

INSPECTION REPORT

**FRANCES OLIVE ANDERSON
CHURCH OF ENGLAND (AIDED) PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Lea, Gainsborough

LEA area: Lincolnshire

Unique reference number: 120625

Interim Headteacher: Mrs D Townsend

Lead inspector: Mr C D Loizou

Dates of inspection: 27 – 29 June 2005

Inspection number: 268054

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Primary
School category: Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils: 4 to 11
Gender of pupils: Mixed
Number on roll: 161

School address: The Grove
Lea
Gainsborough
Lincolnshire

Postcode: DN21 5EP

Telephone number: 01427 612827
Fax number: 01427 612827
E-mail address: enquiries@olive-anderson.lincs.sch.uk

Appropriate authority: Governing body

Name of chair of Mr A Hardwick
governors:

Date of previous 18 January 1999
inspection:

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Frances Olive Anderson Church of England (Voluntary Aided) Primary School is an infant and junior school situated in the village of Lea, near Gainsborough in Lincolnshire. There are 161 boys and girls on roll, which is average in size. The school admits up to 28 four-year-olds into its Reception class each year and there are currently 18 Reception aged children. The children's attainment on entry to the school is average overall, especially in language and communication skills and mathematical development. There are seven single-age classes, including the Reception class. Most of the pupils live near to the school but a significant number travel considerable distances because the area the school serves includes families from the town of Gainsborough. Almost all the pupils are of white British heritage. Less than one per cent of pupils claim free school meals, which is well below average, but this is influenced by the very low take up of free school meals. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is average (17 per cent) and four of the pupils have a Statement of Special Educational Need.

The school is currently managed by an interim headteacher, appointed by the Local Authority, who will manage the school until the recently appointed headteacher takes up her post.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
18645	Charalambos Loizou	Lead inspector	Foundation Personal, social and health education Science Information and communication technology Physical education Stage
32658	Nicky Bolton	Lay inspector	
2509	Gail Cowmeadow	Team inspector	Special educational needs English Art and design Design and technology Music
18331	Jonathan Sutcliffe	Team inspector	Mathematics Geography History

The inspection contractor was :

Inspire Educational Ltd

The Coach House
132 Whitaker Road
Derby

DE23 6AP

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

The school provides a satisfactory education but has serious weaknesses. Standards are currently below average in English and average in mathematics and science by Year 6. Although the teaching is satisfactory overall, standards and achievement are uneven across the school so there is some underachievement by the time the pupils leave the school. The interim headteacher has provided stability and satisfactory leadership this year but, overall, leadership and management are unsatisfactory. The school offers unsatisfactory value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The school has lacked a substantive headteacher for some years with a resulting lack of consistent direction
- Standards have declined and achievement across the school is uneven
- Standards in writing are too low from Year 1 through to Year 6
- The children in the Reception year achieve well and make good progress because the teaching is good and the Foundation Stage is well managed
- Although the teaching is satisfactory overall, teachers are not challenging pupils of average ability enough, especially in mathematics where standards are not high enough by Year 6
- The personal development of the pupils is good and this is reflected in their good behaviour and attitudes as well as the very good attendance rates
- The school provides a good range of extra-curricular activities and pupils enjoy school

The school has made unsatisfactory progress since it was last inspected in 1999. The provision for children in the Foundation Stage has improved very well but the leadership and management of the school has been too unstable for the school to move forward and raise standards consistently.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

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

Achievement is satisfactory overall but there is some underachievement in writing and mathematics where pupils of average ability make insufficient progress. The children in the Foundation Stage (Reception class) get off to a good start and achieve well because the teaching is consistently good. By the end of the Reception year standards are above average in communication, language and literacy, mathematics and other areas of learning. Standards are well above average in their personal, social and emotional development. Standards in the 2004 national tests for Year 2 were below average in reading and writing and above average in mathematics and science. When compared with similar schools standards were well below average in reading and writing. In English, national test results declined compared with previous years. Similarly, the Year 6 2004 test results declined

compared with the previous year (see table above). Compared to similar schools results were well below average in mathematics and in the bottom five per cent of schools in English and science.

Currently, standards achieved by the pupils in Years 1 and 2 are average in English, mathematics and science but standards are not high enough. The standards achieved by the pupils in Years 3 to 6 are below average in English and average in mathematics and science but writing standards are not high enough. Though standards have improved in mathematics and science, pupils of average ability do not make enough progress in mathematics from Year 3 through to Year 6. There is good additional support for pupils with special educational needs and they make good progress as a result.

The pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good. They have positive attitudes to school and behaviour is good. Attendance is very good and punctuality is good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The school provides a satisfactory education. The teaching is satisfactory but it is inconsistent with too few lessons of good or better quality. The teaching in the Foundation Stage is consistently good. Although the teaching of English is satisfactory there is underachievement in writing where the pupils are not learning as well as they should. They do not have enough opportunities to write at length. The teachers are well supported by teaching assistants and are particularly successful in planning work for pupils with special educational needs. Assessment is satisfactory as it is beginning to meet the needs of more able pupils but those of average ability in mathematics are not always learning as well as they should. Information and communication technology (ICT) is increasingly being used to support both teaching and learning but the ICT room is too small for whole classes.

The school provides a satisfactory curriculum, enhanced by a good range of enrichment activities. The care and welfare of the pupils are good and they are offered good support and guidance. There are satisfactory links with parents and the community and good relationships with other schools.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are unsatisfactory overall. The interim headteacher and staff have provided satisfactory leadership. This has brought about some stability and improved staff morale. However, standards remain too low in some key areas, despite the efforts of the staff to improve the quality of education, because of uneven achievement and teaching. The governance of the school is unsatisfactory. Governors have not been diligent enough in addressing the school's difficulties and in establishing a long-term strategy for the future development of the school.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Most parents and pupils are satisfied with the school but a significant number of parents have lost confidence in the way the school has been managed and governed in recent years because of staffing difficulties. Parents are pleased that their children like school. They feel that the teachers expect their children to work hard. The pupils confirm that they enjoy school and feel that they are treated fairly. They particularly enjoy sport and music.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The most important things the school should do are:

- improve leadership, management and governance in order to raise standards and restore parents' confidence in the school;
- improve the quality of teaching to ensure that all pupils achieve consistently well throughout the school in English, mathematics and science;
- improve writing standards from Year 1 onwards and provide more opportunities for the pupils to write at length.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Achievement is uneven across the school but is satisfactory overall. Standards in English are average by Year 2 and below average by Year 6. Standards are average in mathematics and science.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards have declined since the last inspection, especially in writing, where standards are too low
- Science standards show signs of improvement but pupils of average ability underachieve in mathematics in Years 3 to 6
- Children in the Reception year make good progress and achieve well in all areas of learning
- Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and make good progress

Commentary

1. The children's attainment when they first join Reception is average, particularly in the area of language and mathematical development. The good teaching and curriculum mean that the children make good progress in all areas of learning. By the time they start Year 1, standards are well above average in personal, emotional and social development and above average in communication, language and literacy, mathematics and other areas of learning. The teacher's planning is good and ensures that all areas of the Foundation Stage curriculum are given sufficient coverage and that work is well matched to the children's level of ability and maturity.
2. The 2004 National Curriculum test results show that by the end of Year 2, pupils' attainment was below average in reading and writing and above average in mathematics and science. When compared with similar schools attainment was well below average in reading and writing and average in mathematics and science. The recent 2005 results show some improvement but too few pupils are achieving the higher levels in writing. An increased number of pupils obtained the higher Level 3 in mathematics. Over the last four years the rate of improvement in the school's average point scores (see the table below for Year 2) has been slower than the national trend.
3. The inspection indicates that standards are average in English, mathematics and science by Year 2 and, in relation to their attainment on entry, the pupils have made satisfactory progress. The teaching is mainly satisfactory with signs of improvement, especially for pupils with special educational needs and for more able pupils because they are being identified early using the school's tracking systems. However, some pupils of average ability underachieve because the school's target setting and teaching does not always meet their specific learning needs.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	15.5 (16.6)	15.8 (15.7)

Writing	14.4 (16.8)	14.6 (14.6)
Mathematics	16.9 (17.8)	16.2 (16.3)

There were 26 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

4. In Year 6, the 2004 national test results were below average in English and mathematics and well below average in science. When compared with similar schools, the results in English and science were in the lowest five per cent of schools nationally and in mathematics they were well below average. This indicates some underachievement over time. The proportion achieving the higher Level 5 was well below average in English, mathematics and science and this indicates that more able pupils did not make enough progress. The results for 2004 were lower than in previous years and, over time, they have been declining when comparing the school's results with the national trend. The results for 2005 show signs of improvement as more pupils achieved the higher levels in mathematics and science compared with last year, but too few achieved these levels in English where there is significant underachievement in writing. National comparisons are not yet available for the 2005 results.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	26.0 (28.5)	26.9 (26.8)
Mathematics	26.4 (27.8)	27.0 (26.8)
Science	27.2 (30.0)	28.6 (28.6)

There were 30 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

5. By the end of Year 6, standards are below average in English and average in mathematics and science. The school places a high priority on the pupils' literacy and numeracy skills and this has had some impact on reading and mathematics standards but writing standards remain too low. Although the teaching is mainly satisfactory, there are too few good lessons to have a sustained impact on standards across the school and this accounts for the uneven pattern of achievement. In the best lessons and where the teaching is consistently more challenging, the pupils write clearly and neatly. However, in many lessons the expectations set are too low so that work is sometimes presented untidily and handwriting is poor. In mathematics, there has been an increase in the proportion of pupils reaching the higher levels but too many pupils of average ability fall short of the standards expected for their age. Consequently, by Year 6, although standards are average, they should be higher. Standards in science are in line with those expected because the pupils are given practical investigations and experiments, so they develop the skills of scientific enquiry quite well. But some unsatisfactory teaching and uneven progress across classes in Years 3 to 6 lead to inconsistencies, which are reflected in the fluctuating national tests results from year to year.
6. Standards have been maintained in ICT and are in line with those expected of pupils at the end of Years 2 and 6, despite the unsatisfactory resources and accommodation for ICT. The individual resourcefulness of teachers has managed to maintain standards but the cramped conditions in the ICT suite do little to help and support the pupils, especially when whole classes are taught there. Standards in history are in line with what is expected. Although work was sampled in other subjects and only one physical education lesson was observed, standards are broadly in line with national expectations. In physical education, the pupils have good opportunities to excel in sports and games. The pupils achieve well in music

because teachers, volunteers (including parents) and peripatetic staff are enthusiastic and employ a good range of instrumental and choral work to capture pupils' interest.

7. The achievement of pupils with special educational needs is good. They are identified early and good levels of support are provided. The pupils work diligently and make good progress from their different starting points because of the careful attention given to their individual needs. The school clearly identifies gifted and talented pupils and plans teaching that challenges them to achieve well.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

The provision for the pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good. The children behave well and have positive attitudes towards their work.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils enjoy school and this is reflected in the very good attendance rates
- The school successfully instils in pupils a sense of respect for themselves, others and their surroundings
- Pupils generally meet the school's high expectations of their behaviour

Commentary

8. The school works hard to provide well for the personal development of its pupils. Pupils support the wide range of extra-curricular clubs and activities enthusiastically. Good use is made of visits and visitors and these provide pupils with opportunities to develop socially as well as enrich their understanding of their own and other cultures. Pupils remember with enthusiasm a visit by Morris dancers and an African dance workshop, for example. Pupils in Year 4, who are learning about Hinduism in religious education lessons, have formed links with pupils at a Hindu school in Watford and correspond regularly with their new pen pals. Assemblies, religious education lessons and the use of 'circle time' stimulate the pupils' spiritual development. In a Year 1 lesson, for example, pupils were given the opportunity to explore their own emotions and to try to understand those of their classmates. Pupils look after each other well and have a strong sense of the responsibilities of living in a community. Year 6 pupils have devised and operate an incentive scheme to encourage everyone to bring fruit to school in their lunchboxes, and the school council has decided to set up a new system of 'friendship buddies' at play times.
9. The good provision for the personal development of pupils means that they are keen to come to school and behave well when they are there. They are enthusiastic and work well in lessons. The occasional lapses from the generally good standards of behaviour in the classroom happen where teaching is weaker or the pace has slackened. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and are consistent in the way they apply rules, with the result that pupils have a clear sense of what is expected of them and of the difference between right and wrong. Play times are well supervised by a team of mid-day supervisors who between them have many

years experience at the school and provide welcome stability. The children play well together and any problems in the playground are dealt with quickly and effectively.

10. A children's charter displayed prominently throughout the school buildings emphasises the importance of respect for others. This respect is evident in the way pupils listen attentively to others, and it contributes to their growing self-esteem and confidence. At the start of a Year 5 English lesson, for example, a pupil was allowed time to describe in depth a wedding she attended recently. Her contribution was clearly valued by the class teacher and by fellow pupils.

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	3.7	School data	0.3
National data	5.1	National data	0.4

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

Exclusions

There was one temporary exclusion last year.

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	157	1	0
Black or Black British – African	2	0	0
Any other ethnic group	2	0	0

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides a satisfactory quality of education. Teaching, learning and the curriculum are satisfactory and there are good arrangements for securing the care, welfare, health and safety of the pupils. Links with parents and the local community are satisfactory and those with other schools are good.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory and procedures for assessing the pupils' attainment are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The teaching and provision for children in the Foundation Stage (Reception class) are good and so the children make good progress in all areas of learning
- The teaching of writing is unsatisfactory from Year 1 through to Year 6 with the consequence that pupils underachieve in writing
- The teaching and support for pupils with special educational needs is good

- Although the teaching of mathematics is satisfactory, pupils of average ability are not being provided with enough challenge to enable all of them to reach the levels expected for their age

Commentary

11. Overall, the quality of teaching is satisfactory but it is uneven across the school because of staff absence and the fact that the school has not had a substantive headteacher for some time. Monitoring has only been established this year under the leadership of the interim headteacher and this has had an impact on the pupils' achievement and progress in some key areas of the curriculum. However, the pupils are not making enough progress in writing in particular and the recently established assessment procedures have not had time to affect how well teachers plan and assess the pupils' progress. The quality of teaching has declined since the last inspection partly as a result of the school's staffing difficulties.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 37 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	3 (8%)	13 (35%)	19 (51%)	2 (5%)	0	0

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

12. The children in the Foundation Stage achieve well because of the consistent good quality of teaching. The teacher and teaching assistants work as an effective team due to the good well managed provision for Reception children. All members of staff know the children really well because of their detailed and systematic assessments of the children. Communication with parents is good. The well organised and effective planning ensures that every child works at a level that matches his or her age and ability. The teaching is particularly effective at providing each child with stimulating tasks that will enable them to improve in all areas of learning, particularly in early language and literacy. There has been very good progress since the last inspection in the teaching of children in the Foundation Stage.
13. The teaching in Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory and during the inspection one third was found to be good, particularly in Year 2. Recent stability in staffing and monitoring by the headteacher and senior staff has led to a consistent approach to planning and assessment. However, these measures have not had time to take full effect so there is still some underachievement by a few pupils, particularly those of average ability. The basic skills of literacy and numeracy are taught quite well but the pupils are not making enough progress in writing, especially independent and extended forms of writing. This is because teachers do not always expect pupils to write accurately, and this lack of consistency leads to some untidy and often inaccurate handwriting and spelling. Lessons in English and mathematics follow national guidance and the pupils apply the language and numeracy skills well in other subjects such as science and history. The teaching of information and communication technology, although satisfactory, is affected by the lack of space and some unsatisfactory resources in the computer room. However, the interim headteacher has brought some stability to the teaching in both Year 1 and Year 2 and regular monitoring is starting to bring about consistency in teaching and learning. This is evident in the science work seen where there are good opportunities for the pupils to plan investigations and make predictions.

14. In Years 3 to 6 the teaching is satisfactory overall but several key aspects of it are unsatisfactory and some unsatisfactory teaching was also observed. This part of the school has been affected by staff absence and the interim headteacher has managed to maintain some level of stability despite this. The unsatisfactory teaching seen was unchallenging and led to some unsatisfactory behaviour or lack of attention from the pupils. From the evidence of work in pupils' books, there are inconsistencies in the way teachers expect the pupils to present their work, for example, in mathematics some of the workbooks are untidy and poorly presented. The pupils underachieve in writing because there are too few opportunities provided for them to write at length and a tendency in some classes to use worksheets too often which inhibit opportunities for independent and extended writing. In mathematics, the pupils of average ability are not always being challenged enough so the work provided repeats what they already know. Just under one-third of the teaching seen was good because the pace of the lessons was more brisk and pupils were engaged in their learning right from the start. Most lessons are well managed and lead to good behaviour. In the best lessons the challenge and variety of tasks makes learning interesting and fun for the pupils. In Year 4 for example, the English lesson seen was motivational and fast paced and led to the pupils having a clear understanding of the differences between discursive and persuasive writing and texts. In most mathematics lessons, mental and oral skills are well developed at the beginning of lessons but most of the lessons observed did not challenge some pupils of average ability enough for them to reach the standards they are capable of. The teaching is usually practical and teachers' planning draws in skills from different subjects to make topics interesting. For example, the work on fairground rides combines science skills with those seen in design and technology and art and design. In science, there are good opportunities provided for the pupils to plan and predict outcomes and to choose the most appropriate resources. Information and communication technology is planned into a range of subjects but the main computer room used is too small, especially for older pupils and particularly when whole classes are taught there.
15. Pupils with special educational needs are usually taught as part of a class. Teachers plan lessons carefully taking account of what different pupils can already do. They are supported by well trained teaching assistants who are skilful in helping pupils with special educational needs to participate fully within class and to succeed in their learning. This has a positive effect on their personal development. Their individual education plans are well crafted and staff make good use of them to plan lessons with the right amount of challenge and support. Their attainment is carefully assessed and recorded to contribute to the regular reviews of their progress.

The curriculum

The school provides a satisfactory curriculum that is enriched by a good range of extra-curricular activities. Accommodation and resources are satisfactory overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage is good
- Support for pupils with special educational needs is good
- There are a good range of opportunities, including after school clubs, to enrich the pupils' experiences
- Not enough opportunities are given for pupils to focus on and develop pieces of extended writing in the foundation subjects (subjects other than English, mathematics and science)

Commentary

16. The school values the contributions of all pupils regardless of background and ability. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. They have access to the whole curriculum and take part in all activities. The school works hard to integrate a small number of pupils with very particular needs who make satisfactory progress because the arrangements for teaching them are good. The systems for planning the pupils' work and monitoring progress are clear, so there is good practice across the school. Individual education plans set out appropriate targets in literacy and mathematics and teachers plan work that is effectively related to these so that pupils achieve as well as they are able.
17. The school has adopted national guidelines to provide a curriculum that meets all the statutory requirements. The curriculum for the children in the Foundation Stage is good. It meets the children's needs well and helps them make good progress. The emphasis on personal and social development helps the children become confident and well-motivated learners and this has a positive effect on their achievement. At the time of the last inspection there were weaknesses in the provision of the curriculum in the Foundation Stage and these have been addressed fully. The curriculum in Years 1 to 6 is satisfactory and has some strengths in music and physical education. In some classes, however, the emphasis on literacy and numeracy has led to an imbalance in the timetabling of the curriculum with opportunities missed by teachers to give more focus to the foundation subjects. Too little attention is given to planning for progression in these subjects as the pupils move through the school. This limits the opportunities for the pupils to develop their knowledge, skills and understanding and there is little of the pupils' previous work upon which to make judgements about standards. Although cross-curricular links are now being planned there are too few opportunities for pupils to develop extended pieces of writing, particularly in history and geography.
18. The needs of all pupils are met through sound quality personal, social and health education. Sex and relationships and drug issues are addressed appropriately and taught through the science and citizenship programmes. The pupils are well prepared to move on to their next phase of education. There is good transition between the school and the feeder secondary schools and special "taster" sessions such as a design and technology day help promote this liaison.
19. Visits and extra-curricular activities provide good opportunities for curriculum enrichment. The pupils have opportunities to play a variety of competitive sports and join after school clubs including keep-fit, computers, musical groups, French, and cookery. Good use is made of visits to local museums and places of interest such as Lincoln Cathedral and Gainsborough House. Special themed weeks, visiting history workshops and visits from local theatre groups all add interest to the curriculum and enrich pupils' learning. Of particular note is the school's participation in local arts programme where local schools combine to promote sculpture, music and art and design. Older pupils have an opportunity to take part in a residential visit each year.
20. There are sufficient teachers and support staff to meet the needs of the curriculum. Resources are generally satisfactory although the range and quality of books in the library are inadequate. The school's accommodation is satisfactory: the building is well maintained and used well to support teaching and learning. However, the very warm and cramped computer suite affects the progress of many pupils in information and communication technology.

Care, guidance and support

Pupils are well cared for in this school. Adults know the pupils well, which means they are able to provide them with good levels of support and guidance. Pupils are involved in decision-making through the school council.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils throughout the school are well-looked after, particularly in the Foundation Stage where levels of care are very good
- All adults at the school provide good support for pupils' personal development

Commentary

21. The school's caring ethos is evident in all aspects of its work. Health and safety, first aid and child protection procedures are all good. The focus on the security of pupils and the school site is also good. Relationships throughout the school are well developed and pupils feel confident they have an adult they could turn to if necessary. At playtimes and lunchtimes, pupils are supportive of each other and are looked after by an experienced team of teachers, support staff and supervisors who clearly know the pupils well. Personal, social and health education lessons provide good opportunities for teachers to monitor and support personal development. The caring aspects of the school's provision mean that pupils are able to flourish in an environment in which they feel safe and secure.
22. Pupils' personal development has benefited from opportunities to take the initiative in managing aspects of their school environment through the school council. The council has had a positive impact on school life by choosing new playground equipment, for example, and making improvements to playtime rules and procedures. The pupils have also raised impressive sums of money themselves to spend on new toys and games, for example, through a sponsored skipping event. School council representatives have a good understanding of their budget, how much they have spent and what they have spent it on. Older pupils could now take responsibility for the school council agendas and minutes. The school could also extend the influence of pupils further by conducting regular questionnaires.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

There are some strengths in the relationship between the school and parents, but links overall are only satisfactory because of widespread parent concern about the management and governance of the school since the previous inspection. Links with other schools are good, while those with the wider community are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Many parents have lost confidence in the way the school has been managed since the previous inspection, and in the governors in particular
- Parents are generally appreciative of the quality of the education and, in spite of these concerns about management and governance, are supportive of the school
- The school does well to provide parents with information about their children's progress and to help them contribute to their children's learning at home
- Pupils benefit from strong links with other schools in areas such as the arts, sport and technology

Commentary

23. It is clear that many parents have lost confidence in the ability of the school's governors to manage the school effectively. In fact, more parents are critical of the leadership and management of the school than feel able to support it, according to the pre-inspection parent questionnaire. Parents have particular reservations about how the governing body has dealt with staff turnover and appointments and the way it has communicated with parents during a time of uncertainty and instability. However, despite these concerns, parents are generally supportive of the school, and are pleased with their children's progress. This support is evident in the active Parent Teacher Association, which, in addition to raising considerable sums of money, contributes to the social life of the school community. Parents are also willing helpers in the school and on trips, and support the school's homework policy. Consultation evenings are very well attended and parents ensure that attendance rates at the school remain well above average.
24. The school, in turn, works hard to involve parents in their children's learning. Parents are offered three parent consultation evenings a year, in addition to a one-to-one meeting with teachers at the start of each school year to discuss the curriculum. Information sheets on aspects of the curriculum are also provided, as well as regular newsletters. Annual reports give parents a good understanding of their child's progress and achievements, with clear targets for improvement.
25. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are regularly informed about the achievements of their children in relation to the targets in their individual education plans. They are encouraged to be fully involved in helping their children to learn and information passes between home and school on a daily basis where appropriate.
26. Links with the community are satisfactory, involving the church, the elderly and local events such as an arts festival. The school has strong relationships with other schools in the area, both primary and secondary schools. Pupils attend art and design activities and technology days at local secondary schools for example. They also take part in a wide range of sporting fixtures and activities with other schools.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are unsatisfactory overall. The leadership of the interim headteacher is satisfactory and the governance of the school is unsatisfactory. The leadership of other key staff is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The lack of a substantive headteacher for a number of years since the last inspection has had a negative effect on the school which has lacked consistent direction and leadership for too long
- The interim headteacher and senior teachers have recently brought stability and consistency, which is beginning to have an impact on the teaching and on standards
- The governors have not been diligent enough, despite staffing difficulties, to secure stability for the school and parents have lost confidence in the leadership and management of the school as a result
- The provision for children in the Foundation Stage and for pupils across the school with special educational needs are well managed

Commentary

27. Since the last inspection the school has lacked direction because there has been a high turnover of temporary headteachers. It has taken too long to secure a permanent appointment of a headteacher and, although some of the reasons for this are not entirely the fault of governors, their lack of monitoring and checking has led to concerns raised by parents about the future management of the school. The decline in standards and the inconsistencies evident in the quality of teaching in parts of the school mean that the management of the school is also unsatisfactory.
28. The current interim headteacher, appointed by the local authority, has brought stability and more rigour to the work of the school. She has a clear sense of purpose and works closely with teachers, support staff and the Local Education Authority to improve the quality of education. During a very difficult period, which has seen the number of pupils on roll diminish and staffing instability, she has provided the school with direction and stability. This has enabled the quality of teaching and learning to improve and standards to show some signs of improvement as a result. However, there remains some underachievement, which the recent measures adopted by the headteacher and staff have not had time to address. Improvements have been made to the procedures for assessing the pupils' work and in monitoring their progress but there remain some inconsistencies in the quality of teaching, particularly in Years 3 to 6.
29. The disruption to staffing has resulted in changes to the organisation of classes. Good communication between teachers ensures that the needs of most pupils are met but teachers' planning does not always take account of the needs of the pupils, particularly those of average ability. The school has successfully targeted more able pupils and those with special educational needs and this is having an immediate impact on standards. However, the management of the school has yet to establish clear and systematic procedures to monitor pupils' work and this has led to lapses in the performance of some pupils. This is most evident in the inconsistent standards seen in writing across the school where standards remain too low. The provision for children in the Foundation Stage is well managed by the senior teacher who also teaches the Reception class. Consequently, Reception children do well and make good progress.
30. Curriculum planning is being monitored by curriculum co-ordinators and this has led to greater consistency and progression across the school. Subjects are managed satisfactorily but there are not enough checks to ensure that all pupils make enough progress. The assessment co-ordinator and a class teacher record assessment data to help teachers track the performance of their pupils from year to year. This system was introduced this year but is not yet well established to have an impact on sustaining a rise in standards.
31. The management of the provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. The special educational needs co-ordinator supports teachers well and works with the headteacher to ensure support assistants are placed where they may be most effective. Systems for keeping and updating paperwork are well organised and readily accessible. The school makes good use of outside agencies such as the behaviour and health support services to the direct benefit of the pupils. Governors oversee this important aspect of school life conscientiously and are well informed about the arrangements and teaching in school for meeting the needs of these pupils.

32. The governance of the school is unsatisfactory but governors are keen to address the issues facing the school. The lack of stability has led to the lack of a long-term strategic plan indicating how governors will plan for the future. At the moment, the governing body is reactive rather than proactive. Governors have started to become more strategic in the way the governing body responds to changes. The recent appointment of a permanent headteacher is already bringing about fresh optimism and confidence among the staff. The loss of confidence by parents in the management of the school is understandable given the decline in standards and the inconsistencies evident in the quality of teaching. Governors are now beginning to respond to these concerns and have already started to introduce a forum for parents to express their concerns so there is a willingness on the part of the governing body to listen to the views of parents and to take action.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	378,230	Balance from previous year	-12,960
Total expenditure	348,106	Balance carried forward to the next	17,164
Expenditure per pupil	1,978		

33. The overspend in the previous year came about as a result of falling rolls and added expenditure on supply staff. The carry forward figure last year shows that the school has balanced its budget but the uncertainties caused by long-term staff absences have made it difficult for senior staff and governors to plan its annual budget efficiently.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

34. The provision for the 18 Reception children is good. All achieve well and make good progress. The teaching is good overall and there has been very good progress made since the last inspection in improving the curriculum and provision for children in the Foundation Stage. Tasks are well matched to the maturity and activities of the children who are taught by a class teacher and part-time teaching assistants. The school has a well resourced and organised classroom and outdoor play areas for the Foundation Stage and this provides opportunities for children to initiate spontaneous adventurous play and to follow personal investigations throughout the day. By the time the children start Year 1 standards are above average in nearly all areas of learning.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The children achieve very well because the teaching is very good in this area of learning
- Children enjoy coming to the well-organised, secure and stimulating Reception classroom
- Personal, social and emotional development permeates all activities

Commentary

35. All members of staff understand the personal and emotional needs of all the children. Good assessments of the children's potential and characteristics when first starting school mean that the staff are clear about the potential of each child. This leads to very effective planning so that the teaching and care offered to all children is very good. The children learn to choose an activity in their groups and the staff are careful to gently prompt the children if they choose something they have already done before.
36. The children soon learn to become confident and secure. They become familiar with the routines and participate in all activities with interest and enthusiasm. On arrival they come in and put their coats, books and bags in the correct place, and sit on the carpet. They reply politely to the register and a special person is chosen each day to carry the register to the office. They learn to take turns and this is reinforced regularly throughout the day. In the welcoming session the children confidently share their news or special information and the staff value their contribution and so build up their self-esteem. Relationships are very good and there is an ethos of mutual trust and respect between adults and children. Children concentrate extremely well in activities and help to tidy equipment away at the end of each session. Most children reach and exceed the goals expected by the time they enter Year 1.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children develop good speaking and listening skills
- Reading and writing are taught effectively
- Role-play is used well to encourage the children to communicate and express their ideas

Commentary

37. The children explore the landscapes, farms and animals when reading “The Train Ride”. Effective themes such as this help the children to enjoy their learning, for example, as they become news reporters to summarise important features that interests them. The children hold a microphone and talk to the rest of the class in turn so that other children can learn to focus their listening skills. Children and staff use rhyming songs and poetry effectively with repeated patterns in the phrases so that stories and rhymes become familiar to them. Reception children sit as a group to follow words and pictures in the big book. Then their work is extended to writing independently. This they do with clarity and accuracy as they form letters correctly and recognise familiar words and their own names. The vigilance of the staff when assessing the progress of the children and the good quality of their planning and teaching enables the children to talk, explain and write what they mean to adults and other children as well as learning how to listen to others in a group.
38. Books, tape recorders and computers are used effectively to engage the children’s interest and provide a basis for discussion. Role-play and a variety of activities that extend the children’s language are used to good effect. Good teaching techniques are used, such as the use of initial letter sounds and word recognition of common high frequency words in texts. The children are usually taught in small groups where they are assessed and put into maturity and ability groups. This helps the children to quickly learn the sounds and shapes of letters as well as combining words into sentences and phrases. More able children in the Reception year are beginning to use these skills to spell words accurately. Children are encouraged to develop early skills of writing and learn that writing can be for many purposes through, for example, the use of graphics areas where the children develop the stages of writing from making marks and explaining what they write to an adult, to letter and word formation as they recognise words in stories or their own name. The majority of children will attain and exceed the early learning goals by Year 1.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The teaching is good because the staff use assessments of the children to plan work that is closely matched to the abilities and stage of development of the children
- The children have gained a good understanding of numbers, shapes, measures and time

Commentary

39. Adults use every opportunity to help children count, recognise numbers and to develop an understanding of shape, relative size, positional language and simple measurement. They do this through a good range of activities. Children confidently counted to ten and beyond and demonstrated a very good knowledge of the relative position of numbers on a counting rod. Knowledge is supported through a range of number games and rhymes which children enjoy and in the lesson observed, more able children were able to use a good range of vocabulary to place pictures on a grid and then describe their position in relation to other pictures. A good knowledge of shape has been reinforced through interesting games and investigations, for example, when the children guess what shape is hidden in a bag after the teacher describes its key features and attributes. Most children will reach and exceed the standards expected in this area of learning.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The staff provide a wide range of activities that capture the children's interest
- The children have access to a class based computers and other technology such as cameras, tape recorders and robotic devices but the computer room is unsuitable for the children
- Very good use is made of familiar stories, themes and resources to improve the children's observational and scientific skills

Commentary

40. The children progress very well and exceed the standards expected for their age in this area of learning. The adults organise a very stimulating range of experiences to arouse the children's curiosity about, for example, how materials change when using dough or clay or which materials are waterproof. The children enjoyed testing different materials and predicting which would allow water to pass through and which would keep out water. When outdoors in the sand and water trays, they discuss why some containers filled more quickly than others. The children are learning to recognise the characteristics of different animals and their habitats. The adults are very alert to initiating opportunities for the children to encourage observation and investigation. They also respond promptly when the children indicate that they wish to pursue some experience or attempt to change pictures or graphics on the computer. An opportunity to work in groups to create collages using natural materials or pasta shells has the children excitedly comparing different materials or discussing possible solutions. The children's curiosity about the world around them is developing extremely well. New technology is used well to support learning and to learn through trial and error. For example, when some children used a programmable device to predict how far it would roll and when a group of children practiced controlling a remote control car. The computer suite has enough computers for the children to practice their skills but it is an uncomfortable room, which is too cramped for a whole class, and the interactive whiteboard is not suitable located for the children to have practical access.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good indoor and outdoor resources are used to develop the children's physical co-ordination and skills
- The teaching is good with opportunities for the children to use large and small apparatus

Commentary

41. Good teaching ensures the majority of children will reach and exceed the standards expected for their age by the end of the Reception year. The teaching caters well for the children's natural exuberance and energy. The school has made very good progress since the last inspection in providing well planned and imaginative indoor and outdoor play areas. These provide the children with daily opportunities to develop their physical skills. The outdoor area is a good resource and there is a good range of wheeled toys, which the children manoeuvre well, avoiding other children and planned obstacles. Previous topics about their bodies help the children develop an understanding of the importance of exercise to ensure good health. Regular access to good quality equipment is developing good spatial awareness, control and imagination as they respond well to their teachers and teaching assistants. Most children display a good degree of suppleness and agility as they become more aware of their own bodies. They can follow instruction in the hall as they travel in different directions, stop and hold a balance. Emphasis is placed on developing the children's independence and skill when handling tools and malleable materials such as dough and clay. They are becoming competent as they handle a variety of tools and materials safely and with care, such as previous work when designing and making vehicles, buildings and animals.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The children develop imaginative and creative skills and the staff celebrate and praise originality
- There is a good balance of activities that are led by an adult as well as those the children choose themselves

Commentary

42. By the end of the Reception year, the children's attainment reaches the expected level for their age. Children achieve well developing their skills using brushes, tools and materials to more advanced work when mixing coloured paints to represent pictures, scenery and self-portraits with well balanced and proportioned facial features. The staff are very good at praising their efforts by identifying what the child is telling them they are drawing (or writing). All the children show very good levels of confidence, flair, imagination and creativity in their work. The teaching is good, enabling the children to learn, master and use key skills and techniques. A good balance is achieved between activities where adults show the children how to carry out tasks and how to improve their work, and those activities that give the children the freedom to experiment and make their own choices and decisions. The most striking feature of the Foundation Stage is the good planning of role-play areas that

sit comfortably with structured areas that focus on key skills such as painting, sketching and sculpting.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are below average at the end of Year 6 because pupils do not achieve as well as they can in writing. There are too few opportunities provided for extended writing
- Pupils of all ages reach high standards in speaking and listening
- Teachers' expectations about the presentation of written work and the development of handwriting are too low

Commentary

43. Standards attained in last year's national tests for Year 6 were below average. Inspection evidence, such as the work in pupils' books in Year 6, confirms this picture for this year's Year 6. Standards have declined since the previous inspection when standards were above average. By the time they reach Year 6, most pupils reach a satisfactory standard in reading but too few attain the expected standard in writing. However, there is evidence in class work, and from recent assessments, that the standards attained by more able pupils are improving and more are reaching the higher levels of which they are capable. In Years 1 and 2 standards of attainment observed during the inspection are average overall. Most pupils in the current Year 2 group reach the expected standard for their age in reading and more able pupils exceed this level, but too few reach the expected standard for writing. Although boys do less well than girls in national tests there is no evidence that they are taught or treated differently. Lower attaining pupils including those with special educational needs make good progress and achieve well because they are well supported and work is usually well matched to their needs.
44. Achievement in reading is satisfactory throughout the school. Pupils are enthusiastic readers at school and at home where younger pupils read regularly to their parents. Most pupils in Year 2 read accurately and with understanding and higher attaining pupils are beginning to understand character traits and motives in the stories they read. However, some pupils in this year group struggle to read unfamiliar words because they do not have sufficient knowledge of letter sounds. By the time they reach Year 6 most pupils read fluently and with good expression. They access information in the library competently and discuss and compare the works of their favourite authors intelligently.
45. Achievement in writing is unsatisfactory overall because the pupils' writing does not reflect their capabilities. Their progress from year to year is uneven and has not been tracked systematically until recently. For example, in Year 2 written work shows good progress during the autumn term that is not maintained later in the year, and in Year 4 the high quality writing in pupils' autobiographies is not replicated in other work. In Year 2 most pupils construct simple sentences and are beginning to use basic sentence punctuation in a range of writing. Many higher attaining pupils

write well, constructing complex sentences and using a range of punctuation accurately. In Year 6 the writing of higher attaining pupils is sometimes interesting and well controlled, but the work of some pupils is too often unfinished and careless. There are too few opportunities across the school for the pupils to write at length in both English lessons and in other subjects. Although evidence shows that time is allocated to teaching handwriting in all classes, few pupils develop neat flowing handwriting and use it to present their written work across the curriculum. This is because teachers do not have consistent expectations or give consistent messages about the importance of presenting work well.

46. Throughout the school pupils speak and listen well because teachers place an appropriate emphasis on this aspect of the subject and give pupils the confidence to develop their skills. In a Year 2 lesson pupils were adept at sharing their ideas with partners to compose the questions about dinosaurs that they wanted to find answers for, and in Year 4 a pupil was given time to explain his idea that persuasive language can be strengthened by the inclusion of facts. As he spoke clearly and confidently his classmates listened to his views with respect. Achievement was good because the teachers' interventions were skilfully judged to bring out the best in their pupils. Opportunities to share ideas with "talk partners" were observed in many lessons. In this way teachers ensure that all pupils participate in thinking and are able to express their ideas. Group performances of poems and other pieces of text build confidence well.
47. Teaching and learning are satisfactory across the school and some lessons are good or very good. Pupils usually behave well and show positive attitudes in English lessons. Planning is good and teachers prepare and organise lessons well, ensuring that teaching assistants are well briefed. In the best lessons teachers use their good subject knowledge to convey key learning points clearly and set tasks that are well matched to the different abilities of pupils. They vary their methods and set a good pace to capture and maintain pupils' interest and concentration. At the end of the lesson there is a simple review of the lesson's objectives and pupils are involved in evaluating how well they have learned them. For example, the teacher in Year 1 used a well designed activity at the end of a lesson to reinforce the main teaching points in a different way and to assess the learning acquired by pupils with differing abilities. In weaker lessons teachers set tasks that lack challenge and interest for some, or all, of the groups of children in the class so they do not work hard or achieve as much as they can. Written work is marked regularly but pupils are rarely given time to respond to, and learn from marking comments in their books. Pupils of all ages have individual targets for improving their work but the system is used more effectively in some classes than others, where the pupils are not always clear about what they have to do to improve or what level they have reached so far.
48. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. Systems to assess and track pupils' progress as pupils move through the school have not had time yet to make an impact on standards and achievement. The subject leader has opportunities to check teachers' planning, observe teaching and sample standards in written work. She uses the information gathered appropriately to decide priorities for development and to devise the annual action plan for the subject, but again, these systems are too recent for the full impact of her work to be seen. Resources are unsatisfactory, particularly the library area, where displays, books and furniture do not invite pupils in to take part in the exciting and interesting activity of reading.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

49. Spoken language is developed well through other subjects where pupils regularly discuss their ideas and explain their thinking. For example, Year 2 pupils worked in groups discussing and sharing their ideas eagerly as they composed their “waves” music. Opportunities to use other subjects to promote reading and writing are sometimes missed. This is particularly so in history and geography where older pupils complete very little research and written work. Some imaginative links between subjects do promote literacy effectively as in the lessons in several subjects on other cultures in Year 4 which include letter writing to pen pals in a Hindu school in Watford.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The recent monitoring of standards has had a positive effect on the performance of more able pupils
- Too few pupils of average ability in Years 3 to 6 are achieving the levels expected for their age in mathematics
- Many pupils are confident and competent in number because these skills are taught well across the school
- Not enough focus is given to the teaching of data handling and investigational work

Commentary

50. By the end of Year 2 standards are average and the pupils achieve satisfactorily. This reflects the school’s results in the national assessments over the last two years and is similar to the judgement made at the last inspection. By the end of Year 6 standards are also in line with national average. Again this is a similar judgement to the last inspection. However, as many of these pupils achieved very well when they took the tests as seven year olds, they should now be achieving higher standards. Statistics reveal a similar picture for the pupils who left the school the previous two years. Recent positive strategies to target pupil performance have been successful in improving the performance of more able pupils. Similarly, pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress and are well supported by the teaching assistants. However, not enough pupils of average ability in Years 3 to 6 are attaining the average levels. This is because in some classes target setting is not consistent, expectations are not high enough and poorly presented work affects learning and progress. Furthermore, because of the unstable leadership of the school over the last few years the use and impact of booster groups to help these pupils attain the average levels has been inconsistent.
51. Overall, the quality of the teaching is satisfactory. At the time of the last inspection it was judged to be good. The present staff have worked hard to raise the profile of mathematics and a programme of in-service training for the teachers is beginning to have positive effects on pupils’ learning. Much of this work has focussed on making sure that the planning is clear about what the pupils are expected to learn. In the best lessons seen these objectives are clearly displayed and discussed with the pupils and are referred to by the teachers at the beginning and end of the lessons. These qualities were seen in a good Year 2 lesson on fractions and a good Year 4 lesson on frequency charts and bar graphs. The teaching of number is good across

the school. The teachers have a good understanding of the National Numeracy Strategy. The introductory activities are usually brisk, involving all of the pupils, and there is a strong emphasis on developing pupils' mental mathematics skills. Provision for work on data handling and of an investigational nature is, however, inconsistent across the school. In some of the work seen across the year groups in the scrutiny of pupils' work and in some lessons observed, the match of work to pupils' abilities is not always effective and the pace of learning slows. This is particularly evident in Years 3 to 6 where the progress of pupils who should be achieving the average level is unsatisfactory. These pupils often produce untidy work that is not corrected by their teachers.

52. The co-ordinator provides satisfactory leadership. She is enthusiastic, focused on raising standards and has been instrumental in achieving the improvements seen so far. As part of the work to raise standards a recently initiated system of assessing attainment is beginning to provide the teachers with the information they need to track pupils' progress as they move through the school. A programme of monitoring the quality of teaching and learning has identified areas for development. The impact of this exercise should further improve standards but has not yet had time to have an impact. The pupils' work is marked conscientiously by all staff. This represents an improvement from the last inspection when it was identified as an issue for action.

Mathematics across the curriculum

53. The pupils have satisfactory opportunities to consolidate and apply their mathematical skills in other subjects. Year 4 pupils link their work on frequency charts to their data handling work in information and communication technology and Year 5 pupils have compared their work on angles with their science project on the spinning axis of planets. Other pupils use mathematics when plotting graphs in science on heat loss. The pupils' ability to use computers in mathematics is developing as the school updates its software.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers provide good opportunities for pupils to develop their investigative and experimental skills but they do not provide enough extended work for more able pupils
- Teachers do not always point out how best to improve or correct the pupils' work and expectations are inconsistent across the school

Commentary

54. The 2004 national test results in Year 6 were well below average because more able pupils were underachieving in science and not reaching the higher levels. The most recent 2005 results confirm that there has been an increase in the proportion of pupils reaching the higher levels. The 2004 teacher assessments for Year 2 show that pupils' attainment was above average. However, too few pupils were achieving the higher level. Evidence from the inspection shows that standards are currently average by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 and that the pupils have made satisfactory progress overall. The school has recently begun to identify and support more able pupils and this is beginning to be effective. Teachers have assessment information

about the pupils to tracking their progress and this is beginning to contribute to the recent improvement in standards by Year 6.

55. As a result of the good emphasis placed on pupils' learning through practical and first hand experiences, the pupils' skills of investigation and experimentation are secure. Investigative skills with the necessary scientific knowledge, but the pupils are not always provided with opportunities to question the facts they are given or to draw their own conclusions. The pupils learn how to use their knowledge to make sensible predictions, for example, in Year 1 when finding out about how sound is produced and in Year 2 when investigating electric circuits, then labelling diagrams appropriately to explain how a switch can break a circuit. However, more able pupils are not always being challenged to extend their knowledge, particularly in Years 3 to 6. In Year 3, the pupils enjoyed investigating light and shadow but the teaching was not always demanding enough to sustain the pupils' interest. Pupils use scientific vocabulary well to explain their ideas clearly and accurately, as in Year 5 when learning about the earth and the solar system, so the pupils gain a secure knowledge and understanding but the scientific skills are not always being reinforced by the teacher when concluding the lesson.
56. The achievement of all pupils is satisfactory but in some lessons pupils of higher ability underachieve. There is an appropriate balance of work carried out in science but it is not consistently well presented in all classes, reflecting the different expectations set by teachers. There are good links to other areas of the curriculum, such as when Year 5 and 6 pupils designed and made their own fairground models in design and technology using their knowledge of electric circuits. After a brief period of decline in standards last year there has been a recovery, so there is satisfactory improvement since the last inspection.
57. The teaching is satisfactory overall but varies across the school. Teachers plan well but do not always incorporate enough tasks and activities for more able pupils in their lessons. Pupils of average ability, as well as those with special educational needs achieve satisfactorily. Assessment is now being used to identify more able pupils so there is a shift of emphasis which is beginning to show an improvement in standards with a greater proportion of higher attaining pupils reaching the higher levels in this year's national tests. Sharing the lesson's objectives at the start of a lesson enables pupils to know exactly what is expected of them, but in some lessons teachers do not spend enough time evaluating the extent of the pupils' learning during end of lesson reviews.
58. Leadership and management of the subject is satisfactory. The co-ordinator has only recently taken up her role. The interim headteacher has established a system of monitoring teaching and learning which has been carried out but has yet to have a direct impact on sustaining a rise in standards. The monitoring so far has not picked up inconsistencies in the pupils' workbooks so that some of the work is poorly presented, while in some classes higher expectations are being set.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Core skills are being taught regularly now that the school has an ICT room but the room itself is uncomfortable and cramped, especially for whole classes and for older pupils

- There are good opportunities for the pupils to use computers to research but the disruption caused by the lack of a substantive headteacher has adversely effected the development of the ICT curriculum

Commentary

59. There are inconsistencies and gaps in the pupils' learning in ICT as a result of the instability of not having a substantive headteacher for a number of years. However, there is evidence that there has been satisfactory improvement in standards since the last inspection but resources and accommodation are unsatisfactory because of a lack of co-ordinated investment in ICT. Standards are in line with national expectations by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. The interim headteacher and staff have worked hard to make more effective use of the computer suite and better use of classroom computers. Overall, the pupils achieve satisfactorily throughout the school.
60. Inspection evidence indicates that teaching and learning are satisfactory throughout the school. During the inspection, most staff demonstrated confidence in using computers and the interactive whiteboard in the computer suite to introduce their lessons and to develop particular themes. Teachers' planning for lessons in the computer suite is satisfactory and learning objectives are identified clearly. Teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge but the small and cramped ICT suite makes it difficult to teach, especially to whole classes when conditions become cramped and uncomfortable for the pupils. The projector is poorly located so that pupils have to dodge out of the way when using the interactive whiteboard and teachers were often recalibrating the whiteboard when the projector was knocked out of position.
61. Word processing skills and the ability to use painting and drawing programs are developed quite well throughout the school. Year 1 pupils show satisfactory skills in their ability to add graphics to design their perfect street as part of their geography work. Year 6 pupils used computers quite well to research information on CD ROMs when investigating what it would be like to have lived on a Tudor galleon in history. However, the pupils were distracted by the cramped conditions and many had to wait their turn for too long so that the lesson became disrupted by some unsatisfactory behaviour.
62. Leadership and management of the subject are unsatisfactory because there has been a lack of direction and co-ordinated planning to ensure that the quality of teaching and learning is consistently good across the school. Teachers have coped well in difficult circumstances and have managed to plan lessons that have largely led to some satisfactory achievement but the potential for improvement is being hampered by unsatisfactory resources and accommodation.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

63. This aspect of ICT is satisfactory and improving as teachers gain confidence. There is a cross-curricular approach to ICT and teachers have adapted their planning to combine the skills the pupils acquire with those in other subjects. This was best demonstrated when Year 2 pupils used a simulation program to investigate switches and electric circuits to support their science work. Other ICT tasks across the school include problem solving when attempting to program a screen robot around a maze. Drawing and constructing shapes extend the pupils' mathematical understanding of interior and exterior angles. Year 5 and 6 pupils have researched information in their

history lessons. Year 4 pupils are planning to write e-mails to pupils in another school.

HUMANITIES

64. Only one lesson was seen in **geography** so it is not possible to make a judgement about the quality of provision. Evidence from the planning documents and looking at pupils' work indicates the statutory requirements of the National Curriculum are met. There are very few geographical displays around the school and very little work was available for scrutiny. A small amount of work about the local environment in Years 1 and 2 was of a reasonable standard. Similarly work of a satisfactory standard was seen on India in Year 3, on rivers in Year 5 and work about mountain regions in Year 6. Although planning based on the national guidelines covers all of the necessary areas, it provides little guidance about mapping skills and there are gaps in the depth of study of contrasting localities. Opportunities for pupils to extend their writing skills in geography are very limited. Some classes are beginning to use information and communication technology to support the subject. Year 1 pupils, for example, use computer graphics in their work on the local area.

History

Provision in history is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The subject is enriched by visits and visitors to the school
- Information and communication technology is being used well by some classes to support teaching and learning
- Pupils have little opportunity to improve their learning in history through sustained and extended writing

Commentary

65. Standards of attainment in history are average throughout the school. The pupils make sound progress and enjoy learning about the past. This is a similar judgement to that made at the last inspection. Pupils show increasing depth of factual knowledge and understanding of the history of Britain and the wider world. In three of the four lessons seen the quality of teaching was satisfactory and in one lesson it was good. In the good lesson in Year 4 on The Tudors the teacher planned well to ensure all the pupils showed interest and were motivated to learn about rich and poor people of the times. The recent visit to Gainsborough Hall inspired the pupils to gain factual knowledge of Tudor life. In this lesson teaching and learning were good because the teacher's enthusiasm, knowledge and good quality questioning were effective.
66. Across the school the teachers are successful in bringing the subject to life for pupils. This is achieved through a range of visits and visitors. Pupils have visited Lincoln Cathedral and themed historical groups from the Greek and Tudor periods have visited the school to promote and stimulate the pupil's learning. These events gave the pupils a chance to dress in costumes of the time, examine artefacts and engage in role-play. Planning is based on national guidelines and ensures statutory requirements are met. However, there is some repetition of topic areas within the older classes with Year 4 and Year 6 pupils both covering the Tudor period at the same level. This repetition narrows pupils' opportunity to cover a broad and balanced curriculum in history in Years 3 to 6. Computers are being increasingly used to gain information from the Internet. Year 6 pupils for example, use their information and communication technology skills to research information on aspects of life on Tudor ships. Although teachers are beginning to plan links between history and other subjects there is little evidence of pupils having opportunities to use different forms of extended writing in their history work. The scrutiny of pupils' past work reveals a lack of sustained and imaginative pieces of writing. In some year groups work is also poorly presented.
67. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The co-ordinator is enthusiastic and is building up resources from within the school and from outside organisations such as loans from museums. A recent focus on monitoring teaching and learning has been effective in focussing areas for development for the future. Newly formed assessment systems now highlight pupils' achievements at the end of each topic and enable teachers to plan work to match the different abilities of the pupils.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

68. Only one lesson in **art and design** was observed during the inspection. Displays and samples of work show generally satisfactory standards in all year groups and some work of a good standard such as the pencil drawings and collages of natural objects made with fabrics and other materials in Year 2. In Year 5 the mixed media works based on waterfalls were also of high quality and demonstrated appropriate links with work in geography, as did the “canal art” pottery. Other work in art and design was also well linked to studies in other subjects. Pupils from Year 2 upwards have sketchbooks but these are not used often enough by older pupils to collect and develop their ideas in depth. Teaching was good in the lesson observed. Year 4 pupils were well prepared for their journey around the school grounds through exploration and discussion of aboriginal art. They went out to collect ideas for the creation of their own pieces. However, visual resources are of poor quality which makes it difficult for pupils to appreciate the qualities of the work they are discussing.
69. No lessons were observed in **design and technology** and limited evidence was available during the inspection for the younger pupils, apart from the winding mechanisms seen in Year 2. The subject is blocked with art and design and there is insufficient development of skills specific to design and technology in some year groups. However, work is of a satisfactory standard generally and there are some well developed projects such as the design and making of musical instruments in Year 5. Pupils collected ideas, chose their design, made and evaluated their instruments. They commented sensibly on the ways in which the finished products might be improved. The work on fairground rides in Year 6 also produced results of a good standard and offered useful links with work in science by exploring the different ways in which the models could be powered. The curriculum in this subject is enriched by the after-school cookery club.
70. Only one **physical education** lesson was observed and this was an outdoor games lesson. The lesson focused on rounders skills and rules and the pupils made satisfactory progress improving their throwing, catching and striking skills. Although no specific judgement can be made about the quality of provision and of teaching and learning, the pupils do well in a good range of sports and games against other schools. There are well organised competitions against local schools in football, cricket, rounders, cross-country, swimming and athletics. Swimming standards are above average by Year 6. The school’s physical education curriculum is well supported and enhanced by a very good range of extra-curricular sports and activities. The pupils, staff and governors are very proud of the school’s sporting achievements and a full trophy cabinet is testimony to this. This aspect of the school’s curriculum is well managed by the physical education co-ordinator.

Music

Provision in music is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils benefit from a wide range of opportunities to participate in musical activities
- Pupils achieve well in music because teachers capture their enthusiasm for the subject

Commentary

71. Pupils of all ages enjoy music. Standards attained in playing and singing, listening and responding to music and in developing their own musical ideas are satisfactory in all age groups and the standards attained by more musically talented children are

good. Pupils work with enthusiasm and obvious enjoyment in music lessons because teachers plan activities that engage their interest and best efforts. They achieve well. Pupils in Year 2 responded thoughtfully to the “wave” music they listened to before developing their own group instrumental pieces based on the sea. Pupils in Year 3 enjoyed playing a range of percussion instruments to learn about pulse and rhythm and in Year 4, the pupils showed good levels of discrimination as they commented constructively on their classmates’ performances.

72. The musical experiences offered in school are wide ranging and cover all aspects of the National Curriculum programme of study. Very good use is made of volunteers and other visitors, such as musically talented parents and the local authority’s music support service, to broaden the opportunities. Pupils can choose to learn to play a number of different instruments including violin, flute, saxophone and piano as places become available. Recorder and ocarina clubs are open to all, including the younger pupils. Pupils sing tunefully in assembly and during lessons as when Year 3 sang “Bobby Shaftoe” with good pace and sound. The choir is well trained and the standard of singing here is very good. Pupils perform for audiences both in school and in the community.
73. Music is taught by class teachers who are supported by the subject leader and visiting or volunteer musicians. Planning has improved since the previous inspection and is now based on national guidance. This ensures that there is continuity and progression as pupils move through the school. The best work is imaginatively linked with other subjects as seen in the linked literacy, art and design, dance and music workshop based on a multicultural theme for Year 4. Teaching and learning, in the lessons observed during the inspection, were predominantly good because teachers explained key points clearly and balanced listening, performing and appraising so that pupils had time to improve their work. Leadership of the subject is satisfactory. The coordinator has drawn up an improvement plan but monitoring and assessment are not yet well established because the school has been concentrating appropriately on more immediate priorities. Resources for music are good.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

74. A few lessons were seen in this area and, together with evidence from discussions with staff and pupils, a good programme is provided, but it is not possible to make firm judgements on the quality of the provision and learning. The school has developed a good policy and places a strong emphasis on the pupils’ personal and social development. Good behaviour is reinforced during class discussion times, where pupils are given the opportunity to explore ways of resolving issues and the school is particularly successful in supporting good relationships. Aspects of personal and social development are taught regularly in each class and strongly supported in assemblies. There are clear procedures for teaching sex education and drug awareness.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Inspection judgement

Grade

The overall effectiveness of the school	4
How inclusive the school is	4
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	5
Value for money provided by the school	5

Overall standards achieved	4
Pupils' achievement	4

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	3
Attendance	2
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

The quality of education provided by the school	4
The quality of teaching	4
How well pupils learn	4
The quality of assessment	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	4
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	5
The governance of the school	5
The leadership of the headteacher	4
The leadership of other key staff	4
The effectiveness of management	5

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