

INSPECTION REPORT

SILVERSTONE INFANT SCHOOL

Silverstone, Towcester

LEA area: Northamptonshire

Unique reference number: 121883

Headteacher: Mrs J Letts

Lead inspector: Ms R Frith

Dates of inspection: 6 – 8 June 2005

Inspection number: 267667

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:	83
School address:	High Street Silverstone Towcester Northamptonshire
Postcode:	NN12 8US
Telephone number:	01327 857 351
Fax number:	01327 857 351
Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs S King
Date of previous inspection:	7 December 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Silverstone School is a smaller than average community infant school. It is part of the recently formed Silverstone Schools' Federation, along with Silverstone C of E Junior School. The Federation has one headteacher, one governing body and two separate budgets. Pupils come from a range of social backgrounds but, overall, the socio-economic status of families is favourable, with no pupils receiving free school meals. When children join the school, they bring with them a wide range of experiences and abilities but, overall, their attainment is broadly similar to that usually seen for children of this age. However, a significant number of children have higher than average standards in personal, social and emotional development. Nearly all pupils come from White British heritage. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs is below the national average and those pupils receiving support have a range of learning difficulties. Few pupils join or leave the school at other than the usual starting or leaving times. Over the last two years two teachers left the school, one of whom was the headteacher. At the time of the inspection, the newly appointed headteacher had been in post for nearly a year and two temporary part-time teachers were teaching the Year 1 class. They had been in post for a few weeks. The school received the School Achievement Award in 2001, the Artsmark, the Green Flag Eco Schools Award and the Basic Skills Quality Mark in 2003, the Activemark in 2004 and Investors in People in 2005.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
2490	R Frith	Lead inspector	English Science Geography History Religious education Special educational needs English as an additional language
9519	S Pritchard	Lay inspector	
32136	L Brookes	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Art and design Design and technology Music Physical education Areas of learning in the Foundation Stage

The inspection contractor was:

Nord Anglia School Inspection Services
 Anglia House
 Carrs Road
 Cheadle
 Stockport
 SK8 2LA

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a very good school. It provides a happy and supportive environment where pupils enjoy learning and feel part of the school community. Staff ensure that all pupils have good opportunities to succeed through taking part in a wide range of activities. Teaching is frequently very good because lessons are interesting. Pupils achieve very well so that, by the time they leave the school, many reach standards that are well above average in English, mathematics and science. Resources are managed very well and the school provides very good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The ethos is very good and reflects a happy and stimulating school where children flourish.
- Leadership and management of the school are very good.
- Pupils are presented with an exciting curriculum which stimulates their learning and meets their needs very well. Consequently, pupils' attitudes to school and their learning are very good.
- Very good provision is in place to develop pupils' moral and social education and this leads to very good relationships and very good behaviour.
- Staff have high expectations of what children can achieve and pupils respond well to these, developing the self-confidence to try out new things.
- The school's strong and supportive community spirit results from the work staff have done in forging links with parents, the churches and other community members.
- The way pupils record their work does not always reflect their capabilities.
- Pupils have a limited awareness of cultural diversity.
- Some parts of the school are not accessible to people who use a wheelchair.

Progress since the last inspection has been good. The quality of the teaching and the curriculum have improved, which has helped to maintain high academic standards. Very significant improvements in the provision for information and communication technology have resulted in better learning and higher standards. Staff have successfully addressed the issues identified in the last report, and show a strong commitment to continual development and improvement.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

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

Pupils achieve very well during their time in school. In the reception class, staff have high expectations of work and behaviour, so children make a good start and quickly develop very good attitudes to learning. Consequently, by the time they enter Year 1 nearly all are

working above the levels expected nationally for pupils of that age in all areas of learning. In Years 1 and 2, staff have recently been particularly effective in raising standards in reading so that pupils now continue to achieve very well in all subjects and standards in reading have risen since 2004. By the end of the academic year, pupils in Year 2 frequently attain standards in speaking, listening, reading, writing, mathematics and science which are well above those expected for children of this age nationally. This was reflected in the work seen during the inspection. Standards are above average in information and communication technology and religious education, and pupils' art work is of a high quality. All groups of pupils achieve equally well.

Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are good overall. They are encouraged to enjoy their learning and respect the views, feelings and values of others. This results in pupils behaving very well, and developing very good attitudes and relationships with other children and adults. Pupils enjoy going to school. Attendance is above average and punctuality good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school and the quality of teaching are very good. Teachers' high expectations of pupils' personal and social education help them settle well and become confident learners who enjoy school. Pupils' learning is also enhanced by the effective support staff, who, together with teachers, form a strong team. The curriculum is very good, with activities that are well linked so that pupils see connections in their learning. There are particular strengths in the provision for pupils with special educational needs, extra-curricular activities and pupils' involvement in addressing environmental issues. Staff work hard to ensure that pupils are well cared for and feel supported. Pupils' views are taken into account well, for example, through the Eco Council. Staff have developed very good links with parents who, in turn, get involved in activities and help with their children's learning at home. The school also has very good links with the local community and other schools and colleges, and it encourages visitors.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership, management and governance of the school are very good. The headteacher has quickly gained the confidence of pupils, parents, staff and governors, and is providing very good leadership during this period of change. The headteacher and governors have a clear vision of how the school should develop and have high aspirations and expectations. They are fully committed to running a school where all pupils enjoy learning and are helped to develop well, both academically and socially.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents have very positive views of the school and many good things to say about it. They particularly appreciate the hard work and dedication of the headteacher and describe her as being "a very obvious head ... very, very approachable and one who doesn't hide herself away". Pupils, too, are very fond of their teachers, their school and its friendly atmosphere. They agree that all adults in school are helpful and fair to them.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

Inspectors found no additional issues to those already identified by the school.

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

- Broaden the way pupils record their work so that it reflects their thinking and independent learning.
- Deepen pupils' understanding of the variety of customs and traditions evident in society today.
- Make all reasonable adjustments to improve access to the school for people with disabilities.

and, to meet statutory requirements:

- Ensure all the required information is included in the governors' annual report to parents.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Overall, pupils achieve very well and, by the time they leave school, attain standards that are well above average in English, mathematics and science.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve very well throughout the school because of their very good attitudes to learning, the very good teaching and the interesting curriculum.
- The school's drive to raise standards is reflected in the significantly improved levels in reading.
- Pupils with special educational needs achieve very well because their needs are identified early and very good additional support is provided.
- Higher-attaining pupils achieve very well.

Commentary

1. On entry to school, children have a wide variety of skills and experiences but, overall, their attainment in most areas is typical for children of the same age nationally. However, a significant minority have higher than average personal and social skills because they have attended pre-school and, through good links with the school, have become familiar with the school building, staff and other children. Due to the quality of teaching and provision of a broad and interesting curriculum, most children achieve very well. In the reception class, staff focus on developing the children's personal and social skills and on encouraging communication across all areas of learning. Progress is very good and children use these skills well so that their mathematical, creative and physical skills, as well as their knowledge and understanding of the world, improve very quickly. By the time they enter Year 1, nearly all children are working at levels above those usually seen for pupils of that age in all areas of learning.
2. When compared with all schools, the results of the tests and assessments in 2004 show a slight fall in standards from the previous year, but indicate very good achievement for that particular cohort of children, except in reading. Standards were well above average in speaking, listening, writing and mathematics and above average in reading. When compared with schools with a similar number of pupils receiving free school meals, pupils attained well above average standards in writing and mathematics, and below average standards in reading. The reading standards were lower than standards in the other subjects because pupils were insufficiently challenged and fewer attained a level above that expected for their age, thereby bringing down the overall level of attainment. However, improvements in teaching and the curriculum are raising standards in reading. Over the last five years, the school's trend of improvement in reading, writing and mathematics was broadly in line with the national trend.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	16.5 (17.8)	15.8 (15.7)

writing	16.7 (18.2)	14.6 (14.6)
mathematics	18.1 (18.6)	16.2 (16.3)

There were 22 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

3. The work undertaken in the reception class creates a good foundation on which to develop very good learning in Years 1 and 2. Despite changes in staffing, very good management has resulted in continuity of learning and very good progress. Evidence from this inspection indicates that pupils in Year 2 are currently working at levels well above those expected for their age in speaking, listening, reading, writing, mathematics and science. Standards are above average in information and communication technology and reflect the changes in the curriculum and the improved resources. Standards are above those expected in the locally Agreed Syllabus for religious education in Year 2 because the teaching is good, overall. Some of the pupils' art work is also of a high quality and reflects a range of interesting activities which systematically develop their skills over time.
4. Staff recognise the differing styles of learning amongst pupils and use a good variety of teaching styles to accommodate this. Consequently, there is no evidence of underachievement overall. No significant difference was noted in achievement between boys and girls during the inspection.
5. Pupils of higher attainment are usually very well challenged, as the results of the 2004 national Year 2 tests in writing and mathematics show. Teachers usually have high expectations and set work to match the capabilities of each pupil so that all work hard and progress very well. Following last year's results, the school recognised the need to provide more challenge in reading and developed a range of strategies which resulted in the current Year 2 pupils doing much better than those last year. For example, nearly half of them attained the higher Level 3 in reading. Significant improvements have been made in the school's provision for those pupils who are gifted and talented and currently their needs are met very well. The achievement of pupils who have special educational needs is very good throughout the school. It matches that of other pupils because their needs are quickly identified and very effective care and support are given by teachers and learning support assistants. From the information provided by the school and through observation, it is clear that the very few pupils from minority ethnic groups achieve as well as other pupils.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils behave very well, establish very good relationships and have very good attitudes to learning. They have good records of attendance and punctuality. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

Pupils ...

- enjoy school, and this is reflected in their good attendance and punctuality;
- value friendships, show a lively interest in learning and want to do well;
- have a very good understanding of environmental issues and how these affect them;
- are not made sufficiently aware of what it means to be part of a multi-cultural society.

Commentary

6. An interesting curriculum and teaching that is lively and stimulating help to ensure that pupils enjoy school and have very good attitudes to their learning. Pupils work and play together very well, showing high levels of co-operation and mutual respect. They enjoy the dialogue they have with their teachers in the classroom and, although this can be lively and even a little noisy at times, interactions remain focused and purposeful. Pupils calm down quickly when asked to do so because their social awareness and sense of appropriate conduct are strong. In assemblies, for example, they know when to listen quietly, when to sing enthusiastically and when to laugh with amusement. Visitors to the school are impressed by how sensible and polite the pupils are. In the playground, pupils share toys and games fairly and are much more interested in keeping up a friendship than an argument. Parents agree that incidents of bullying are rare and that there are good procedures to deal with these should they arise. There were no exclusions during the year prior to the inspection.
7. The school promotes equal opportunities well. The value placed on pupils' contributions in lessons sends a clear message that everyone has a right to be heard. As a result, pupils are very keen to have their say and their interest in learning is high. Pupils with special educational needs have the same positive attitudes because the very well-planned curriculum allows for pupils of different abilities to achieve and learn in different ways. The very good range of out-of-school activities, for example, stimulates the interest of the school's young cooks, environmentalists and musicians.
8. Pupils' cultural development is satisfactory overall. In lessons and assemblies they learn about the influence faith has on the way people choose to live their lives. Visiting artists, musicians and representatives from churches and charities bring added value to pupils' learning. Pupils have good opportunities to learn about British customs and traditions. They gain much from their visits to local farms, museums, theatres and places of worship. Christmas productions, carol and harvest festival services are annual events on the school's calendar. However, it is predominantly the good provision for religious education that gives pupils the secure grounding they have in the different faiths and values of a multi-cultural society. The potential within different subjects and classroom displays to promote and deepen pupils' understanding of global customs and traditions is yet to be fully explored.
9. Pupils' spiritual development is good. Assemblies present good opportunities for pupils to empathise and reflect on their own existence and being. The highlight of one assembly came when pupils, listening quietly to water trickling from one container to another, reflected on the importance of this as a resource for life. At this point, pupils showed a high degree of emotional involvement in the theme of the assembly.
10. Pupils' moral development and sense of social justice is very good. Their ability to make informed judgements on moral issues is particularly evident in the concern they show for the environment. Pupils are aware of the differences they can make, for example just by tending a plant, tidying a classroom or switching off a light after use. They try very hard to 'do the right thing', a quality upheld by the parents who give a high level of support to the school and its rules.

Attendance

11. Parents at the pre-inspection meeting said they are always happy to send their children to school because the staff are so caring and approachable. The school's rigorous monitoring procedures confirm that most pupils have good records of attendance and are in school every day unless they are unwell or on holiday.

Holidays during term time contribute significantly to the authorised absence rate, which is slightly above the national average. The school is keeping a close check on these absences. Almost all pupils arrive in time for morning registration and there are good procedures to chase up the few who might not.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	5.3	School data	0.1
National data	5.1	National data	0.4

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is very good. Teaching is very good, overall, and pupils are supported well by a very good curriculum and good levels of care. Links with parents, the community, other schools and colleges are very good.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are very good across the school. The way staff assess pupils' learning and achievement is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are very good in English, mathematics and science, and this helps pupils to achieve very well.
- Teaching assistants support the pupils very well and help them to make very good progress.
- Expectations of pupils' behaviour are high and pupils respond well. This helps to create a very good ethos for learning.
- Staff use their knowledge of the pupils, gained through thorough assessment, to plan work that ensures they are able to succeed.
- Staff have high expectations and provide appropriately challenging work but do not always give pupils the opportunity to develop their own ways of recording, and to write about what they know.

Commentary

12. Children in the reception class quickly develop very good skills and high levels of confidence because the activities are enjoyable, and very effective in developing their independence. The teaching covers all areas of learning well and staff use a good variety of methods and activities that help children to succeed. Improvements in outside provision and in information and communication technology are particularly noticeable. This very good practice continues throughout Years 1 and 2, where children further develop their confidence and self-esteem, which helps them to tackle new tasks with interest and enthusiasm. Pupils enjoy learning and are keen to do well. The chart below gives an outline of the quality of lessons seen during the inspection and reflects the focus that all staff place on giving pupils very good learning experiences.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 23 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	11	9	3	0	0	0

The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons.

13. A significant feature of the best lessons is the way teachers link different subjects within one topic so that pupils' learning is consolidated and developed. An example of this was seen in Year 2, when pupils learnt about William Morris from an historical perspective and then developed an understanding of his art work and design. Teachers use their knowledge and expertise well to plan activities which match the learning needs of all pupils and maintain an excitement when finding out about new

things. In the very good lessons, teachers make good use of the information gained from assessing pupils, so that the activities provided build systematically on previous learning. They have a clear idea of what they want pupils to learn and share this with them at the start of the lesson. Appropriate support and challenge ensure that pupils of all levels of attainment maintain a good pace in their learning. Also, staff use this knowledge of pupils well in lessons and encourage them to improve and work harder if they think they can, or provide additional support to make things clearer. These aspects are particularly evident in English, mathematics and science lessons.

14. Lessons are frequently built up of short sessions with input from the teacher, work from the board, using ICT or a book, individual reading or writing and discussions between pupils. Teachers encourage the use of talk partners to extend pupils' speaking and listening skills and also use questioning to develop their thinking skills. As a result, pupils ask and answer questions confidently and leave school with the ability to communicate clearly and effectively with adults and one another.
15. Many pupils reach well above average standards in their knowledge, skills and understanding by the time they leave school, but their written work does not always reflect this. In several subjects, teachers give pupils too many worksheets and this limits the possibilities for pupils to use their own ideas, and ways to record their work. Also, pupils usually work on paper and not books and this does not encourage their presentation skills. The school is aware of the need to develop consistency in pupils' handwriting across the school as the methods currently in use are not as effective as they could be. Although pupils continue to progress very well, improvements in the areas highlighted above would encourage a higher level of skills in line with pupils' knowledge and understanding.
16. Senior managers have been very successful in developing a strong team and a school ethos of learning, which builds confidence among staff and pupils. All staff share their ideas and expertise and are keen to improve their skills through professional development. The quality of relationships between staff, and between staff and pupils, is very good. This helps pupils to gain trust in their teachers and also has a significant influence on how staff manage the pupils in their care successfully. They have consistently high expectations of behaviour and pupils respond well to these as they know what they should do. Also, staff are very encouraging and supportive, which results in pupils becoming confident in their abilities and aware of what to do to improve.
17. Pupils who have special educational needs are supported very effectively. On the occasions when pupils are withdrawn from lessons for extra support, the tasks they complete relate well to the classwork or cover areas where there is a weakness in knowledge, skills or understanding. Consequently, they are fully prepared for when they return to lessons and make very good progress in learning as a result. This is a key factor in ensuring that their achievement matches that of other pupils. Support staff make a very positive contribution to pupils' learning and the standards they achieve. The school has improved its work with higher-attaining pupils and those who are gifted and talented. More capable pupils were seen being well challenged in lessons. Teachers are also aware of differences that may occur in the responses and learning of girls and boys so use a good range of methods to ensure that all are included and interested. Staff are particularly effective at using interactive whiteboards and digital cameras to make the teaching more interesting.

The curriculum

Curricular provision is very good. Pupils have a very broad range of opportunities to learn and opportunities for enrichment are very good. Accommodation and resources are satisfactory overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Cross-curricular links are well developed.
- A very good range of visits and visitors enhances and enriches the curriculum.
- Given the age of the pupils, a good range of clubs is offered.
- There is no access to some parts of the school for people using wheelchairs.

Commentary

18. The school keeps its curriculum under constant and effective review and implements changes appropriately. Curricular planning and schemes of work have been systematically developed to ensure full access to a broad and balanced curriculum for all pupils. Each subject is given an appropriate amount of time, and links between subjects are well developed. Subject co-ordinators monitor teachers' planning and scrutinise pupils' work. Teachers adjust the curriculum appropriately, having regard for any differences between pupils. The school identifies gifted and talented pupils and extends their curriculum appropriately. Provision for pupils with special education needs is very good. Their specific needs are monitored carefully and reviewed regularly to ensure that work is given to them at the right level to maintain very good achievement. The value that the school places on equality of opportunity is consistently reflected in what the pupils do.
19. The school enriches pupils' learning with a very good variety of activities outside lesson times. The range of visits and visitors gives pupils extra chances to learn. The depth and range of clubs offered are good, given the small size of the school and the age of the pupils. Clubs are well attended. Educational visits are regularly planned and enhance the quality of learning. For example, visits to local places of interest, such as woods, farms and zoological parks, develop skills in geography, history and science. Visitors are invited to talk with pupils and share their knowledge and expertise. The school holds regular weeks dedicated to specific areas of the curriculum, such as arts and science, and these help to maintain pupils' interests and enhance learning.
20. Accommodation is satisfactory, although some parts of the building are old. One class is housed in a mobile classroom that does not have toilet facilities. There is no discrete staff room and the school hall, which is in a separate building, has a size and shape which make some activities difficult to manage, for example, in physical education. However, the staff cope well with these conditions. Since the last inspection a dedicated outdoor area for the youngest pupils has been developed, which enriches their curriculum. The outdoor accommodation is spacious and attractive and there are plenty of seats and quiet areas to attract pupils. However, the school has not yet addressed the provision of access for disabled pupils, their families and other visitors.
21. The quality of staffing is good. The number of experienced teaching assistants provides good extra support. Significant improvement in the resources for information and communication technology has helped to raise standards. Each classroom has its own computers and printers, as well as an interactive white board, and the amount of other smaller technological equipment enhances learning well. An attractive and well-stocked library has been developed.

Care, guidance and support

Arrangements to ensure the health, safety and welfare of pupils are good overall. Staff give good support to pupils' personal needs and to their academic progress. The school takes good account of pupils' views.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Well-planned and well-organised daily routines enable pupils to form very good and trusting relationships with adults in school.

- The school actively promotes a healthy lifestyle for its pupils.
- Procedures for children starting school are good.
- Although much has been done to make the old prefabricated buildings safe and welcoming, people with certain physical disabilities would have difficulty accessing much of the school.

Commentary

22. Pupils' personal well-being is a priority for staff. Despite the significant changes in personnel, all adults in school take time to talk to the pupils about their achievements, to inspire their confidence and to gain their co-operation. The Eco Council is used well to consult with pupils and to help them discover how, by making small changes, lifestyles can be much improved. With other equally well planned initiatives, such as the end-of-the-day and parent/pupil reading sessions, pupils are brought into good, supervised contact with caring adults who have the interests of children at heart. Consequently, pupils turn readily to the adults in school for support and are very confident about asking for help when they need it. The verbal feedback given by teachers to pupils during lessons is good. In a survey of their views, pupils agreed that teachers were always helpful in showing them how to improve their work. Pupils are set appropriate academic and personal targets and are guided towards achieving them by knowledgeable, supportive staff. As a result, they make very good progress in their learning.
23. There are very good opportunities for all pupils, including those of the higher ability groups, to work with pupils from other schools in drama and music, and in some sporting activities, all of which extend and improve their motivation to achieve. The school makes good efforts, through liaison with parents and health agencies, to ensure that pupils with specific medical needs receive the care they need to take part in school activities. Very good support is afforded to pupils with special educational needs. Their individual education plans are subject to frequent reviews to ensure that targets are met and the progress of each pupil carefully tracked. The school's child protection procedures are good, with staff and governors regularly updated on their responsibilities towards children at risk. All staff listen closely to what children say and are careful to report any concerns they may have, at once to the headteacher.
24. There are satisfactory procedures to ensure the school is a safe working environment. The long-awaited replacement windows are about to be installed and the hall has now been improved as much as it can be without re-building it. The governors have put together an 'Accessibility Plan' to show what needs to be done to the school to meet the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act. However, uncertainty about the future development of the buildings has stalled reasonable progress on the plan. In the meantime, the school is left with no separate welfare room, no toilet facilities for the disabled and too many steps without ramps. This means that people with impaired mobility are unlikely to be able to access all areas of the present school buildings for some time yet. There are, however, well-established procedures for general health and safety issues, with more training on the way to increase the number of the fully-qualified first-aiders on the site to two.
25. The school has received recognition from a number of outside award-giving bodies for the very good work it does to help pupils understand and follow a healthy lifestyle. Displays around the school and special 'healthy eating' taster sessions reinforce pupils' understanding of how to look after themselves, their health and their environment. Much work has also gone on to organise a 'walking bus' scheme. Parents appreciate the benefits this will bring in terms of pupils' safety, attendance and punctuality. There are good arrangements for children starting school. Pre-school class visits and briefing meetings help the process considerably and parents appreciate these. Parents at the pre-inspection meeting commented favourably on the help and guidance they receive at this time.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The links with parents, others schools and the community are very good and support learning and achievement very well.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents are impressed by the recent improvements across the school and see the headteacher's strong and determined style of leadership as being the key to its success.
- Very good use is made of the community to promote the pupils' social and moral development.
- Links with local schools and local organisations enrich and strengthen the curriculum.
- The school's lack of facilities for disabled people hinders its use by the whole community.

Commentary

26. Parents and governors have very favourable views on the work of the school. They are especially pleased with the success it has in encouraging pupils to behave well and work hard. The school is supported very well by the parents, who contribute much of their time and money towards making it a friendly and well-resourced place in which to learn. There are very good links with the local playgroup. Children transferring from this to the main school are introduced slowly and carefully to school routines through a programme of well-planned visits and play sessions. Under the strong leadership of its headteacher, the two halves of this newly federated school work as one to ensure the smooth transfer of pupils from the infant to the junior site. Parents have been pleasantly surprised to find that so many of their children already know the names of most pupils in both schools. This is because pupils and staff from the two schools meet together frequently, maintaining the vital elements of a joint school community. Resources are shared, ideas are exchanged and joint solutions are found to common problems so that the momentum for learning is not lost as pupils move up to the junior school.
27. Links with the community are very good. Local organisations are proud to be connected with the school and are happy to lend their support to it, often in very practical ways. The famous race circuit, bearing the same name as the school, provides the venue for the school's fund-raising events and Christmas parties. Local people from the village join meetings of the school's Eco council to support the pupils' efforts to help the school and the community become more environmentally aware. Other events hosted by the very supportive parent/teacher association, the seasonal festivals, discos and sponsored events, enable the whole community to socialise, have fun and at the same time raise money for good causes. These links make a very strong contribution to the pupils' social and moral development. The weakness in this area is the school's lack of facilities for people with certain disabilities, which hinder the use of the school buildings by certain sectors of the community.
28. Co-operation between home and school is very good. The end-of-year reports form a good basis for constructive discussion at the regular parent/teacher consultation sessions. Parents of pupils with special educational needs have good, additional opportunities to discuss their children's targets and be involved in setting new ones. School newsletters successfully persuade many parents to come into school and help with various projects. These range from reading with groups of children to giving the school a good spring-clean. With the exception of an update on the progress made by the school since it was last inspected, the helpfully detailed and illustrated prospectus together with the more concisely worded governors' report, contain all the information parents must by law receive from the school. All this information, together with regular updates on the curriculum and the good, controlled, access parents have to the staff,

the school and its displays, means that parents are kept well informed about what their children are doing all day and are thus better prepared to help them at home.

29. A recent questionnaire issued by the school encouraged parents to share their perceptions of its work. Their responses showed them to be happy with all aspects, including homework. However, at the pre-inspection meeting around half the parents questioned whether the arrangements for homework were in fact appropriate. They did, however, agree that homework gave them a useful insight into the standards their children were achieving, particularly in literacy. The inspection evidence shows that the amount and quality of homework are good and well matched to the age and ability of the pupils.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are very good overall. The headteacher provides very good leadership and is very well supported by senior staff. The governance of the school is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher's very good leadership has ensured that staff work very well as a team in order to maintain high standards.
- The governing body has worked hard with senior managers to shape the future of the school and has developed members' roles and responsibilities well.
- The school's use of self-evaluation to improve standards is very good.
- Financial management and control are good.

Commentary

30. The headteacher has quickly gained the confidence of parents, as can be seen from their positive responses in their questionnaire returns and from their comments during the pre-inspection meeting. Her consultative approach, which gives value to the views of staff, parents, pupils and governors, has created a sense of optimism and a renewed drive to improve provision. She has a clear vision for the school and central to this is the provision of high quality teaching to ensure high standards. This vision can easily be identified through her everyday practice, which shows respect for, and value of, children and staff. The headteacher is helping to create a school which provides pupils with a stimulating and exciting first formal experience of education. Her clear goals include the desire for pupils to become interested in learning and to develop enquiring minds as well as specific skills.
31. Another key feature of the school's success is to the very good management. The headteacher and deputy headteacher work very well together, sharing their expertise and experience in order to improve the quality of education. The headteacher has every confidence that the school will run smoothly when she is working in the junior school because of the knowledge, skills and abilities of the deputy headteacher and other staff. This is echoed in the comments from parents, who believe the management and leadership of the school to be very good. The deputy headteacher is particularly effective in supporting pupils with a variety of special educational needs and management of their provision is very good. She also sets a good example to other staff through her own teaching. Teachers new to the school work hard to embrace the school's ethos and rise to the high expectations set by the headteacher.

In turn, she and other staff work hard to ensure they are supported well. The effective and efficient work of the office manager is also valued by staff and parents as this helps to ensure the day-to-day smooth running of the school.

32. A particular key improvement this year has been the way links between the infant and junior schools have been developed. Examples include the coming together of staff to develop policy and practice in pupils' handwriting, and the appointment of some co-ordinators who have responsibilities for their subjects across both schools. Overall, subject leadership and management are very good as provision and achievement are monitored well with a view to raising standards.
33. Overall, the governing body has given a very firm steer to the development of the school and was instrumental in the development of its federated status. This decision was made responsibly and for the right reason, that is, to secure a high calibre headteacher. After having no success at attracting a suitably experienced and qualified headteacher for the infant school, decisions were made to extend this role to include the leadership of the Silverstone Church of England Junior School. A wide variety of issues needed to be addressed but members have guided the school through this period of change well whilst maintaining stability of teaching and learning.
34. Governors are very supportive of the school and its staff but challenge appropriately when required. They have very good levels of knowledge and are well informed. This helps them to be fully involved in discussions and developments, and able to make informed decisions. They undertake their duties diligently and fulfil their roles very well. They have successfully addressed the issues arising from the last inspection and good improvement has been made. Governors have a very clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. The school improvement plan sets a clear agenda and is the result of a good consultation process. Staff and governors are particularly effective when evaluating the success of their actions and when using a range of information to raise standards. This can clearly be seen in the way they responded to the disappointing reading standards last year, with the result that standards this year show significant improvement. Governors, the headteacher and staff continue to show a clear commitment to maintaining the pace of improvement.
35. The school's good approaches to financial management and control help senior managers and governors to achieve their educational priorities. Finances are managed efficiently and effectively, with best value principles applied when considering financial expenditure. However, the overall financial picture is complicated due to an accumulation of funds prior to the appointment of the current headteacher and the accumulation of a large sum of Capital Development Funding over two years. The latter was not spent as managers were waiting to see what support would be given by the local authority in terms of school renovation and repair. At the time of the headteacher's appointment and when the new governing body was formed, there was a substantial underspend in the total school budget. This is still reflected in the figures below although financial plans show that the large carry forward will be eroded to an acceptable level by the end of the current financial year. A substantial amount has been allocated to make improvements to the school building and to ensure appropriate teaching support in both Year 1 and Year 2. Overall, the school provides very good value for money because standards are well above average, and the ethos for learning, quality of provision and teaching are all very good.

Financial information for the year April 2004 to March 2005

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	268,520
Total expenditure	251,050
Expenditure per pupil	2,060

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	45,380
Balance carried forward to the next	62,850

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

The Early Years area is managed very well by an experienced practitioner who also provides very good leadership to the staff team. Consequently, the overall provision for the children in the Foundation Stage is very good. The pupils in the reception class receive a very good start to their education. Teaching is very good overall and the very good planning and good assessment systems contribute to the effectiveness of provision in the reception class. Lesson plans are well matched to children's capabilities and closely related to the six areas of learning outlined in the national guidance. The reception class uses the Foundation Stage Profile of assessment, supplemented by observations well, and this helps to ensure that children's achievements are recorded in a systematic way and appropriate work planned.

Although ability covers a broad spectrum, the majority of the children are of average ability when they start school. However, standards in personal, social and emotional development are higher. They achieve so well because teaching is very good and there is very good deployment of the learning support assistants. Therefore, the majority of the class will reach, and a significant proportion exceed, the Early Learning Goals by the end of their time in the reception class. A number of pupils will already be working within the early stages of the National Curriculum. This indicates that pupils make very good progress.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children are developing their levels of personal independence well.
- They behave exceptionally well for their age.
- Their personal and social skills are developing well.

Commentary

36. Children already have standards higher than average in this aspect of learning when they start school. The focus on the further development of these skills quickly enhances their confidence and self-esteem. They work and play co-operatively, and a strong rapport has developed between them, their class teacher and the classroom assistants. The high quality of the general ethos and environment, together with effective teamwork and supportive relationships, contributes to the strength of this area of learning. Despite their young age, the children behave extremely well and are encouraged to be considerate of others. Adults capture children's interest effectively, and promote concentration, by the very good use of resources and the provision of a very good curriculum and environment. These qualities, together with suitably planned activities, ensure that children's involvement is fostered and maintained to a high standard. High expectations of the children's attitudes and behaviour are supported by very good teaching, and children's learning reflects the teaching standards. All receive plenty of praise and encouragement. This is effective in building up their self-esteem and confidence. They cope well with their personal

needs, such as changing for physical education and pouring their own drinks at break time.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The children's emergent writing is promoted very well.
- Pupils' speaking and listening skills are very well developed and extended.
- Staff are very effective at developing children's early reading skills.

Commentary

37. Teaching and learning are very good and help children to achieve very well. Many opportunities are provided for children to extend their speaking skills through all areas of learning. Activities are planned well to support and extend learning, as in the current topic of 'Jim and the Beanstalk', in all curriculum areas. When they start school, most children have good speaking skills and are keen to talk about their interests and activities. They enjoy listening to stories and sharing books, and many can predict or suggest how a story will develop. For some, reading ability is in its early stages, but it is encouraged appropriately. A good proportion of the children are fluent and confident readers. The classroom has a good range of picture books, including non-fiction titles. These are accessible to the children and relevant books support displays such as the 'growing table'. All can write their names with increasing legibility and a significant number are beginning to write words and phrases independently. Good use is made of classroom computers to support children's early reading and writing skills. Most children are on track to at least achieve the Early Learning Goals. With the very good standard of teaching, and the emphasis on literacy skills, it is likely that many will be working within the early stages of the National Curriculum as they progress to Year 1.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children's mathematical vocabulary is developing well.
- Most children count and calculate with confidence.
- Children's emerging skills are used well across a range of curriculum areas and this helps them to achieve very well and gain confidence.

Commentary

38. Because of very good teaching, most children are making very good progress in their early understanding of number, shape and measure, and they achieve very well. They can handle simple calculations with numbers to five and more, and the more confident work with higher numbers. The staff use games and activities effectively to support number work and children are enthusiastic about their lessons. The use of a range of resources, including the class computers and the interactive white board, is planned

and organised well. The children's use of mathematical vocabulary is developing well, and they understood and used the appropriate comparative language when they compared the height of the classroom assistant to their 'giant' in his castle. Children are making very good progress and a good proportion is likely to be working within the National Curriculum levels by the end of their time in reception.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A stimulating environment introduces children to the wonders of the world.
- They have very good opportunities to explore and learn about their world in the classroom, outdoors and further afield.

Commentary

39. Children make very good progress in this area of learning and achieve very well because they have plenty of opportunities to experience a wide and stimulating range of activities. Teaching and learning are consistently very good. The children are very interested in all activities presented to them and make very good gains in their learning. They quickly learn to use a broad range of technological equipment with confidence and skill. For example, as well as programmable equipment, they use digital cameras and video cameras, and use the interactive white board independently. A popular activity was using hand-held metal detectors to find 'gold' coins buried in the sand tray. The children learn about their world by observing, handling and discussing a variety of objects. Adults use questioning well to extend both the children's vocabulary and their use of language to explain their thoughts and ideas, and to encourage children to think about their world. Most children will be working at levels above those expected for their age, by the time they enter Year 1.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children have very good opportunities to develop their physical skills on a range of large exercise equipment.
- They are developing their expertise well in the use of pencils, scissors and other small tools.

Commentary

40. Children have almost continuous access to a spacious and very well-resourced outdoor area adjacent to their classroom. Its frequent use is planned well and it is an integral part of the overall curriculum, being used effectively for a wide range of outdoor activities. Indoor activities include gymnastics, dance and drama. Planned physical education sessions develop children's skills and co-ordination and very good use is made of the time-tabled sessions in the school hall. Teaching and learning in this curriculum area are very good. Fine motor movements are developed effectively through the use of pencils, brushes, scissors and other activities. Children have very good opportunities to manipulate a range of small equipment and construction apparatus with dexterity. By the time they enter Year 1, most children will be working above the levels expected for their age.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Easy access to a very wide range of resources for creative work promotes freedom, independence and creativity.
- Musical ability is fostered and developed well.

Commentary

41. Children have a very good range of opportunities to develop their creativity. Planning of this area is carefully thought out, giving children a broad range of experiences. Very good teaching is matched by children's learning. Support from adults, including parent helpers, means that a wide range of different activities is on offer during creative sessions. The children use a wide variety of tools and materials to create all sorts of different images. They selected from a variety of leaves to create pictures and made recognisable images, including monkeys, giraffes and elephants as well as robots! With the help of a teaching assistant they laminated their work in order to preserve it. Many examples of children's work are on display and show that they have used many different techniques and media. They learn to sing a number of songs and rhymes well, and are given opportunities to listen to music and play percussion instruments. They have many good opportunities to use their imagination through role-play, and are enjoying play in the 'Giant's Castle' which they have helped to create. Many children will be working within the early stages of the National Curriculum as they progress to Year 1.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGE 1

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in all aspects of the subject are well above average.
- The quality of teaching is very good and this helps pupils to achieve very well.
- Leadership and management are very good and help to maintain high standards.
- Speaking and listening skills are encouraged very effectively and pupils become confident and articulate.
- Pupils have too few opportunities to set out their work in books.
- Literacy is used very well across the curriculum.

Commentary

42. Standards for Year 2 pupils in speaking, listening, reading and writing, are now well above average and show an improvement in reading from last year. Following the disappointing results in the 2004 national reading tests, the school identified areas for development, such as working with pupils who had the potential to do better and improving reading resources. Teaching improved and this resulted in much better standards, particularly for the potentially high achievers. This is a good example of how very good leadership and management can identify and successfully address a specific issue and, in a short time, bring good results. Overall, the achievement of pupils is very good, including those who have special educational needs, and no differences in achievement were observed between boys and girls.
43. Teaching is very good overall, and teachers who are new to the school have been supported well in order to maintain the high expectations and ethos which characterise teaching and learning at Silverstone. In the best lessons, teachers focus on establishing learning intentions; the pace is brisk, and pupils become engrossed in activities. All lessons are very carefully planned and tasks are usually stimulating and

challenging. This was seen in a very good Year 2 lesson when pupils read a non-fiction text in order to support their own writing on the lifecycle of a butterfly. Good links between literacy and science resulted in very good achievement in both subjects. The interactive whiteboard was used very effectively to gain pupils' interest, and to maintain their concentration as images and information were relayed. Learning was very good here, as it is usually throughout the school, because the task was very practical and built systematically on prior learning. Other strong features of teaching include: planning, assessment, accurate target setting so that pupils know how to improve their work, support for pupils with special educational needs and regular homework tasks.

44. Teachers are particularly effective in promoting speaking and listening skills, and most pupils speak fluently and clearly. Many lessons include opportunities for discussions and pupils are encouraged to present their ideas to the class. Discussion is purposeful and well managed. All staff provide very good role models for spoken English and also listen attentively to children's responses. Consequently, pupils know they will be listened to and are keen to participate.
45. Pupils' well above average speaking and listening skills underpin their ability to write logically and to use correct grammatical constructions. From an early stage, pupils quickly develop the confidence to write because writing across the curriculum is purposeful and they are pleased with their resulting work. The content of pupils' writing is interesting, and spelling, grammar and punctuation are used with increasing accuracy. However, pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to develop their skills of presentation because work is done on paper and worksheets. This restricts the development of their key skills of independence and control over their work.
46. Reading skills are well developed throughout the school, and pupils are encouraged to enjoy books and stories. This was seen when a good number of parents and volunteers brought books to the school and read to groups of children at the end of the day. This confirmed that reading is a pleasurable activity and helped pupils to identify what they liked about specific stories. Information and communication technology is used increasingly as teachers and pupils work with the interactive whiteboards and computers during literacy lessons. Resources have improved and pupils frequently use listening centres as well as choosing books from the newly organised and restocked library.
47. Subject leadership and management are good. The joint co-ordinators have a good understanding of their roles and a clear idea of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. The latter are securely based on monitoring and evaluation of learning and teaching. Through monitoring, the co-ordinators identified the need to improve pupils' handwriting and, together with the junior school staff, have developed their policy and practices so that continuity and progression are ensured across both schools. The school continually strives for improvement and progress since the last inspection is good.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

48. This is a strong feature of pupils' work in most subjects. As standards in speaking, listening, reading and writing are high, teachers are able to plan challenging and interesting activities incorporating these skills. For example, in history pupils compose poems entitled, *I Wish I'd Lived in Days of Old*, and in religious education they write sensitively on Remembrance. This results in pupils achieving well in subjects such as

history and religious education. Pupils use a good range of materials for research, including reference books and the Internet.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is very good overall.
- Standards are well above average by the end of Year 2.
- A high level of practical work engages pupils' interest and attention.
- Pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to plan and lay out their work in books.

Commentary

49. Standards of attainment in mathematics are likely to be well above national expectations at the end of Year 2. This shows very good achievement by pupils in Years 1 and 2. Boys and girls from all groups achieve equally well and pupils with specific needs are supported most effectively.
50. By the end of Year 2, virtually all pupils count, order, add, subtract and multiply numbers to at least twenty, with the more able working confidently to numbers of 100 and more. In a Year 2 lesson, pupils were observed planning and describing position, direction and movement. The introduction was effectively led by use of the interactive white board, while learning assistants supported those pupils who needed reinforcement. Pupils progressed to working independently, and with partners to support their learning, and were encouraged to check their own work using the classroom computers. Less able pupils used programmable machines to plan and check their work. There was particularly good support and challenge for all the pupils which helped them to attain high standards. With very good encouragement, most pupils attempt mental calculations with alacrity, and benefit from the structured introductory sessions in their numeracy lessons.
51. The quality of teaching and learning is very good overall, and there are many good opportunities for pupils to utilise their learning in practical contexts. Teachers use questions well to evaluate pupils' understanding and to advance their learning. Pupils have very positive attitudes to their work in mathematics. They enjoy their lessons, behave very well and develop confidence in using a variety of different methods to work out their answers. This has a positive impact on pupils' social development as they develop self-esteem. However, because written work relies heavily on the use of commercial worksheets, pupils have limited opportunities to practise laying out their work in books. A strong feature of lessons is the use of interactive white boards by both adults and pupils. This engages pupils' attention most effectively and fosters their use of ICT skills in their mathematics lessons. Pupils say that they like being able to save their work and revisit it on later occasions.
52. The quality of assessment is good and the information gained is used well. It is likely that the introduction of a new system of tracking progress and development will ensure even further improvement. The results of analysis have been used to focus on areas where it was identified that pupils were having problems. Teachers share the learning objectives for lessons with pupils, which enables them to develop an understanding of how they have achieved. Pupils with special educational needs are supported very well in their learning. Classroom assistants are given good information on how best to support the groups they work with.
53. Leadership and management of the subject are very good. The co-ordinator has a thorough knowledge of standards in the subject and how the subject should progress. Careful analysis of national test results is used to identify where a particular focus is needed. There is a strong emphasis on maintaining a practical approach to teaching in the subject. Improvement since the last inspection is good.

Mathematics across the curriculum

54. Basic numeracy skills are taught very well, and pupils' mathematical skills are promoted and extended well in their work in other subjects. For example, pupils have produced charts and graphs linked to work in science.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve very well and reach well above average standards.
- Teaching is very good, overall, and this ensures that pupils make very good gains in their learning.
- Very good leadership and management have ensured that good improvements have been made since the last inspection.
- Good links with other subjects, good use of the grounds, and the school's eco work ensure that pupils are given a very interesting range of activities which maintain their interests well.
- Opportunities for pupils to record their work are restricted.

Commentary

55. Inspection evidence and national assessments for pupils in Year 2 indicate that pupils make very good progress in science and achieve very well. By the time they leave school, they reach well above average standards. These results show good improvement since the last inspection when standards were above average.
56. Most pupils respond very well to science because they like the practical nature of many of the activities and are interested in their local environment. Because of this, their behaviour is very good. Staff have focused well on developing the pupils' skills of scientific enquiry so that, by the time pupils leave school, they can suggest a suitable way of finding things out when trying to answer a scientific question. Pupils confidently predict, for example when asked "Which fabric stretches the most?" Pupils base their answers on previously gained scientific knowledge and understanding. In the best lessons, teachers pose questions that encourage the pupils to think scientifically and to explain their ideas. This was observed in a very good Year 2 lesson when pupils were asked to predict what habitat might be preferred by woodlice. One pupil responded, "*As they are insects and we are humans, they probably like the opposite conditions to us, like dark and damp*". Because the climate for learning is positive and their views valued, pupils are keen to make suggestions and extend their learning.
57. Overall, teaching and learning are very good. Teachers are confident in their subject knowledge and use the surrounding area and the expertise of visitors to capture the pupils' attention and sustain their interest. This was seen during a session when a bee-keeper spoke to Year 2 pupils about the life of bees and her work. Throughout, the pupils listened well and showed by their answers that they understood. Towards the end of the lesson, they asked some very perceptive questions which indicated their desire to learn more and their good thinking. Pupils' learning was significantly enhanced by the practical nature of the session when they were shown the bees, identified the queen bee, felt the honeycomb and tasted the honey.
58. In most lessons, good links are made between science and other subjects. For example, pupils use their literacy skills to record in an exercise and sleep diary. Very good links were made between science and design and technology when pupils were challenged to design a palace for woodlice based on what they had discovered about

their preferred habitat. Appropriate science homework is given, for example, that which encourages pupils to take part in a moon watch. Pupils also completed sheets about objects at home which were translucent, transparent or opaque. Pupils enjoy these types of activities and their successful completion aids learning and achievement. In some lessons, the interactive whiteboards are used well to impart knowledge and maintain the pupils' interests. Teachers also encourage activities where pupils develop their own ICT skills, as when they use the microscope or record their findings following investigations. In some ways, however, opportunities are missed to further develop pupils' skills of recording so that they match their high levels of knowledge and understanding, and there is sometimes an overuse of worksheets.

59. The subject has been very well led and managed. The curriculum has been reviewed since the last inspection to ensure that all areas are covered and revisited in order to confirm learning and sustain pupils' knowledge and understanding. There is now a greater emphasis on investigative science and this has been a key feature in raising attainment, particularly that of more able pupils. The co-ordinator, together with staff, is particularly effective in identifying areas for improvement by looking at pupils' test results and assessments and identifying areas of weakness. The co-ordinator has a clear view of how to maintain high standards, extend provision further and ensure that the curriculum fully meets national expectations and the pupils' needs. This reflects the school's drive for continual improvement. The profile of the subject has been raised through the pupils' involvement in the Eco project and the David Bellamy project, when they received national recognition of their work. These two initiatives are instrumental in raising pupils' levels of knowledge and understanding and giving them control over their immediate surroundings and lifestyles.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school's resources for the subject have improved significantly.
- Teachers are enthusiastic, confident and knowledgeable.
- They handle new technology with high levels of competence.
- Pupils enjoy the subject and work very well.

Commentary

60. Standards are above those usually seen for children of this age. Improvements in the resources available have been very good since the previous inspection. Each classroom now has at least three computers and an interactive white board. The well-planned use of this equipment fosters the potential for improving standards further.
61. Pupils achieve well and standards continue to rise. Pupils' level of achievement is improving rapidly. Although they do not have planned ICT sessions, the use of technology is firmly embedded in all lessons and pupils are becoming skilled in its use to support all subjects. This approach enhances pupils' learning and positively impacts on their capacity to achieve. Their word-processing skills improve noticeably as they get older and they are introduced to an increasing variety of software. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is good because teachers are confident and plan activities which sustain pupils' interests and develop their skills systematically over time. Staff have high expectations of what pupils can achieve and pupils, in turn, rise to this challenge.

62. Older infant children use a range of tools when drawing. They use word-banks to help them write and produce text with a range of punctuation and structures. They are able to illustrate their work with imported images. They use the interactive white boards with high levels of confidence and competence. All these activities enhance good learning.
63. ICT is well led and managed and the co-ordinator will be a Lead Teacher in the local education authority next year. The subject is well-resourced and pupils are able to use digital and video cameras, as well as a digital microscope and hand-held metal detectors. They were seen to use 'digital blues': small video cameras from which video clips are downloaded onto classroom computers and the interactive white board, and then used to assess and develop progress in, for example, physical education.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

64. The use of ICT across the curriculum is developing well and good examples were seen in mathematics and science as well as in physical education. This is having a very positive effect on learning in many subjects as well as increasing the opportunities for pupils to practise their skills.

HUMANITIES

Two lessons were observed in religious education and one each in geography and history. Inspectors also looked at pupils' work and teachers' planning and spoke with staff and pupils. It was not possible to make overall judgements on provision in history or geography.

The scrutiny of pupils' work in **geography** shows that they are offered a broad curriculum which matches their capabilities and reflects national guidance. In Year 1, pupils develop a good understanding of their locality and identify key features of the area through walks and work in class. This is further developed in Year 2, when pupils study Silverstone in more detail, look at the use of land, the work that people do and how the village has changed. Their work on '*Silverstone in the Future*' shows some interesting ideas and perceptive observations. Pupils' literacy skills are developed in Year 1 as they learn how to write their address and in Year 2 as they compose a letter from a girl living on an island. The latter indicates a good understanding of the similarities and differences between island living and their own village, as they identify different physical features and extend their mapping skills. In a good Year 1 lesson, pupils again look at similarities and differences as they talk about the lives of two children in Zambia. This helps them to understand cultures different from their own.

An analysis of **history** work and teachers' planning indicates that pupils are taught a broad curriculum in line with that recommended nationally and good cross-curricular links are made, for example, with art and English. In Year 1, pupils develop a sound sense of chronology and distinguish between life *a long time ago* and their experiences now. For example, the use of a video to introduce pupils to aspects of home life enabled them to identify differences in the kitchen. Their vocabulary develops as they begin to use terms such as *dolly*, *mangle* and *tub* when talking about washday. In Year 2, pupils develop a good understanding of key historical events and knowledge of famous people. Good links with literacy are made as they write a diary entry describing how the Great Fire of London spread and when they write postcard from Brighton in role as a person in the 1900s. Good links between history and art and design were developed well when pupils were introduced to the life and work of William Morris.

Religious education

The provision for religious education is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good standards have been maintained since the last inspection.
- The curriculum has significantly improved.
- Good links are made between religious education and other areas of the school's work.
- Religious education plays a significant part in the development of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Commentary

65. Standards of work are above those expected in the locally Agreed Syllabus, particularly in the way pupils learn from religion. They make good progress throughout Years 1 and 2 and achieve very well. This is because of their very good attitudes to learning, their interest in the subject and the very good quality of teaching. All children are encouraged to participate and, because they enjoy their learning, they behave very well.
66. Teaching and learning are mostly very good. Children receive a good basic curriculum in the reception class and are aware of Bible stories such as the Nativity and Noah's Ark. This knowledge and understanding is built upon well in Year 1 as pupils discover the Old and the New Testaments and move beyond the literal when studying Bible stories to a basic understanding of Christian beliefs. This was developed in a very good lesson when pupils visited a local church and understood how this was a special place for Christians and the importance of the Bible and the Crucifix for believers. By the end, pupils could name the altar, font and pulpit and understood their uses. Good links were made with other subjects, for example, art and design, when pupils were encouraged to sketch an aspect of the church in which they were particularly interested. Digital cameras were also used well to record some key features of the church so that these could be further studied back at school. This visit was brought to a very good conclusion as pupils stood in the choir area singing as the Canon conducted and the teacher played the organ. Not only did this activity give pupils the opportunity to do something new, it provided a very spiritual moment from which they learnt about the feelings one could experience in a church. Learning was very good because staff had high expectations, very good knowledge and understanding and used this well to provide an interesting and uplifting lesson.
67. Work in Year 2 extends pupils' knowledge and understanding of religion through the study of other faiths such as Judaism. In one very good lesson, the teacher used her good knowledge and expertise well to ask questions which developed pupils' thinking as she introduced the giving of the Ten Commandments. The second part of the lesson was effective in helping pupils to relate what they had learnt about the Ten Commandments to their own lives, as they wrote their own list of rules for living at home and school. This lesson was enhanced by the use of the interactive whiteboard which helped pupils to understand the messages given. Not only are pupils' knowledge and understanding good but their sensitivity to belief systems and their ability to reflect are very good for children of this age. Also in Year 2, good links are made with other subjects when, in design and technology, pupils make a life-size coat for Joseph which is of a very high quality.

68. Overall, religious education makes a positive contribution to pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development, and this is extended through assemblies and acts of collective worship. During assemblies, pupils show a high emotional involvement with the subject matter and make very good contributions when, for example, responding to questions about the value of God's gift in relation to water.
69. Overall, leadership and management have been good. However, since the appointment of the current subject co-ordinator, who is based in the junior school, the curriculum has been reviewed in the light of changes to the locally Agreed Syllabus and significant improvements have been made recently. Many of these focus on introducing the new Foundation Stage curriculum, where the co-ordinator has guided developments and highlighted resource needs. The school's work has been adapted so that, throughout, the curriculum now meets requirements. Some monitoring takes place. For example, planning is reviewed to see that it reflects the scheme of work and matches pupils' needs. Although staff have an understanding of what pupils have achieved and what they are able to do, they recognise the need for a more consistent way of assessing and recording these and are already developing their practice in these areas.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Two lessons were seen in art and design, one in design and technology and two in physical education. A very brief period was spent in a music lesson. Inspectors also spoke to staff, analysed the school's curriculum provision and evaluated pupils' work and displays around the school. Only in art and design was it possible to make an overall judgement.

Art and design

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils throughout the school take part in a very good range of art and design activities.
- Pupils achieve well and, by the end of Year 2, standards are well above the nationally expected level.
- There is effective skills development, alongside a broad knowledge and understanding.
- Pupils' work is valued and is attractively displayed in classrooms and around the school.

Commentary

70. The curriculum has been well developed to ensure that pupils have access to a good range and variety of learning experiences. Pupils have time to practise new skills or to design and produce extended pieces of art work.
71. Pupils throughout the school achieve very well, and by the end of Year 2, their work is well above the expected standard for their age. This demonstrates very good improvement since the last inspection. Pupils take part in a good range of activities that successfully promote and extend their skills, knowledge and understanding, and provide good opportunities for them to work in both two and three dimensions. Pupils are developing knowledge of the work of well-known artists, for example when producing their own seaside pictures in the style of Seurat. Pupils' work is attractively displayed around the school, and is often enhanced by interactive labels that draw the observer's attention to key skills, methods or other items of interest in the individual displays.
72. The quality of teaching and learning in art and design is good overall, and is notably better where teachers have real confidence in the subject. Lessons are well prepared and well presented. Where teachers have a secure knowledge of the subject, they are successful in the way in which they help the pupils to develop the necessary skills, and make suggestions for ways in which work might be improved. There are some good opportunities for pupils to evaluate their own work and that of their peers. Teachers encourage pupils to use sketches to practise newly acquired skills and for preparatory work, such as the collection of ideas and materials. There are good links with other subjects. Pupils in Year 2 combined history work on William Morris with their own designs for repeating patterns in his style, using plants and flowers for inspiration as well as digital photographs which they had taken. Pupils have very positive attitudes to art and design, and are keen to talk about their work and to point out their contributions in classroom displays. They work well together in small groups and pairs, and share resources readily.
73. The co-ordinator brings enthusiasm and expertise to the subject and provides very good leadership. She has carried out a range of monitoring activities. Pupils are involved well in assessing their own skills and abilities, as well as in identifying skills that they found difficult. There have been educational visits, for example to the National Gallery, where pupils have been able to look at art works from different eras and cultures.

74. In a Year 2 **design and technology** lesson, good cross-curricular links were made with science. Pupils were designing and making 'palaces' for the woodlice they were studying in science. The design process developed into making comprehensive lists of the equipment and materials needed for the task and pupils were absorbed in their work, receiving good help from staff and from parent helpers.
75. Pupils are introduced to a wide range of **music** and the subject is resourced well. The children sing well during assembly and music is sometimes used to enhance and inspire creative work. In a Year 1 lesson, pupils showed that they have a well-developed sense of rhythm as they clapped, nodded and stamped to the tune, 'This Old Man'. Pupils take part in music workshops and performances in school, as well as with other schools from their local cluster group. They have the opportunity to learn the violin from a visiting teacher.
76. The school has identified that a new scheme of work for **physical education** is necessary in order to raise standards, and is currently involved in a primary link training programme. The junior school is involved in the same initiative and there are good links between the two schools to develop the subject. The focus of the new scheme is quality and performance. The school is hampered by the somewhat unsatisfactory hall, but they cope well with its limitations and there are spacious outdoor areas for games lessons. There is nowhere in the hall to site a climbing frame or wall bars but there is a good range of smaller equipment such as benches, gymnastic tables and A-frames. Adventure equipment, outdoors is used for recreational play and offers opportunities for climbing, balancing and swinging.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

This area of the school's work was sampled through one lesson observed in Year 1, the observation of daily practice and outcomes, and discussions with pupils and staff. From this, it is clear to see that personal and social education is embedded in all aspects of school life. The school's policy is clear and inclusive, and is fully implemented in all lessons and activities. Pupils are frequently asked to express their views about a range of things, and know that their ideas are valued. They were consulted on ways to improve the school grounds and are very aware of a range of environmental issues. Their level of understanding is high for pupils of this age. Citizenship is developed well as pupils learn to take responsibility within the community, and the Eco Committee introduces them to the concept of democracy. This body of pupils is very influential and the school's work has been recognised nationally through the receipt of the Green Flag Award and the David Bellamy Award.

The sense of community was also developed very well in the lesson observed, when pupils were encouraged to work together to suggest ways to survive when shipwrecked on an island. The ensuing discussions were very perceptive and clearly indicated how the pupils felt they needed to form a community to address issues of food, shelter and rescue. A sense of community is evident throughout the school, with mutual respect shown as staff and pupils work amicably together, without tension or embarrassment. Pupils have very good understanding of the concepts of right and wrong. They conform cheerfully to school and classroom expectations, and treat resources with care. Their sensitivity is also evident, for example, when they view birds from the school's hide and learn about different birds from a parent with expertise in this area, or when they learn about looking after chickens in Year 2.

Pupils accept a variety of responsibilities in their classrooms and throughout the school, as well as learning about their rights to be safe and finding out who can help them. The governors have agreed policies on sex and relationships education and drugs awareness. As is usual for pupils of this age, sex and relationships education is largely covered through aspects of science and through answering questions simply if they arise. Drugs awareness focuses largely on medicines and warning pupils not to take medicines designed for others.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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