

INSPECTION REPORT

STOCKHAM PRIMARY SCHOOL

Wantage

LEA area: Oxfordshire

Unique reference number: 123072

Acting Headteacher: Miss J Dovey

Lead inspector: Mrs J Greenfield

Dates of inspection: 27th - 29th June 2005

Inspection number: 267992

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Primary
School category: Community
Age range of pupils: 4 - 11
Gender of pupils: Mixed
Number on roll: 188

School address: Stockham Way
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Postcode: OX12 9HL

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Appropriate authority: The governing body
Name of chair of Mrs J Kent
governors:

Date of previous 7th December 1998
inspection:

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Stockham Primary School is smaller than most primary schools and draws its pupils mainly from a large housing estate on the western edge of the market town of Wantage. The socio-economic circumstances of the area are below average. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is broadly average. Many pupils have weak literacy and social skills when they enter the reception class and their attainment overall is below average. There are fewer higher-attaining pupils than usually found in similar schools. The school has 188 pupils on roll, 27 of whom are in the reception class. Children start school at the beginning of the academic year in which they are five, initially on a part-time basis but full-time in the term after they reach the age of five. Almost all pupils are of White-British origin, with very small numbers from Mixed White-Asian and other backgrounds. No pupil speaks English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils identified as having learning difficulties and disabilities is in line with the national average but the proportion with a statement is above average. Their main needs are moderate and specific learning difficulties, severe learning difficulties and autism. The number of pupils joining or leaving the school at other than the normal times is higher than average. The school received a Schools Achievement Award in 2002.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
7070	Mrs J Greenfield	Lead inspector	Music Physical education Personal, social and health education and citizenship
15181	Mrs M Hackney	Lay inspector	
10204	Mr D Vincent	Team inspector	Mathematics Science Information and communication technology
16773	Ms R Arora	Team inspector	Art and design Design and technology Religious education Special educational needs Foundation Stage
22704	Mr G Williams	Team inspector	English Geography History

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Stockham Primary School provides a satisfactory education for its pupils and has a number of very good features. Pupils do well in relation to their capabilities and attainment on entry. Standards in English, mathematics and science have improved considerably over the past year because of good teaching and are above the level expected nationally. The acting headteacher has successfully sharpened the focus on improving standards further and established a strong sense of team working amongst all staff. The school gives satisfactory value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Pupils achieve well in English, mathematics and science and standards are above the level expected nationally by Year 6.
- The strong leadership and purposeful approach of the acting headteacher are ensuring a more consistent approach by staff, resulting in higher standards and improvements in other key areas of the school's work.
- Pupils' very good attitudes and behaviour, together with the very positive relationships between pupils themselves and with staff, ensure that they are able to learn in a secure and supportive atmosphere.
- Effective teaching, supported by the very wide range of enrichment activities, enables all groups of pupils to make good progress in their learning.
- Although improving, subject leaders do not yet have a strong enough influence on raising standards and improving the quality of provision in their areas of responsibility.
- The procedures used to measure and evaluate the school's performance are not yet rigorous or systematic enough.
- The provision for religious education does not meet the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus.

The school has made good improvement since its last inspection in December 1998. Good progress has been made in: raising standards in mathematics, especially in Years 3 - 6; improving the curriculum, planning and assessment in the reception year; recording and tracking health and safety issues; putting in place more detailed assessment records of individual pupils' work and progress; and meeting statutory requirements. Progress in remodelling the accommodation has been very good. The school has good capacity to improve further.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

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

Pupils' achievement is good and all groups of pupils achieve equally well. Overall standards are in line with national expectations by Year 6, and exceed expectations in English, mathematics and science. They are in line with expectations in almost all other subjects except religious education, where they are below average. The national test results in Year 6 have been broadly average but dipped sharply in 2004, especially in English and science, although they were above average when compared with similar schools. The number of pupils with learning difficulties in this cohort was larger than usual. The unvalidated results for 2005 indicate a considerable rise in standards in all three subjects. Children make good progress from their below average attainment on entry into reception, although most do not achieve all the expected goals for learning in communication, language and literacy, mathematical development and knowledge and understanding of the world by the end of reception. They reach them in the remaining areas. Standards remain below average by Year 2. In recent years, the national test results in Year 2 have been well below the national average but there are clear signs that standards are improving because of a well-planned curriculum and more structured teaching. **Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are good.** Their attitudes and behaviour are very good, and their attendance and punctuality are good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided is good. Teaching is good and ensures that all pupils learn well. Pupils respond well to the good teaching and work hard. Pupils do well in English, mathematics and science because of the strong attention given to these areas, although staff ensure that pupils receive a broad and balanced curriculum, especially in the arts. A very wide range of extracurricular and enrichment activities supports the curriculum and pupils' learning well. Standards of care and welfare are very good. Pupils receive good support and guidance from staff and there are good systems to involve them in the work of the school. Links with parents, the community and with other schools are good.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are satisfactory, and are improving. The good leadership of the acting headteacher has brought drive and energy to sharpening aspects of the school's work, especially in raising standards. She has successfully motivated and inspired other staff to bring about improvements and as a result, staff morale is very high. The leadership and management provided by other key staff are satisfactory overall, with examples of good practice in the Foundation Stage, for pupils with learning difficulties and in the three core subjects. Overall, the role of subject leaders in evaluating and influencing the quality of provision and practice across the school is not sharp enough. Governance is satisfactory. Governors are supportive and are fully involved in setting the strategic direction for the school's future development but are not playing a strong enough role in providing the level of challenge necessary to ensure that the school continues to develop and improve. They are also not ensuring that all statutory requirements are met in full.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents speak positively about the school and nearly all are pleased with the progress their children make. A minority do not feel that the school listens to their views enough. Most pupils like school and think that other children are friendly. Although a significant minority express concerns about standards of behaviour, inspectors judge that nearly all pupils behave very well.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- sharpen the role of subject leaders in monitoring and evaluating the quality of provision in their areas of responsibility to raise standards further;
- identify clearer criteria and apply them more rigorously and systematically to evaluate the school's performance and other areas of provision;

and, to meet statutory requirements:

- ensure that the curriculum for religious education fully meets the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus; and
- ensure that the procedures for the performance management of staff are implemented in full.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Pupils' achievement is good overall. Standards by Year 6 are at the level expected nationally overall and are above this level in English, mathematics and science. Standards in religious education are below the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus and pupils' achievement is unsatisfactory. The more capable pupils and pupils with learning difficulties also achieve well.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well in English, mathematics and science and standards are above average by Year 6.
- Pupils with learning difficulties are achieving well because of the good support they receive, especially from teaching assistants.
- Children in the reception year get a good start to their education as learning is carefully planned and organised and they are taught well.
- Standards in religious education are below the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus and pupils are underachieving.
- Pupils do not achieve as well in Year 3 as in other years as pupils' behaviour is not managed effectively enough.

Commentary

1. Pupils' results in the national tests at the end of Year 2 in 2004 were well below average in reading, writing and mathematics. They were well below average when compared with similar schools, based on the proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals. The school's performance between 2000 and 2004 has improved at a similar rate to that found nationally. The school's unvalidated results for 2005 indicate that standards are broadly similar to those in 2004. Despite the good teaching, the current group of pupils in Year 2 has a higher proportion than usual of pupils with learning difficulties and a number who have only been in the school for a comparatively short time.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	14.0 (14.1)	15.8 (15.7)
writing	13.0 (12.3)	14.6 (14.6)
mathematics	14.4 (14.9)	16.2 (16.3)

There were 28 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

2. The school's results in the national tests at the end of Year 6 in 2004 were well below the national average in English and science and average in mathematics. Overall, the results were below average and lower than those in 2002 and 2003. The improvement in the school's performance between 2000 and 2004 has been lower than the national trend. However, when compared with similar schools, based on the pupils' performance in the national tests at the end of Year 2, pupils achieved very well in mathematics, well in English and satisfactorily in science. Overall, these pupils did better than expected and

exceeded the targets set for them in English and mathematics. Although there are no national figures against which they can be compared, the results in 2005 show a marked improvement in all three subjects and considerably exceed the national figures for 2004. The results in 2005 reverse the dip seen in the school's performance in 2004. The results in 2005 must be treated with caution as the size of the cohort taking the test was much smaller than in 2004.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	25.7 (27.8)	26.9 (26.8)
mathematics	27.2 (26.5)	27.0 (26.8)
science	27.2 (28.3)	28.6 (28.6)

There were 32 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

3. Children's attainment when they enter reception is below average, and their personal, social and emotional development and aspects of their literacy development, especially reading and writing, are less well developed. Although most children have attended some form of pre-school education, they have much to do to catch up during their time in the reception class. The good teaching enables pupils to make good progress during the reception year and to achieve well in most areas of learning and very well in creative development and personal, social and emotional development. Although most pupils are on course to attain the early learning goals in these two areas of learning and in physical development, most will not reach them in communication, language and literacy, mathematical development and knowledge and understanding of the world.

4. By Year 2, standards are below national expectations in English, mathematics and science. Their speaking and listening skills are broadly in line with expectations for their age and better than their reading and writing. Pupils are achieving well in these subjects because of the structured teaching and the well-planned curriculum. The progress of these pupils has been affected in the past because of staffing issues and this is the first year that they have had the same team of teacher for the whole of Year 1 and Year 2. Standards in other subjects are in line with national expectations in information and communication technology (ICT), geography, history, music and physical education but are below expectations in religious education. Their achievement in religious education is unsatisfactory because not enough time is allocated to cover the curriculum in sufficient depth. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory in the other subjects and good in history. There is insufficient evidence to make clear judgements about standards in art and design, design and technology, and personal, social and health education or pupils' achievements in these areas.

5. Pupils continue to make good progress between Year 3 and Year 6, although it is faster in Years 4, 5 and 6 than in Year 3, where it is satisfactory. The slower progress in Year 3 is the result of the unsatisfactory behaviour of a minority of pupils which is not managed well enough. By Year 6, standards are in line with the level expected nationally overall and are above the level expected in English, mathematics and science. These standards reflect the test results in 2005, which are likely to be above average. Pupils achieve well in all three subjects. Standards in ICT, history, music and physical education are in line with national expectations and in all these subjects, pupils' achievement is satisfactory. As with pupils in Year 1 and Year 2, pupils are underachieving in religious education and standards are below the expectation of the locally agreed syllabus. Not enough work was seen in art and design, design and technology and personal, social and

health education to be able to make clear judgements about standards and achievement in these areas.

6. Throughout the school, different groups of pupils achieve equally well. Pupils with learning difficulties, including those with a statement of special educational need, make good progress against their targets. These pupils achieve well in lessons and over a longer period of time through carefully targeted work. The most capable pupils receive more challenging work and pupils with learning difficulties receive good support from their teachers and teaching assistants. The very small number of pupils from minority ethnic heritages achieve as well as other pupils. Although boys quite often do better than girls in the tests at the end of Year 6, boys and girls do equally well in their school work.

7. Pupils use their language and literacy skills satisfactorily to support their learning across all subjects. Teachers pay particular attention to developing pupils' speaking and listening skills across the curriculum and the use of strategies such as 'talking partners' is particularly successful. Sometimes the overuse of worksheets constrains the development of pupils' writing skills, especially in history and geography. The use of numeracy skills to support learning in other subjects is satisfactory in Years 3 - 6 but pupils' numeracy skills are less well developed in Years 1 and 2.

8. Standards are improving across the school because of the changes implemented by the acting headteacher. The role of the subject leaders has been strengthened and they are making a more effective contribution to raising standards in their areas of responsibility. Some of these staff have only assumed their responsibilities quite recently but are already beginning to have an impact, although they have not yet had time to result in higher standards in some of the foundation subjects. The school is also benefiting from a period of stability in staffing and an ending of the disruption caused by the remodelling and refurbishment of the buildings. There is good capacity to make further improvements in raising standards even higher.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' behaviour and attitudes are very good. Attendance and punctuality are good. Their relationships with one another are very good and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school is a very orderly and happy environment and pupils behave very well.
- The very good relationships and well-established routines help pupils to learn effectively.
- Attendance is above the national average.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength and contributes well to their personal and social development.

Commentary

9. Pupils of all ages have very positive attitudes towards school and they are interested and keen to learn. They enjoy school and enthusiastically take part in the full range of activities. Pupils are very friendly and polite, and most are keen to talk about their work and the life of the school. This reflects the very good role models provided by staff and the very positive ethos within the school. Relationships are very good, and pupils have warm and

trusting relationships with their teachers and teaching assistants. This helps them to gain confidence and motivates their desire to learn. During most lessons, pupils concentrate well and work hard. Pupils listen well to their teachers and to each other, and they share resources cooperatively and sensibly.

10. Pupils with learning difficulties have good attitudes to learning. They show considerable pleasure in undertaking a range of activities, especially where these are carefully matched to their needs. Most pupils work well together and help each other. Targets for their personal development are included as part of their individual educational plan. They receive good support to help them achieve their targets, and gain a lot in self-esteem and confidence.

11. Behaviour overall is very good and is generally well managed through good procedures and high expectations. Parents are satisfied that pupils behave well in school. Pupils move around the school sensibly and quietly and show a good sense of self-discipline and courtesy towards others. Although the vast majority of pupils behave very well, a minority in Year 3 do not always behave well during lessons. At times, this disrupts the quality of the lesson, and the systems of management in this class are not strong enough. During assemblies and in the playground, pupils behave very well and they are very caring towards each other. Pupils are positive that there is no bullying or racism in the school, and they are confident that staff deal with any problems promptly and effectively. There have been no exclusions during the last reporting year.

12. Pupils' personal development is good. Parents are satisfied that the school positively encourages pupils to be independent and mature. During assemblies and lessons in personal, social and health education, pupils discuss a range of social and moral issues that affect the school and the wider community. Pupils are respectful of the feelings of others and they have a clear understanding of the difference between right and wrong. The school's approach to developing pupils' values is good and provides a common theme throughout the curriculum. Children in the reception class make good progress in developing their personal and social skills. In all classes, pupils benefit from the opportunity to join a wide range of extracurricular clubs and visits to places of educational interest. These opportunities contribute very well to developing their confidence and extending their experience. Pupils are keen and confident to take on special responsibilities such as monitors, playground leaders, and taking the role of personal assistants to the acting headteacher.

13. Since the last inspection the school has improved its overall provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Spiritual development is good. During lessons in English, music and art and design, pupils often reflect on aspects related to their own lives and learn to appreciate the beauty of the world around them. Assemblies are an integral part of the school day and contribute well to pupils' spiritual awareness and an empathy with the beliefs of others. Moral and social development is very good and closely linked to the caring relationships and responsibilities of living within a community. The good programme for personal and social education effectively develops pupils' understanding of citizenship and pupils regularly support local and national charities. Cultural development is good and has improved since the last inspection. Through the very good opportunities for enrichment, including the regular programme of visits and visitors into school, pupils gain a clear understanding and appreciation of their own culture. The school is developing its provision for multicultural education, and displays of musical instruments and artefacts around the school celebrate the richness of a multicultural society. Pupils' awareness has

been enriched through the opportunity to take part in a music and art week with other schools when they produced artwork inspired by African music.

14. Attendance is good and is above the national average. The school works hard to raise attendance levels further but a small number of pupils continue to take holidays during term time, which affects the continuity of their learning. Good procedures are in place to monitor attendance and to follow up unauthorised absence promptly. Pupils are punctual and lessons start on time.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	4.5	School data	0.4
National data	5.1	National data	0.4

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is good overall. The good teaching ensures that pupils do well in the key subjects of English, mathematics and science, and teachers assess pupils' work systematically and effectively. The provision for religious education requires improvement as it does not meet the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because they receive good levels of support from their teachers and especially the teaching assistants. The curriculum in the reception year is good and elsewhere, it is satisfactory. Pupils are cared for very well and the support and guidance they receive from staff are good. Pupils are able to make a good contribution to the work and life of the school. The school's partnership with parents is good and improving, as are links with the community and other schools.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is good overall, enabling pupils to make good progress and achieve well. The assessment of pupils' work is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching in English, mathematics and science ensures that pupils achieve well.
- Pupils with learning difficulties make good progress because they receive good support from their teachers and especially the teaching assistants.
- Good planning ensures that children in reception are provided with a wide range of challenging and interesting activities.
- The planning of lessons in religious education does not provide pupils with enough challenge.
- Teachers assess pupils' work thoroughly and constructively but do not always ensure that pupils understand what they need to do to improve their work.

Commentary

15. The good teaching promotes effective learning throughout the school, especially in English, mathematics and science. All of the teaching in the reception class and in Year 1 and Year 2 is good. It is more variable in Years 3 - 6, but overall the teaching is good, with about a fifth that is very good. This picture is similar to that seen at the time of the last inspection. The teaching in Year 3, although mostly satisfactory, is not always as effective as in the other year groups, mainly because the unsatisfactory behaviour of a minority of pupils is not managed well enough. The table below shows the quality of teaching across the school as a whole.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 35 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0 (0%)	4 (11%)	23 (66%)	7 (20%)	1 (3%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

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

16. In the reception year, the teaching is good in all areas of learning. The class teacher and the teaching assistant work well together to plan a range of carefully structured and interesting activities to enable children to learn in a systematic and purposeful way. As a result, the children's confidence and maturity grow considerably during the year. Children are keen and eager to learn and they are developing a good capacity to work on their own and with others. From their below average starting point on entry to reception, and their weak literacy and social skills, they have much to learn during the course of the year. Despite the good teaching and their good progress, many children do not reach the expected goals for learning in communication, language and literacy, mathematical development and knowledge and understanding of the world by the end of the reception year. However, their speaking and listening skills develop well and most children reach the expected learning goals in these areas.

17. Staff intervene sensitively to question children in order to develop their understanding and their linguistic skills, as well as giving clear explanations and guidance. The expectations that staff have of the children are high, who respond well to their demands. Staff insist on very high standards of behaviour and response, and deal effectively with children that do not conform to the required standards. They give them considerably encouragement which builds their self-esteem very well. Provision in the reception class has improved considerably since the last inspection when it was identified as a weakness.

18. The teaching in Years 1 and 2 builds well on the progress pupils make in the reception year. Pupils are benefiting from more stable staffing this year and their learning is more systematic, although it has yet to result in improved standards. Nevertheless, there are signs that this is beginning to happen. As pupils move through the school, they continue to make good gains in their learning as they are given work that interests and challenges them, especially in English, mathematics and science. There is also good teaching and learning in ICT, which is a considerable improvement since the last inspection. Although there is some good teaching and learning in history and physical education with the younger pupils, overall they are satisfactory.

19. Teachers plan their lessons well to motivate and challenge pupils effectively, providing them with a variety of interesting tasks that meet the needs of all groups. Pupils respond with interest to the work they undertake, working well on their own or with others in

small and large groups. A particularly effective strategy that teachers use is to give pupils many opportunities to share their ideas with their 'talking partner' before sharing them with the class. This approach enhances the pupils' confidence as well as developing their speaking and listening skills. Teachers also give pupils plenty of encouragement and praise. They pitch their questions at different levels to draw and build on what pupils already know, understand and can do to reinforce or bring about new learning. Because the improvement of standards in English, mathematics and science has been a key area of focus in recent years, they are the subjects in which teachers' subject knowledge is strongest.

20. Nearly all teachers manage pupils and activities well. They explain the purposes of lessons clearly to help pupils understand what they are expected to do and why they are undertaking the activities. Occasionally, these purposes are couched as a series of tasks rather than as clear learning intentions. Instructions and explanations are clear which help lessons to run smoothly. A minority of pupils in Year 3 do not always behave well in lessons and they are not always managed as effectively as they might be. As a result, their unsatisfactory behaviour affects the learning of others in the class at times.

21. Although satisfactory overall, there are some weaker features in the teaching of religious education. The planning of lessons does not always provide pupils with enough challenge, with the result that the work is not covered in sufficient depth. Teachers' expectations in this subject are not high enough and lead to pupils' unsatisfactory progress and achievement.

22. Teachers, together with the teaching assistants, provide effective group teaching or individual support in lessons for pupils with learning difficulties. Withdrawal from class for additional support is carefully organised so that pupils do not regularly miss important lessons. Learning support assistants are well briefed to support these pupils and ensure that appropriate teaching strategies are employed. They liaise effectively with class teachers in planning and in assessing the progress of individuals in their care. Teachers have opportunities to discuss problems and concerns with the two newly designated special needs coordinators. However, their daily plans do not clearly indicate how the support for identified pupils in the class is to be organised. Most teachers plan work to address the targets in pupils' individual education plans and to meet their various needs. Literacy, numeracy, personal and social skills are particularly targeted and developed. The targets in the individual educational plans are realistic and generally achievable, but do not always have clear time limits. The achievement of these targets is regularly monitored and recorded.

23. Pupils' work in English, mathematics and science is closely monitored and they are set individual targets in English and mathematics. The assessment arrangements are effective, enabling the school to track pupils' progress in these subjects. In other subjects, assessment arrangements are satisfactory and developing, but some have only recently been introduced, for example, in ICT. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly across all subjects and the marking is generally constructive and helpful. Teachers use assessment information to plan appropriate work for pupils and to challenge them further. Discussions with pupils show that they do not always know what they need to do to improve their work and this aspect of the assessment arrangements is not as effective as other elements. The school has already identified the need to improve its assessment arrangements, especially in the use of assessment to support learning, and has included assessment as one of its priorities in its improvement plan.

The curriculum

The school provides a satisfactory curriculum which meets the needs of its pupils and, with the exception of some aspects of religious education, fulfils statutory requirements. There are very good opportunities for pupils to enrich their experiences through well-planned visits and visitors and a very wide range of clubs and activities. Resources, including staffing, are good and accommodation is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum in the reception year is varied and well balanced.
- The well-planned links between subjects make learning more interesting and relevant for all pupils.
- The planning in religious education does not fully secure the depth of coverage required by the locally agreed syllabus.
- A very well planned and very wide range of links, visits and visitors greatly enhance and complement learning.
- Whatever their capabilities, considerable efforts are made to meet pupils' particular needs and to provide them with a rich curriculum.
- The accommodation and outside environment are very good and support the teaching of the curriculum well.

Commentary

24. The curriculum is satisfactory overall and, with the exception of religious education, fully meets requirements. The breadth and balance in the core areas of English, mathematics and science are good and are at least satisfactory in the nearly all of the remaining subjects. The planning in religious education does not provide pupils with opportunities to cover the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus in sufficient depth. The curriculum includes good opportunities for pupils' personal, social and health education and the governing body has taken a decision to include provision for sex and relationships education in the programme. Learning opportunities in the reception year are good and prepare children well for the later stages of their education. This is a considerable improvement since the last inspection when the curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage was judged unsatisfactory. Good improvement has been secured for personal, social and health education and opportunities for enrichment.

25. Curriculum planning is thorough and teachers use cross-curricular links effectively to enhance pupils' learning in a good range of subjects. The curriculum is beginning to be influenced by a creative approach, which the acting headteacher and staff are anxious to promote. Together, they are intent on creating a curriculum that has an emphasis on 'excellence and enjoyment', using the creative arts to make learning real and alive. Many cross-curricular links have been established and staff are using innovative and inventive introductions to lessons to make them become real and personal to the pupils. This was seen in a Year 1 science lesson, where a supposed letter from a local garden centre requested pupils to find out whether they should keep their plants in a light or dark place for them to grow best. The school has introduced German as an extracurricular activity, which is taught by a parent who is fluent in German. There is additional curricular provision to meet the needs of the more capable or gifted pupils.

26. The curriculum for pupils with learning difficulties is good and supports the learning targets identified in their individual education plans. There are good procedures in place for

identifying such pupils. A comprehensive policy provides guidance for staff. Suitable support is given to teachers to write individual educational plans with targets that are specific and easily achievable to ensure pupils gain a degree of success on a regular basis. Class teachers and support staff work well together and provide good support, particularly where it is well planned and organised by the teacher. Withdrawal arrangements, where regular, are carefully applied, with close links to class work to ensure equality of access for all pupils.

27. The curriculum is very well supported by a very broad range of well-planned visits and visitors from which pupils benefit greatly. Extracurricular activities in the arts and sport are very good and underpinned by a rich and varied residential programme. This is accessible to all junior-aged pupils. The school makes good use of visits to theatres and museums, as well as visits from theatre, musical and sporting groups.

28. This is a very inclusive school and all staff are fully committed to making sure that all pupils have equal access to the opportunities on offer. This is reflected in the curriculum planning and in the very positive relationships that are fostered and developed across the school. A good number of teachers and well-trained teaching assistants teach the curriculum effectively. Resources are plentiful and of good quality to support the curriculum.

29. The outside play areas are large, giving plenty of space during playtimes as well as for outdoor physical education lessons and competitions. The adventure equipment is a valued asset. The newly redeveloped and refurbished buildings are sufficiently large to allow space for pupils to work freely and the computer suite and library are centrally accessible to all pupils. Classrooms are in a very good state of decoration and designed to a high standard. The environment of the school is a very pleasant place for staff and pupils to work and learn.

Care, guidance and support

Provision for pupils' care, welfare, health and safety is very good. Pupils receive good support, advice and guidance. There are good opportunities for pupils to share their views about the school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The very good procedures ensure that pupils' health and safety at school are assured.
- The school is a happy and safe environment where pupils are valued and well cared for.
- The very good relationships effectively support pupils' individual academic and personal needs.
- Pupils with learning difficulties receive good support through well-organised individual education plans.
- Pupils' personal development is monitored well informally but is not always based on secure formal assessments.

Commentary

30. Since the last inspection the school has improved its procedures to monitor pupils' care and welfare. Parents are satisfied with the high level of pastoral care their children receive at school. All staff are committed to ensuring that pupils learn in a safe and secure

environment. During lessons and in the playground, pupils are reminded regularly about safe practices and taking care of themselves and each other. Staff and governors follow very good procedures to monitor all aspects of health and safety and the school now has a good formal system for recording and tracking health and safety issues. Risk assessments are completed regularly. Child protection procedures are good and the acting headteacher and coordinator closely monitor those pupils giving cause for concern. All staff are aware of the school's responsibilities. Effective links have been established with the educational psychologist and other agencies, including, for example, the school health adviser, occupational therapist, and speech and language therapists.

31. Other than in the reception class, the school has no consistent system of record keeping to support the assessment of pupils' personal development. However, staff know pupils very well and through informal monitoring, information is regularly shared about pupils' progress and their personal achievements. There are good procedures to monitor pupils' academic development, especially in English, mathematics and science. Regular assessment are made each half term about their academic progress and achievements in English, mathematics, science, ICT and religious education. Tracking sheets enable staff to keep a close overview of pupils who are doing well and not so well. Pupils with learning difficulties receive good support from teaching assistants, outside specialists and their well-organised individual education plans. This ensures that these pupils are fully included during lessons and in the full range of activities. Induction arrangements are good and parents are very satisfied with the support their children receive to help them to settle quickly into school routines. Pupils joining the school at different times receive the same good level of care and support.

32. At present there is no formal school council and this limits the opportunity for all pupils to have a strong voice in the life of the school. However, governors have recently conducted a pupil questionnaire and older pupils are actively involved in a range of projects that have resulted from their own ideas. The school listens to and values pupils' suggestions; these have included improvements such as the provision of fruit at playtime, a recycling scheme and presentations by a pupil at the official opening of the new building. In all classes, the programme of personal, social and health education involves pupils well in discussions and encourages their views and ideas for improvements to the school environment.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school welcomes parents and is committed to maintaining a good partnership with them.
- Most parents are very supportive and make a good contribution to the work of the school.
- Regular communication keeps parents well informed about events and pupils' progress.
- Good community links support the curriculum and contribute well to pupils' personal development.
- Links with other schools provide good additional opportunities for joint activities.

Commentary

33. Since the last inspection, the school has continued to develop a close partnership with parents and this makes a strong contribution to the life of the school. Parents support their children well and most find that the school is approachable and welcoming. Parents are satisfied with the quality of education provided and feel that their children make good progress. Although the governors recently invited parents to complete a questionnaire, a small number of parents do not feel that their views are sought or valued by the school. A group of parents helps regularly in classrooms and with extracurricular activities. The School Association is very supportive and organises regular social and fund-raising events to provide the school with a range of additional resources to support teaching and learning.

34. The school provides a good range of information for parents, and newsletters have recently improved. Communication is regular and includes weekly newsletters celebrating achievements, curriculum information for each year group and guidelines to help parents to support reading at home. The parent/teacher interviews, which are held twice a year, involve parents well in setting pupils' targets and reviewing progress. In addition, the acting headteacher and staff are readily available to meet with parents on an informal basis. Parents of children in the reception class are involved well through the well-organised induction programme. Although a few parents would like more information about progress, inspectors judge that the annual reports to parents are good and provide clear information about progress and targets for improvement.

35. Most parents believe that pupils with learning difficulties are catered for well and are very positive about the provision for them. The school liaises with parents at all stages. Parents are always encouraged to be involved in all reviews and kept informed of all individual education plans. The regular contact to exchange information enhances the provision further.

36. The school has good links with the community and this makes a valuable contribution to fostering pupils' progress and personal development. Good links with the church support pupils' spiritual and moral development well and assemblies are sometimes led by visiting clergy. Pupils benefit from regular meetings with visitors from the local community who come to support special topics. These visits enhance the pupils' learning and experiences. Through the school's good links with the Wantage Town Band, pupils have the opportunity to play musical instruments with the orchestra. Pupils are involved well in local events, which include a range of music, sports and fundraising activities.

37. The school has good links with other schools through its membership of the Wantage Area Schools Partnership. This provides staff with opportunities for good interaction to support the curriculum, including ICT support and development of new initiatives and good practice. Pupils regularly take part in inter-school sports, which encourages their responsibility and social development. Links with the secondary school are good and they support the curriculum well through the sharing of resources and expertise. The school works well in partnership with the nearby special school and pupils regularly share joint activities. The school's international link with schools in Portugal, Spain and the Czech Republic has successfully enabled exchange visits for staff and provided an additional learning opportunity for pupils.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. The leadership of the acting headteacher is good and she receives good support from the acting deputy headteacher. The routine management of the school is satisfactory. Governance and the leadership of other key staff are satisfactory but the governors have not ensured that the provision for religious education meets requirements or implemented formal arrangements for the performance management of staff.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The acting headteacher fosters high standards in all areas of the school's work and has created excellent relationships within the school community.
- Governors play an important role in shaping policies and make a major contribution to the school's positive ethos but the means to evaluate performance are not always sufficiently objective or precise.
- Most subject co-ordinators lead their subjects with considerable commitment but do not do enough to evaluate the quality of provision in their areas of responsibility.
- Morale amongst staff is very high and they are responding positively to the opportunity to contribute to the school's development.

Commentary

38. The leadership of the acting headteacher is good. Despite the uncertainty associated with the length of her tenure, she has quickly initiated substantial development based on thoughtful evaluation of provision and an analysis of data. She has high aspirations for the improvement of the school and is able to motivate and inspire others to bring about developments. The acting headteacher has a clear focus on raising standards and achievement but also attaches immense importance to the development of each pupil in her care. Her philosophy is focused on the 'whole child' and priorities embrace not only the achievement of pupils, but their attitudes, their well-being and their moral and social needs. She seeks to learn from good practice elsewhere and to provide a rich and stimulating environment for pupils to learn. The degree to which she inspires governors, staff, pupils, parents and all associated with the school to work collectively is a tribute to her leadership and a crucial element in the degree to which she has moved the school forward in such a short period.

39. Governance of the school is satisfactory. Governors play an important, supportive role in shaping the direction of the school and keep in close touch with the school through regular visits and reports from senior staff. They largely fulfil their statutory duties although the requirements for religious education do not fully meet the locally agreed syllabus and the formal arrangements for the performance management of teachers are unconfirmed. The governing body has recently taken steps to monitor the implementation and assess the impact of its race equality policy and to communicate the results to parents. Governors have a satisfactory understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school but lack sharply defined and objective measures to enable governors to evaluate the school's work more perceptively, ensure that decisions are fully justified and provoke further improvements. Governors have already taken the first steps to address this issue. They give great support to the professional staff, and individual governors are associated with many subjects and areas of provision. Governors have a commendable belief in the school and bring a positive and constructive approach to their deliberations.

40. The leadership provided by other key staff is satisfactory. The role of the subject leaders has been strengthened by the acting headteacher, is developing well and has the

potential to make a considerable impact upon standards and achievement. There is some effective leadership in English, mathematics and science, and in the Foundation Stage and for pupils with learning difficulties. Not all subject leaders do enough to monitor and evaluate the quality of provision in their areas of responsibility to raise standards further. Although the appointments for some subjects are recent, coordinators are leading their subjects with thoughtful deliberation and considerable commitment.

41. The effectiveness of management is satisfactory, with a number of recent initiatives yet to make a full impact. Agreed initiatives are carried out with consistency and diligence, and satisfactory monitoring procedures are in place to ensure proper implementation and informed evaluation. Staff are highly valued and strongly encouraged to extend their professional expertise. This is having a positive impact on raising standards and achievement through better subject knowledge and greater expert awareness. It supports the sense of purpose and the motivation that are apparent throughout the school. This strong development of professional training extends to support staff as well as teachers, and new staff are welcomed and given very good support by colleagues. Morale amongst the teaching and non-teaching staff is very good as all feel they are fully involved with the development of the school and that their individual opinions are valued. The management of the school reflects high aspirations and a marked lack of complacency.

42. Inclusion and the promotion of equality are very good. This is because everyone associated with the school is committed to providing an education which meets the particular needs of each of its pupils. Teachers and support staff provide very good role models for pupils, and their dedication and hard work create a purposeful and secure environment with equal opportunity for every pupil. Where appropriate, lessons contain separate activities designed specifically for pupils with different capabilities. Pupils with learning and other needs are fully incorporated into the life and work of the school. Staff are sensitive to the personal circumstances and characteristics of each pupil and every child is valued.

43. Governors and senior staff demonstrate good awareness of the financial implications of their decisions. Budgets are set carefully and longer-term trends and implications considered. Day-to-day financial administration is very good. Grants to improve provision for ICT and funding to improve standards exemplify such application. The governing body employs the principles of obtaining best value for money to a satisfactory level. Governors are keenly aware of the need to ensure that the money allocated to the school is spent carefully and consult widely as part of this process. Reports from staff and analyses of test data raise their awareness of how the school is performing. The completion of the performance management procedures and the introduction of sharper criteria for evaluating the effectiveness of initiatives are necessary to ensure that governors are provided with the means to fully justify decisions and to challenge more perceptively the nature of provision within the school.

Financial information for the year April 2004 to March 2005

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	472,483	Balance from previous year	83,997

Total expenditure	515,990
Expenditure per pupil	2,886

Balance carried forward to the next year	40,490
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PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECTS

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

44. Twenty-seven children currently attend the reception class on a full-time basis. Effective arrangements ease children into the reception class in September each year. Children are prepared well for their start, with useful visits beforehand. Very positive links are established with parents and some provide good quality voluntary support in the classroom. Almost all children have received some form of pre-school education. The starting point of most children is below average, especially in personal, social and emotional development and in some aspects of their language development, particularly reading and writing.

45. By the time they reach Year 1, all children make good progress and achieve well because of consistently good teaching. Growth in confidence, maturity and interest in learning is considerable. Most children attain the expected goals for learning in the areas of personal, social and emotional development, physical development and creative development. However, despite good teaching and progress, most do not do so in the areas of communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, and knowledge and understanding of the world.

46. Good planning ensures that children are provided with a wide range of challenging and interesting activities. Staff are fully aware of the principles that underpin good practice for young children, including plenty of opportunities for play that are carefully structured to promote learning. The class teacher and the teaching assistant plan and work well together as an effective team. The monitoring of children's progress takes place on a constant basis, so achievements are noted and built on well. The Foundation Stage coordinator, who is also the class teacher, provides good quality leadership. Improvement since the last inspection has been good overall. The environment for learning, which includes the space outside, has been carefully reorganised into well-defined areas. The school has plans to develop the outdoor space into a much safer and purpose-built area. Children's individual needs are identified early and they receive good care and support.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Nearly all children meet the expected goals by the end of the reception year.
- Children's attitudes and behaviour are very good due to the very good role models set by the staff.
- The very good relationships between all adults and children result in a very positive learning environment.
- Children are given good opportunities to use their initiative and develop their independence.

Commentary

47. Children settle down quickly because of a well-planned, supportive climate for learning. Each child is well known to all staff and treated respectfully, so all children feel very comfortable and want to please their teachers and assistants. This positive approach results in eagerness to learn, good behaviour and much enjoyment. Children know the routines well and settle to tasks with growing confidence and maturity whilst trying new activities. Adults set clear boundaries for behaviour and are very good role models. Children share well, learn to respect each other, cooperate with the use of resources, and are willing to take turns when working and playing together.

48. Teaching is good, and has some very good features. For example, support staff are used particularly well as partners in the teaching process, helping to establish high standards of behaviour and social skills. Through direct questioning, they support and extend sensitively children's play and responses. Children are given every opportunity to develop initiative and to manage tasks independently whenever it is appropriate. Encouragement of these skills occurs frequently as, for example, when children were engaged in making their own little booklets about pets. As a direct consequence, children often take pride in sticking with the activity until its completion, and then tidy up when they have finished. Adults make regular checks of the level of children's involvement in activities, thus monitoring their personal development. The use of encouragement is generous, but never inappropriate, at every step of new learning, so children feel reassured about what they do; they work to capacity, and thereby achieve well.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement is good as a result of good teaching.
- Children make good progress in language skills, vocabulary and basic reading and writing throughout the reception year.
- Staff are skilful listeners and actively encourage children to speak confidently, using good standard English.
- The school/home reading system is well established.

Commentary

49. Children make good progress and they achieve well, because basic skills are taught consistently to meet their individual needs. Staff make careful assessments of children's progress so that the teaching matches their stage of development. A high proportion of children are on course to meet the expected goals by the end of reception, particularly in speaking and listening. In reading and writing, children's skills do not advance quite as rapidly. This aspect of the area of learning is more complex and some younger children who have had varied pre-school experiences and limited language skills do not attain as highly, although they cover a lot of ground and get a good start.

50. The good teaching has a positive impact on pupils' learning. The class teacher and the teaching assistant give very precise, practical instructions about how to carry out well-planned activities. Resources are used skilfully. For example, the role-play areas, especially the 'vet's surgery', successfully capture children's imagination and give them good opportunities to make gains in linguistic skills. In this way, children acquire relevant new vocabulary and express themselves competently whilst playing in imaginative, challenging situations.

51. Work with stories helps children to learn new words and to understand how events are sequenced in order. Good one-to-one and small group support is frequently available during these activities. When they write or make marks on paper for themselves, this support enables children to develop control of pencils and to gain early skills in recognising letter shapes, sounds, simple words and, in the case of higher attainers, short whole sentences. The focus on developing children's communication and language skills features across many activities that the children select for themselves. All staff value children's efforts in communication, language and literacy, including their use of computers. They interact well with them to increase their skill and confidence in talking, as well as early reading, writing and word processing skills, supported also by the regular use of the 'Jolly Phonics' scheme.

52. Children handle books carefully and take them home to share with adults. Many children are already associating some sounds with letters and the more capable children recognise several words on sight. Teachers often use printed text to familiarise children with useful vocabulary, focusing on key words well. Literacy sessions are adapted well to suit young children while, at the same time, preparing them for what will come when they begin the National Curriculum. Teaching also uses conversation and discussion effectively, helping children to listen to each other, to take turns in speaking and to adapt what they say to take account of what others might already have said. This sensitive approach puts an emphasis on thinking first, so children gain in maturity and achieve well in this aspect too.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Almost all children make good progress and achieve well, due to good use of resources.
- Children are eager and have very positive attitudes towards mathematical ideas.
- Teaching and learning are good and children participate in a good range of practical opportunities.

Commentary

53. Most children make good progress in relation to their below average start, and this represents good achievement. The teacher provides good, challenging opportunities for children to develop mathematically in a range of situations, for example, singing number rhymes and songs. In one lesson, children were fully engaged in learning to describe position, direction and movements by instructing a programmable toy. As a result of the good quality support by the teaching assistant, they were able to build up mathematical vocabulary and ideas, for example, estimating the number of steps to be taken by the Roamer, which was dressed as a 'cat' to catch a 'mouse'. Most children are secure in counting to 10 and beyond, and using pictorial representations of numbers to enhance learning. Most children write numerals correctly and recognise written or printed numbers. More capable children record repeating patterns with understanding of the ideas and processes that are involved. Some confidently recognise and name simple shapes, and sort by colours and size.

54. Teaching is consistently good and includes very good practical opportunities to count people or objects for real reasons, such as, 'Do we have enough fruit?' or 'How many children are in today?' As a result, children are progressing well in understanding problems that involve the use of mathematical language, such as, 'more', 'less', 'how many altogether?' and 'how many left?' This type of activity is indicative of good achievement. Adults plan well and use a good range of teaching methods. They make learning interesting, linking skills they wish the children to learn to fun topics and themes. Children also make gains in their knowledge of capacity and weight from everyday practical experiences with sand and water.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching ensures that children achieve well and have good attitudes to learning.
- Children are keen and eager to find out about the world around them.
- The teaching assistant provides good quality support in lessons.

Commentary

55. Many children begin school with comparatively low levels of general knowledge. This is enhanced by good teaching and as a result, almost all children make good progress and achieve well. However, despite the good teaching and overall provision, their attainment at the start of Year 1 is below what is typically found. Teaching is particularly well planned, providing opportunities for exploration and investigation, and activities are often carried out both indoors and in the grounds. Good use is made of the interactive whiteboard to support children's experiences. Children enjoy all activities and remain very absorbed looking at the living creatures, the 'minibeasts'. The current topic of 'pets' is well developed through role-play situations that enhance children's understanding of pets and what is needed to take care of them.

56. Teaching and learning are good. Support staff are used very well to make effective interventions in the planned activities and to extend children's responses through appropriate questions. In one good session, for example, knowledge about the work of a veterinary surgeon was skilfully developed through role-play, and was supported effectively by an adult. Children learned to recognise and name various items used to take care of animals. The visit of a veterinary nurse, who also brought a cat and various items to share with children, enhanced children's knowledge and understanding of the living creatures well. Children are fast developing skills in asking questions to find out how things work. However, their skills in comparing objects to find similarities and differences are often insecure.

57. Suitable resources of good quality are used very well, so children learn practically. They are, therefore, thoroughly absorbed, enjoying experiences of working with sand, water and malleable materials such as plasticine. They use paint and learn about mixing and naming colours.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Most children are on course to meet the early learning goals.
- Teachers plan a suitable range of indoor and outdoor activities to help children develop their physical skills.
- The resources are used effectively to enhance learning.
- The outdoor area is not yet well developed.

Commentary

58. Nearly all children achieve well and most are on course to meet the expected goals for their age. They move with confidence around the classrooms, recognising each other's space. They show appropriate control and understanding of safety when outside. Staff provide calm and sensitive support and show good understanding of how young children learn the skills of running, jumping and balancing. The range of large and small outdoor resources is limited, but the large bricks and other construction equipment are used well to promote acquisition of physical skills.

59. Teaching is good and included some very good features in a lesson that focused on parachute games and different ways of moving. Learning was effective in this lesson, that buzzed along very enjoyably for the children. All responded accordingly, making rapid progress as they practised their ideas, with both control and enthusiasm. Children have regular lessons in the main school hall, as well as opportunities for play in the outside area. Their understanding of keeping healthy and of changes to their body when engaged in a physical activity is suitably developed. Skills of co-ordinating hands, fingers and eyes are developed through the use of several small tools and utensils. Children are taught to hold pencils and crayons correctly and to paint carefully with

both broad and fine brush strokes. They are developing confidence and accuracy in the use of scissors and joining materials with glue. As a result of the well-planned opportunities, their hand and eye co-ordination is developing appropriately.

60. In the outdoor play area, children readily share equipment with others and learn how to use space efficiently. Plans are in place to develop this space further, with increased resources, so making it more inviting and successful as a stimulating outdoor classroom.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve well and most are on course to meet the early learning goals by the end of the year.
- Children work in a well-ordered environment in which creativity and expressiveness are valued.
- Teachers provide plenty of opportunities for children to develop their creative skills.
- Children have very positive attitudes to learning and feel confident in expressing themselves creatively.

Commentary

61. By the end of the reception year, nearly all children achieve very well in this area of learning. They use a range of materials, such as card, crayons and paints, to produce attractive and interesting artwork that relates to current themes and topics. These themes are planned across the areas of learning. Their observational drawings of flowers, which are on display, are of good quality. Children make plasticine models of homes for their pets, using a variety of tools imaginatively and with growing independence.

62. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers provide a range of interesting settings to learn and stimulate children's ideas. Children particularly enjoy the imaginative areas prepared for them, and staff actively join them, thus monitoring involvement, and encouraging participation. Children develop their use of related language through the good opportunities to role-play and through the effective teaching where probing questions are asked.

63. Opportunities for singing, dancing and making music are good. The use of number rhymes, games and songs enhances learning in other areas. Children sing enthusiastically and work with total involvement. All the children show obvious enjoyment, take pride in their work and speak interestingly about it.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above those normally expected by the end of Year 6 in all aspects of language and literacy.
- Achievement is generally good across the school and enhanced by pupils' good listening skills and probing questioning by all staff.

- Good assessment systems are used well to focus work effectively and support good learning.
- Teaching and learning are good overall, but there is some variation in quality in Year 3 because the management of pupils' behaviour is less effective.

Commentary

64. On entry to Year 1, the majority of pupils have not achieved the early learning goals in communication, language and literacy. This baseline, together with the number of pupils with learning difficulties and the comparatively large number of pupils who joined the school mid-year, result in them attaining standards by the end of Year 2 that are below those normally expected. However, because of the good teaching, they achieve well. They have good listening skills, positive attitudes to their work and work effectively with other pupils. This is having a positive impact on their learning but it has not yet had sufficient time to raise their standards to those expected for pupils of this age. The national test results in 2005, although unvalidated, indicate that standards are likely to be above average by Year 6. This is confirmed by inspection evidence for all aspects of English and indicates a significant rise in standards from the considerable dip in performance in 2004.

65. Standards in speaking are below those normally expected by Year 1 but due to the effective and creative approaches, probing questioning and the high expectations of staff, pupils quickly establish a class of learners whose speaking skills are now in line with those expected by the end of Year 2. Pupils listen carefully to what is being said by adults or other pupils, particularly when using the 'talking partners' technique. These strategies are used effectively by almost all teachers and, together with teachers' high expectations, contribute not only to the development of their speaking and listening skills but also to their social development. This further promotes pupils' confidence and self-esteem. Almost all teachers focus on promoting pupils' speaking and listening skills, and by the time they reach Year 6, these skills are well honed. In answer to a question about why a pupil preferred one poem rather than another, one pupil's response was, 'I liked the first poem because it empties my mind and makes me think of nothing'. In almost all lessons, teachers give pupils sufficient opportunities to develop their speaking and listening skills, which underpin their writing and progress in other subjects.

66. Standards of reading are generally below average in Years 1, 2 and 3 and begin to show improvement as pupils progress through Years 4, 5 and 6. Pupils start from a low baseline in Year 1 and achieve well when account is taken of their starting point. The teaching of reading is good in most classes and is used as frequently as possible to support learning in other subjects, such as history, geography and science. The range of books used is good, and their quality and interest level are appropriate to the pupils' ages. As they move to Years 4, 5 and 6, pupils become more selective in their choice of reading books. They are quite clear about their favourite authors and the type of books they read. Pupils have their own reading record books which identify the books they read and in which adults make comments upon the child's reading ability. Teachers keep very careful records of pupils' progress in reading. Teaching assistants support reading well and pupils in Years 1 and 2 use phonetics and picture cues confidently to assist the development of their reading skills. Pupils enjoy selecting books from the library and many visit the local library.

67. Standards of writing in Years 1, 2 and 3 are below average but the impact of good teaching and frequent opportunities across other areas of the curriculum help to secure improvement in this area. However, the overuse of worksheets in some classes, although providing the opportunity to write responses to given questions, is insufficiently challenging

and does not promote or extend the range of writing skills necessary at this early stage. The standard of writing in Years 5 and 6 improves considerably and is mostly above the level expected nationally by Year 6. Pupils are encouraged to use their writing skills, employing similes and alliteration, particularly in their poetry writing. They use computer technology to produce newspaper reports, which are of good quality. The range of opportunities provided enhances pupils' writing skills and continues to raise standards in handwriting and spelling. However, the use of pencils for writing in their English books does not enhance the overall presentation of the work of older pupils.

68. Teaching and learning range from satisfactory to very good and are good overall. In the more effective lessons, teachers have high expectations and share the lesson objectives with pupils, using an informative and well-structured approach. This approach extends learning, and pupils' understanding and expectations of what they are expected to achieve by the end of the lesson. Explanations are clear and appropriate; teachers' questioning probes pupils' knowledge and understanding and challenges their thinking well. When lessons are just satisfactory, it is mainly due to insecure strategies for managing pupils' behaviour. This affects pupils' attention and reduces the effectiveness of learning. Pupils' work is closely monitored, using very effective assessment procedures. These are used to track pupils' progress, set targets and identify school, class, group and individual strengths and weaknesses. However, the coordinator recognises that staff do not collaborate sufficiently in setting targets to ensure greater accuracy when forecasting results.

69. Leadership and management of the subject are good. The coordinator has been in post just over a year but has worked very closely with the advisory staff from the local education authority and the literacy consultant. This has helped to identify areas of concern and determined appropriate strategies, including giving support to arrest the downward trend in results. The coordinator has worked hard to achieve this end, clearly establishing an awareness of what needs to be done, and has worked very closely with a well-committed and well-established team to redress the downward flow. The school has a good curriculum in English. Staff adopt an inventive approach to their lessons making them personal and creative, which enthuses and motivates the learners. Resources are good overall and the school has established a good library. The school has made good progress since the last inspection.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

70. Subjects such as science, history and geography extend pupils' speaking, listening and reading skills satisfactorily. However, the use of writing in history and geography is often confined to the completion of worksheets. This reduces pupils' opportunities for writing and inhibits their progress and development of recording and persuasive writing. Pupils make sound use of ICT to write newspaper reports about historical events of yesteryear and some examples of these were of high quality.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils leave the school with above average standards in mathematics.

- The very good relationships, good levels of expertise and well-planned lessons build pupils' mathematical skills systematically.
- Pupils' attitudes are very good and nearly all pupils are well behaved, attentive and hard working.
- The subject coordinator provides clear direction, with innovative initiatives sharply focused on improving achievement and standards.
- The good procedures for assessing pupils' progress and achievement help to measure progress and to indicate areas where improvements can be made.

Commentary

71. Standards by Year 2 are below the level expected nationally but are above national expectations by Year 6. This represents an improvement on the results in the national tests in 2004 when the school's performance was well below the national average in Year 2 and in line with the national average in Year 6. Because of the relatively small cohorts involved, some caution must be exercised in interpreting the test results. The unvalidated results for 2005 indicate that standards in Year 2 remain broadly similar to those in 2004 but show an improvement in Year 6. This is borne out by the standards of pupils' current work, which are above the level expected nationally by Year 6.

72. Pupils' numeracy skills on entry to the school are lower than is typical for their age. They make consistently good progress as they move through the school and achieve well. The good achievement in Years 1 and 2 is not fully reflected in improved standards this year because a relatively high proportion of pupils have learning difficulties and because a number of pupils have not been in the school for the whole of Year 1 and Year 2. Nevertheless, the good quality teaching and pupils' positive attitudes are establishing important foundations, and these are contributing factors in the continuing good levels of achievement in Years 3 - 6. In both key stages, pupils achieve well in relation to their capabilities because of the consistently good teaching, the fostering of very positive attitudes and the fact that teachers provide a range of tasks that ensure that pupils are working at the appropriate level.

73. Teaching is good throughout the school. This is because most teachers manage pupils well and employ a range of stimulating approaches in their lessons. There is a good focus on ensuring that learning is based upon sound mathematical understanding rather than upon rote techniques. Correct mathematical terminology is routinely introduced and used. Teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge and develop pupils' understanding by encouraging them to reason and to explain their mathematical thinking. Graded tasks within each lesson further promote work that is suitably matched to pupils' capabilities. In some lessons, there is productive emphasis upon the importance of mathematical pattern, both as a mathematical tool and to foster aesthetic appreciation through the exploration of relationships in number and shape. In many lessons, sensitive and effective support is provided by the teaching assistants. The quality of teachers' planning is good although in some cases, the particular objectives for each lesson are not stated precisely enough.

74. The procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are good. They provide an informed and objective basis upon which to analyse individual and whole-school performance. Individual targets are helping to make pupils more aware of what they need to do to improve. The agreed initiatives are implemented with considerable care and they are proving instrumental in raising standards.

75. Pupils' attitudes are very good throughout the school, with almost all showing interest, concentration and maturity. This has a good impact on their learning because nearly all pupils strive to do well and little time is wasted in lessons. Productive collaboration between pupils makes a very good contribution to their social and moral development.

76. Leadership of the subject is good. The acting headteacher has high aspirations for the subject and she monitors provision with care and rigour. She has carefully and thoughtfully analysed the information available and has instigated a number of initiatives designed to improve the school's performance in mathematics. This is exemplified by the action taken to strengthen the reasoning and problem-solving aspects of mathematics. Different approaches and greater emphasis are providing pupils with greater mathematical insights and understanding. The degree to which the rationale for these changes has been discussed and agreed by staff, governors and parents is an important factor in the improved quality and consistency of teaching. Management is good. There is a good structure for monitoring provision for mathematics through observing teaching, scrutinising pupils' work and checking planning. This is having a good impact on learning since it helps to ensure that agreed initiatives are properly implemented, that coverage and progression are verified and that shortcomings are quickly identified and acted upon.

77. The findings of the last inspection were generally favourable in respect of mathematics. Since then, the school has raised standards by Year 6, improved the quality of teaching, raised the level of achievement and promoted improved pupils' attitudes to mathematics. Overall, progress since the last inspection has been good.

Mathematics across the curriculum

78. Pupils' use of numeracy skills to support their work in other subjects is satisfactory. The collection, analysis and graphical representation of data in science, the measurement of scale in geography and the use of mathematical shapes to produce patterns in art are examples of how numeracy skills are being reinforced satisfactorily as well as being used as a tool to raise standards across the wider curriculum.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' achievement as they move through the school is good because the content of the programme is carefully planned and is taught in a stimulating way.
- The subject leader provides good leadership and has a strong focus upon raising standards and achievement.
- Teachers encourage pupils to have very positive attitudes to science through planning interesting lessons and by establishing a stimulating working atmosphere.
- Experimental and investigational work is strong and is fully integrated into the teaching of the science programme.
- The good procedures to measure standards and progress are used effectively to promote individual progress and to ascertain the strengths and weaknesses of the programme.

Commentary

79. Attainment in science is below the level expected nationally by the end of Year 2. Pupils make good progress and achieve well, with the result that standards exceed the national expectation by Year 6. This is an improvement on the standards reached in the national tests in 2004, which were well below the national averages in Year 2 and Year 6. Because of the relatively small cohorts involved, some caution must be exercised in interpreting the test results. The unvalidated test results for 2005 indicate that standards in Year 2 and Year 6 have improved considerably over those of the previous year.

80. Achievement in Years 1 and 2 is good, despite the below average standards apparent in Year 2. Standards are adversely affected by the proportion of pupils with special educational needs and because a number of pupils have transferred to and from the school during the year. Achievement in Years 3 - 6 is also good. The consistently good teaching, the very positive attitudes of the pupils and the quality of the programme are all instrumental in developing this successful provision. The more capable pupils are stimulated to explore topics in greater range and depth, and this is reflected in their higher levels of attainment. Tasks that are well matched to their capabilities, and additional support from staff, help lower-attaining pupils and pupils with learning difficulties with their scientific understanding.

81. By Year 6, most pupils are able to think rationally and creatively as they seek to answer scientific questions and are able to identify the key factors to be considered. When testing and recording evidence, most perceive the importance of isolating each variable, with even the lower-achieving pupils requiring only minimum guidance. They plan appropriate experiments, make logical predictions, record their observations systematically and draw conclusions which are firmly based upon the evidence. All pupils use the investigative process well to support their good levels of scientific knowledge. The practical activities are having a good impact on pupils' achievement and standards because they develop pupils' scientific understanding and promote their enjoyment of science.

82. Teaching is good in all year groups. Teachers have extremely positive relationships with their pupils and demonstrate good subject knowledge. They employ imaginative techniques and strategies which help to ensure that lessons are stimulating and that pupils

are motivated. Teachers focus sharply on the essential key elements of the lesson. There is little loss of productive time and skills and knowledge are built systematically. Teachers have high but realistic expectations of their pupils, who are challenged to achieve well but are not frustrated by work that is beyond their grasp. The consistently good teaching in Years 1 and 2 is laying important foundations upon which the good achievement in later years develops.

83. Pupils have very good attitudes to science. They clearly enjoy their work, behave very well and are eager to participate in discussions and activities. Almost all sustain close concentration and consistently strive to do well. Even the youngest pupils collaborate maturely and productively. These very positive attitudes mean that little time is wasted in lessons and make an important contribution to the good achievement that is evident throughout the school.

84. A good range of assessments enables teachers to track progress and to identify ways in which the science programme can be improved. Good use is made of this data, as exemplified by the thoughtful development of the guidance upon which teachers' planning is based and the greater emphasis upon pupils' investigative skills. The school is shortly to introduce individual targets in order to boost awareness of pupils' achievement and attainment further.

85. The coordinator provides good leadership. In the short time she has been in post, she has brought thoughtful analysis and clear understanding to her role. She has initiated a number of developments to improve the quality of the programme and these have had a direct impact upon the standards pupils are attaining. The greater sophistication of investigational work, the more precise definition of what is to be taught and the provision of more adequate resources are examples of such developments. The subject leader is constantly seeking ways to refine and improve provision. The science curriculum is now well defined and teachers are given clear guidance as to what should be taught and when. This contributes significantly to learning as it helps to ensure proper coverage and that skills, knowledge and understanding are advanced systematically. Pupils are encouraged to think creatively and the recent initiative to develop investigational skills is evident throughout the school. Since the last inspection, standards by Year 6 have improved and achievement throughout the school is higher. This constitutes good progress in the provision for science since that time.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are achieving well and standards by Year 2 and Year 6 are similar to those found nationally.
- A number of improvements have been introduced which are beginning to have a clear impact on standards and achievement.
- Pupils enjoy their work in ICT and apply themselves with enthusiasm and sustained concentration, collaborating sensibly when working with others.
- A large investment in resources, training and guidance is beginning to make a significant impact on raising standards.
- The school has made a good response to the shortcomings identified in the last inspection report and is poised to make further improvements.

Commentary

86. Standards in ICT by Year 2 and Year 6 are similar to those found nationally. Pupils in Year 2 have satisfactory levels of proficiency in word processing and basic keyboard skills. Their ability to save and retrieve information, with support, is sound and pupils use 'painting' programs with appropriate skill. Pupils know how to give sequential instructions, for example, in order to control programmable devices, and they have adequate understanding of how ICT is used in the home and their environment.

87. By Year 6, pupils' overall competence in the skills required by the National Curriculum is also in line with national expectations. Word processing skills are extended and most pupils reach satisfactory levels of competence. They save and retrieve stored information independently. Almost all are able to combine text and pictures to the expected level and print their finished product. Pupils have satisfactory knowledge of how to establish, test, modify and store sequences of instructions to control on-screen events. They have the expected knowledge when entering, sorting and classifying data and in presenting the findings by means of a range of graphical representations. Pupils have some experience of monitoring external events such as temperature. Their awareness of the application of ICT outside the school is satisfactory. The school has installed Internet access and pupils confidently log on and use the search facility.

88. Achievement is currently good throughout the school. Skills and knowledge are built methodically and incrementally as pupils move through the school, although the guidance which underpins this process has only recently been introduced. Its full impact is not fully reflected in higher standards because this and other improvements have yet to work through a full cycle.

89. Due to staff absence, two members of staff are currently undertaking the leadership of the subject on a temporary basis. They are approaching their responsibilities with commendable enthusiasm and commitment. They have thoughtfully analysed the priorities needed to improve provision and have introduced detailed guidance for teachers' planning and procedures for assessing pupils' progress. The school is extremely appreciative of the support received from the local education authority during this period. In recent years, there has been significant investment in staff training, resources and facilities and the school is now poised to deliver further advances in provision.

90. Teaching is good throughout the school, although this has yet to be fully reflected in standards. Teachers have enhanced expertise and satisfactory resources and are able to work in a suitably designed computer suite. Although the number of lessons seen during the inspection was small, it is evident that the programme contains material that interests and challenges pupils. In every lesson seen, there was very good balance between the direct, whole-class teaching of skills and opportunities for pupils to consolidate and extend their knowledge by working on computers.

91. Pupils have very good attitudes, behave sensibly and sustain concentration over time. Pupils actively strive to complete their work successfully and interact well with each other and with staff. They clearly enjoy their work but the earlier limitations in provision mean that these positive attitudes are only now being fully harnessed.

92. The recently introduced programme for ICT provides a good basis for determining what should be taught and for ensuring that skills are built systematically. The major

investment in a computer suite, with enough machines for pairs of pupils to share, makes an important contribution to the effectiveness of learning since it allows direct teaching of skills to be followed by immediate, practical experience for all pupils in the class. Records for charting individual experience and progress have been introduced recently and these help to ensure that every pupil receives his or her entitlement.

93. The last inspection report found that ICT did not fully meet the requirements of the National Curriculum. Some elements of the subject, such as control technology, were insecure. Resources and staff expertise were judged to be insufficient. Since then the requirements and prominence of ICT have been considerably increased. A substantial programme of staff training has been instituted and teachers are now confident and assured. The school has defined what should be taught more precisely and has significantly improved the resources. Although these initiatives are very apposite, some, including the creation of the new computer suite, are relatively recent and have yet to impact fully. Overall, however, the school has made a good response to the issues raised in the last report and is well placed to make significant improvements in standards and achievement.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

94. The use of ICT to support the work in other subjects is satisfactory. Pupils use their ICT skills for word processing in English, data analysis in mathematics and science, they create artistic effects and use the Internet to research historical topics such as Ancient Greece. These opportunities reinforce pupils' ICT skills as well as making an important contribution to learning across the curriculum. In many lessons, the use of interactive whiteboards makes an important and positive contribution to teaching and learning.

HUMANITIES

95. There is insufficient evidence to make a judgement on the quality of provision in **geography**. One lesson was seen in Year 5. This evidence, together with a scrutiny of pupils' books, teachers' planning and the assessment files shows that standards in geography are broadly in line with the those expected nationally. There is, however, an overuse of worksheets, which constrains pupils' writing and learning. In the lesson seen, teaching and learning were good and pupils achieved well.

History

Provision in history is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The development of pupils' skills in the subject is promoted well, especially in Years 1 and 2.
- The learning activities provided for pupils in Years 1 and 2 are good and help to promote effective learning.
- The overuse of worksheets in Years 3 - 6 does not support the development of pupils' writing skills.

Commentary

96. Standards are in line with those expected nationally by Year 2 and Year 6. Pupils achieve well in almost all classes. In Year 2, lessons are introduced in a particularly interesting and stimulating manner. For example, the teacher makes the lesson exciting by asking children to act as detectives and, using the strategy of 'talking partners', deduce what is happening during the Great Fire of London. They respond very positively to this approach. In a separate discussion with pupils in Year 2, it is clear that they have absorbed a great deal of information and are enjoying their learning. Pupils develop their skills of analysing pictures and are provided with opportunities to explore their ideas with others. The learning activities are presented in such a way that brings history alive, an important aspect of the creative approach which the school is keen to develop. The interactive whiteboard provides an important dimension to aid the development of their skills and to promote enjoyment of learning.

97. Teaching is satisfactory overall, with some good lessons seen in Years 1 and 2. Where learning is most effective, the approach is creative, the management of pupils' behaviour is very good and results in positive attitudes. Learning is enjoyable and pupils are keen to talk about what they have found out. Where it is satisfactory, pupils' behaviour is less well managed and the enjoyment of learning and the creative aspects are missing, so pupils learn at a slower pace. Schemes of work and policies are fully in place and followed by all teachers. The assessment procedures, although documented, have not yet been implemented consistently. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory, as is improvement since the last inspection.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils have positive attitudes to learning about different religions.
- Religious education does not fully meet the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus.
- Standards by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are below expectations, due to weaknesses in planning and insufficient teaching of religious education.
- Religious education does not make enough contribution to the development of pupils' literacy skills.

Commentary

98. Standards by Year 2 and Year 6 are below the expectations set out in the locally agreed syllabus. The main reason is that what is taught is insufficient and does not meet the requirement of the revised locally agreed syllabus. Overall, pupils' achievements are unsatisfactory and their progress, including that of pupils with learning difficulties, is not fast enough. These findings are not reflected in the last inspection report, which found provision to be satisfactory and standards in line with expectations. However, some weaknesses that were raised at that time, such as understanding religious experiences and the views of others, are still evident now. The lack of time allocated to the subject and the lack of adequate depth covered in the topics affect pupils' experiences and their progress.

99. The locally agreed syllabus requires the study of customs and beliefs of several major religions. What is taught in school has not been revised to match the prescribed curriculum in full. As a result, pupils' knowledge does not match what is expected. Nevertheless, pupils are able to understand and appreciate values, such as caring and helping others, that are common to many faith communities. Pupils also acquire adequate knowledge of Christianity, and have some ideas of God, as worshipped in different ways in other religious faiths. However, this knowledge is largely

confined to basic facts about festivals such as Christmas and Easter. In discussions, pupils were able to give little information about the nature of the Bible or stories from it. Even pupils in Year 6 were at early stages of understanding the importance and meaning of different religious symbols and artefacts. The main reason is that too few opportunities are provided to reinforce and consolidate understanding through artistic or written work. As a result, pupils do not receive opportunities to apply skills learnt in literacy sessions to writing accounts of what they have learnt in religious education. Similarly, the possibilities of religious education to provide a strong basis for expressive writing about, for example, what it might mean to be a believer, are missed.

100. In the small number of lessons seen, the teaching was satisfactory. In a Year 6 lesson, pupils engaged in a good discussion about the 'second chances' in life, based on the story about 'how Peter betrayed Jesus'. Pupils showed a positive interest and shared some good ideas. However, the idea of linking with important people from other religions was not fully developed in the lesson.

101. Leadership and management are unsatisfactory. The subject coordinator is aware of the need for appropriate action planning to eradicate weaknesses, which have resulted from a lack of proper monitoring, but has not taken the necessary steps to do so. Progress since the last inspection has been unsatisfactory.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

102. Owing to the timetable arrangements, the provision in art and design, design and technology, and music was sampled. There is insufficient evidence available to make clear judgements about the overall quality of provision in these subjects. The direct observation of lessons was limited but additional evidence was gleaned from pupils' books and discussion with pupils and with staff.

103. The work in **art and design** often exceeds the standard expected nationally and shows that good use is made of links with other subjects. The quality of artwork produced by pupils attending the after-school art club is of a high quality, and includes, for example, 'batik' prints and 'tie-dye' by pupils in Year 6. The well-finished and carefully decorated coil pots made out of clay by pupils in Year 5 are a good example of the three-dimensional work in art and design. Pupils in Year 4 have been working on the Ancient Egyptian death masks which are impressively colourful and skilfully made out of mod-roc. Additionally, the younger pupils participating in the sewing and knitting clubs also produce a range of attractive artefacts.

104. The subject is enhanced by the opportunities such as the 'Art and Music Week'. Pupils were inspired by opportunities to listen to African music and look at African fabrics and to produce carefully designed patterns using pastels. Pupils' drawings and paintings of characters show a good understanding of the traits and features of various characters that had been acquired in literacy sessions. Pupils' work is displayed well and indicates their careful approach to artwork. Leadership and management of art and design are good. The co-ordinator has good expertise and enthusiasm to make the curriculum creative and enjoyable.

105. Similar strong links are not evident in **design and technology**. A lesson in Year 5 focused on Internet research to find out how musical instruments are made. While this lesson provided pupils with a good link to ICT and an opportunity to undertake research, which was the main focus of the lesson, the emphasis shifted to the use of ICT skills rather than discovering information about how the musical instrument of their choice was made. However, in their work, there is appropriate emphasis on designing to meet a perceived need, so that all pupils are not producing the same object.

106. Design and technology is not a well-established part of the curriculum. There were no examples of pupils' finished products on display. Teachers' plans indicate that pupils in Year 2 have successfully made string puppets earlier in the year. The leadership of design and technology is currently in abeyance because of the long-term absence of the headteacher, who is the coordinator. Although the subject is suitably planned and an appropriate amount of time allocated to it, the profile of the subject is not sufficiently clear and explicit.

107. Two lessons were seen in **music**, one in Year 2 and one in Year 6. This small amount of evidence, together with the quality of singing and instrumental playing in an assembly, and discussions with the coordinator, indicate that standards overall are broadly in line with national expectations by Year 2 and Year 6. The quality of their singing, however, is above the standard normally found among pupils of this age. They sing tunefully and rhythmically, with great enthusiasm, and show good awareness of dynamics and expression. Pupils respond with alacrity when invited to sing, and younger pupils gain much from the opportunity to sing with the older pupils.

108. The quality of teaching in one lesson in Year 2 was good. A well-prepared and organised lesson ensured that pupils made good progress in exploring different sounds they could make with everyday objects, such as saucepans, lids, spoons, graters and containers, and in using these sounds to accompany their singing. In the other lesson in Year 6, the very good teaching and specialist knowledge of the music coordinator, together with the pupils' very positive attitudes, enabled them to work very effectively in two groups to develop their compositions for performance at the Year 6 leavers' assembly.

109. Over the past few months, the refurbishment and remodelling of the school, and especially the unavailability of the hall, has limited the range of musical activities in the school. The music curriculum is rich, with opportunities for pupils to perform with other groups in school, in the local community and nationally. In addition, some pupils receive instrumental tuition in the school and several play in the local brass band. Other pupils in the school benefit from hearing these pupils perform in assemblies and other school occasions and also from a range of workshop activities provided by external agencies, which are extending pupils' musical experiences well.

110. Leadership of the subject is very good and its management is good. The coordinator, who is currently acting headteacher, leads by example, in encouraging and enthusing pupils to develop a love of music. Further development of the music curriculum has been affected by building works and the coordinator's current role, but progress since the last inspection has been satisfactory.

Physical education

Provision in physical education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are able to participate in a good range of extracurricular activities.
- Pupils receive a broad curriculum, although it is not sufficiently balanced.
- The coordinator is leading and managing the subject well and pupils and staff are benefiting from the School Sports Co-ordinator programme.
- Pupils' skills in appraising their own and others' work are not developed well enough.

Commentary

111. Standards by the end of Year 2 are in line with national expectations. Pupils are making steady progress and their achievement is satisfactory. In Year 2, pupils have a good sense of phrasing and most are able to change direction at the end of a phrase of music. The majority are able to skip, showing sensitivity and a good awareness of the space around them. They work well with a partner as they perform a complex dance. Pupils with learning difficulties make good progress through the support they receive, both from their classmates and from the teaching assistants. Pupils in Year 1 are also making good progress in developing their swimming and water confidence skills.

112. No lessons were seen in Year 6 and therefore it is not possible to make a secure judgement about standards by Year 6. Standards of pupils' throwing, catching and striking skills in a Year 3 lesson were broadly as expected for pupils of this age and the gymnastic skills of pupils in Year 5 were in line with expectations. Across Years 3 - 6, pupils continue to make steady progress and their achievement is satisfactory. Nearly all pupils are able to swim at least 25 metres by the end of Year 6.

113. The quality of teaching ranges from unsatisfactory to good and is satisfactory overall. It is good in Years 1 and 2, and mostly satisfactory elsewhere. In the more effective lessons, pupils learn well because the planning is very thorough, and tasks are challenging and suitable for the range of pupils' needs. In a dance lesson in Year 2, the teacher's high expectations and the careful building of pupils' skills ensured that the class made good progress and achieved well. Learning was unsatisfactory in a games skills lesson in Year 3 because pupils did not receive sufficient help to enable them to develop and refine their throwing and striking skills. In addition, the organisation of the pupils meant that they were throwing and hitting in too confined a space. Not enough attention is paid to developing pupils' skills of appraising their own work and that of others.

114. Leadership of the subject is good. The coordinator has implemented a number of improvements to the curriculum. These include, for example, extending the range of extracurricular activities, developing more effective systems for assessing pupils' progress, and involvement in the School Sports Co-ordinator programme with the local secondary school. This latter development is adding considerably to the quality of the curriculum in the school, resulting in increased participation by pupils, improved attitudes and behaviour, and greater links with the community. The curriculum is broad but has an overemphasis on games, which limits the development of pupils' skills in other areas. Management is satisfactory. The co-ordinator has established a development plan for the subject but has not been able to monitor the quality of teaching and learning across the school to raise standards further. Progress since the last inspection has been satisfactory.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Personal, social and health education

115. Not enough evidence was gathered to enable a secure judgement to be made about the overall quality of provision in this area. The school sees pupils' personal and social development as an important aspect of its day-to-day work. Evidence from pupils' very positive attitudes to learning and to each other, both in the two lessons seen and more generally around the school, shows that the school's recent focus on enhancing pupils' skills and understanding in this area is having a considerable impact on improving their confidence and fostering their self-esteem.

116. The planned programme, together with the school's emphasis on values education and its consistent approach to managing behaviour, is ensuring that pupils systematically develop their skills of making informed choices and taking greater responsibility. The programme gives appropriate attention to sex and relationships education and drug education, as well as to features of healthy living and personal safety. The school's emphasis on 'excellence and enjoyment' successfully underpins its approach to enhancing pupils' personal, social and health education. Visits to the school from external agencies, such as the school nurse, support the programme well.

117. In the two lessons seen, teachers managed and organised their classes well, providing pupils with a good range of interesting and relevant activities, although these were not always sequenced in the most effective way to help children to consolidate their learning. The very secure relationships between teacher and their pupils ensure that pupils benefit greatly from opportunities to share their ideas with their 'talking partners' and at times, with the rest of the class. This was particularly effective in one Year 5 lesson.

118. The coordinator is well informed and enthusiastic. In her comparatively short time in this role, she has introduced a new scheme of work, has plans to implement a school council early next term and is seeking to gain a Healthy School Award. So far, there are no specific systems in place to monitor and assess pupils' progress and development or to evaluate systematically the quality of pupils' experiences from year to year.

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