards and achievement.
- Literacy skills are used well in many other curriculum areas.
- High quality resources and the effective use of the library bring an added dimension to the quality of learning.

Commentary

45. On the basis of the 2004 National Curriculum tests for Year 2 pupils, attainment was well above the national average in reading and writing and above average when compared to similar schools. Inspection findings show that standards in speaking and listening, reading and writing are above average. The differences between inspection findings and test results can be explained by the fact that the present Year 2 pupils started school with below average levels of attainment. The important factor is that all pupils, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, achieve well. Improvement since the last inspection has been good.
46. Pupils leave the school at the end of Year 2 with good all round skills in English. Pupils are attentive listeners and follow instructions well. They use a good vocabulary when talking about their experiences or work in different subjects. Reading skills are well developed from an early age. Pupils have a good phonic awareness and quickly learn to read simple sentences. Pupils benefit from very good parental support. By the end of Year 2, many pupils read fluently and accurately, know how to use contents and index pages with confidence and use dictionaries and glossaries well. These well-honed skills help them to locate information quickly. Writing skills are well developed by the time pupils leave school. Pupils write well, in respect of both quantity and quality, for a variety of different audiences and purposes. Pupils use punctuation well to enliven their writing, and spelling standards are good. Pupils use a good and varied vocabulary and present their work well.
47. Teaching and learning are good overall and at times very good, particularly for the Year 1 pupils. Good strategies are used daily to encourage confidence and raise self-esteem in talking aloud and listening to others. Reading skills are taught well from an early age with pupils being taught good phonic skills through a range of fun games, rhymes and other activities and then being

taught a range of different strategies to help them tackle unfamiliar words or phrases. Teaching in writing is effective because it directly focuses on the skills needed to write for different audiences and purposes and because it sets high expectations as to how much pupils will write. Pupils often rise to the challenge. Teachers model good writing styles and ensure that pupils have lots of ideas about the content of their writing. Teachers work hard at developing a love of literature, in developing positive pupil attitudes and in setting high expectations. These factors often produce a very positive response from pupils, which adds much to how well they learn and achieve. Just occasionally, higher-attaining pupils are not challenged well enough. When tasks are not sufficiently extended for this group of pupils, they do not achieve as well as they could. Teaching assistants make a significant contribution to the learning of pupils with special educational needs and of those who speak English as an additional language. Good support and guidance for this latter group of pupils are also provided by an external support worker who visits the school regularly to work with pupils in their English lessons, and to liaise with school staff. The marking of pupils' work is good as it makes clear to pupils what next steps are needed for improvement.

48. Leadership and management of English are good. The subject leader has played an important and influential role in improving provision in the subject by the regular monitoring of teaching and learning and by scrutinising teachers' planning and pupils' work. She plays an active role in analysing test and assessment data and evaluating trends, and this enables her to quickly identify areas of strength or weakness, which can be quickly corrected. Good procedures are in place for tracking pupils' progress and for target setting. When achievement is evaluated, good attention is paid to factors such as gender, ethnicity, and how well similar aged pupils are performing in different classes. The high quality library facility is well used in helping to encourage reading across the school and this, together with the very good book resources, contribute much to the quality of pupils' learning.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

49. The use of literacy skills across other subjects of the curriculum is good. Pupils' speaking and listening skills are put to good use in many subjects of the curriculum and are developed particularly well in PSHE lessons. There are good planned examples of writing in history, geography, religious education and science particularly. Pupils label their diagrams well in science, design and technology and in geography. They make lists and menus in food technology and write extended accounts in history, with good recent examples from Year 2 in the style of Samuel Pepys' diary.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well.
- Teaching is effective at developing pupils' investigative and problem-solving skills.
- Teaching assistants contribute much to how well pupils achieve.
- The leadership and management of the subject contribute much to pupils' achievement.
- Assessment data is used well to set challenging targets.
- Pupils' mathematical skills are put to good use in other subjects of the curriculum but better use could be made of computers to enhance learning.

Commentary

50. On the basis of the 2004 National Curriculum tests for Year 2 pupils, attainment was well above the national average and well above average when compared to similar schools. Inspection evidence indicates that current standards are above average. This does not represent a fall in standards because the evidence clearly indicates that the present Year 2 pupils started school with below average levels of attainment. The important factor is that all pupils, including those with special educational needs and pupils for whom English is an additional language, achieve well. Improvement since the last inspection has been good.
51. By the time that pupils leave the school they are good mathematicians. Their number skills are good and they are confident and competent at carrying out mental calculations. Pupils have a good grasp of the properties of three- as well as two-dimensional shapes and are developing good skills of measuring and drawing different shapes accurately. They know how to construct Venn and Carroll diagrams. Pupils are becoming increasingly confident at collecting data and then putting it into a graphical format. The higher-attaining pupils are already competent at then interpreting the data they have collated. Many opportunities are provided for pupils to carry out investigative and practical tasks and pupils use and apply their mathematical skills well, although there are some pupils who struggle a little when problems are presented in word format or formats that they are not used to.
52. Teaching and learning are good overall and at times very good. A particular strength of teaching is that teachers place a very good emphasis on ensuring that work is well matched to the differing abilities of the pupils and teaching is often challenging, stimulating and fun. This is particularly, but not exclusively, prevalent in Year 1. Teachers use the mental opener activities at the start of the lesson to bring learning to life with challenging and thought provoking activities. The pupils thoroughly enjoy these sessions. Their enthusiasm then often carries over into the remainder of the lesson. Many lessons have a real sense of pace and urgency and, again, pupils respond well to the high expectations that are set. Teaching provides a good array of practical and investigative activities which test out pupils' ability to apply their mathematical skills and enhance the quality of pupils' mathematical learning. Although good examples were observed of computer programs being used well to add to and challenge pupils' learning, there are times when opportunities are missed, for example to present data in different formats. Across the school, teaching

assistants make a major contribution to how well pupils with special educational needs and pupils for whom English is an additional language learn and achieve. Their support is both challenging and yet sensitive to the individual needs of pupils. The marking of pupils' work is often good because it leaves pupils under no illusion as to what they need to do to improve.

53. Leadership and management of the subject are good. The subject leader regularly monitors the quality of teaching and learning in the classroom as well as scrutinising pupils' work and teachers' planning. She is actively involved in analysing test and assessment data and the information from this and from monitoring exercises is used well to set priorities for improvement. The way that she has carried out her role gives her a strong grasp of the quality of provision in the subject and she has played an important role in helping to improve standards and how well all pupils achieve. Good procedures are in place for tracking pupils' progress and for target setting, with good attention paid to factors such as pupil mobility, gender, the achievement of pupils from different ethnic backgrounds and to examining how well similar aged pupils in different classes perform.

Mathematics across the curriculum

54. The use of pupils' mathematical skills in other subjects of the curriculum is good. Teachers look for, plan for and capitalise on the opportunities that arise for pupils' mathematical skills to be put to good use in subjects such as art and design, design and technology, geography and science. This attention to detail adds another layer to pupils' learning.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- All pupils achieve well.
- Teaching strikes a good balance between developing pupils' scientific knowledge and their investigative skills.
- Good links are made with other subjects, but there is scope for computers to be used more effectively to enhance pupils' learning.
- Strong leadership has resulted in very good improvements to the provision.

Commentary

55. On the basis of the 2004 teacher assessments for Year 2 pupils, attainment was well above the national average. Inspection findings show that attainment for the current Year 2 pupils is above average. This does not suggest that standards have fallen but does reflect the fact that the present Year 2 pupils started school with below average levels of attainment. The picture that also clearly emerges is that all pupils, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, are achieving well.

There has been very good improvement to science provision since the previous inspection because pupils' achievements, teaching and learning, and pupils' attitudes are all much better now than they were.

56. By the time that pupils leave school, they have a good understanding of push and pull forces. Pupils name a good range of materials, identifying clearly where they come from and what they are used for. Pupils have a good understanding of electrical circuits and know well what animals need to live and classify them according to the way they move. They already show a good understanding of what is needed for a healthy lifestyle. A strength in standards is the fact that pupils' investigative skills, as well as their scientific knowledge, are developed well. Pupils carry out investigations carefully and show good observation skills and know what factors are needed for a fair test. They make sensible predictions and are keen to test whether they are correct.
57. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers across each year group plan and prepare lessons together, which ensures consistency across classes. They ensure that pupils are clear about the learning intentions and, because teachers have good subject knowledge, they explain scientific concepts and ideas clearly. They skilfully question pupils and introduce and emphasise correct scientific vocabulary, so that pupils understand it and learn to use it themselves. Particularly good examples of this were seen in Year 1 classes when pupils were exploring a very wide range of everyday and more unusual items, made from different materials. There is a strong emphasis on investigations, an aspect of science that has improved particularly well since the last inspection. This approach motivates and engages all pupils. It involves them in lots of discussions with adults and other pupils. This also benefits those pupils still learning English and those who have special educational needs. It also ensures that pupils develop good skills in scientific enquiry and that they learn to record their findings in a variety of ways. Teachers make good use of relevant links between science work and pupils' work in English, mathematics and design and technology. Particularly good opportunities are used to develop pupils' speaking, listening and writing skills through science. ICT is used satisfactorily, but is an aspect that the school is working to extend.
58. Leadership and management of science are good. The new subject leader is continuing to develop work in this subject. She took over from a very experienced science leader who had clearly worked very diligently to improve resources and provision, and had very rigorously monitored the impact of any developments, to ensure that they resulted in better teaching, learning and pupils' attitudes. Good strategies are in place to monitor teaching through lesson observations and the scrutiny of pupils' work and teachers' planning. Good procedures are in place for assessing and tracking pupils' progress although there is scope for refining these further so that they have an even bigger impact on pupils' achievement. The subject leader has already flagged this up as an area for improvement.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well.
- Key skills are taught well and pupils are provided with a wide and varied range of learning activities.
- Lessons are well organised and planned so that the best possible use can be made of resources and the computer suite.
- Leadership and management of the subject have contributed much to the rise in standards since the last inspection.
- Although there are some good examples of computers being used well to support pupils' learning in other subjects, there is still room for further improvement.

Commentary

59. Standards are above average by the end of Year 2. The achievement of all pupils, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, is good. Improvement since the time of the last inspection has been good.
60. By the time that pupils leave the school they have acquired a good range of computer skills. Pupils save and retrieve work with ease, confidently use the mouse and printer and recognise the different icons on screen. Pupils are good at using tools to draw and then fill different shapes with an array of colours. They change the size and colour of different fonts and are already confident at merging pictures and text. Pupils know how to navigate around a CD Rom to find answers and how to use a search engine to locate information. Pupils are competent at inputting a sequence of commands for a programmable toy and are developing an increasing awareness of how computers are used in the wider world.
61. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers provide a good and varied range of learning activities that cover all aspects of the subject as well as keeping pupils highly motivated, committed and showing a real desire to find out about new things. Many teachers have good subject knowledge and use this well to deal with any glitches that occur without much teaching time being wasted. The school has a small but well equipped computer suite. So that pupils have good access to the computers, lessons are often planned to allow half the class use the computer suite whilst the other half are, for example, taught library skills. The groups then swap over. This works well and means that during their time in the suite each pupil has individual access to a computer. Teachers are good at directly teaching key skills to the pupils and then providing meaningful and relevant tasks for them to test out their newly learned skills. In the classrooms where interactive whiteboards have been installed, they are used well and bring another dimension to pupils' learning. Pupils' learning is further enhanced with the good computer links that have been established with a local high school, where a specialist teacher visits the infant school and teaches small groups of pupils. The school also runs an extra-curricular computer club which is very popular and much appreciated by the pupils.

62. Leadership and management of the subject are good. The subject leader has a good grasp of the strengths and weaknesses in the subject because she has carried out lesson observations, held discussions with pupils and scrutinised teachers' planning. She has set up a good quality annotated portfolio of work that gives good guidance as to what pupils need to do to attain at different levels across varying elements of the subject. Although assessment procedures are satisfactory, the subject leader is seeking to improve the procedures further and to ensure that more consistent use is made of computers to support learning in different subjects.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

63. The use of information and communication technology across the curriculum is satisfactory, but could be better. Some good examples were observed during the inspection in subjects such as mathematics and history but there are times when opportunities are not identified at the curriculum planning stage or are missed in lessons. The school, however, has already flagged this up as a weakness and is in the process of addressing the issue.

HUMANITIES

Timetable constraints meant that insufficient lessons were observed in geography for the subject to be reported on in full or for a judgement to be made on provision. More lessons were observed in religious education and history and these subjects are reported on in full.

64. In **geography**, evidence from pupils' work, teachers' planning and discussions with teachers and pupils indicates that standards are at an average level by the end of Year 2. Scrutiny of teachers' planning and pupils' work shows that a good balance is struck between developing pupils' geographical knowledge and geographical skills. By the end of Year 2, pupils make maps of imaginary islands and use symbols to identify key features. Pupils' knowledge of maps also enables them to locate places on local maps and a map of Great Britain. Their knowledge of the wider world is satisfactory. Pupils compare in simple terms the geographical features of Shirley with those in Minsted. Pupils study a broad and interesting curriculum, which is well linked to visits and local studies. Teachers make good use of the resources that are available to them, including the local environment. The subject is often used well to enhance pupils' writing skills but opportunities are sometimes missed to use computers to enhance pupils' learning. The subject is well led and managed. Good procedures are in place for the subject leader to monitor provision in the subject and, importantly, good subject leadership over time has meant that significant weaknesses, identified at the time of last inspection, have been successfully addressed.

Religious education

Provision for religious education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers provide good opportunities for pupils to develop their writing and speaking skills as part of their work.
- Pupils have relatively few opportunities to talk about their own religious practices.
- Good use is made of artefacts to enliven learning.
- Insufficient use is made of computers to enhance pupils' learning.

Commentary

65. Standards by the end of Year 2 are in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus and for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, achievement is satisfactory. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory.
66. By the time that pupils leave school, they have a secure knowledge of the religious stories they have been told. They understand the significance of past events around the major festivals of Christmas and Easter and that there are special places for people of different faiths to worship. Good opportunities are provided for pupils to explore their feelings and emotions, although at times not enough time is provided for reflection. Pupils have a satisfactory understanding of Hindu festivals and stories but their understanding of how different religions may have their own distinct values and beliefs is not as well developed.
67. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Strengths include the way that staff treat the subject with respect and provide good opportunities for pupils to write about what they have learnt. Less evidence is available of computers being used to support learning. Teachers endeavour to make learning interesting by, for example, providing pupils with opportunities to act out stories. This was seen in Year 1, when pupils acted out the events around Palm Sunday. Planning takes good account of the abilities of different pupils. Good use is made of artefacts to help to bring learning to life. A weakness in teaching is that, although pupils are taught about different religions, there are missed opportunities for pupils to share their own religious beliefs and practices, so as to help all pupils to appreciate and to celebrate the fairly wide range of religious backgrounds represented within the school community.
68. The subject has been led and managed satisfactorily since the last inspection, which has led to satisfactory improvements. The subject leader has monitored provision through the scrutiny of planning and has accurately identified the need to modify whole-school planning in the light of the introduction of the new locally agreed syllabus last September. Assessment procedures are satisfactory.

History

Provision in history is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers work hard to make pupils' learning interesting.
 - Good use is made of visits and visitors to bring an added dimension to learning.
 - Pupils' literacy skills are put to good use, although there is scope for the better use of computers to further enhance learning.
 - The good quality of the leadership of the subject has led to good improvements in provision over time.
69. By the end of Year 2 standards are at an average level. The achievement for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, is good, given their attainment levels when they started school. Improvement since the last inspection has been good.
70. By the end of Year 2, pupils have a secure understanding of the key historical characters and events they have studied. Pupils demonstrate a good knowledge of the Great Fire of London. They recognise that everyday objects and life styles have changed considerably over time. Pupils have a reasonably good understanding of cause and effect and their satisfactory sense of chronology is demonstrated when they locate famous people and events they have learned about on a simple time line.
71. The quality of teaching is good and this helps pupils to learn well. Teachers plan interesting activities and keep a good overview of pupils' progress. Tasks within lessons are well planned to take good account of the differing abilities of the pupils. Teachers link work in history well with other subjects, particularly literacy. As a result, pupils have many opportunities to listen to historical accounts, as well as to read and write about them. A varied programme of themed days, visits and additional activities motivates pupils well. It brings the subject alive for pupils. This was clearly evident when talking to pupils about "Samuel Pepys" visit to the school. Following on from this, pupils enjoyed painting pictures, writing diaries about the Fire of London, and writing letters to King Charles about the need for changes to the way that houses are built. Although good examples were observed during the inspection of computers being used well to carry out research tasks, this good practice is not as consistent as it could be.
72. The school is developing an increasingly good and interesting history curriculum, which contributes well to pupils' social and moral development. The good leadership and management of history have resulted in good improvements to teaching, learning and the curriculum since the last inspection. The co-ordinator supports colleagues well, monitors teaching and learning in an effective manner and has clear ideas about how she wants to develop provision further. Assessment is satisfactory although plans are already in hand to further improve this aspect of the subject.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Due to timetable constraints no lessons were observed in design and technology so this subject has been sampled. It is not, therefore possible, to make a judgement on provision. A good number of lessons were observed in art and design, music and physical education and so these subjects are reported on in full.

73. In **design and technology**, discussions with pupils and teachers, and scrutiny of pupils' work and teachers' planning indicate that standards are at least at an average level and that achievement is never less than satisfactory in the designing, making and evaluating aspects of the subject. Planning indicates that over time the subject is taught in depth and pupils have the opportunity to make many different products, to take part in food technology activities and to build using different construction kits. Evidence indicates that important cutting and joining skills are taught in a direct manner and that good emphasis is given to the progressive teaching of different skills. Pupils are provided with chances to work with a wide range of different materials and teachers stress the importance of the design and evaluation processes as well as the making element of the subject. Evidence around the school shows that pupils have made some good models during focused practical tasks that show above expected levels of attainment. For example, pupils in Year 2 have designed and made good wheeled vehicles using wood, card, glue and paint. They have used some innovative fixing methods to attach the wheels to their realistic three-dimensional models. In Year 1, there are good examples of pupils using construction kits to create inventive models of playground equipment. Pupils have clearly achieved well in some of their practical tasks. Good technology is an important component of the subject and the planned provision shows evidence of good progressive activities as pupils move through the school. Leadership and management of design and technology are good and the subject leader has played an important role in monitoring and improving provision since the last inspection. Satisfactory assessment procedures are already in place but the school wants to make them even more effective so that they have an even bigger impact on pupils' learning.

Art and design

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well.
- Key skills and techniques are taught well.
- There is a good range of vibrant learning opportunities consistently on offer.
- Artistic displays and resources add much to the learning environment and the quality of learning.

Commentary

74. Standards in art and design are above average by the end of Year 2. The achievement for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, is good. Improvement since the last inspection has been good.
75. By the end of Year 2 pupils show good levels of imagination and creativity in their work. They mix colours well to produce the desired effect. Pupils demonstrate good observational skills and work confidently with different materials and media. They show a good awareness of texture and line to create realistic effects. Pupils are just as confident working in three-dimensional formats as in two-dimensional work and use a wide range of multi-coloured shapes to produce good quality pieces of abstract art. Work on display around the school shows that pupils attain consistently good standards in their art and design work.
76. Teaching and learning are good. Teaching provides a good, vibrant and exciting range of learning activities. Teachers manage the practical nature of the subject well and provide a good range of activities and resources to extend pupils' skills. Good use of technical vocabulary by teachers and the direct teaching of key skills mean that pupils gain a good knowledge and understanding of techniques. Good examples are provided to help pupils improve and evaluate their own work. The school runs an annual "Arts Week" where a wide range of stimulating activities takes place. The strength is that throughout the year similarly exciting tasks are on offer and past work has included vibrant experiences such as kite-making and batik work, all of which are displayed in the school and show good levels of achievement.
77. Leadership and management are good and contribute well to the quality of the provision. Teaching and learning are monitored in an effective manner. High quality art displays enhance the environment and provide a good creative backdrop to the school day. The accommodation and resources are good and are used well to support and celebrate learning. Assessment procedures are satisfactory but the school intends to further improve them so that teachers can more accurately track pupils' progress as they move through the school.

Music

Provision in music is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well.
- Teachers' good subject knowledge is used well to enthuse the pupils.
- All aspects of the subject are covered well over the course of the year.
- Enrichment opportunities and the quality of resources add to the quality of pupils' learning.
- The subject leader monitors provision well.

Commentary

78. Standards are above average by the end of Year 2 and all pupils, including those with special educational needs and pupils for whom English is an additional language, achieve well. Improvement since the last inspection has been good.
79. By the end of Year 2 pupils sing well and are developing a good sense of pitch. They not only sing with great enthusiasm and gusto but also tunefully. Pupils have developed a good sense of rhythm and clap well to different beats. They clearly recognise that different pieces of music can evoke different feelings. Many pupils in Year 2 play a recorder and many can name notes, with the higher-attaining pupils playing the recorder well. Pupils name a good range of untuned instruments and enjoy and listen attentively to different pieces of music that are played to them.
80. Teaching and learning are good. Some teachers have good subject knowledge and use this well, not only to directly teach pupils but also to motivate and enthuse them. This ability was put to particularly good use in a Year 1 lesson where the animated and lively teaching style, together with the obvious subject knowledge, brought learning springing to life with groans of disappointment when the lesson ended. A strength of teaching is the fact that over the course of the year good emphasis is given to singing and performing, simple composition and listening to different pieces of music. This means that many pupils leave school as well rounded musicians. Learning is further enhanced by extra-curricular choir clubs, opportunities to perform in assemblies and in the community and by a good range of visiting musicians and other performers.
81. The subject is well led and managed. The subject leader monitors teachers' planning on a regular basis and discusses pupils' feelings about learning with them. She organises activities and enrichment opportunities that enhance learning, and plans are in hand to directly monitor teaching and learning when the subject is an identified area of priority on the school improvement plan. Assessment is satisfactory with the school planning to make procedures even sharper and more rigorous and effective. The subject is very well resourced with a wide range of instruments that add to the quality of pupils' learning.

Physical education

Provision in physical education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils perform well in dance.
- All aspects of the subject are covered well over the course of the year and a good range of enrichment opportunities and very good resources enhance pupils' learning.
- At times there is not enough physical challenge for the higher-attaining pupils and expectations of pupils' behaviour are not high enough.
- The subject leader has a good grasp of the quality of provision in the subject.

Commentary

82. Standard in the subject are at an average level overall by the end of Year 2, with standards in dance being above average. Achievement for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and pupils for whom English is an additional language, is never less than satisfactory and is good in dance. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory.

83. By the end of Year 2, pupils' performance in dance is above the expected level. Pupils move with poise and elegance and put together sequences of movement with a good degree of creativity and imagination. Pupils show a good awareness of their own and others' space and move to and interpret different pieces of music well. Pupils' gymnastic skills are at an average level with pupils showing satisfactory balance and sequencing of movements. Throwing and catching skills are satisfactory with only a small number of pupils able to throw accurately from a distance.
84. Teaching and learning are satisfactory with some good practice observed. Teaching is at its best in dance where teachers set high expectations, pupils are kept physically active throughout and pupils are encouraged to be inventive and imaginative in their movements. Teaching is lively and animated and there is a real sense of enjoyment from teachers and pupils alike. Lessons have appropriate warm up and cool down activities and instructions are often clear and precise. There are times, however, when pupils are not kept physically active enough or when too little is expected of the higher-attaining pupils, for example, when they are taking part in some throwing and catching activities. Most pupils are very well behaved in lessons and show high levels of enthusiasm and enjoyment. Just occasionally, however, there are a small number of older pupils who are reluctant to take part and expectations of high standards of behaviour are not made clear. This is the exception rather than the norm. Teachers' planning clearly indicates that all aspects of the subject are covered well and pupils' learning and enjoyment is further enhanced by a good range of extra-curricular sporting activities and the involvement of professional coaches.
85. The subject leader manages and leads the subject well and has contributed to an improvement in standards since the last inspection. She has a good awareness of provision in the subject through the regular monitoring of teaching and learning and the scrutiny of teachers' planning. Assessment procedures are satisfactory and the school is keen to further develop and improve these so that staff develop an even better awareness of pupils' attainment and progress in the subject. The quantity and quality of resources are very good and make a positive contribution to the quality of learning.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Provision in personal, social and health education (PSHE) is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve very well because of the very good teaching and support and the very creative curriculum.
- Speaking and listening skills are developed very well in this aspect of school life.
- PSHE provision contributes significantly to the ethos of the school.
- Leadership has influenced the quality of provision well.

Commentary

86. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, achieve very well in PSHE, attaining standards well above those expected for pupils in Year 2. This represents very good improvement since the last inspection.

87. By the end of Year 2, pupils show a good understanding of healthy eating and healthy lifestyles. They show that they are beginning to take responsibility for their own health and know that being active has a positive effect on their bodies. They have a very good understanding of how to deal with their own problems, and show that they know how to care for others and to listen sympathetically while they each talk about things that make them sad. Pupils draw on things they have learned in science as they plan a healthy meal and show high levels of empathy and understanding when they discuss different disabilities.
88. The quality of teaching is very good and pupils are very well supported in lessons. Teachers have very good skills in the subject and make very good use of resources to raise awareness of everyday issues. Because of high quality interactive presentations, pupils in all of the Year 2 classes were able to change their misconceptions about the health of certain groups of people. Teaching assistants contribute very well to pupils' learning in the subject. Good provision is made for informing pupils about substance misuse and for discussing sex and relationships in a manner that is appropriate for pupils' ages. Improving speaking skills is a major feature of lessons. In all activities, pupils were able to practise and improve their confidence and fluency in talking to others, extending their vocabulary very well. Teaching and learning provide a very rich range of learning opportunities to extend pupils' social, health and citizenship skills. Very good focused practical tasks are used to promote sharing, caring and kindness to others. The very good PSHE skills that pupils develop contribute much to the good behaviour and very good relationships evident in all areas of the school.
89. Leadership and management are good because the leader ensures that all aspects of the subject are covered in depth and that the delivery of the subject is such that it impacts very positively on the ethos and work of the school.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Inspection judgement	Grade
The overall effectiveness of the school	3
How inclusive the school is	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	3
Attendance	2
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The quality of education provided by the school	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	2
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	2
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	1
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	4
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).