

INSPECTION REPORT

STORRINGTON FIRST SCHOOL

Storrington

LEA area: West Sussex

Unique reference number: 125874

Headteacher: Mr Garry Smart

Lead inspector: John William Paull

Dates of inspection: 25th - 27th April 2005

Inspection number: 268000

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	First
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 - 10
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	329
School address:	Spierbridge Road Storrington Pulborough
Postcode:	RH20 4PG
Telephone number:	(01903) 742 047
Fax number:	(01903) 745 853
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Peter Surtees
Date of previous inspection:	21 st June 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- The school is larger than the average primary school.
- The school has two classes in each year from Reception to Year 5.
- Boys and girls are about equal in number, except in Year 4, where boys outnumber girls.
- The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals (6.4 per cent) is below the national average.
- The percentage of pupils who do not speak English as their first language (1.7 per cent) is a bit higher than in most schools. There were none at the time of the last inspection.
- The largest ethnic group is white British and a small number are from various Asian backgrounds.
- The percentage of pupils with special educational needs (8.3 per cent), including statements, is below the national average and lower than at the last inspection.
- The percentage of pupils with statements of special educational needs (0.6 per cent) is below the national average.
- Most pupils with special needs are identified as having speech and communication difficulties, and a smaller number has social, emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.
- Attainment on entry and socio-economic circumstances in the area from which most pupils are drawn are above average.
- The school gained a national *Achievement Award* to celebrate its very good National Curriculum test results of 2002.
- The school runs classes in information and communication technology for its families.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
22028	John William Paull	Lead inspector	English Art and design Design and technology Music Personal, social and health education, and citizenship
9092	Ron A. Elam	Lay inspector	
16773	Raminder Arora	Team inspector	The Foundation Stage Religious education
22113	Aileen King	Team inspector	Mathematics Geography History Special educational needs
12116	Christina Morgan	Team inspector	Science Information and communication technology Physical education

The inspection contractor was:

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Storrington First School provides its pupils with a satisfactory education. Leadership and management are good. Standards are average and beginning to improve after the headteacher, appointed last April 2004, recognised that there was some underachievement. Action taken to improve the pupils' performance is meeting with success. Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to their work are good, and their overall rates of progress are speeding up. The teaching is effective. **The school provides satisfactory value for money.**

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Good teaching and learning, including in the Reception year.
- The headteacher's very good leadership and very able support from governors and the deputy head.
- Pupils' achievements often do not match their potential, especially in older age groups.
- Strong signs of improvement in provision, and especially so in literacy.
- Pupils' good behaviour and their rapidly improving personal development and attitudes to learning.
- Good achievement by pupils with special educational needs.
- Assessment is not used consistently to plan and target progress.

Improvement since the inspection of June 1999 is satisfactory. The important key issues have largely been addressed. Provision in information and communication technology and for pupils with special educational needs has improved considerably. Monitoring of the school's work is now effective in raising the quality of teaching and learning. Several other less important weaknesses have also been rectified. However, worksheets, rather than pupils' own recording of ideas, are still used too frequently in science; work for higher attainers is still not always hard enough, and the consistent use of assessment remains a weakness in science.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

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

Pupils' overall achievement is currently unsatisfactory by Year 5, although it is improving strongly. Test results have dropped back since a high point in 2002 when the school received a national *Achievement Award*. As several pupils enter the Reception with skills above those usually found, the results indicate that standards at the end of Year 2 have not consistently been as high as they should be. Samples of current work indicate that this pattern is changing. In the Reception classes, for example, the children are on course to exceed normally expected goals. In Years 1 and 2, although standards remain average overall, the proportion of pupils working at levels above those normally expected is now higher than is the case nationally, especially in English. In Year 5, the school's oldest age group, spelling is a particular weakness, and attainment in science and religious education is below average, indicating that several pupils are underachieving. Too few pupils attain higher than expected levels. However, as in the younger age groups, much

improvement is taking place. Recently introduced monitoring has identified those pupils, including those with particular gifts and talents, who are not making enough progress. Challenging targets are now set, and teaching and learning are focused well on what needs to be done to attain them. Lower down the school, good teaching of phonic knowledge is raising standards in spelling and reading. Improvements in provision for pupils with special educational needs have already resulted in good progress for many of them, contributing also to raising overall standards. **Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, and their attitudes and behaviour are good.** Attendance is satisfactory, although several parents bring their children to school late in the morning.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The overall quality of education provided by the school is satisfactory and improvements are beginning to have a positive impact on standards. **Teaching and learning are good**, especially in the Reception classes, Year 1 and Year 2. Examples of very good teaching were also observed in these age groups. In classes for older pupils, the quality is also good, although not as consistently. Teaching during literacy hours is consistently good throughout the school. The proportion of good teaching reflects an improving picture, confirming what is indicated in the school's own monitoring. As a result of this improvement, pupils' learning is secure and underachievement is reducing. Systems of assessment are being used successfully to target learning in English, mathematics and information and communication technology. In the latter, good teaching, assessment and resources have already raised standards considerably since 1999. However, in science, teaching and learning do not sufficiently emphasise scientific enquiry. Weaknesses are also apparent in religious education. The curriculum is satisfactory overall and aspects of care for pupils and links with their parents are all good.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good overall. The headteacher is a very able leader who is strongly supported by the deputy head and a particularly good governing body. In a short time, successful strategies have been introduced to reverse underachievement. Staff morale and teamwork are good. No hint of complacency is evident and subject leadership groups are aware that a lot remains to be done to get standards as high as they should be. In those subjects that have been prioritised, such as English, mathematics and the Reception classes, strong improvement is already apparent. Except for religious education, the governors ensure that statutory requirements are met.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents express support for recent changes in provision. They are very pleased with the headteacher's willingness to respond to concerns about their children's work. A few have concerns about poor behaviour in the playgrounds. Inspectors found that successful strategies have recently been introduced to deal with this issue. Pupils who were asked felt that their teachers listen to them and take their ideas seriously.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Raise standards in spelling, science and religious education.
- Spread the use of assessment to all subjects, to plan teaching and to establish what should be taught, especially focusing on higher levels of attainment.
- Ensure that those parents who do not bring their children to school on time understand the negative impact on their children's learning.

And, to meet statutory requirements:

- Use the locally agreed syllabus as the basis for what is taught in religious education.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Achievement is unsatisfactory, because too many pupils have not reached their full potential by Year 5. Nevertheless, rates of progress are speeding up throughout the school. In the Reception classes, achievement is now good, and it is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2. Standards of attainment are generally average.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Results of National Curriculum tests in 2004 were not high enough, although they were much improved compared with the previous inspection.
- Progress and achievement are improving through the school.
- Spelling is a particular weakness, especially amongst older pupils.
- In English, a significant proportion of pupils in the Reception classes and in Years 1 and 2 are currently attaining at a level above that normally expected for their age.
- Standards in information and communication technology have improved since the last inspection.
- The progress of pupils with special educational needs is good.
- By Year 5, standards in science and religious education are below average.

Commentary

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	16.3 (16.4)	15.8 (15.7)
writing	15.5 (15.2)	14.6 (14.6)
mathematics	16.6 (16.7)	16.2 (16.3)

There were 57 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

1. At the time of the last inspection, National Curriculum test results at the end of Year 2 were below average in reading, well below average in writing and average in mathematics. Compared with similar schools, these results were below average in reading and mathematics and well below average in writing. The school's results in 2004 were average in reading and mathematics, and above average in writing so performances have improved. However, compared with similar schools, these results were below average in reading and mathematics and average in writing. For this school, the statistical measure that is used to place schools in similar groups (the number of pupils known to qualify for free school meals) may not give a true picture because hot meals are not provided. However, on entry to the school the social skills and attainment of a large proportion of pupils are average and many others are particularly confident and articulate speakers. Overall attainment on entry is therefore skewed above what is usually found. As a result, performances in 2004, although much improved since the last inspection, still did not match pupils' potential. The above average results for writing were an exception. A successful focus on improving pupils' skills, focusing on teaching them to use a richer vocabulary in their work, is probably the main reason. Results in English may not remain above average this year, despite good teaching, because several pupils have special educational needs of types that are likely to affect their levels of attainment. Nearly all these pupils make good progress towards their own targets, but several are likely to struggle to reach the normally expected level. Nonetheless, overall achievement is now satisfactory by the end

of Year 2. Good teaching has overcome past weaknesses. A similar pattern has emerged in Year 1, so the groundwork to build on pupils' achievements in the future is now secure.

2. On his appointment to the school, about a year ago, the headteacher identified that standards in Year 5 were below average. Several pupils in older age groups, especially in Year 5, were not achieving as well as they should in English and mathematics. Strong decisive leadership resulted in good action being taken. Parents were informed and groups were set up to boost rates of progress. Parents in the pre-inspection meeting expressed considerable support for this strong approach. Inspectors agree with them. Furthermore, samples of work indicate that weak progress has been reversed and has since picked up considerably. As a result, pupils' attainment has improved and is now around average. Nevertheless, given their favourable starting points, progress in the past has not been good enough, so overall achievement, while much improved, remains unsatisfactory. In Years 1 and 4, an effective system known as *Core Grouping* has been introduced in English and mathematics. Pupils from the two classes in the year group are brought together into different teaching groups, according to their prior attainment, so what is planned can be better adapted to meet requirements. Careful monitoring is confirming the success of this development. Since the beginning of the year, these groups have made progress at a good rate, and many are now working at levels above those normally expected, indicating that achievement is also much improved. As a result of this success, it is planned to extend the arrangement into all ages.
3. Sampled work indicates that spelling is a particular weakness in Year 5 and, to a lesser extent, in Years 3 and 4. While many pupils throughout the school are now writing effectively in terms of their use of language and organisation of ideas, this weakness in spelling is reducing their overall standard of English. In order to remedy this feature and, at the same time, to improve pupils' reading, a scheme that links sounds to letters and groups of letters has been introduced. This new scheme is already having an impact in speeding up progress and improving achievement. Samples of work show that spelling is comparatively better, reaching expected levels and increasingly exceeding them in Years 1 and 2. As these pupils move through the school, standards are therefore set to rise significantly.
4. Currently, nearly all children in the Reception year achieve well and are on course to exceed the expected goals in communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, and in most other areas of learning. The teachers of the Reception classes are relatively new to the school, and have re-organised much of the provision. Their work is clearly bearing fruit. In Year 2, although standards are still around average in English and mathematics, the proportion of pupils working at higher than expected levels is an increase on that indicated in the 2004 tests. This increase shows that more able pupils are now reaching their potential more often. In Year 1, many pupils are now attaining higher than normally expected levels. These standards of achievement in the younger age groups, together with steady improvements in teaching and learning through the school, are important. They form compelling parts of the finding that overall attainment at the school is set to rise significantly in the next few years.
5. The previous report found that by the time pupils left in Year 5 standards in information and communication technology were below those normally expected and that progress was unsatisfactory. Very little direct teaching occurred. Owing to improvements in teaching and resources, pupils are now learning more effectively and standards have risen to match those expected. Pupils' competence in the use of the subject is also adequate at the end of Year 2. Where relevant, pupils with special educational needs use programs that support their progress well. In some cases, they have been provided with their own word processors to help them to record written work, so they do not lag behind in other subjects simply because their handwriting is not fast enough.
6. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress. The main reason is that the co-ordinator for special needs (SENCo) is a good manager, who has organised provision well. As a result, targets in pupils' individual education plans are precise, so teachers and learning support assistants know what to do to ensure that the pupils learn effectively. Good examples of this occurred during literacy and numeracy sessions throughout the school. Adapted work

was provided whenever relevant and assistants were adept at explaining to pupils how they should approach tasks. Pupils with particular gifts and talents or with very high attainment across a range of subjects have been identified. A few lessons and adaptations of work have been made to address their needs. However, this type of work is currently only just underway, so its impact in terms of attainment and progress is limited.

7. In science, owing to an insufficient emphasis on scientific enquiry in the past, including experiments and fair tests, attainment in Year 5 is currently below expected levels and achievement is unsatisfactory. This shortcoming is being rectified and improved teaching is beginning to have an impact. As a result, by Year 2, standards are now broadly average. Through the school, standards in religious education are below those expected in the locally agreed syllabus. The main reason is that what has been taught omits parts of this statutory local syllabus. Pupils do not have the chance to acquire all of the required knowledge and skills, so do not meet what is expected. Work that was sampled in other subjects was usually in line with expected levels at the relevant ages, although singing was often of a higher quality than normally found.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Overall, pupils' attitudes to school and behaviour are good. Attendance is satisfactory but punctuality is unsatisfactory. Pupils' personal qualities, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are good overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Nearly all pupils behave well; they have positive attitudes to work, and enjoy being at school.
- Pupils with identified social, emotional and behavioural difficulties are supported well.
- The school's good provision for personal development leads to good relationships around the school and enhances pupils' understanding of living in a community.
- A number of pupils arrive late in the mornings, which affects the start of the day adversely.

Commentary

8. Pupils are interested in what happens in school and they enjoy their work. Their social development is good. Nearly all pupils who were asked said that they enjoy their lessons. Parents' comments at the pre-inspection meeting and responses to questionnaires confirm what their children told inspectors and what was seen. Pupils also volunteered to inspectors that they like their teachers and support staff. Invariably during lessons, they listen attentively and follow instructions well. They are often eager to answer questions and are prepared to contribute ideas of their own. They settle quickly when they go into groups during lessons. These positive attitudes reflect the quality of teaching and the variety of interesting activities that are currently built into lessons.
9. Children in the Reception year also behave well and display good attitudes to work and play. Provision in personal, social and emotional development is good. As a result, nearly all children achieve well in this area of learning and are on course to exceed the expected goals.
10. Pupils respond well to the moral guidance that they receive and demonstrate good understanding of right and wrong. They are aware of how their behaviour affects others, though a few are still to develop self-discipline when no adults are near. Pupils themselves commented that squabbling sometimes happens, but their belief is that bullying is rare. The few examples that were given had been taken seriously by other pupils and staff. Pupils are characteristically open, well mannered, polite to adults and to each other and welcoming to visitors. They usually move around the school in an orderly way, although occasional running in corridors does occur. Teachers generally adopt a consistent approach and guide pupils' behaviour effectively; only very rarely were instances observed when good behaviour did not result instantly. Teachers and assistants support pupils with particular behavioural needs well. They employ advice, encouragement, sanctions when needed, and pastoral support

programmes to good effect. A particularly strong feature is that other pupils are shown how they can help, with strategies such as a circle of friends. One result is that last year's five exclusions for extremely poor behaviour have reduced to just two in the current year.

Exclusions

Ethnic background of pupils school year

Exclusions in the last

Categories used in the Annual School Census	Number of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White - British	290	5	0
Asian or Asian British	2	0	0
Chinese	1	0	0
Any other ethnic group	1	0	0
Preferred not to say	1	0	0

The table gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

11. Pupils' very good social development is enhanced during opportunities to work with each other in groups, paired discussions and to evaluate tasks. Many pupils in Years 3, 4 and 5 are eager to volunteer for tasks at lunchtime. The *School Council* and the house system enable pupils of different ages to work together to improve what happens in school. Their awareness of the wider world is enhanced through visitors, inter-school sports and opportunities to collect for charitable organisations. Pupils' good relationships with each other and with adults contribute strongly to the improvements in achievement that are underway, particularly in providing a good climate for asking and answering questions.
12. Opportunities for pupils to gain insights into values and beliefs, thereby developing self-esteem and spiritual awareness, are good. School assemblies help pupils to a sense of belonging and, each week, to celebrate the contributions and achievements of others. Times are provided when pupils sit in a circle and talk about matters that are important to them. These occasions also support their confidence and self-worth. Pupils willingly demonstrate that they can act responsibly, taking care when carrying out tasks in the classroom and around the school.
13. Pupils' cultural development is good. Various subjects provide pupils with a fuller understanding of the world around them. For example, during art and design and music, they develop aesthetic awareness, appraising a range of styles. In history and geography, pupils are introduced to the British and European heritage, studying fairy tales and working on, for example, the Greeks and Tudors. Pupils' awareness of non-western cultures is developed with topics that extend over several weeks on, for example, India and Africa. These topics are planned to provide cross-curricular themes that employ geography, music, art and craft and literacy. Visitors are a good feature of such work and have recently included musicians, dancers, and speakers about elephants and Indian children's toys.

Attendance

14. Attendance has improved in line with national figures since 1999. Most absences are for medical reasons. Some success has occurred in reducing the frequency of family holidays during term time. Such absences are not authorised when children's previous attendance level has not been good. Most pupils arrive on time in the morning. Nevertheless, during the inspection, a steady stream of pupils was still coming through the playground gate up to five

minutes or so after time and many of them were accompanied by a parent or carer. Several of these pupils are not recorded in the register as arriving late, which is unsatisfactory.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	5.0	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 educational year 2003-4.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

Overall, the quality of education is satisfactory and improving steadily. This improvement is beginning to have a positive impact on standards. Teaching and learning have improved considerably over the past year or so and are now good, especially in classes for younger age groups. The curriculum is satisfactory and the care of pupils and partnerships with parents are good overall.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching is good, which is starting to produce a positive impact on learning, increasing rates of progress and improving pupils' achievement. Assessment is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are good, which is building a solid foundation for raising standards as younger pupils move up the school, and improving the achievement of older pupils.
- The quality of teaching and learning is consistently good during literacy hours and in the Reception classes.
- Samples of work and discussions with staff indicate weaknesses in the teaching of science and insufficient emphasis on spelling.
- Teaching and support of pupils with special educational needs are good.
- Teachers emphasise links between the body of knowledge in different subjects very well, which helps pupils to relate what they learn to new situations, using it flexibly.

Commentary

15. Teaching and learning are good, which matches the finding in the last report. This quality was observed in a high percentage of lessons through the school, and two were very good. All remaining lessons were satisfactory. Only one lesson had unsatisfactory teaching but the other lessons in the same class were of a higher quality, indicating that unsatisfactory teaching is not typical. With the help of the local authority, the school has monitored teaching and learning regularly for the past couple of years. The records of this monitoring indicate a steadily improving picture. However, they also show that the overall quality was not always as consistent as it is now and that elements were unsatisfactory. Where there are weaknesses in pupils' standards, especially in older age groups, in spelling and science, for example, this inconsistent teaching in the past is the most likely cause. Present good teaching is ensuring that younger pupils are now being taught basic skills effectively. As a result, they are acquiring a good basis on which future progress can be built, resulting in good achievement. Good teaching is beginning to fill in gaps in the learning of older pupils, so their achievement is now improving and standards are rising.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 33 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
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0 (0%)	2 (6%)	25 (76%)	5 (15%)	1 (3%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
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The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons; figures in brackets show percentages where 30 or more lessons are seen.

16. One of the key factors in the school's recent improvement has been consistently good teaching in literacy hours and in the Reception classes. A recent focus on the improvement of pupils' writing skills has been successful. The impact is clearly shown in pupils' above average results in the 2004 National Curriculum tests and in their increased good use of adjectives and powerful verbs in their written work. A good variety of types of writing for particular purposes is taught effectively. Good examples included, in Year 5, letters to the Indian Prime Minister about the fate of tigers; poetry and storytelling throughout the school; in Year 4, the formation of important ideas about Colin Thompson's *Paper Bag Prince*; and in Year 1, how to write questions using question marks. Good management of the subject has ensured that teaching focuses pupils' attention on text, so they study how well-known children's authors organise language to convey meaning. As a result, learning is successfully based on the acquisition and use of similar skills to those of published authors. Teaching and learning are good in the Reception classes. Teachers, nursery nurses and assistants have good knowledge of their roles. Their good planning ensures that what is taught matches children's individual needs closely so, in each session, learning begins from exactly the correct point for good progress to occur. The overall quality of teaching and learning in mathematics is satisfactory, although what was directly observed in lessons was often good. However, samples from the pupils' work indicate that their past learning has not been as consistently strong as it is now. The main reason for the improvement is that management of subjects has been reorganised on a team basis. Especially in mathematics, which has been identified as a current priority for the school, this arrangement is proving effective in spreading information and expertise, thereby raising performance. In all other subjects, teaching and learning in lessons was generally satisfactory and included examples of good teaching.

17. A lack of emphasis on what pupils learn and how they learn it is the main reason that teaching in science has not advanced as rapidly as in English or mathematics. Work samples indicate an insufficient focus on the skills of scientific enquiry so, by Year 5, pupils' skills have fallen behind those that are normally expected. The style of teaching has not allowed pupils to acquire enough skills in prediction, designing fair tests for themselves and learning from observation which, in turn, adversely affects their recall of factual information in the subject. Samples of work also indicate weaknesses in spelling, especially amongst older pupils. Senior staff have already identified this feature and measures to rectify it have been introduced. For example, in classes across the earlier stages of education, a scheme that helps pupils to acquire skills in linking letters to related sounds has been introduced. Early indications are that this scheme has assisted teachers and teaching assistants to focus on these skills more consistently, making a good contribution to improving the overall quality of teaching and ensuring that secure learning now occurs in younger age groups. However, teachers' marking of spelling is still not always sharp enough in other subjects across the curriculum. As a result, pupils do not always employ routines, such as the use of spelling lists, dictionaries and glossaries, that would help to improve the situation further.

18. Pupils with special educational needs receive good teaching and support. Since the last inspection, arrangements to manage provision for special needs have been improved considerably. The co-ordinator has introduced good systems to ensure that information about how pupils can be helped to make progress is shared effectively between teachers and learning assistants. Adaptations of planning are based effectively on pupils' needs with good reference to individual education plans. This good provision results in good learning of basic skills, and good progress. Pupils with special needs therefore achieve well in relation to their targets.

19. The teaching and support of facts and ideas that link several subjects are planned very effectively and teachers often make such knowledge explicit during lessons. As a result, pupils are often good at realising that what they have been taught in one subject is applicable

to another. This flexibility in the use of knowledge enhances their progress. Recent positive change in how subjects are managed is one of the main reasons. The content of different subjects is planned in teams of staff, so different specialisms are fully represented and included when pupils' learning is prepared, thus sharing knowledge and expertise.

20. In English, mathematics and information and communication technology, the use of assessment and monitoring to inform influence what is planned is thorough. Records that track pupils' progress are also in place. However, uses of such information are inconsistent in science, religious education and other subjects. Senior staff are aware of those areas that have not been developed adequately and plans for improvement are in place. A prioritised programme to introduce change is established.

The curriculum

Currently, what is planned is sufficiently broad and provides enough richness to offer pupils a sound curriculum. Accommodation and learning resources are good and are used effectively to support teaching.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- What is taught in religious education does not fully meet statutory requirements.
- Owing to past weaknesses, pupils in Year 5 have not been prepared well enough for the next stage of their education.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good.
- What is taught is much better matched to pupils' learning needs than in the recent past.
- Extra-curricular provision in sport and the arts is good.

Commentary

21. At the time of the last inspection, the curriculum was insufficiently balanced between different subjects, with not enough emphasis on some of them. Improvement has been secured and this situation is no longer the case. However, this legacy has contributed to gaps in the learning of pupils in Year 5 and several have therefore underachieved. As a result, they have not been sufficiently well prepared for what is normally expected when they move on to Year 6 in their next school. This shortcoming has been identified and is being addressed, which is remedying the difficulty for pupils in Years 3 and 4, and in the younger age groups. All subjects in the National Curriculum, including information and communication technology, which was a key issue in the previous report, are now taught with sufficient breadth and balance. *The Curriculum for the Foundation Stage* (a nationally published document that explains what must be taught in Nursery and Reception years) is used effectively to plan what is taught in the Reception classes. However, in religious education, not all aspects of the locally agreed syllabus are adequately provided. Whilst the subject is taught in all classes, planning is not sufficiently based on the latest locally agreed syllabus, omitting some aspects that are required and including others that are not.
22. Under the strong guidance of the headteacher and other senior staff, the school is undertaking a major review of provision that is to be implemented next year. In recent years, innovation has been limited, although issues in the last inspection have been addressed satisfactorily. Dramatic improvement has been introduced in information and communication technology, for example, and in provision for pupils with special educational needs. In both cases, strategic planning is now good, owing to stronger management and co-ordination. Uses of information and communication technology are now fully integrated into other subject areas and, in nearly all classes, opportunities for its use are written explicitly into teachers' planning. Cross-curricular links in all subjects are often planned effectively, helping pupils to understand that knowledge in one subject provides insights into a range of situations, and not only that where it was originally taught. Teachers understand the essential features of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies, so planning in English and mathematics is often

good. However, science is a weaker subject, owing to a lack of emphasis on using pupils' own observational skills as a basis for developing factual knowledge, as well as ideas of fair testing. A reliance on worksheets is often the cause, resulting in too much work that is aimed at average levels of attainment, with insufficient adaptation to meet the needs of quicker learners. Provision for pupils with special educational needs (another key issue in 1999) is now good. Since then, with strong support from the active linked governor, the co-ordinator's role has been developed well and now ensures that provision is well planned and organised. Pupils now receive good levels of support, including adaptations of what is taught, that meet the requirements in either statements of need or individual education plans.

23. Extra-curricular provision effectively supports the curriculum in sport and music. The choir and orchestra make a valuable contribution to the cultural life of the school. Input from the local leisure centre, the local middle school and the physical education co-ordinator ensure that pupils are able to extend their basic sports skills. A range of themed weeks and visits in the local area enliven provision, although there are no residential visits.

Care, guidance and support

Arrangements for pupils' care, welfare and health and safety are good. The provision of support, advice and guidance based on monitoring is satisfactory. The involvement of pupils in the school's work through seeking, valuing and acting on their views is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents and pupils are pleased with school's levels of care and concern for pupils.
- Effective procedures ensure a healthy and safe environment.
- Guidance given to pupils on how to progress in English and mathematics is good.
- The school provides a variety of opportunities for pupils to express opinions about life in the school.

Commentary

24. As at the time of the previous inspection, staff show good levels of concern for the needs of pupils and provide good role models to encourage personal qualities. Pupils' self-esteem is raised effectively by a good range of rewards such as praise, house points, displays of certificates and celebrations in the weekly achievement assemblies. Any good performance that pupils achieve outside school is also included and applauded. However, the school has no structured approach to recording pupils' personal qualities and development. This omission is not as significant as it might otherwise be, as staff understand their pupils well and guide them towards positive attitudes and good social skills. Parents are pleased with this level of support, seeing the school as essentially caring and staff who are approachable. In particular, parents agreed that their children are well supported when they first come into the school, either into Reception classes, or if they arrive in other years.
25. Governors are effectively involved in overseeing health and safety arrangements and, for example, recently considered the safety of playground equipment and arrangements for coping with emergencies. The local education authority also visits to identify any potential hazards. Teachers follow relevant guidance for lessons such as science, design and technology and physical education, where particular issues of safety might arise. Local procedures for child protection are followed closely and the new headteacher has introduced systems to ensure that all staff understand local guidance on how to deal with concerns. Arrangements for first-aid are good, with several staff having undergone training. Thorough records are kept of any treatments that are given to pupils and parents are informed if children bump their head.
26. The school has recently introduced a new system to monitor and guide the progress of pupils in English and mathematics and this is providing useful and effective information. Pupils have detailed target books which are also shared with parents. Older pupils recognise that these

targets are helpful in guiding them as to what they need to do to improve – they are also provided with target cards that are replaced when they are ready to move on. Year 2 pupils also understand the target books but are not yet fully using them. The monitoring carried out by the staff has enabled them to identify pupils who are at risk of underachieving, so action can be taken. The headteacher's special classes to boost performance are a telling example. However, these arrangements are not sufficiently extensive to provide consistently useful information about progress in other subjects.

27. Pupils know to whom they would go if they need help. They also consider that their teachers listen to their ideas. Pupils are enabled to influence what happens in the school by means of the school council and in discussions in the classroom during occasions when they sit in a circle and talk about matters that concern them and also at other times. Innovations that have resulted include a games shed, a climbing frame in the playground and a friendship bench.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Links with parents are good. Links with the local community are satisfactory and with other schools are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents hold the school in high regard.
- The parents' involvement at home and in school makes a good contribution to pupils' achievement.
- The school provides a wide range of information about what happens in school.
- The involvement of other education providers extends experiences for pupils' personal, social and academic development.

Commentary

28. In the pre-inspection questionnaire and at the meeting, parents indicated that they are very pleased with what the school provides in most respects. Inspectors' findings confirm parents' positive views. Their children like school; the staff expect their children to work hard, and the children make good progress. These responses are similar to those at the time of the last inspection, although many parents stated their opinion that much improvement has taken place in the short time since the appointment of the headteacher.
29. The school sends home good quality news and information regularly and other letters about general matters. Well attended termly workshops about, for example, the teaching of mathematics and reading have recently been held. Family learning sessions have taken place to help parents with their understanding of computers. Teachers are readily available and the parents are welcome to talk to them at the end of the day. The school helpfully supplies information about pupils' progress in a variety of ways. As well as the formal termly consultation meetings, there are others to discuss targets. The extensive target setting booklets not only enable parents to see their child's progress but also indicate the next steps that should be made. Annual reports on pupils' progress, sent to parents in the summer term, provide a good record of what pupils know and can do in each subject.
30. Parents have good opportunities to influence what the school does. A questionnaire is sent out twice a year. An outline of the strategic plan is sent to parents, inviting their ideas. Parents are also invited to monthly coffee mornings to meet the headteacher and a governor. The school helpfully sends out guidance notes on how parents can help their children to learn at home. Nearly all pupils confirm that their parents either help or, at least, ensure that homework is completed. Some parents help to support pupils in class, especially at the lower end of the school. A parents' association is well established and works hard to organise both fund raising and social events successfully.

31. Pupils' sporting skills are enhanced with specialist coaching at the local leisure centre and with the physical education specialist from a sports college. Pupils' understanding of the community is enhanced by contacts with the local church and by occasions when the choir and orchestra go into the community to perform at Christmas and during *Village Day*. The curriculum is enhanced by visits to places in the local area, as well as further afield. Good contacts with a cluster of local first and middle schools also extend educational provision. The more able pupils in Year 5 visit the middle school to enrich their understanding of mathematics and to take part in days devoted to writing skills. The staff meet regularly to extend their management skills and to share good practice in teaching. They are also producing well-designed information booklets for parents on the teaching of different aspects of the curriculum.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management of the school are good overall. The headteacher, appointed around a year ago, is a very determined leader with a strong vision. In a very short time, he has already established effective managerial teams that are moving the school forward. Senior managers support him ably. The governing body takes a prominent role and strongly influences the school's most important strategic aim of reversing all signs of underachievement.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The leadership of the headteacher is very good.
- Provision for religious education does not meet statutory requirements.
- The senior management team and core subject leaders work together effectively to ensure that weaknesses are identified openly, and that improvements are introduced.
- The management of special educational needs is good.
- Governors are well aware of the school's needs and priorities, and effectively monitor and support it, demonstrating a very high level of commitment and understanding.

Commentary

32. The headteacher provides high quality leadership, and is capably supported by his deputy. The work of the school reflects his strong sense of purpose and very straightforward ideas focused on raising achievement and providing the best for all pupils. With his open and consultative style of leadership, he has united the staff and formed a coherent structure for middle management based on effective teamwork. His energetic presence and sensitivity to the needs of all staff and pupils generate a happy, constructive climate for learning and effectively bind the community, correctly raising the confidence of parents that the school is moving forward rapidly. Planning for improvement is good. It is based on careful analysis of pupils' rates of progress through broadening and refining uses of assessment and detailed information from improved systems for monitoring teaching and learning. At the same time, complacency is not allowed to intervene. For example, it is appreciated that much remains to be done. Further developmental aims include work to spread the use of assessment and monitoring far beyond the core subjects of English and mathematics, and ensuring that progress for all pupils is maintained at a good rate, so all elements of underachievement are eradicated. Furthermore, provision for religious education is currently unsatisfactory, failing to meet the statutory requirements of the locally agreed syllabus.
33. The deputy head and other key staff are thoroughly involved in the work of the school. This openness reflects the headteacher's determination to empower the whole staff in a mission to raise standards, drawing on their expertise and fully involving them in sharing ideas and contributing to decision making. A good, solid start has already been made, staff work well together and are united behind this strong commitment to improve standards of achievement. Core subject leaders manage their subjects well. Systematic monitoring in English, mathematics and information and communication technology is being used well in tracking standards and identifying points for improvement. However, some procedures are new, so have not had sufficient time to produce their full impact on standards. Teachers are aware of

the need to ensure the highest possible achievement for the most able pupils. Whilst all teachers are beginning to set appropriately challenging tasks, some already doing it well, this practice is inconsistent between subjects and classes.

34. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. The SENCo collaborates effectively with other staff to ensure that pupils' needs are accurately identified and that a good level of support is offered. This aspect has improved considerably since the last inspection, when elements of provision failed to meet statutory requirements. As a result, pupils are progressing well towards their targets and, when they are attained, new ones are set.
35. Governors make a very strong contribution to the school's direction. Their relationship with senior staff is based on good communication and support, together with a questioning approach. They ask about what should be done to effect improvement; the consequences of introducing new arrangements; and keep a close eye on information about the work of the school. These characteristics are indicative of very good strategic leadership. As a result, governors are well informed and carry out their responsibilities effectively, despite the lack of statutory compliance in religious education. A well-established structure of committees enables them to process the information that they gather. They are strongly committed to raising standards and have been very strongly involved in all related decisions about action taken to achieve it. Procedures for the professional development of the staff are good and closely linked with such priorities. The results of this good management are seen, for example, in the very significant proportion of good quality teaching that is now occurring. Records of monitoring by the local authority and the school itself provide compelling evidence that this improvement has recently been rapid and is now a constant feature. As a result, the school is well placed to sustain its aims of improvement.
36. The financial plan and the school improvement plan are closely linked, so senior staff and governors are in a strong position in relation to monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of spending on school improvement priorities. Systems in place for monitoring, and procedures for financial management, are robust. Funds secured for special projects and in support of different groups of pupils are spent wisely. The principles of best value are applied rigorously by all involved.

Financial Information

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	910,363	Balance from previous year	0
Total expenditure	868,368	Balance carried forward to the next year	41,995
Expenditure per pupil	2,608		

In the table, the figure of '0' is recorded as balance from the previous year as the original balance was returned in full to the local authority. The reason was that over-estimates of the number of pupils on roll had led to an overpayment in funding for the relevant year.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Currently, 50 children attend in the two Reception classes. Effective arrangements ease children into full-time education in September, January and April. Both Reception classes are skilfully set up in shared spacious, bright accommodation. Children are well prepared for their start, with useful visits beforehand and positive links are established with their parents. Almost all children have received pre-school education of some type prior to their start. The starting point of only a few children causes concern; a large group is about average, and another large group are particularly confident and articulate for their age. Overall attainment on entry is therefore above what is usually the case.

Currently, children in both classes are achieving well. Indications are that nearly all of them are on course to attain the normally expected goals for their age group by Year 1, and that many will exceed them in all areas of learning. Since the appointment of the new headteacher and, even more recently, the Foundation Stage co-ordinator, improvement in provision is very evident. The learning environment has been carefully reorganised into well-defined, stimulating areas, which includes the space outside. Individual needs are identified early. Those children whose characteristics give rise for concern are quickly assessed and, if necessary, placed on the register of special educational needs. They then receive good care and support, which is targeted to meet their needs.

What is taught is based closely on *The Curriculum for The Foundation Stage*. Good planning ensures that children are provided with a wide range of challenging and interesting activities. The staff are fully aware of the principles that underpin good practice for young children, including plenty of opportunities for play that is carefully structured to promote learning. All staff plan and work together as an effective team. Monitoring of children's progress takes place on a constant basis, so achievements are noted and built on well.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Nearly all children exceed the expected goals by the end of the Reception year.
- Children achieve well because of consistently good teaching.
- Children's attitudes and behaviour are very good.
- 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

37. 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 the children feel very comfortable and want to please their teachers and assistants. This positive provision results in eagerness to learn, good behaviour and much enjoyment. The children know routines well and settle to tasks with growing confidence and maturity while trying new activities. The adults set clear boundaries for behaviour and are very good role models. Children share well; learn to respect each other; co-operate with the use of resources; and are willing to take turns when working and playing together.
38. Teaching is good, including very good features. For example, learning support staff are used particularly well as partners in the teaching process, helping to establish high standards of

behaviour and social skills. Children's play and responses are supported and extended sensitively through direct questioning. Children are given every opportunity to develop initiative and to manage tasks independently by themselves whenever it is appropriate. Encouragement of these skills was noted frequently during observations of sessions. As a direct consequence, children often took pride in sticking with a self-selected activity until its completion, and then tidied up when they had finished. All 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 consistently good teaching.
- Children make good progress in language skills, vocabulary and basic reading and writing throughout the Reception year.
- Teachers and teaching assistants are skilful listeners and actively encourage children to speak confidently, using good standard English.
- The school/home reading system is well established.

Commentary

39. Children make good progress and they achieve well, because basic skills are taught consistently to meet their individual needs. All staff make careful assessments of children's progress so that teaching matches requirements. A high proportion of children are likely to exceed the expected goals by the end of the Year, particularly in speaking, listening and reading. Writing skills do not always advance quite as rapidly. This aspect of the area of learning is more complex and the younger children have not been in school since September. Therefore, although they cover a lot of ground and get a good start, they do not have as much time as others to attain as highly.
40. Good teaching has a positive impact on pupils' learning. Both class teachers give very precise, practical instructions about how to carry out well-planned activities. Available resources are used skilfully. For example, the role-play areas, especially that currently known as *The Garden Centre*, 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 while playing in imaginative, challenging situations.
41. Work with stories, usually organised in small groups, also 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 help 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, whole sentences. The focus on developing children's communication and language skills is continued 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, and early reading, writing and word processing skills. Nearly all the children listen with enjoyment to their best loved stories. During the inspection, *The very hungry caterpillar* was a source of constant interest and enjoyment.
42. The book areas are well resourced and inviting. Children handle books carefully and take them home to share with adults. Many children are already associating some sounds with letters and higher attainers 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

- Most children are on course to exceed the expected learning goals by the end of the Reception year.
- Children are eager with very positive attitudes towards mathematical ideas.
- Teaching and learning are good and children are provided with a good range of practical opportunities.

Commentary

43. Most children are likely to exceed the expected goals in this area by the end of the Reception year, which represents good achievement. Teachers provide good, challenging opportunities for children to develop mathematically in a range of situations. For example, shopping activities and pictorial representations of numbers are used to enhance learning. In a good lesson, children were fully engaged in developing mathematical ideas to solve simple problems. They were secure in counting to 20 and even beyond, and learning about the doubles of numbers through carefully planned practical activities. A high proportion write numerals correctly and recognise written or printed numbers. Higher attainers record repeating patterns with understanding of the ideas and processes that are involved. They recognise symmetry in shapes, sort by colours and size. Higher attainers are able to identify shapes accurately, often picking out examples correctly, even when two properties are combined, such as “the bigger circle”.
44. 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 more pencils will be needed for our group today?” As a result, children are progressing well in 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. Teachers 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, for example, through counting ladybirds or caterpillars etc. Children also gain some 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, valuable support in lessons.

Commentary

45. Many children begin at school with comparatively good general knowledge, which is further enhanced with good teaching. As a result, many of them exceed most of the expected goals in this area of learning and nearly all are at least met. Teaching is particularly well planned to meet those goals that are related to exploration and investigation, and activities are often carried out in the grounds. Children enjoy such activity and remain very absorbed looking at things that grow. The current topic, entitled *Growing*, is well developed in indoor and outdoor situations that enhance children's understanding of plants and what they need in order to grow successfully. Children develop good understanding of life-cycles, through story, songs and role-play. Good opportunities are provided to explore the meaning of related language and children look at factual books with great interest and enjoy learning from the pictures and diagrams. The topic of *Minibeasts* is similarly well developed through good uses of resources and stimulating activities, such as a hunt for minibeasts, resulting in close observations of caterpillars, stick insects, slugs and many others.
46. Teaching and learning are good. Again, support staff are used very well to make effective interventions in planned activities and to extend children's responses through appropriate questions. In a good session, for example, knowledge about various creatures was skilfully developed through role-play, which was supported effectively by an adult. Children learnt to recognise and name various creatures, and were encouraged to examine creatures with the use of magnifying glasses.
47. Suitable resources of good quality are used very well, so children learn practically and are therefore thoroughly absorbed, enjoying experiences of working with sand, water and malleable materials such as plasticine and dough. They use paint and learn about mixing different colours. Several higher attainers are challenged successfully to name many colours correctly and to recall the combinations that make secondary colours. Children are fast developing skills in asking questions to find out how things work. Their skills in comparing objects to find similarities and differences are often advanced for their age. Well-organised cooking activities take place regularly, when children engage in, for example, making a pizza or biscuits and recognise the changes in materials brought about by kneading or heating.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Most children are on course to exceed the early learning goals.
- Teachers plan a suitable range of indoor and outdoor activities.
- Resources are effectively used to enhance learning.
- The outdoor area is not yet well developed.

Commentary

48. Nearly all children achieve well and many are likely to exceed the expected goals for their age. They move with confidence around classrooms, recognising each other's space. They show appropriate control and understanding of safety when outside. Staff always provide calm and sensitive support and show very good understanding of how young children's skills of running, jumping and balance are developed. They have a strong awareness of protecting children's safety. The range of large and small outdoor resources, such as the play-house, fixed climbing equipment, large bricks and others, are used well to promote acquisition of physical skills.
49. Teaching is good and included a very good lesson, which focused on different ways of moving and balancing. Learning was very effective in this pacy lesson that buzzed along very enjoyably for the children. All of them responded accordingly, making rapid progress as they practised their ideas with both control and enthusiasm. This quality of teaching is clearly promoting a high standard of physical development. Children have regular lessons in the

main school hall, as well as opportunities 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 with 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 strokes with brushes. They are developing confidence and accuracy in the use of scissors and joining materials such as glue. As a result of all these well planned opportunities, they are developing good hand and eye co-ordination. During a good session, children very confidently used large bricks to make models of castles, placing one brick on another with a lot of care.

50. 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 facility 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 likely to exceed the early learning goals by the end of the year.
- Children work in a well-ordered environment in which creativity and expressiveness are valued.
- Teaching is good in providing 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

51. By the end of the Reception year, nearly all children achieve well and a large proportion exceed the expected goals 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 those that are planned across the areas of learning. Their artwork in the style of Eric Carle, for example, is of good quality. Children were observed mixing paints and making textured paintings, using a variety of tools imaginatively and with growing independence.
52. Teaching and learning are good. A range of interesting settings in which to learn and that stimulate children’s ideas are provided. Children particularly enjoy well set-up imaginative areas and staff actively join them, thus monitoring involvement, and encouraging participation. Good opportunities to be an actor playing a role or an artist exploring colour, texture, shape and form are successfully positive outcomes. Effective teaching ensures the involvement of all children and the acquisition of related language.
53. Good opportunities are also provided for singing, dancing, of which the maypole is an unusual example, and making music. The use of number rhymes, games and songs enhances learning in other areas. Children sing enthusiastically and work with enthusiastic involvement. When spoken to by inspectors, all the children showed obvious enjoyment, taking pride in their work and speaking interestingly about it.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**, despite underachievement in Year 5.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' achievement in Year 5 is unsatisfactory, although their learning is currently good, owing to good teaching.
- Standards are rising and a high proportion of pupils in Years 1 and 2 are attaining at a level above that normally expected for their age.
- The quality of teaching and learning observed in lessons is consistently good through the school.
- The subject is well led and managed.

Commentary

54. At the time of the last inspection, the standards of pupils in Year 5, the year that pupils leave the school, were about average overall. Currently, standards in Year 5 remain average. As the national picture is higher now than in 1999, so the school's standards have in fact risen, keeping pace with the improvement in the national average. However, records indicate that too many pupils have not made progress at the expected rate over the past few years, so there is underachievement. This unsatisfactory situation is partly caused because insufficient pupils attain at higher than expected levels in comparison with their favourable starting points.
55. Spelling is a particular weakness. Many pupils, including even those of otherwise high attainment, spell poorly. The main reason is a failure to apply simple routines that would help. For example, situations were observed when words that were available on whiteboards, in texts that pupils were using, or previously in their own writing, were written incorrectly. Pupils' present teachers are aware of these deficiencies and are working hard to reverse them. The quality of teaching and learning observed in both Year 5 classes was good, and it is clearly apparent that standards have risen during the year. One of the most striking improvements is in pupils' choices of words and phrases to enrich their writing. As a result, their language is often imaginative, and engages readers well. Standards in reading are average. Pupils are enthusiastic about favourite writers and nearly all of them read texts that are appropriate for their age group fluently and expressively. In the library, pupils in Years 4 and 5 gave good explanations about how books are organised on shelves and grouped together in sections according to their subject matter. They knew how to find what they were looking for and how to use an index. These skills were around those expected for their age.
56. A pattern of improvement is evident in classes through the school, so overall achievement is rising. In Years 3 and 4, for example, the same emphasis as in Year 5 on how to produce precise and imaginative writing is clearly apparent. This improvement in pupils' skills is related to successful leadership of the subject. Monitoring of pupils' work identified weaknesses and focused on strategies to improve the situation. This approach has brought success, resulting in improvements. In Year 2, pupils' overall achievement is now satisfactory, although currently standards remain around average. Nevertheless, a large proportion of pupils are now attaining at a level above that normally expected. The reason that overall standards do not fully reflect this development is that the proportion of pupils with identified special educational needs is also higher than usual. Understandably, several of these pupils are unlikely to reach expected levels, despite their good progress, so the impact of the increase in high attainers is reduced. Good leadership and management of the subject also identified the need to improve the teaching of letters and sounds. A new phonic scheme has been introduced. As well as providing pupils with an increased range of strategies to help with their reading, it is also helping to improve spelling.

57. The capacity to build on pupils' achievements as they move through the school is good. Achievement is now good in the Reception year, which means that many children are currently beginning the National Curriculum at starting points above those normally expected. Teaching and learning through the school are good, so good progress is now set to build consistently on these improved starting points throughout the school. Furthermore, records of monitoring and self-evaluation, confirmed in the inspection, indicate that this improvement in teaching and learning is a constant feature of the past couple of years. It has been especially rapid since the appointment of the headteacher and reorganisation of leadership teams. This good teaching is based on good planning, which focuses on pupils' needs. For example, targets are set and shared with them, so they know what they must do to learn effectively. It extends to adaptations that support pupils with special educational needs well. In nearly all lessons, this aspect was evident. As a result, support staff knew exactly what to do to help these pupils make progress. Their questioning and explanations were invariably good, so pupils were confident and worked well towards their individual targets. An often very strong feature of teaching was the choice of interesting methods and material to engage pupils. In Year 4, for example, pupils set and answered their own "hot-seat" questions for the central character in *The Paper Bag Prince*, the book that they were reading together. Another telling example was in Year 1, when a girl took on the role of *Jack*, explaining why she wanted to climb the beanstalk in the first place. She provided an excellent role-model to other pupils, with quick-witted confidence, which provided all pupils with a high standard at which to aim.
58. Co-ordination of the subject is good. The leader of the literacy team is knowledgeable and understands what to do to ensure that improvement is sustained. She is a strong role model for other staff, as was seen in her own very good teaching in Year 2. A class of higher attaining pupils was taught very skilfully to produce high quality writing. In Years 1 and 4, ideas such as reorganising pupils into different classes, known as *Core Groups*, that are based on their level of prior attainment, are being tried and monitored. If this arrangement is successful in increasing rates of progress, it is planned to spread it to other years.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

59. Reading is used well in other subjects to find information and for general research. Pupils use the non-fiction sections of the library effectively. Word-processing and programs that support writing are used effectively in information and communication technology, as well as during literacy hours. However, in a range of subjects, pupils' own writing is not employed as often as it might be, which limits opportunities to write factually in, for example, history and geography, or expressively in religious education. The main reason is that dependence on worksheets sometimes prevents pupils from practising their own skills.

MATHEMATICS

The provision for mathematics is **satisfactory** overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' achievement is currently satisfactory but it is improving.
- A high proportion of pupils in Year 2 is attaining at a level above that normally expected.
- Assessment of pupils' work is used effectively to plan teaching.
- Good teamwork is beginning to improve leadership of the subject.

Commentary

60. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall. Whilst pupils in Years 1 and 4 are making good progress in their learning, underachievement occurs in Year 5. Teaching and support for learning are satisfactory overall, with good support for pupils who have special educational needs. Work is generally well-matched to the different needs of all pupils. In lessons that were observed, pupils generally made good progress, which is boosting their achievement,

indicating that the school is now improving well. The main aim for the leadership team is to sustain this improvement, so it becomes embedded into the school's practice.

61. Standards currently in Year 5 are about the expected level for this age group. However, the number of pupils achieving higher levels is not as large as it might be, given pupils' often good levels of attainment on entry. As the new senior leaders, including the headteacher, become established in the school, indications are that standards, especially in Years 1 and 4, are improving. Some pupils in Year 5 are not achieving as well as they could, as gaps in their knowledge are still apparent. However, in lessons observed, the pupils made good progress and the staff are developing good skills in building on what the pupils have learnt and understood. Since the appointment of the new headteacher, groups to boost the attainment of these pupils have been set up, and this practice is also bringing about improvements in their achievement. Standards in Year 2 remain average overall. This year group has a larger than usual proportion of pupils with special educational needs which affect their capacity to reach expected levels. Nevertheless, the proportion currently attaining at levels above those normally expected is higher than indicated in recent National Curriculum tests. This feature indicates that pupils are now better taught and challenged and their opportunity to meet levels that are appropriate to them are much better, so achievements are consequently improving.
62. Analysis of pupils' work indicates a strong emphasis on numerical calculations; good reinforcement of strategies for pupils to devise their own methods; and a thorough planning of all the expected elements in the National Curriculum. Such improvements are apparent throughout the school, although they are particularly evident in Year 4. For example, during the inspection, pupils discovered how to find the new position of two-dimensional shapes in space after translations were made. The staff assessed pupils' ideas about this work effectively. This assessment was detailed and accurate, and meant that what was taught could be adapted to meet pupils' learning requirements. As a result, they achieved well. This judgement includes those with special educational needs, whose requirements are served well by learning assistants who question and instruct effectively. This help is based on good assessment, which leads to planning that addresses needs closely.
63. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, with many examples of good teaching in the lessons observed. However, from analysis of pupils' past work, it is evident that, over time, achievement for some pupils has been unsatisfactory, with insufficient challenge for more able pupils especially. Development of their thinking and mathematical ideas at levels above those expected for their age has been insufficient. Indeed, in Year 5, gaps in pupils' knowledge have caused the attainment of too many pupils to fall below average. In this year group, many pupils are still learning to develop secure understanding of place value and its use when numbers are multiplied or divided by multiples of ten. In contrast, in Year 2, many pupils are developing good strategies to calculate in their heads. For example, several are adept in adding on nine, by adding ten, and then subtracting one. Another significant factor is the organisation of classes into *Core Groups* in Years 1 and 4. This practice has had a considerable impact on raising achievement and improving standards in these years and it is intended to introduce it throughout the school.
64. Leadership and management of mathematics are satisfactory overall and improving. A new organisation for co-ordinating the subject involves a team that represents each stage of education. The headteacher is part of this group and takes a strong lead in ensuring improvement with several initiatives that are beginning to have an impact. Teamwork has also meant that teachers are well-informed, which results in an improving consistency of approach. As a result, pupils' different needs are catered for well. Monitoring is effective and plans are now considered carefully to ensure a good match of tasks to the range of abilities within lessons.

Mathematics across the curriculum

65. Opportunities to use mathematical ideas are carefully thought through and planned as part of topic work. For example, in history in Year 5, pupils studied Vedic patterns and symmetry. Measurement is used in science and design and technology when, for example, pupils check the size of components for artefacts that they make or use newtons to measure force. Information and communication technology is frequently used in lessons, supporting pupils' learning and as an effective aid to teaching.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are below average in Year 5 and achievement is not good enough.
- Improvements in what is taught are underway.
- Too much dependence on worksheets restricts the quality of teaching and learning.
- Provision for and progress of pupils with special educational needs is good.

Commentary

66. Standards in science are currently below what is expected in Year 5. This level of attainment represents a decline since the last inspection, when they were judged to be average. The pupils in this year group underachieve. Analysis of pupils' work through the school shows a lot of unnecessary repetition, without enough increase in skills of scientific enquiry or recording. As a result, tasks are insufficiently challenging, especially for older, more able pupils, who receive few opportunities for devising their own investigations or for developing hypotheses based on observations and collected data.
67. Attainment by the end of Year 2 is around average and the pupils' achievement is satisfactory, providing a basis on which higher attainment can be built, as planned improvements to the curriculum are introduced. In observed lessons, examples of good teaching occurred in Years 1, 2 and 3, resulting in good acquisition of knowledge. Nevertheless, throughout the school, teaching is often based on worksheets. This method restricts opportunities for pupils to record the outcomes of investigations and experiments in their own way, which results in lack of practice in using scientific language. Teaching and learning are therefore satisfactory overall, rather than good. In one unsatisfactory lesson, the teaching provided insufficient questioning and discussion to ensure that pupils understood how to measure and record in newtons. The link between amounts of force generated and differences in how elastic bands were stretched was therefore not understood securely by several pupils. In the good lessons, resources were used effectively and opportunities for pupils to develop investigative skills were more apparent than in other teaching. For example, in one of these lessons, understanding of terminology such as "variables" and "control" was focused effectively and, in Year 4, a classroom display provided a flow chart, enabling pupils to classify rocks as igneous, sedimentary or metamorphic. Practical activities, during related good teaching, encouraged pupils to test rocks for durability and permeability as a means of classification.
68. Lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs are supported effectively throughout the school. They are often seated with a teaching assistant who works with them closely, explaining what they should do to carry out the tasks that are set. As a result, these pupils are able to understand teaching points and to make good progress in relation to their prior attainment and needs.
69. Leadership and management are beginning to improve and are currently satisfactory. Improvements in provision are underway. Prior to the appointment of the new headteacher, science had not recently been focused for development. As a result, little monitoring of teaching and learning had taken place. Despite this, the new subject team has quickly formed a clear view of what needs to be done to improve provision. For example, the current

scheme of work contains little information about how to develop skills, the order in which skills should be introduced, and when. Developmental planning therefore includes a review of this situation and the introduction of monitoring to ensure improvement. Procedures have already been put into place for tracking pupils' progress. However, the system is not fully in operation, so has not yet generated enough useful information as a basis for decisions.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Considerable improvement in provision has occurred since the last inspection.
- Standards have improved since the last inspection.
- Leadership and management of the subject are good.
- Resources are good and are continuing to improve.
- Most teachers are confident in using the new technology.

Commentary

70. Overall standards are in line with national expectations by the end of Year 2 and Year 5. This position is a marked improvement since the last inspection when standards were low; pupils made unsatisfactory progress, and the subject became a key issue. In the last few years, a lot of effort has gone into providing the necessary resources and establishing pupils' basic skills. This improvement is now accomplished and a few elements of pupils' knowledge and understanding now actually exceed what is expected nationally.
71. The overall quality of teaching is good. As a result, from an early age, pupils gain confidence in using new technology and are encouraged to see it as a key factor in making their work easier and more interesting. By Year 2, pupils have a wide range of competencies and use basic skills independently. For example, skills with the mouse and keyboard are frequently employed to click on to areas of the screen, and to use symbols and icons without help. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 are confident in the use of *PowerPoint*. In Year 5, pupils use the Internet as a normal tool for research. The school computer suite is now well-equipped and additional computers in classrooms are networked to the same system. As a result, pupils are enabled to reinforce skills that they acquire in the suite, when they use similar programs across the curriculum in their classrooms. In nearly all classes, opportunities for using information and communication technology are written into teachers' planning. This good practice helps to ensure that the subject is often and appropriately used to support learning. As a result, teachers engage pupils' interest well and pupils have very positive attitudes towards the use of computers. They are keen to develop new skills; they are happy to experiment, and they learn from errors. Collaboration with each other is a strong feature, as pupils discuss what they do and pass on information about new techniques and what has or has not worked very sensibly.
72. Leadership and management are good. The two leaders of the subject possess many complementary skills and provide very good support for colleagues, and the work of a technician ensures that systems are kept running smoothly. The leaders set a good example in the quality of their own teaching. The picture is further enhanced by strong awareness of the need for constant review and development in this rapidly changing subject. The action plan has clear priorities for further development. For example, interactive whiteboards are being introduced into all classrooms as rapidly as funding will allow. The potential of laptop computers with wireless cards and other technology that can be moved from class to class as required is a matter of current investigation as an aid to learning. Monitoring of teaching is a key element in ensuring that pupils' skills are built on as they progress through the school. Assessment is used effectively to track pupils' progress.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

73. In most lessons, teachers use computers as an effective tool for learning. Where available, they make use of computer-linked whiteboards as part of their lessons. Occasionally, opportunities are missed for using the available technology to support learning, but this shortcoming is infrequent. In most classes, word processing, for example, is used extensively to publish and display work. A telling example was a facsimile of a World War 2 newspaper in a class where pupils were studying that era in history. In mathematics and science, pupils enter data on to spreadsheets, make graphs and formulate questions.

HUMANITIES

History and Geography

It was not possible to observe lessons directly in either history or geography, so overall judgements of provision have not been made. Discussions took place and work was sampled.

Commentary

74. In both of these subjects, the National Curriculum is planned adequately. Good, explicit links are made across the curriculum. Good examples were apparent in a wide range of subjects.
75. In **geography**, in Year 2, pupils are currently studying coastal locations. This work is linked to science. What was seen of pupils' comparisons of the rural location around the school and seaside landscapes were of the expected level for their age. By Year 5, pupils are covering work on India, which encompasses factual information about the country, including its landscapes, food and currency. This work, which meets national expectations, is generally neat and well presented. Furthermore, it employs good geographical techniques and language, although spelling is a weak area, affecting the overall quality of what is presented. Pupils' studies include rural and urban locations, so they understand that parts of India are very modern, have skyscrapers and are developing rapidly. Good comparisons are then made with the village of Chembakolli, which is situated in the rainforest, south of Bangalore. Again, strong cross-curricular links, involving India's cultural heritage and work in mathematics, are a good feature. For example, pupils studied the symmetry and meaning of Vedic patterns and created examples of their own.
76. In **history**, pupils in Year 2 have recently studied Guy Fawkes and also the Great Fire of London. Their standards are around the expected level. In Year 5, work on the events of World War II is very thorough. This work includes strong links with literacy. Pupils kept their own diaries, imaginatively taking on the role of children during this period of history and recording what life might have been like. In terms of historical detail, elements of this work were above expected levels for their age. Pupils also constructed shelters, reminiscent of those used to escape bombing, developing knowledge and skills in design and technology to research ideas, plan and make these artefacts.
77. Management of geography and history is currently good. New study units are being devised for staff to follow, with links to assessment opportunities. Effective use of information and communication technology has been established. Ideas that support pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are well planned and promoted through a good range of interesting and relevant events, including visits and visitors, particularly related to topics in history.

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 local authority's agreed syllabus.
- Standards by the end of Year 2 and Year 5 are below expectations.
- Religious education does not make enough contributions to the development of pupils' literacy skills.

Commentary

78. Standards by the end of Year 2 and Year 5 are below the expectations set out in the local authority's agreed syllabus. The main reason is that what is taught does not match the statutory requirement of basing the curriculum on this document. Overall, pupils' achievements are therefore unsatisfactory and their progress, including those with special educational needs, is not fast enough. These findings are not reflected in the previous report, which found provision to be satisfactory, sometimes good. However, weaknesses that were raised, such as insufficient opportunities to write, are still evident now.
79. The locally agreed syllabus requires the study of customs and beliefs of several major religions. What is taught in school, although based on nationally prepared material, does not fully match the prescribed religions, includes at least one that is not required and omits several elements of others. As a result, pupils' knowledge does not match what is expected in the syllabus. Nevertheless, pupils are able to understand and appreciate values, such as caring and helping others that are common to many communities of faith. Pupils also acquire adequate knowledge of Christianity, and have 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 of stories from it. Even pupils in Year 5 were at early stages of understanding the importance and meaning of different religious symbols. 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. 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.
80. In observed lessons, teaching was satisfactory. Resources were used effectively and teachers' own knowledge of the subject was satisfactory. For example, in Year 2, pupils followed the story of Jonah and were shown that the Bible is really not one book. Pupils showed a positive interest. In Year 1, one lesson was effectively supported by a representative from the local church.
81. The subject managers are newly appointed, but have identified that the curriculum is unsatisfactory and have already made a start in bringing it in line with the agreed syllabus. Appropriate action is planned to eradicate weaknesses, which have resulted from lack of proper monitoring.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

These subjects were not a main focus of the inspection and direct observation of teaching was very limited, so overall judgements of provision have not been made. Nevertheless, sampling of work and discussions took place.

Commentary

Art and design, and Design and technology

82. What was sampled was often of a good standard of achievement and indicates that good use is made of links with other subjects. In Year 1, for example, pupils' drawings and paintings of characters from fairy tales showed a good understanding of various characters' traits and features that had been acquired in literacy sessions. Pupils' work was displayed well, setting questions about which stories the characters were from. Similar strong links are evident in design and technology. Work in the same year group demonstrated a good emphasis on teaching the skills of designing and making. For example, the level of care and quality of finish were high in pupils' explorations of levers to make moving components and uses of fasteners and hole-punches to join chains of paper and card. This emphasis on skills was apparent in the work of older pupils, showing good development from previous work. For example, pupils' illuminated letters in Year 3 were clearly based on careful observations of monastic records of Saxon times, linking well with history. Their *Daffodils* were another good example of a careful approach to artwork.
83. In Year 5, work seen in both these subjects was of a good standard. Similar good provision of opportunities for pupils to look at works of art and to observe the skills that were employed in creating them are apparent, as well as further strong cross-curricular learning. In art, for example, pupils looked at Islamic patterns before producing their own designs that might appear on Muslim prayer mats. In design and technology, they employed a variety of materials, including wood, string, card, glue and *Jinksjoints* (a well-known joining method in primary schools) to design and make early war machines that might have been used at the time of *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* that was a focused text during literacy hours.

Music

84. During the pre-inspection meeting, a number of parents expressed concern that standards in music might not be maintained at levels that they perceive as high. The reason was that a music specialist has recently left. However, no evidence for falling standards was found. The new headteacher has established a good link with local music students, who are supporting work very effectively. Pupils' singing, heard during assemblies, is of a good standard and makes a good contribution to overall spiritual awareness. A high proportion of pupils learn to play instruments and an orchestra is available to them to acquire skills of playing together with other musicians. It was not possible to observe lessons directly, but those pupils who were asked are very pleased with what they do and enjoy the subject.

Physical education

85. The majority of lessons, apart from swimming, are taught by staff from the local leisure centre, providing a strong link with the community. This arrangement provides appropriate opportunities for the development of skills in gymnastics, team games and athletics. The bulk of resources is provided by the leisure centre, although the school has a small range of its own.
86. The school has a swimming pool of its own, which provides good opportunities for beginners to reach the government's minimum requirements for safety. A large majority of pupils attain this standard. However, the pool is unsuitable to challenge higher attainers to develop their skills, which is a weakness.
87. Extra-curricular provision is good. Opportunities to participate in a range of sports are provided in a variety of ways. For example, the subject's team leader, staff from the leisure centre and a netball club at the middle school are all involved.

Leadership and management

88. Co-ordination of the creative, aesthetic, practical and physical subjects is generally good. The main leader of each is knowledgeable and effective. In physical education, it is recognised that although present provision is good, it has drawbacks. For example, a risk has been identified that staff may lose touch with teaching requirements in the National Curriculum as their responsibility for planning and taking lessons is reduced.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

89. The programme for personal, social and health education is good. Good advice and guidance are provided in lessons about how to keep safe and healthy, and provide opportunities to explore ideas of general well being. Good links are established with other subjects. For example, in science, pupils learn about the beneficial effects of a good diet and ideas related to the importance of exercise are often raised in physical education. Teaching about the community, kindness towards others, and related ideas are developed into practical citizenship through, for example, harvest festival gifts and care of the environment. Times are also set aside when pupils can sit together in a circle and raise matters of importance or concern to them.

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	4
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	4
Value for money provided by the school	4
Overall standards achieved	4
Pupils' achievement	5
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	3
Attendance	4
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The quality of education provided by the school	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	4
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	4
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	4
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3
The leadership and management of the school	3
The governance of the school	2
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	3

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