

INSPECTION REPORT

ST BENEDICT'S INFANT SCHOOL

Birmingham

LEA area: Birmingham

Unique reference number: 103261

Headteacher: Mrs Rosemary Harvey

Lead inspector: Mr Sean O'Toole

Dates of inspection: 10th – 13th January 2005

Inspection number: 267752

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: Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils: 3 – 7 years
Gender of pupils: Mixed
Number on roll: 572

School address: St Benedict's Road
Birmingham
West Midlands

Postcode: B10 9DP

Telephone number: 0121 4646420

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Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of Mr Roger Hale
governors:

Date of previous 30th November 1998
inspection:

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Located in Small Heath, a suburb of Birmingham, it is much bigger than most primary schools. The school has grown in size since the previous inspection and is oversubscribed. Almost all of the 572 pupils (269 girls and 303 boys) speak English as an additional language and over three-quarters are at an early stage of learning English. The most common languages spoken are Urdu, Bengali, Panjabi and Somali. The school provides nursery education for 64 boys and 66 girls who attend part time each day. Over a third of the pupils are eligible for free school meals (above average). Factors such as health, crime and the living environment indicate high levels of deprivation. On starting school almost all pupils have very low levels of skill, knowledge and understanding compared to those expected for their age, and their knowledge of English and mathematics and their personal, social and emotional development are particularly poor. The school has identified over 35 per cent of pupils with special educational needs, well above the national average. Three have statements of special educational needs, which is about average. The school has a mobile population and the percentage starting school at times other than the normal is over twice the national average. During the inspection, three key members of staff were absent through illness. The school is involved in several initiatives including Excellence in Cities and Sure Start. It was given an Achievement Award in 2003 and an award from the Royal Horticultural Society in 2002.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
20891	Sean O'Toole	Lead inspector	English as additional language; Mathematics; Personal, social and health education and citizenship.
19692	Robert Folks	Lay inspector	
20911	Judy Dawson	Team inspector	Foundation Stage; Art and design; Design and technology; Music.
20655	Beryl Rimmer	Team inspector	English; Geography; History.
18645	Bamber Loizou	Team inspector	Special educational needs; Science; Information and communication technology; Physical education; Religious education.

The inspection contractor was :

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This school provides a sound quality of education with several good features. The pupils achieve well in English and mathematics and satisfactorily in most other subjects. Teaching is mostly good in English and mathematics but satisfactory in other subjects. The school is led well and managed satisfactorily and provides good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Pupils make good progress and achieve well, especially in basic skills
- The teaching of English and mathematics is mostly good
- The headteacher and senior staff take a determined lead in promoting the pupils' success
- Some aspects of the curriculum need improvement
- In some lessons, the pace is too slow and pupils are not given sufficient opportunities to use their initiative
- The school development plan needs a sharper focus
- Pupils are well behaved and have good attitudes
- There are good systems to care for pupils

Improvement since the last inspection in November 1998 has been good. Although standards remain below the national average in English, mathematics and science, the school's academic performance has improved since the previous inspection. The management team has successfully improved some aspects of the quality of teaching but more remains to be done. Attendance has risen significantly. The school now meets all statutory requirements. There is good potential to build upon the school's successes.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2, compared with:	All schools			Similar schools*
	2002	2003	2004	2004
Reading	D	E	E	B
Writing	C	D	D	A
mathematics	D	E	D	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

*These figures have been changed to reflect the levels of deprivation in the area in which the school is located

There are significant barriers to pupils' learning. Almost all pupils start school with little or no English, attainment on admission is very low and pupil mobility is high. The school compensates effectively for these difficulties and **the pupils achieve satisfactorily overall and well in English and mathematics**. Over time, there has been a slight dip in the trend in pupils' performance but this is accounted for by the changes to the intake and attainment on admission which is much lower than at the time of the previous inspection. The school has increased the percentage of pupils attaining the expected level for their age in English, mathematics and science. Staff set sufficiently challenging targets and meet them successfully. Pupils achieve well in ICT. Standards in religious education, history, geography and music are below average. Pupils make limited use of their literacy skills in other subjects.

Pupils in the Foundation Stage achieve well and make good progress in all of the areas of learning, although very few attain the expected goals for their age by the end of the

reception year. There is little difference in the performance of pupils from different ethnic backgrounds. Pupils with special educational needs are supported effectively and make good gains in their learning, working effectively to meet the goals in their individual education plans. Pupils at an early stage of learning English are given well focused support and quickly learn basic communication skills. Girls are more successful than boys in reading and writing.

Pupils are keen learners and most work hard and apply themselves well. Behaviour is good and there is little evidence of bullying or rough play. **The school makes good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.** Although attendance is below average the absence rates have been significantly reduced in recent years through the school's and governors' initiatives. School starts and finishes on time and pupils are punctual.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

This inclusive school provides a sound quality of education. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Lessons are planned and prepared well. Adults and pupils relate very well to each other. Staff have good knowledge of different ways of teaching English and mathematics. The school's system of setting by ability works effectively and enables teachers to provide challenging work for the more able. Pupils mostly work hard and show interest in activities but many have difficulty in taking the initiative in their learning. In some lessons the pace is too slow and not enough is expected of the pupils. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is good. Pupils with special educational needs and those at an early stage of learning English are given well focused and effective support. Although the curriculum is satisfactory and the provision for personal, social and health education is good, there are weaknesses in the planning and development of skills, knowledge and understanding in some subjects. The school provides a range of opportunities to enrich the curriculum, including good extra-curricular activities. This is a caring school and staff make good use of assessment to identify the strengths and weaknesses in pupils' performance and to help them to grow in confidence and to develop their academic skills.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Good leadership and satisfactory management combine with an active and enthusiastic governing body to make a successful team. The headteacher and senior staff provide good leadership and set challenging targets which have led to good improvement in standards and teaching in English and mathematics. Management is satisfactory but more needs to be done to improve the organisation and administration of the curriculum and some aspects of teaching. Governance is satisfactory. The school's development plan identifies correct priorities but lacks a sharp focus on measuring success. Funds are used well and the school is especially successful in attracting additional funds to improve the school's building and resources. Best value principles are used appropriately when purchasing supplies and services.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents have very positive views of the school and value the contribution it makes to their children's academic and personal development. The school works very hard to involve parents and consults them regularly. Pupils enjoy school and take an active part in decision making through the school council.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Improve the curriculum to extend opportunities for the pupils to apply their basic skills and extend their knowledge and understanding in some subjects

- Improve some important aspects of teaching, especially in accelerating the pace of lessons and in providing opportunities for pupils to use their initiative and independent skills
- Improve the school development plan to provide a sharper edge in curriculum development

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Pupils of all abilities and backgrounds achieve well in English and mathematics, although standards are below the national average by the end of Year 2. Girls are more successful than boys in English. Standards in English, mathematics and science have improved since the previous inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils make good progress in basic skills in English and mathematics
- Progress in the Foundation Stage is good
- Pupils with special educational needs make good progress
- Pupils have a limited knowledge and understanding in several subjects

Commentary

1. Several factors limit the pupils' attainment in national tests. Attainment on admission is very low and has declined since the previous inspection. The pupils come from an area of significant multiple deprivation. A high proportion of pupils are at a very early stage of learning English when they start school. Over a third of the pupils have special educational needs. There is an above average turnover of pupils at the school and about a third of the pupils taking the national tests at the end of Year 2 have been in the school for little more than one year. The school's data shows that pupils who start in the nursery and stay at the school make substantial progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Good achievement in these subjects is due to effective teaching, good levels of support for pupils with learning difficulties and the use of several initiatives such as Talking Partners to enhance the pupils' basic skills.
2. Pupils start in the nursery with skills, knowledge and understanding which are very low when compared to an average three year old. Their personal, social and emotional development is very weak and the vast majority have little knowledge of English. A high proportion of pupils do not register a mathematical score when they start school. The pupils achieve well. The staff work hard to identify the needs of individuals and provide a good curriculum and teaching, which promote good progress. By the end of their time in the reception classes very few pupils attain the expected goals for their age and most are at least a year behind those of a similar age in personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy, mathematical, creative and physical development and knowledge and understanding of the world.
3. Although trends over time show a slight decline in performance in national tests at the end of Year 2, data shows that the percentage of pupils attaining average levels in assessments has increased in spite of a significant decline in attainment on admission and increased mobility. The school's leadership has been successful in raising standards in reading, writing and mathematics through effective target setting linked to rigorous analysis of pupils' performance and the provision of focused support and setting by ability.
4. Standards in speaking, listening, reading and writing are below average but the pupils achieve well. By the end of Year 2 most are able to communicate their feelings and ideas and join in discussions with an awareness of the views of others. Most read accurately and successfully build words from the sounds that letters make. Their writing is neat and well presented and most are beginning to write in simple sentences using a range of vocabulary. Pupils' achievement in mathematics is good. They are mostly competent in addition and subtraction, and sequence and order numbers correctly. They have a secure knowledge of shape and measures but most struggle with solving problems as their understanding is sometimes hampered by limited mathematical vocabulary. Pupils make satisfactory progress

in ICT and design and technology and attain average standards. Most pupils have a secure grasp of how to use computers to support their work in a variety of subjects and applications. Progress is too variable in music, religious education and art and design. Pupils have a below average knowledge and understanding of science and limited knowledge of the work of famous artists and musicians. Standards in religious education, history and geography are below average.

- Throughout the school pupils with special educational needs make good progress because the provision is managed very well and support is specifically focused on helping the pupils to meet the targets in their individual education plans. Pupils at an early stage of learning English improve at a good rate because of the well focused opportunities to practise speaking and listening and to learn simple structures in reading and writing. There is very little variation in the performance of pupils from different ethnic backgrounds. Although pupils with Pakistani backgrounds are slightly more successful in national tests than those of Bangladeshi heritage the latter start school with slightly lower levels of skill and knowledge and both groups progress at similar rates. New entrants, including an increasing number of Somali pupils, make good progress and achieve well. The school's arrangements for setting by ability help to ensure that more able pupils are challenged sufficiently.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	14.2 (14.1)	15.8 (15.7)
Writing	13.8 (13.7)	14.6 (14.6)
Mathematics	15.6 (15.1)	16.2 (16.3)

There were 142 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils have good attitudes to school and take a full part in the life of the school. They are keen learners and their behaviour is good. Overall, the school provides well for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils have good attitudes to work, listen well and work hard
- Relationships and behaviour are good
- Moral and social development is good
- There are limited opportunities for pupils to learn independently

Commentary

- In the Foundation Stage many pupils have not yet learned how to relate with others but they make good progress in their personal, social and emotional development. Throughout the school pupils get on well together and there is little evidence of rough play, unkindness or racial intolerance. These factors combined with the pleasant environment created by the school contribute well to the pupils' learning. The school has built upon these strengths since the previous inspection.
- Pupils are taught to tell right from wrong from an early age. These values are expanded and reinforced as they go higher in the school. They are taught to respect each other and school property and to understand how they can fit into school life by conforming to school requirements and contributing to the life of the school. Regular visits outside the school and the after-school clubs help them to learn how to socialise and to adapt their behaviour appropriately. The pupils are well behaved. The staggered lunchtimes, level of supervision and wide range of activities available in the playground, all contribute to the pupils' growing

sense of moral responsibility and social development. The high level of behaviour achieved is a credit to the school. No harassment or bullying was seen during the inspection and the pupils are well advised in how to deal with bullying if it happens to them. A few parents had concerns about behaviour at lunchtimes but the inspection team observed that they were very well organised and managed.

8. Pupils play a strong part in the social life of the school. They have looked at a wide range of issues through the active school council. Pupils are involved in energy conservation in the school; during the inspection they checked the electric meters and switched off lights that have been left on accidentally. They have a strong involvement in the environment of the school and in the local environment. They have done an audit of the local park, Digby Park, and have helped local residents with rubbish clearance problems. Recycling of waste is a current interest with "Brumcans" providing expert advice to them.
9. Spiritual awareness is developed satisfactorily; a few good examples were observed during the inspection. The atmosphere and work in the sensory room is very beneficial. During assemblies and lessons there were several moments when pupils were given time to reflect on the beauty of the natural world. The environmental approach adopted by the school allows the pupils an insight into the natural world; for example, pupils go bird watching in the school and at the nearby Eco-Park. Cultural development is satisfactory although the inspection team felt that sometimes opportunities were missed to examine and compare the very varied backgrounds and cultures that make up the school's population. Pupils are prepared well for life in a culturally diverse society but few opportunities are provided to learn about famous artists and musicians

Attendance

10. Attendance is below the national average and unauthorised absences are higher than the national average. However, over the last three years, the figures have improved considerably. The figures so far this year indicate a further improvement and fewer unauthorised absences. The governing body have contributed well to supporting improvements in attendance. All statutory requirements are met and pupils are punctual.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	4.8	School data	3.5
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 sound quality of education. Teaching, learning and the curriculum are satisfactory overall and the school provides good standards of care.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall and good in English and mathematics. Assessment is good overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good.
- There is a good focus on developing skills in the Foundation Stage
- Pupils at an early stage of learning English are given good support
- Some lessons lack sufficient pace and pupils are not given sufficient opportunities to use their initiative
- The teaching of some subjects lacks sufficient depth

Commentary

11. Teaching in the nursery and reception classes is good and is supported by effective planning and preparation. Staff work together well and plan interesting activities, especially in promoting pupils' knowledge and understanding of the world. There is good teaching of early reading and writing skills through a mixture of practising sounds and listening to a variety of stories and traditional tales. Parents are encouraged to work with their children and are given much support in this through courses and training. Staff have a secure understanding of how young children learn and provide practical opportunities to enhance their understanding. Thorough assessment is used to track the children's progress and the information is used to plan work that is matched to the needs of individuals.
12. Pupils at an early stage of learning English and new entrants to the school are included well in lessons and also given additional support which helps them to participate in lessons. The school has a good range of resources to support learning and additional guidance is available for parents in several languages to involve them in their children's learning. Very focused questioning and skilful intervention contribute much to developing pupils' confidence and competence in learning new skills and language. Similarly, the good provision for pupils with special educational needs makes a positive impact on achievement. Pupils benefit from well crafted individual education plans and staff are briefed effectively on their use. The setting by ability for English and mathematics also works well because planning is focused on meeting the needs of specific groups and this helps teachers to provide good challenge for the more able.
13. The teaching of English and mathematics is variable, ranging between satisfactory and very good, and is good overall. Staff are well trained in developing pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. The impact of "Talking Partners" is good as pupils are encouraged to engage in discussion and skilful intervention by the well trained staff means that vocabulary is extended effectively. Assessment in these subjects is thorough and linked to targets so that pupils are given clear guidance on how to improve. Staff keep accurate records of the pupils' progress and this information is used to plan the next steps in learning.
14. Teaching in the other subjects is mostly satisfactory, but there are some unsatisfactory features. The planning for religious education, music, geography and art and design is rather weak as specific skills are not developed consistently and the level of work set is sometimes too easy for the pupils. The organisation of topic teaching in the afternoon, when teachers repeat lessons with different classes, results in rather slow paced learning. Science is taught satisfactorily, but opportunities are missed to engage the pupils in exciting and interesting opportunities to experiment and investigate. The pace of some lessons is slow and this results in low levels of productivity and occasional loss of concentration by pupils, especially boys. Insecure subject knowledge allied to weak curricular planning in religious education lead to some unsatisfactory lessons where the content was undemanding and pupils' work was at a low level. Some teachers are very skilful at involving pupils actively in their learning and, through well targeted questions and a variety of strategies such as paired discussion and group writing, encourage independent thinking. This works especially well in English and mathematics. However, the limited range of open ended tasks in several foundation subjects means that pupils have insufficient opportunities to work independently, use their initiative and apply their literacy and numeracy skills to good effect.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 74 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0(0%)	8(10.8%)	34(45.9%)	26(35.1%)	3(4.1%)	3(4.1%)	0(0%)

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

The curriculum

The curriculum is satisfactory. There are some good opportunities to enrich learning but some subjects are taught rather superficially.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' skills and knowledge in religious education, history, geography, art and design and music are not developed sufficiently well
- Provision for personal, social and health education is good
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good
- The quality of the accommodation and resources is good

Commentary

15. Although the curriculum meets statutory requirements and all subjects are taught there has been insufficient improvement since the previous inspection in ensuring that skills, knowledge and understanding in some subjects are taught with sufficient regularity and depth. Children in the Foundation Stage benefit from a good curriculum which includes opportunities to develop skills in all of the areas of learning. The curriculum for English and mathematics is good and basic skills are taught effectively. However, there are inconsistent opportunities for the pupils to apply these skills in some subjects. The system of grouping the subjects to be taught in the afternoon, such as science together with art and design and design and technology, and restrictive planning means that pupils are often working at a low level and there is little spontaneity and creativity. Although religious education is taught and follows the syllabus used by most schools in Birmingham, the planning is basic and in some cases the content is too general and not linked to developing pupils' knowledge of religion and its influence on some parts of society. In history and geography pupils rarely explore the themes in enough depth and many are very unclear about basic skills. Teachers make insufficient use of the pupils' home backgrounds when planning some aspects of the curriculum. Conversely, the good use of the school's grounds for environmental work helps pupils to appreciate the world around them. The school provides good support for pupils' personal, social and emotional development through its programme of circle times, philosophy lessons and attention to encouraging a healthy lifestyle. Teaching includes opportunities for pupils to find out about growth and relationships and to learn about the use and misuse of drugs.
16. The school is inclusive and staff work hard to meet the needs of pupils. The school provides very well for pupils with special educational needs. These pupils receive good support and guidance and through setting by ability, well constructed individual education plans and additional support they access the curriculum and take part in lessons. Early identification of need and regular support help these pupils to cope well with the National Curriculum. Staff have good skills in supporting pupils at an early stage of learning English and meeting their needs well through effective teaching of basic skills linked to small group and sometimes individual tuition. New entrants to the school usually have opportunities to speak to someone in their home language as well as English, and their cultures and traditions are valued.
17. The school provides a good range of extra-curricular activities and pupils thoroughly enjoy attending a range of clubs which include sport and games, music, art and drama. These activities contribute much to the pupils' personal, social and emotional development. Other aspects of enrichment vary in quality. There are few opportunities for the pupils to listen to and appraise music and in art and design many of the activities are limited and hamper the pupils in improving their skills of investigation. Few opportunities are provided for pupils to learn about famous artists and musicians.
18. The school is staffed by a good number of teachers and other adults who work together well. They provide good role models to pupils. There is a useful programme of training and

development linked to performance management. The school has mostly good resources, including a library and ICT suite which are used regularly. There is a good range of books and materials to support the teaching of English and involvement in initiatives such as *Talking Partners* are contributing effectively to improvements in standards. The school has unsatisfactory accommodation but makes good provision for outdoor play. Much thought has been given to helping the pupils understand their environment and the school has an award from the Royal Horticultural Society in recognition of its work in this area. The caretaker and cleaners work hard to make the school clean and safe. A significant drawback is the limited space. Staff work successfully to overcome the difficulties in the Foundation Stage and the rooms are arranged to include activities for each of the areas of learning. Year 2 are taught upstairs in adjoining classrooms and some lessons are interrupted as pupils move from room to room as there is no corridor. Staff and pupils cope well with these difficulties.

Care, guidance and support

The care, welfare and safety of pupils are good. Careful monitoring ensures that pupils are supported, advised and guided well. Pupils' views are sought, valued and acted upon.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are well cared for and looked after during their time in the school
- Induction arrangements for pupils are good
- Each child has a number of trusting adults they can rely on for help, support and guidance
- Insufficient use is made of the children's many and varied ethnic backgrounds in the curriculum and Foundation Stage

Commentary

19. The school has good procedures for child protection that are sensitively and effectively applied. Health and safety procedures are good, include monthly inspections of the site and premises and involve governors well. There is a sufficient number of first aiders in the school and the procedures are good. The staff know the pupils well and care for and look after them well. Children have a number of caring adults to turn to if they need any help and teachers are always available. There is a good family feel about the school in which everyone has their part to play and this ensures that the pupils are well supported at all times. This is particularly noticeable at lunchtimes. Outside organisations and specialists provide invaluable additional help and support, including the school nurse, the educational psychologist, the Family Support Unit, Learning Mentors Support Service and Sure Start. A strong feature of the school's care is the way in which staff enable the children to settle quickly into a very large school. Many children with little or no English and poor social skills are enabled to thrive through this effective support.
20. Careful tracking and monitoring ensures that pupils are given good advice and guidance as they progress through the school and the Golden Cards with individual targets for pupils work well. Their personal development and academic achievements are effectively tracked and monitored. Induction arrangements are good and contribute well to the settling in process for the youngest children and for new entrants to the community. Effective systems and the strong involvement of parents support pupils at an early stage of learning English. Similarly, the well crafted individual education plans and high levels of support for pupils with special educational needs contribute much to their progress. The school has very good procedures for encouraging and monitoring attendance and an efficient "Attendance Team" that undertakes first day monitoring. Extended holidays are closely monitored. The school takes pupils' views into account on a regular basis through the active and well-established school council which plays an important part in decision making. Pupils are also involved in devising class rules at the start of each year and these activities contribute much to the

pupils' personal, social and emotional development. The pupils know that their views matter and they respond sensibly to the regular consultation.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has a very good partnership with parents, other schools and the wider community.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Effective workshops and courses help parents to help their children at home and at school
- The quality of information provided is good
- Links with other schools and colleges enhance learning

Commentary

21. Parents who attended the pre-inspection meeting expressed strong satisfaction with the work of the school. A few expressed concerns about bullying at lunchtime but inspection evidence shows that these arrangements are well organised and managed and no incidents of bullying or aggressive behaviour were observed. The school sends out questionnaires based on the OFSTED questions and the responses to these are very positive. The school provides parents with good information about events in the school and their children's progress. The prospectus is an informative and helpful document and is well supported by the governors' annual report to parents. There are termly parents' meeting with a crèche provided. The school sends out regular newsletters and a half-termly curriculum newsletter of good quality. There is a parents' notice board in the school. Annual pupils' reports are of a good standard and, when coupled with the school's target setting system, provide an effective method of for monitoring and tracking pupils' progress. Parents are pleased with the amount of information they receive.
22. The school has close links with the community which include close liaison with the local street wardens and residents. The staff invite older residents to a harvest meal and have helped them resolve litter and rubbish clearance problems with the local council. There are a number of trips into the community and the local shops and library are visited. The school council has carried out an environmental audit of Digby Park and pupils act as Junior Rangers. There are also close connections with the Family Support Unit and local nurseries which contribute well to pupils' personal, social and emotional development. The school plays an active role in the Coleheath cluster group of schools. Through Excellence in Cities, there is close liaison with the Learning Mentors Support Service who also run a summer school for the pupils. The school provides well for students in training in a range of careers. These aspects of the school's work have improved since the last inspection.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good overall. The headteacher and senior staff provide a clear sense of direction and lead the school effectively. The school is managed soundly. The governance of the school is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher and senior staff share a common vision and commitment with the staff and there is a sense of purpose and an ambition to do well
- Monitoring and evaluation of English, mathematics and special educational needs is effective
- Some aspects of managing the curriculum and teaching are weak
- The development plan needs lacks a sharp edge in measuring school improvement

- Administration, financial planning and management are effective

Commentary

23. The school faces some significant barriers to learning including very low attainment on admission, very poor socio-economic circumstances for most pupils, high levels of mobility and an above average percentage of pupils with special educational needs. The leadership successfully deal with these barriers and the school's particular success lies in the good achievement of pupils in English and mathematics. Many of these barriers are compensated for through the provision of opportunities for parents to improve their skills in helping their children, good teaching of basic skills and successful leadership and management of English and mathematics. The good leadership and provision in the Foundation Stage also contribute to the pupils' good progress in basic skills. However the curriculum is not managed effectively enough and the monitoring of some aspects of teaching has had insufficient impact. The teaching during the inspection was affected in some subjects by the absence through illness of three key members of staff. The headteacher managed this situation effectively.
24. The leadership and management have been successful in improving the provision in English and mathematics since the previous inspection through a combination of rigorous monitoring and support, and effective target setting. The strong emphasis on these subjects prepares pupils well for the next stage in their education. Senior staff have a clear understanding of how to raise standards and have developed a good system of assessment which is managed well. The use of assessment has guided the leadership in evaluating pupils' performance and has led to a well structured programme of performance management. Staff are set clear targets and these are linked to pupils' achievement and monitored thoroughly. The school's self evaluation is rather generous and more sharpness is needed in judging some aspects of teaching and the management of the curriculum. Some aspects of leadership and management have improved since the previous inspection but not enough is done in managing some subjects and making a greater impact on the quality of teaching. The leadership of the provision for pupils with special educational needs is very effective and strong parental involvement is encouraged, resulting in good progress by these pupils. Similarly the provision for pupils at an early stage of learning English is led and managed effectively and enables these pupils to be included in the school's life and work.
25. Good management systems ensure that the school runs smoothly. Finances are in good order and used efficiently to meet the needs of pupils. Best value principles are used well when purchasing supplies and services, although the school needs to do more to challenge its organisation of the curriculum in foundation subjects. The administration is effective and computer systems are used well to reduce workload are good. Senior staff and governors have been successful in winning awards to develop some curriculum areas, such as the use of the environment, and judicious use of funds and careful spending have enabled the school to improve many aspects of the accommodation. An area for development in management is the role of subject leaders in sharpening up the curriculum for foundation subjects. Currently, this is rather weak and leads to inconsistencies in developing skills, knowledge and understanding. Teaching and learning are monitored regularly and detailed records are kept. Additional support is provided where needed and there is a good programme of support for staff new to the school. In spite of good programmes to support teachers there remains some unsatisfactory teaching.
26. The governing body is enthusiastic and supportive of the school. They have been successfully involved in tackling the issue of low attendance through good involvement in the community. The governing body has a satisfactory grasp of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and is keen to help it to improve further. The governors have ensured that the school meets statutory requirements by providing appropriate policies and practice in racial equality, equal opportunities and the provision for the disabled. Their role in strategic planning needs to be more incisive so that governors might challenge the school more

effectively. The school's improvement plan identifies the correct priorities but indicators of success are too general.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	1,785,159
Total expenditure	1,739,785
Expenditure per pupil	2,999

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	31,513
Balance carried forward to the next	30,450

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

27. The provision for children in the Foundation Stage is good. Children join the nursery the September after their third birthday. Home visits ease the transition from home to school and parents help their children settle in to school at the beginning of each session. Children join one of the four family groups in the morning or the afternoon for the first term but change to attending for two and a half days a week during their second term to help them get used to a full day in school. The six reception classes, catering for the children over four years old, work closely together. Very careful planning and effective use of the limited space available ensure that the children have the best possible access to all aspects of the Foundation Stage curriculum. These six terms in school give the children a good start to their school life. Many children join school with very little or no English and very limited skills across all the areas of learning. The school provides for their needs well, whether they join school at the beginning of the nursery year or later. There are no significant differences between the achievements of the different ethnic groups in the Foundation Stage. Although most children leave the reception classes with well below average attainment, they make good progress from their low attainment on entry to the nursery and achieve well across all areas of learning.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Adults have very good relationships with the children, enabling them to feel secure and valued
- All children are encouraged to take responsibility for themselves and their equipment
- Younger children are not encouraged to work or play with others often enough
- Sometimes adults give the younger children too many instructions, preventing them from making choices for themselves

Commentary

28. The very good relationships established between adults and children enable the children to swiftly feel secure and valued. The teachers and teaching assistants show how pleased they are when children succeed. Adults in the nursery encourage the children to care for themselves, put on coats and aprons independently and tidy up at the end of sessions. Snack times reinforce social skills and discussions help the children to become more aware of the feelings and needs of others. Older children begin to understand that people, plants and animals have different needs, and through stories and role play, are beginning to show empathy with others. The use of theme areas such as the deep, dark forest, dressing up clothes, puppets and face masks help children to overcome the limitations of their language skills but they struggle to express their feelings during discussions. Nursery children soon feel part of their family group and older children are encouraged to feel part of the school community through regular contact with the main school. Children are taught what behaviour is expected of them from the start of their school life and behaviour is almost always good. Children in the reception classes are beginning to work and play cooperatively but not enough is done to encourage younger children to play with their peers or to work with a partner. Teaching is good overall, especially in all the reception classes and children make good progress in their personal, social and emotional development. Nevertheless, few will achieve the early learning goals by the end of their Reception Year in many aspects of this area of learning.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are good
- Letter sounds and writing skills are taught systematically
- The school makes good provision for children with little English language and those with special educational needs
- Regular reading and writing at home consolidates and extends learning in the reception classes

Commentary

29. All adults speak clearly and make sure that new vocabulary is repeated often to aid learning. Songs and rhymes help children develop their spoken language even if the words are not fully understood. Adults take every opportunity to talk to and question the children. They regularly correct mispronounced or inaccurate words but rarely encourage the children to try again which would help them improve more rapidly. Overall, in both the nursery and reception classes, the teaching is good and children make good progress.
30. Teachers understand the children's needs well. Younger children see adults reading and writing and are provided with writing tools as part of their role play. The formal teaching of the sounds letters and letter clusters make in the reception classes improve speech as well as reading and writing. Regular exposure to books and reading are steadily improving the children's skills as are the interesting themes that generate enthusiasm for learning. Work across all areas of learning around the theme of "Little Red Riding Hood", for example, makes learning relevant and fun. Both children and parents know what needs to be done to improve because the teachers set targets that children and parents understand. Older children regularly have reading and writing tasks to do at home that are extended in school where new targets are set. New children are given additional support and many staff speak several languages which supports parents and children when needed. However, the difficulty of reading and writing in a newly learned language prevents all but a few children from achieving the early learning goals for communication, language and literacy in spite of the good teaching and the children's enthusiasm.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Many children have very few mathematical skills when they start school
- Activities in the reception classes are well planned to provide a good range of mathematical experiences
- Basic number skills and mathematical vocabulary are reinforced effectively
- The commercial materials used in the nursery classes do not reinforce the understanding that counting, matching and sorting are part of everyday life

Commentary

31. When children join the nursery almost all have a very limited experience or understanding of numbers and counting, shape and space. The adults in the nursery take every opportunity to encourage children to count and use numbers, to discuss shape and size and use positional language such as “over” and “underneath”. As a result, children make good progress and many now name several common shapes and are familiar with number names. A girl using the computer, for example, named the star, square and triangle she used for her pattern. Although the children make good progress their poor understanding of English makes learning more difficult. The almost total use of commercial materials for teaching children about numbers and shapes prevents them from understanding that mathematics is part of everyday life and the nursery teachers do not make enough use of natural and everyday materials for sorting and counting.
32. The teaching is good in the reception classes. Teachers here use every opportunity to promote mathematical understanding through everyday objects and events. In one lesson, for example, children formed chapatti dough into circles for the baker’s shop. Others made patterns for Grandma’s bedspread. The baker’s shop sold “Wolf Snacks” and “Red Riding Hood Cookies”. Throughout the Foundation Stage children use computers to play simple mathematical games or to reinforce learning with relevant programs. More able children match numbers to objects accurately, compare the size of objects and name common shapes. Children achieve well in the Foundation Stage, but because of their limited understanding of English their mathematical development remains well below average by the end of their Reception Year.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The teaching is good, making learning fun
- The organisation of the reception classes enables teachers to create and use theme areas to stimulate learning
- Children are encouraged to find things out but their poor communication skills inhibit their learning

Commentary

33. Most children have a very limited knowledge and understanding of the world when they join the nursery. The nursery staff provide a good range of interesting activities to broaden the children’s experiences. They use a range of materials to make objects, models and shapes, and explore patterns and changes. During the inspection children made sandwiches and cooked and tasted porridge, for example. They use computers regularly and have operated the photocopier. Many aspects of the area of learning such as describing events or commenting on their environment, beliefs, friends and home are very challenging for these children because of their limited understanding of English. They play alongside each other in the home corner or with water and sand, but many rarely communicate with each other so are unable to extend their learning through discussion or questioning.
34. The area in the reception classes dedicated to knowledge and understanding of the world has a good variety of interesting activities to promote curiosity. Children pushed transparent plastic bottles full of coloured water below the surface of yellow water in the water tray and were fascinated by the way the colours changed. Coloured play dough was combined to

create new colours. Children make masks, use glue and sticky tape to make models compare natural objects. Teachers introduce new words carefully and use them often but the children find it very difficult to discuss their learning and the world about them and to explain how things work. Although their use of the computer is appropriate for their age, other aspects of the children's knowledge and understanding are well below average in spite of the good teaching.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers provide many opportunities for children to improve their skills with their hands
- The planning for the use of the outside area and the hall is good enabling children to develop their skills well

Commentary

35. Most children start school with very few experiences of playing outside with other children or using large apparatus. The daily use of the good facilities in the playground and the well-organised activities ranging from traditional games, types of movement, parachute games and climbing are enjoyed by all, although many of the younger children lack confidence. Older children have two well-organised and supervised playtimes where skills are developed as well as physical education lessons in the hall. The limited space allows only half a class at a time to have physical education and this is managed well. Sometimes the long list of instructions prevent the children making the most of the time to move. The teaching is good for all aspects of physical development and the children make good progress although, because of the lack of experiences outside school, even older children find it difficult to use space well and be aware of others.
36. Children are made aware of how to keep safe and to look after themselves. Nursery children wash their hands before their snack and making sandwiches. Older children begin to understand how to eat healthily. They use tools safely and tidy up well. There are many opportunities for children to manipulate small objects. Children thread, stick, cut and sort as well as using writing tools and brushes although many find it difficult to control them accurately. They experience materials such as bark and clay, wet shavings and dough. Most do not have the language skills to describe these materials or their feelings about them. Although children make good progress and achieve well, few will meet the early learning goals by the end of the reception year and standards are well below average.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision for creative development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are a wide range of opportunities to promote creative development, especially in the reception classes
- Imaginative play is a central part of the curriculum
- In the nursery there is too much adult intervention during some activities, inhibiting the children's imagination

Commentary

37. The nursery has a range of different areas to stimulate the children's imagination. They have opportunities to paint and make models, play in the theme areas such as the home corner and to use a range of toys as they play. This helps the children to experience new things and to express themselves through play, helping to overcome language barriers. However, these activities would be even more effective if there were closer links with the children's own experiences. The home corner, for example, has commercial equipment rather than kitchen tools that are used in the children's homes. In the reception classes there are closer links with the children's cultures. There is equipment for making chapattis in the baker's shop, for example. The deep, dark forest, the good range of books and the well-told stories in the reception classes all effectively stimulate the imagination but children find it very difficult to verbalise and express their feelings. A few of the older children engage in cooperative role play as they act out the story of Little Red Riding Hood, assisted by masks and cloaks. Artwork is generally part of the topic and there is limited evidence of the children using their own ideas. Children sing a range of songs and nursery rhymes and older children are beginning to use instruments or everyday objects to accompany their songs, showing an awareness of rhythm. Overall, although children make good progress, very few will achieve the early learning goals by the end on Reception.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGE 1

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are below average by the end of Year 2
 - Pupils make good progress in speaking and listening
 - Basic skills of reading and writing are well taught
 - The subject is well managed
38. Most pupils enter the school with a very limited grasp of English, their second language. An increasingly changing population and a high proportion of pupils with special educational needs are factors in a recent decline in the standards of reading and writing. In spite of this, pupils of all backgrounds and abilities improve significantly in all aspects of English. Standards for the majority of pupils are still below average by the end of Year 2 in reading and writing but pupils achieve well. Achievement is particularly good for the more able pupils who reach standards close to the national average with the brightest pupils working at a level above that expected for their age. Girls are more successful in reading and writing than boys.
39. Standards are below average in speaking and listening. Pupils make very good progress because of, at times, very good teaching through initiatives such as 'Talking Partners'. Adults work with small groups of pupils, effectively developing conversational skills and vocabulary. By the end of Year 2, pupils in most classes listen respectfully and attentively to adults. When encouraged to do so, they communicate their thoughts, ideas and feelings with increasing confidence and enjoyment. The many opportunities provided for lively and engaging drama and role-play activities make a considerable contribution to pupils' good progress. The more able pupils are confident to answer questions and express themselves fluently. The majority have a limited vocabulary, however, and many have a poor grasp of correct grammatical sentence structure. Teaching is good, and pupils achieve well.

40. Reading is effectively promoted throughout the school and, although standards are below average, pupils achieve well. There are good, well established strategies for the systematic teaching of basic reading skills. Through frequent opportunities for reading in a variety of different contexts, pupils soon build up a vocabulary and develop skills in building unfamiliar words. They enjoy a variety of interesting word games and practical activities and make particularly good progress in their knowledge of sounds and word blends. For many pupils, their ability to understand words and discuss meanings and motives of characters is limited by their inexperience of English. They listen to many traditional stories and re-create characters and imagine different settings in drama and role-play. Regular use of the school's recently re-furnished library and a well-planned programme of work are leading to the effective development of library skills. The teaching of reading is good and pupils are very proud of their achievements.
41. Standards in writing are below average. The most able pupils are confident and fluent writers. They build on a secure foundation of the basic skills and challenging teaching encourages pupils to seek alternative words and use their imaginations. For many, however, an insufficient grasp of spoken English leads to unclear sentence structure and a limited vocabulary. Systematic teaching of grammar, spelling and punctuation helps pupils to gain a growing knowledge of word patterns and irregular words. Handwriting and presentation are of a high standard because of frequent handwriting practice and the high expectations of teachers for neat and tidy work.
42. The quality of teaching is good overall. It is well-organised and purposeful with effectively used resources. In the best lessons, which take place in both year groups, teachers generate enthusiasm for learning by a wide variety of imaginative and interesting activities. Most teachers are good role models for speaking. They provide high levels of challenge for the more able and sensitively rephrase responses during discussions. In a minority of lessons, there are too few opportunities for independent work. Adults do most of the talking and several lessons were slow and uninspiring. Teachers are well supported by teaching assistants. There is particularly good support for pupils with special educational needs and those at a very early stage of learning English. The good assessment procedures and the school's organisation of setting pupils according to ability help teachers to match work accurately to pupils' abilities.
43. The subject benefits from good leadership and management and the subject leader shows much enthusiasm and expertise. The co-ordinators are ambitious for the pupils and share a common purpose. They have clear responsibilities and constantly review pupils' progress and attainment through very good systems of monitoring and assessment. There is a cohesive approach to planning and systems for target setting and tracking pupils' progress.
44. There has been good improvement since the last inspection. The previous good provision has been maintained and systems have been developed and re-organised to good effect.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

45. Speaking and listening are well promoted in subjects such as ICT and science. Generally, there are too few opportunities to write across the curriculum for genuine and relevant reasons and this limits progress. Many of the worthwhile activities used in literacy lessons have not been incorporated into the teaching of other literary subjects.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils of all abilities achieve well
- Standards are below the national average by the end of Year 2
- Teaching and learning are mostly good

- Subject leadership is very good

Commentary

46. Standards are improving and an increased percentage of pupils attain average levels in national assessments by the end of Year 2 compared to the time of the previous inspection. Trends in results show a slight decline in recent years but much lower attainment on admission and increased mobility are significant factors in this dip in standards. There is little difference in the performance of boys and girls. The school makes very good use of data to track pupils' performance and this information clearly shows that most pupils make good progress. Inspection evidence and the school's data show that there is little variation in the performance of pupils from different ethnic groups. Those who remain at the school for an extended period achieve well and attain standards close to average in some aspects of mathematics, notably number and shape. Pupils with special educational needs are identified early and given good support through setting or additional support and this enables them to make good progress. Pupils at an early stage of learning English receive focused intervention and soon grasp simple addition by playing in the shop and handling real objects and money. Some pupils' performance is affected by extended holidays.
47. Progress in solving problems is hampered by pupils' limited language and this aspect is the weakest area of mathematical development. Pupils have a secure grasp of number; they order and sequence competently and add and subtract accurately. They recognise, name and correctly describe a variety of two and three-dimensional shapes. The more able extract information from graphs and charts accurately.
48. The quality of teaching varies between very good and poor but is good overall. Lessons are planned and prepared well and in most instances include a balance between the direct teaching of skills, practise of mental arithmetic and opportunities for the pupils to tackle sums, often making use of good resources. Some teachers make very good use of mathematical vocabulary although more needs to be done in some classes to enhance this aspect of the pupils' work. Support staff work well with groups, making good use of questions to check on the pupils' understanding and providing practical examples to aid learning; this approach is especially effective with pupils who have special educational needs. There is well focused teaching of pupils at an early stage of learning English and the staff make very good use of practical activities such as shopping to enhance understanding. Pupils are keen to learn and produce good quantities of work, which is usually presented well. Teachers mark accurately and set targets for the pupils so they know how to improve. Assessment is used well to set work which is matched to the needs of different abilities. Where lessons are less successful the teachers talk too much and the pace of learning is slow because pupils have insufficient opportunities to practise skills. In some cases the explanations are unclear because of insecurities in speaking English. Through the effective use of setting, pupils are grouped by ability and the teachers stretch the pupils. Consequently, more able pupils make good progress and are working at the expected level for their age.
49. The mathematics curriculum is broad and balanced and made relevant to the pupils. The subject leader has a very clear vision for improving standards and, through rigorous analysis of data, has set challenging targets for staff and pupils which are largely met. The increased emphasis on problem solving is beginning to have an impact on standards. Assessment of the school's performance is used effectively to plan the curriculum and very good record keeping and reviews of pupils' work are used to track performance. The provision and leadership and management of mathematics have improved since the previous inspection.

Mathematics across the curriculum

50. Mathematics is used satisfactorily in some subjects. Pupils record some experiments in science using graphs and charts. In design and technology they use mathematical vocabulary when designing and planning their models or making plans for weaving. Little

use is made of mathematics to support work in art and design in exploring pattern and shape. Pupils learn about making shapes and graphs using computers.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards have improved since the last inspection
- Pupils' achievement is patchy because the teaching is not consistent
- There are not enough opportunities for the pupils to ask questions and compare different outcomes when investigating
- The pupils' limited vocabulary hampers their progress in science

Commentary

51. Pupils in Year 2 achieved well below average standards according to the school's teacher assessments in the national tests in 2004. Examination of pupils' work recorded in the current Year 1 and Year 2 books and lessons observed show that pupils are attaining standards that are below average. National test results show that compared with schools in similar social contexts, science standards are average. Standards have improved since the last inspection because a greater proportion of pupils are now achieving the higher level (Level 3) but the improvement in standards is not always reflected consistently in lessons across the school. There is little variation in the performance of boys and girls.
52. The lessons observed during the inspection were mainly satisfactory, although one poor lesson was seen. The scrutiny of the pupils' past work also confirms that the teaching has some inconsistencies. For example, in some classes the pupils' work shows that scientific enquiry skills do not include enough opportunities for the pupils to ask questions or to check their own predictions. There are some good features that result in the majority of pupils being able to explain their ideas but the pupils are not provided with regular opportunities to plan for themselves or to learn through trial and error. For example, pupils in Year 1 appropriately learn about light sources and one wrote; *"You need light to see"* and in Year 2, when asked, one pupil remarked that; *"The battery makes the bulb light and the circuit has to go round properly."* However, most pupils in Year 2 find it difficult to explain how they come to these conclusions.
53. A significant proportion of pupils are in the early stages of English language acquisition and this affects their spoken and written communication skills. Teachers and teaching assistants do well to assist the pupils, especially when preparing special writing frames that in some cases resemble small story books which help the pupils to record their observations. The support provided for pupils with special educational needs is usually good. Teaching assistants work alongside these pupils guiding pupils in how to accurately record their work. However, in one lesson the pupils were not being challenged enough and were only required to find words in non-fiction books about the senses. This was uninspiring and did not contribute in any way to the pupils improving their scientific knowledge and understanding further.
54. Teachers manage pupils well and in most lessons learning resources are carefully chosen to support learning. This was clearly evident in Year 1 when teachers and pupils discussed the effects of different materials in hot and cold climates. Some of the teachers' marking is encouraging and questions the pupils' thinking but it does not always give a clear indication as to how the pupils can improve their work. Scientific language is usually a focus and developed quite well in both Years 1 and 2, for example, the pupils are encouraged to use technical words with accuracy, such as heat, predict and estimate. Teachers are usually well

organised and their expectations for behaviour are high so the pupils respond well and try hard. However, in some lessons the tasks were mundane or repetitive with inconsistency of presentation amongst classes. In the more effective lessons the pupils were required to explain their ideas which helps to reinforce their knowledge and understanding and enquiry skills. In less effective lessons and, in particular, one poor lesson, the pupils were too passive and were only asked basic questions when, for example, passing around different substances and powders to smell, touch or observe.

55. The leadership and management of science are satisfactory overall. The management of resources and teachers' planning are good and have had a positive impact on standards since the previous inspection. Satisfactory improvement has been made but not enough is done to ensure consistency in achievement and teaching.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement is good
- The pupils with special educational needs make good progress because they are well supported
- There are good opportunities for pupils of all abilities to develop basic skills

Commentary

56. The school has developed and improved the ICT curriculum since the last inspection, resulting in average standards which are similar to those found at the time of the last inspection. Printed work displayed or in the school's portfolio of work shows that the pupils are making good use of basic ICT skills to help their learning in other subjects. Throughout the school, the pupils make satisfactory progress, acquiring skills such as word processing and graphics. Boys and girls are equally successful. There is no significant difference in the performance of pupils from different ethnic groups.
57. The teaching is satisfactory overall and some good lessons were observed where expectations were particularly high. There is skilful intervention and support provided by teachers and teaching assistants, particularly for pupils with special educational needs. Staff working with a group of Year 2 pupils enjoyed using a digital camera to take photographs of their friends when dressing up as characters in the story of the Gingerbread Man, intervened well to extend the pupils' language development. In a very good Year 1 lesson the pupils were provided with challenging tasks when experimenting with a graphics and modelling program in the computer room. The strengths of the teaching here were in the clarity of explanations and the good use of teachers' subject knowledge to enhance pupils' understanding. In a few lessons tasks are not always explained clearly enough and pupils tend to repeat what has been done before.
58. Satisfactory use is made of new resources such as interactive whiteboards. Good use is made of computers to present lessons or reinforce mathematical understanding when using a programmable robotic device to support the pupils' learning. The interactive whiteboard is beginning to have a positive impact as pupils learn to use key skills such as pointing at and dragging images on a screen. More capable pupils in both Year 1 and Year 2 use advanced word processing skills effectively.
59. There is a cross-curricular approach and the teaching helps the pupils to reinforce skills in other subjects. This was demonstrated in a Year 2 lesson when the pupils used their reading and writing skills to sort computer generated pictures of people into 'dark' and 'light'

categories which the pupils then had to describe. They successfully used word processing and graphic skills to edit and refine how their pictures were presented on the computer monitor. Again, good quality support is provided for pupils with special educational needs, especially when pupils experiment with the keyboard to help them construct sentences.

60. The subject is managed satisfactorily and resources are well deployed to help the staff. There has been some effective training for staff to develop their skills and this has improved the professional competence of teachers and support staff.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

61. The pupils are increasingly using computers, cameras and recording devices appropriately in a range of subjects. In mathematics, computers are used to provide tasks that include some problem solving related to addition and subtraction facts or money problems. Teachers use the Internet to find information and programs that will enhance their lessons and Year 2 pupils are beginning to use the Internet themselves to find facts or to use a simulation program in English, mathematics or science lessons. Mathematics skills are used well to help the pupils use record data and then produce simple block graphs or charts when surveying, say, modes of transport to school or their favourite food. There are good links to subject such as geography and history, for example, when studying journeys and using story books in programs as when some Year 1 pupils looked at the story of a 'Bear Hunt'.

HUMANITIES

62. Inspectors observed six lessons in religious education one each in geography and environmental studies but none in history. In addition, inspectors analysed planning and talked to the teachers and pupils about the subjects. They examined a variety of pupils' work. The planning for all the subjects meets the requirements of the National Curriculum.
63. Standards in **history** are well below those usually found at the end of Year 2. Pupils in Year 1 develop a sense of chronology to a limited extent by putting pictures of stories in order during their literacy lessons. Many can say which comes first, next and last in familiar stories. By the end of Year 2, only the more able pupils talk about their families and events when they were small. A limited grasp of the English language contributes to a weak knowledge and understanding of past events or historical terms for the majority of pupils. Pupils are unable to recall names of people or events from the past and there is a limited amount of recorded work. A well-established programme of visits to places of historical interest provides the basis for pupils' understanding and experience of the past. The planning of the curriculum adequately covers national requirements through topics such as 'Buildings' and 'Past and Present', but takes too little account of pupils' cultural background. It is rather superficial and lacks depth or relevance. There is a lack of assessment to ensure pupils build on their historical skills, knowledge and understanding.
64. By the end of Year 2, standards in **geography** are below average. Pupils' limited command of English and the organisation of the curriculum inhibits progress in understanding. Pupils have basic misconceptions about places and weather. They successfully build up geographical vocabulary through an interesting variety of activities and visits across the curriculum. During guided walks around the school grounds in Year 1, pupils learn to recognise and evaluate the many interesting features. Older pupils make good use of pictures and ICT to describe settings to good effect. Under the close direction of adults they produce simple plans. The school places a strong emphasis on the care of the environment. This is a positive feature of the subject and pupils develop a good awareness of the part they can play in sustaining and improving their surroundings. The subject is organised as part of a carousel of group activities that change every two weeks. This results in superficial coverage with too little opportunity to develop pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding consistently. There are no formal assessment procedures and pupils carry out tasks unrelated to their previous levels of skill. At times, adults overdirect pupils and there are

limited opportunities for pupils to explore and develop geographical thinking and understanding.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is some unsatisfactory teaching that does not engage the pupils enough
- Subject leadership has weaknesses

Commentary

65. Standards are below average and lower than at the time of the previous inspection mainly because of weaknesses in the curriculum and teaching. Pupils' achievement is unsatisfactory. Boys and girls have similar levels of skill and knowledge. There is little variation in the work done by pupils from different ethnic backgrounds.
66. The quality of teaching is inconsistent across the school and unsatisfactory. Some successful teaching in Year 2 has a positive impact on the pupils' awareness of the views of others and stimulates pupils' thinking. In these lessons the teachers provided good opportunities for the pupils to talk about what is important to them. In one good lesson, the skilful and sensitive questioning helped the pupils to grow in understanding about some difficult concepts such as why people treat or mistreat each other. The interest of the pupils was stimulated by the very good use of a 'special thought box' where the pupils had previously put their questions to be shared during the lesson. However, this is not always evident across the school as in one unsatisfactory lesson, Year 1 pupils were not engaged enough and were too passive because the pace and expectations set by the teacher were insufficient to hold their attention. The content of some of lessons in Year 1 lacked a sufficiently sharp focus on developing religious ideas and knowledge.
67. The school places good emphasis on caring for others and helping pupils to recognise the importance of relationships. This has a positive impact on their learning but lessons are sometimes not challenging enough and this does not consolidate or extend the pupils sufficiently. Some staff do not make sufficient use of the pupils' own experiences of special pilgrimages, festivals or different faith systems. A parent shared her experiences with a Year 1 class when explaining the Islamic pilgrimage to Mecca (the Hajj) but little time was given to consolidating this or extending the pupils' understanding of the symbolism underlying religious pilgrimages.
68. Although the management of religious education is satisfactory and teachers' planning covers all the elements set out in the locally agreed syllabus, there are inconsistencies in the quality of teaching seen. The leadership of the subject has been lacking in firm direction and this has resulted in some inconsistencies in progress and achievement.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

69. Inspectors observed three lessons of art and design lessons, four in music and four in physical education. There was some design and technology observed within the art and design lessons and in some science lessons. In addition, inspectors looked at teachers' planning and talked to the teachers and pupils about the subjects. They also looked at a range of completed work. The planning for all the subjects meets the requirements of the

National Curriculum. Evidence from the work observed shows that boys and girls are working at similar levels and there is no significant variation in the attainment of the different ethnic groups. Art and design and design and technology are taught as part of the topics for each year group. While this integrates the themes well, discussion with the pupils shows that there is some lack of depth in their learning, especially in the knowledge and understanding of the subjects.

70. Pupils enjoy **design and technology**. Groups of pupils in Year 1 name the different parts of vehicles and construct simple wheeled vehicles from construction kits. They label them and have some idea of the purpose of the axle, chassis and wheels. Older pupils discuss plans of buildings but have limited knowledge of the need for these. Displays of work show some good quality models of musical instruments and pupils' work shows an appropriate range of design and technology experiences. By the time they leave school pupils have learnt how to join materials in different ways and have made puppets by sticking, joining with tape and split pins and sewing. They have prepared food such as fruit salad and gingerbread men. The school council has cooked for visitors to school. The curriculum follows government guidelines but has not been adapted to accommodate the diversity of experiences and cultures of the pupils.

Art and design

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers teach skills well, emphasising new vocabulary
- The complex timetables, especially in Year 1, sometimes hamper pupils' progress in completing their work
- Pupils have a limited knowledge of the work of famous artists, especially those from their own cultures

Commentary

71. Overall, pupils' skills are appropriate for their age. They experience a range of different techniques including painting and drawing, collage, weaving and work with clay. Pupils in Year 1 have been experimenting with weaving. In a good lesson a group of pupils discussed techniques with their teacher and named different materials suitable for weaving, such as raffia ribbon and wool. The teacher made sure that the pupils knew the words as well as the different properties of these materials. Pupils were encouraged to find their own ways of weaving using homemade circular looms from card. Pupils used magnifying glasses to see how woven materials are constructed to help them understand weaving techniques. Although no art lessons were observed in Year 2, observation of a group of pupils within a science lesson showed that they were producing some well-crafted observation drawings. Discussion with Year 2 pupils showed that they enjoy the subject. They have satisfactory skills in drawing from still life and in painting self portraits.
72. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Although new skills are taught carefully, pupils have a limited understanding of the work of other artists or the art of their own cultures and this is a weakness. Displays show a range of techniques used but there is very little spontaneous art. Almost all the work seen was the same for everyone in the year group. There is no one responsible for the subject throughout the school and the system of restricting the art to the year group topics, while covering the curriculum, restricts opportunities for creativity as well as knowledge of other artists' work. The art club is popular and addresses this for some, but this is not open to all pupils.

Music

Provision in music is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' singing skills are appropriate for their age
- Standards in music are below average by the end of Year 2
- Peripatetic music teachers make a good contribution to pupils' learning
- Occasionally, teachers' lack of subject knowledge restricts pupils' progress and achievement

Commentary

73. The school uses a published music scheme, delivered through compact discs and additional materials. This helps teachers to meet the requirements of the music curriculum appropriately although occasionally teachers need more support. Music lessons are normally taught to half the class at a time. While this enables more pupils to use instruments it is not the most effective use of time as some skills could easily accommodate a larger group. In one lesson, for example, pupils in Year 2 were learning about "beat". They would have benefited with a larger number of pupils to establish the concept more thoroughly. Where teaching was good, accurate demonstration from the teacher enabled pupils to maintain a strong beat well. Her use of additional material, such as African music, reinforced the understanding of "beat" well. New vocabulary was emphasised and practised and her good preparation and enthusiasm enabled pupils to achieve well. Nevertheless, their skills were lower than average for their age. In a group lesson in Year 1, pupils explored different sounds that can be made with their hands. While they made satisfactory progress, the rather slow pace of the lesson and the limited use of music made the lesson rather dull. Pupils' performance in this lesson was well below average.
74. Good quality visiting music teachers make a significant contribution to the provision for the subject. In the Year 1 and Year 2 weekly singing sessions in the hall, the teacher plans work that is well-matched to pupils' skills. Her good strategies for engaging the pupils through a wide range of activities, the good pace and well-crafted planning, extends learning well. In a very good lesson for the pupils in Year 1, for example, pupils took out their "Magic bubbles" [imaginary bubbles kept up their sleeves] and blew them gently, then hard to create sound to accompany a song. The technique of using "thinking singing" where pupils are silent for part of their song is very effective in ensuring that they maintain the rhythm of the music. It also ensures absolute concentration. As a result, the quality of the singing in these sessions is similar to that of other pupils of the same age. Pupils enjoy these sessions and work hard.
75. A small group of pupils are learning to play the keyboard. The teacher is very knowledgeable and pupils achieve well. A strength of the provision is the very good support from the parents, several of whom join in the lesson. The teacher gives very good guidance to help them support their children at home. The use of the commercial scheme, while supporting teaching, makes no concessions to the pupils' rich cultural diversity. Pupils' knowledge of different music is very limited and opportunities for them to listen to live music are limited.

Physical education

Provision in physical education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The pupils achieve standards that are in line with those expected for their age in dance because lessons build on previous work covered
- There is a good range of activities planned in school and out of school times to enhance the school's physical education provision

Commentary

76. Standards are average and achievement is satisfactory overall. Although only dance lessons were observed during the inspection, the planned curriculum ensures that the requirements of the National Curriculum are met. The school does well to enhance the subject with extra-curricular activities and enrichment days such as those planned for dance and gymnastics. Satisfactory improvement has been made since the last inspection in developing the curriculum and in maintaining average standards.
77. The quality of teaching is satisfactory, although it varies between good and unsatisfactory. Lessons provide activities that build up the pupils' confidence and skills. The pupils respond well and try hard especially when lessons are fast paced and provide variety. In the dance lessons observed, teachers took the pupils through some good warm up activities and then focused on different types of movement that provided contrasts. For example, the pupils were asked to move like penguins and then like polar bears with recorded music used to help with rhythm and timing. However, the lessons tended to be repetitive and did not always challenge or extend the pupils skills enough. These features were observed in most of the lessons seen. Good use is made of a specialist dance teacher who takes some lessons each week and works alongside the class teachers to help them improve their teaching.
78. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory with some good features that help to enhance the provision made for the pupils both in school and out of school hours. Sports clubs and interesting activities such as orienteering are planned. Educational visits are used well, such as camping for Year 2 pupils and day visits for Year 1 to engage in outdoor activities. Swimming is taught weekly so that Year 1 and Year 2 pupils receive good opportunities to learn how to swim and this contributes well to the school's health education programme. The headteacher and subject co-ordinator have been successful in securing a grant linked to a national programme of sports development where specialist tutors from a local college and secondary schools coach and teach the pupils sports skills.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Personal, social and moral education

79. The school sees this subject as an integral part of its work and has made good improvement since the previous inspection in developing pupils' self awareness and appreciation of others. Through circle times, when classes share their feelings and views the encourage pupils to express their ideas and this contributes effectively to their progress in speaking and listening. Concepts such as caring for others' property are explored in philosophy lessons through stories such as *Burglar Bill* and the pupils begin to make sound moral judgements through such activities. The active school council play an important role in contributing to school improvement. Their views and opinions are listened to and the pupils are particularly proud of the way in which their ideas have been used to improve the school's grounds.
80. The school is working towards becoming a healthy school and provides pupils with good teaching about the beneficial and harmful effects of drugs. There is a sensitive programme to teach about growth and relationships which takes good account of the pupils' cultural backgrounds and is sensitive to parental views. Some of the work is linked to science teaching. Pupils are taught about the benefits of healthy eating and there is provision for fruit each day. Lessons in physical education, including swimming, also contribute to pupils' understanding of the importance of regular exercise. Through the use of "brain gym" the

school also helps pupils to think. The subject is led and managed well by an enthusiastic team. There is a useful programme for teachers to follow to enable the consistent development of skills, knowledge and understanding and good records of pupils' personal development are kept.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	4
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	3
Overall standards achieved	5
Pupils' achievement	4
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	3
Attendance	5
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	4
The quality of teaching	4
How well pupils learn	4
The quality of assessment	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	4
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	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	3
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	4

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