

INSPECTION REPORT

THE GERRARDS CROSS CE VA PRIMARY SCHOOL

Gerrards Cross

LEA area: Buckinghamshire

Unique reference number: 110436

Headteacher: Mrs L-J Spector

Lead inspector: Mr G Bassett

Dates of inspection: 13 – 15 September 2004

Inspection number: 268056

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
School category:	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils:	4 – 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	407
School address:	Moreland Drive Gerrards Cross Buckinghamshire
Postcode:	SL9 8BD
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr David Babb
Date of previous inspection:	May 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The Gerrards Cross Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School serves the area immediately around the school where the socio-economic status is above the national average. At present, there are 407 pupils on roll, with an almost equal number of boys and girls. There are 330 white pupils and 77 from ethnic minority groups. There are no pupils with the learning of English in the early stages as an additional language. There are 14 classes in the school, with two classes in each year group. Thirteen pupils have joined the school and nine have left during the past two years. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is well below average and there are 44 pupils with special educational needs, which is in line with the national average. Six pupils have a statement of special educational need. Most children join the school in the reception year following attendance at local nursery schools and play groups. The school's assessments show that the attainment on entry into the reception class is above average.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
21500	Mr G Bassett	Lead inspector	Information and communication technology (ICT) Foundation Stage
14347	Mrs J Lindsay	Lay inspector	
18370	Mr K Johnson	Team inspector	Science Art and design Design and technology English as an additional language
21245	Mr W Lowe	Team inspector	English History Geography Special educational needs
32142	Mrs B Richmond	Team inspector	Mathematics Music Physical education

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

The overall effectiveness of The Gerrards Cross Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School is very good. The school is doing extremely well in relation to all other schools. The headteacher is the driving force behind the school and this has resulted in a school with outstanding features. The good and often better quality of teaching enables most pupils to achieve well and to do as well as they can. The parents and pupils hold the school in high regard and express very positive views about the quality of education provided by the school. The school provides very good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The pupils achieve well and their standards are consistently well above average in English and science and very high in mathematics.
- The pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good.
- The leadership of the headteacher is excellent and the management of the school is very good.
- The teaching is good overall with a significant proportion of very good and excellent teaching.
- The standards in information and communication (ICT) do not yet match the higher standards seen in English and mathematics.
- The pupils' skills in gymnastics in Years 5 and 6 are not high enough.
- The provision made for the pupils with special educational needs is very good.

The school has made good improvements since the last inspection in 1999. All the issues raised have been dealt with appropriately. The standards have been successfully maintained in English, mathematics and science. The headteacher has provided an excellent direction to the improvements made through the school. The quality of teaching has improved, with more lessons being good or better. The school has improved the outdoor facilities for the Foundation Stage. The school is well placed to continue to provide a good quality of education and to maintain standards.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

The pupils achieve well as they move through the school. There is no significant difference between the achievements of the boys and girls. The pupils enter the reception classes with standards above average and during their first year in school almost all reach the early learning goals expected well before they enter Year 1. They settle into the routines of school life very quickly and achieve well during their first year. The very high standards reached IN Year 2 in reading, writing and mathematics have been maintained very successfully since the last inspection and the pupils achieve well by the time they are seven years old. The current standards at the end of Year 6 have been maintained successfully over the past years and are well above average in English and science and very high in mathematics. The tests for 2003 show the school's performance to be in the top five per cent nationally in English and mathematics. A very high proportion of the pupils exceeded the expected levels in English. In ICT, the standards are broadly as expected by the end of Year 6 but as yet they do not match the higher standards seen in English and mathematics. The standards in gymnastics are also not as high as they should be in Years 5 and 6 because of a lack of skills and knowledge by some of the teachers. The pupils with special educational needs achieve well because of the very good level of support they receive.

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
English	A*	A*	A*	A
mathematics	A*	A	A*	A
science	A*	A	A	B

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 6.

The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good and opportunities for learning about these areas are firmly embedded in the curriculum. The pupils' attitudes and their behaviour in and around the school are very good. The relationships throughout the school are very good and all pupils co-operate well with each other. The pupils are enthusiastic and are very happy in school. The teaching of music, art, dance and drama helps pupils' spiritual and cultural development well. Attendance is above the national average.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided is good. The quality of teaching and learning are good throughout the school. This is an improvement since the last inspection because there are now significantly more very good and excellent lessons. One lesson was unsatisfactory because of the weaker management of the pupils. As a result of the overall good quality of teaching, the pupils sustain their concentration and achieve well during all lessons. Throughout the school, all adults have a clear understanding of the high standards of behaviour that are expected. Assessment is very good, and the information is shared very well between the teachers to ensure that all the pupils sustain good achievements.

The curriculum is good overall and offers good opportunities to all pupils. They benefit very well from the very wide range of activities out of lesson times. However, there are some weaknesses in gymnastics and also the uses of ICT are not fully explored. The care, guidance and support given to pupils are very good. There are some minor issues about wearing jewellery in physical education lessons but the school has already taken steps to correct these. All pupils have a trusting relationship with the staff. The school has very good links with the parents and good links with the community.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are very good. The headteacher provides an excellent quality of leadership. She has an inspirational vision for the future of the school and she has set out an excellent direction for the school's development. She is dedicated to improving and maintaining the high standards and achievement in all areas of the school's work. She has brought about an ambitious school and pursues the best practice whilst sharing confidently the understanding of the long-term aims of the school. Her management of the school is very good and she is the driving force behind all developments and is extremely conscientious in promoting high standards. The governors give the headteacher, staff and pupils very good support and the governance of the school is very good. The senior members of staff provide very good leadership, monitoring and evaluating the areas for which they have responsibilities very well. The co-ordinators provide effective leadership to the development of their subjects, assessment procedures and special educational needs.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

The school is highly regarded by both the parents and the pupils. The parents give their full support to the school and make substantial donations to the school's funding. A small proportion of parents say that the school does not seek their views but this is not supported by the inspection team. The pupils enjoy coming to school and show good enthusiasm for the school and their work.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- raise the level of the pupils' skills in ICT and make more use of ICT to support their learning in other subjects;
- raise the pupils' skills and the quality of teaching in gymnastics in Years 5 and 6;

and, to meet statutory requirements:

- ensure that the governors' report to parents contains the necessary information about progress made in implementing the action plan following an inspection and also a statement regarding the future policy for increasing accessibility for those with disabilities.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

The children achieve well and have standards that are above the expected levels for their ages in the Foundation Stage and nearly all are on course to reach the goals expected of them well in time to enter Year 1. Currently, the pupils in Year 2 achieve well and reach standards in reading, writing, and science that are well above average and in mathematics that are very high. By the end of Year 6, the pupils' standards are well above average in English and science and very high in mathematics when compared with all schools and those of a similar type. The pupils' achievements are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The children in the Foundation Stage enter school with attainment above the expected levels for their age and already their achievement is good.
- The standards in core subjects throughout the rest of the school have been successfully maintained since the last inspection.
- Currently the pupils' standards in English and science are well above the national average and very high in mathematics.
- The school's performance has been well above that seen nationally over the past five years.
- The pupils' work in ICT is in line with the expected levels but could be higher.
- The pupils' gymnastic skills are below those expected nationally.

Commentary

1. The children's attainment on entry to the reception class varies from child to child but, overall, their standards are above the expected levels for their age. They make good progress and achieve well whilst in the reception class. The children enter the school in September of the school year in which they become five years old and had only been in school for four mornings before the inspection started. They quickly settle to the routines of the class and school. It is evident, from the good quality of teaching and the assessment records already completed, that nearly all the children are currently on course to reach the Early Learning Goals in all areas of learning well in time for them to enter Year 1.
2. The pupils' standards throughout the infant classes have been maintained successfully since the last inspection and the school's performance has been consistently well above or better compared with the national picture. In the national tests of 2003, the results showed that the standards at the end of Year 2 were very high in reading, writing, mathematics and science. All the pupils reached Level 2 or above in all subjects and the proportion of pupils reaching the higher Level 3 was very high, being in the top five per cent nationally. There is no significant difference between the standards achieved by boys and girls. The long-term trend in recent years shows that the school's performance in reading, writing and mathematics exceeds the national trend at the end of Year 2.
3. The results of the tests in 2004 show that standards are being maintained and, although no direct comparisons can be made with the national average for 2004, comparisons with the results for 2003 suggest that the school's results are once again very high in all areas.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 – average point scores in 2003

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	20.0 (19.1)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	18.4 (17.2)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	19.8 (18.5)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 58 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

4. It is already evident that the achievement of the pupils in Year 2 is good overall because of the overall good quality of teaching. Following a scrutiny of the pupils' work from last year and the current work seen in the pupils' books and in lessons, it is evident that the pupils' standards are well above average in reading, writing and science and very high in mathematics. The pupils' standards in music, design and technology and in art and design are above the expected levels for their age.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 – average point scores in 2003

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	30.5 (31.2)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	30.2 (29.9)	26.8 (26.7)
science	30.4 (30.6)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 60 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

5. The results of the national tests at the end of Year 6 in 2003 showed that pupils reached very high standards in English and mathematics and were in the top five per cent nationally. These standards were well above the average when compared with similar schools. In science, the pupils' standards were well above the national average when compared with all schools and above the average of similar type of schools. The proportion of pupils that exceeded the expected level to reach Level 5 was very high in English and well above average in mathematics and science. The school exceeded the targets which were agreed with the local education authority for the proportion of pupils reaching Levels 4 and 5 in English and mathematics.
6. The results of the tests in 2004 continue the trend seen over the past five years where the school's performance shows that standards are being maintained in all three subjects. Although no direct comparisons can be made with the national average for 2004, comparisons with the results for 2003 suggest that the school's results remain well above average in English and science and very high in mathematics. These standards are confirmed through the scrutiny of work and the work seen in lessons during the inspection. There is no significant difference between the standards achieved by boys and girls.
7. The levels of the pupils' skills and knowledge in ICT have improved since the establishment of the computer suite and the extended training programme followed by all the teachers. Currently, the standards of the majority of the pupils in Year 6 and Year 2 are broadly in line with the expected levels. The younger pupils have built steadily upon their skills as they progress through the school. However, the pupils in Years 5 and 6 had many gaps that the school has worked hard to fill. Consequently, they have achieved well to catch up and this is due to the more concentrated emphasis placed on learning skills than they had previously experienced. They have filled the gaps in their skills and understanding but even so the standards could be higher as they do not yet match their much higher standards seen in

English, mathematics and science. The teachers still do not make sufficient use of ICT to enhance the pupils' learning in other subjects whilst still teaching the skills needed for the discrete subject needs.

8. Although the standards in most elements of physical education are satisfactory, the standards in gymnastics are below the expected levels for pupils in Years 5 and 6 and this is because some of the teachers do not have sufficient knowledge of the subject to improve the pupils' skills. The pupils' standards in music, design and technology and in art and design are above the expected levels for their age.
9. The pupils with special educational needs receive a very good level of support both in the classroom and when working in small groups. Their special needs are carefully planned for and the work set is suitably challenging. Consequently, they make good progress overall and achieve well. The pupils with English as an additional language achieve well and usually attain standards that are as good as the other pupils in their year groups. No pupil is in the early stages of learning English.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

The pupils have good levels of attendance. Their attitudes to school and their behaviour are very good. Their personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils of all ages are very enthusiastic about all aspects of school life.
- Behaviour is very good in and around the school and bullying is very rare.
- The school's promotion of good relationships, including racial harmony, is excellent.

Commentary

10. The very positive attitudes and very good standards of behaviour that were seen at the last inspection have been maintained. Pupils say they enjoy coming to school and their parents confirm this. In lessons, even the youngest children show a great interest in their work, such as on their first visit to the ICT suite, where they all listened intently and worked hard to click and drag teddy's clothes into the right place. Older pupils also show very high levels of concentration. For example, in a Year 3 literacy lesson, they listened avidly to a highly amusing pirate story as they learned how to make their voices more expressive. The pupils' enthusiasm also shines through in other areas, for example the way they sing in assembly and their enjoyment of out-of-school activities such as participating in sporting events and the school production.
11. All adults have a very consistent approach to discipline based on praising good behaviour, described as 'public praise and private sanctions' by one member of staff. The pupils respond very well to the extremely high expectations of their behaviour. On the whole, behaviour is very good in lessons, although on the rare occasion when a teacher's class control is not as effective, a small number do not behave quite as well as they normally do. Behaviour is very good in assemblies and is particularly good at lunchtime when pupils all eat in their classrooms. They act very sensibly and maturely whether an adult is in the room or not. There was no evidence of any intimidation or harassment in the playground and pupils could think of no real instances of bullying. The school works extremely hard to achieve this by encouraging pupils to let someone know if they or others are upset and by 'nipping in the bud' any potential problems.
12. Adults are very conscious of their position as role models and, because of this, they speak to each other, and particularly to pupils, politely and with respect. As a result, the pupils' relationships with others are very good. The older pupils are very kind and caring towards the younger ones, looking after them in the playground and helping with their lunches. They all mix

together very well regardless of their ethnic or social background. The pupils are also very friendly and courteous to visitors and are willing to take on responsible roles such as organising meetings and helping in assembly. The result of having very good attitudes, behaviour and relationships is that the pupils are very happy in school, willing to learn and are able to do so in undisrupted lessons.

13. Attendance and punctuality are still at the good levels seen at the last inspection. There is only a very small amount of unauthorised absence; parents are aware of the school's system to report absences and to request holidays in advance. Although there are some parents who remove their children during term time, most of the authorised absences are due to ill health. Because the pupils enjoy school, they are eager to arrive and, as a result, punctuality is good and the first lesson of the day is not disrupted by late arrivals.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	4.6	School data	0.0
National data	5.4	National data	0.4

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

14. The pupils develop very well spiritually, morally, socially and culturally. Opportunities for learning about these areas are included in the curriculum. In relation to spirituality, pupils are encouraged to have enquiring minds. They are given the space and time to appreciate the school grounds and the world around them. For example, one class went out to look at the particularly striking colours of the autumn leaves last year as a stimulus to a piece of writing. There are good opportunities for reflection in assemblies and the significant role that music and art play in school life contribute very well to this area. There is a clear, shared code of behaviour, which is modelled well by adults. The positive results are seen in pupils' attitudes and behaviour throughout the school day. Most staff plan very good opportunities to develop pupils' social skills. In lessons, pupils discuss their tasks and work in pairs and groups. They develop a social conscience by contributing to fund-raising events like the Lent Fair, and in Year 6, through the residential visit, which is most beneficial.
15. The school prepares pupils well for life in a culturally diverse society. The school has a good range of multicultural resources and very good opportunities are planned in the curriculum. The pupils benefit greatly from learning about other cultures from other pupils and their teachers. They understand that all cultures have differences and similarities. Pupils born in Britain know that their Muslim friends live a different style of life in our British culture than their parents and grandparents may have done in the past. The pupils who are new to Britain are also learning well about the customs and culture of Britain. This good development of understanding and knowledge contributes significantly to racial harmony at the school. Staff appreciate the good support that parents give in this area by inviting classes to their places of worship, like the synagogue in Maidenhead or the Hindu temple in Neasden.

Exclusions

There were no exclusions last year.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is good. The qualities of teaching and learning are good, and sometimes very good. The curriculum is satisfactory, with many strengths in the extra-curricular activities. The provision for pupils' care, welfare and health and safety is satisfactory. The school has very good

links with parents, and good links with the community. Links with other schools and colleges are satisfactory.

Teaching and Learning

The quality of teaching and learning is good overall throughout the school. There is a significant proportion of very good and better teaching. The assessment procedures are very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection, with more lessons being good or better.
- The teachers insist on high standards of behaviour and manage pupils very well.
- The pupils work with enthusiasm because of the teachers' high expectations.
- The teachers and the learning support assistants work very effectively together to promote good learning.
- Information about what each pupil can do is very good and is used very effectively.
- The teaching of ICT and gymnastics is not as strong as in other subjects.

Commentary

16. The proportion of very good teaching has increased significantly since the previous inspection. This is a good improvement. Over two-fifths of the lessons seen were of a very good or excellent quality. This is a high proportion of lessons and the overall quality of teaching accounts for the pupils' good achievement and the well above average standards seen in English and science and the very high standards in mathematics. The key stage co-ordinators play a vital role in monitoring the quality of teaching and this is productive and purposeful in raising standards.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 51 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
4 (8%)	17 (33 %)	21 (41%)	8 (16 %)	1 (2%)	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.

17. Although there are areas for some improvements there are many consistent strengths which underpin pupils' learning. The teachers provide clear guidance for pupils about behaviour and maintain high expectations. Individual teachers use effective strategies to manage pupils and gain their attention. They use the school's 'reward' system fairly. As a consequence, the pupils behave very well. They know teachers value the efforts they make and they strive to achieve more. At the end of one mathematics lesson, pupils were so pleased with what they had achieved, many would have preferred the lesson to continue rather than go to lunch.
18. The volume of work seen in pupils' books is further testament to teachers' high expectations. Work is generally presented well in neat, legible handwriting and with clear diagrams. Teachers' marking is good, frequently challenging pupils' ideas and giving guidance on how to improve. Support from classroom assistants is very effective. The quality of teamwork ensures that all adults are clear about their roles. This enables targeted support, particularly for the most vulnerable learners in classes, to be better focused on pupils' specific needs. The parents are fully aware of the targets set for their children and also give good support to overseeing the homework tasks.
19. The teaching of numeracy is very good. Literacy is taught well throughout the school. There is a very good emphasis on basic skills in the Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2. As a result, pupils get off to a very good start with reading, writing and number skills. In one lesson, the teacher skilfully used the text of a story book to teach reading strategies such as responding to different typescript by changing the expression in their voices. In another lesson, Year 1 pupils'

counting skills were very impressive and they were able to recognise and correctly sequence numbers to 20. Teachers build well on pupils' early achievements in Years 3 to 6. There are many good opportunities for pupils to practise literacy skills across a range of subjects. Evidence of mathematical skills being used other than in art and design and science, however, is not so strong.

20. Teaching in science, music and art and design are consistently good, resulting in the above average or better standards seen in those subjects. The teaching and learning in ICT is not as strong as in other subjects. The teachers do not make best use of the ICT suite to improve pupils' basic skills through more structured use of ICT to support learning in other subjects. Some teachers' skills and confidence are increasing because of newly installed interactive whiteboards but there is still some way to go in enabling all pupils to achieve their real potential. The teaching of gymnastics is also an area for improvement. Insecure subject knowledge has led to a lack of challenge in lessons for pupils in Years 5 and 6 resulting in some unsatisfactory achievements.
21. The quality of teaching for the pupils with special educational needs is good. The teachers and support staff are aware of the needs of pupils identified as requiring additional help. They work together well in teams so that these pupils have opportunities for both independent and supported work. The work is planned carefully in consultation with the special needs co-ordinator and learning support assistants. They give these pupils very effective support so that they are fully involved in lessons, learn well and succeed. The tasks they are set are well matched to their ability level. In small group work they make very good progress.
22. The school's procedures for assessing and monitoring each pupil's progress in English, mathematics and science are maintained extremely well by the co-ordinator and are very effective. The pupils' progress and achievement are carefully tracked from year to year. Data from the range of assessment tests undertaken are used very well by the teachers who set realistic targets for the pupils and accurately predict their attainment levels. The assessment systems in other subjects, although less rigorous, provide sufficient information about pupils' achievements to inform teachers' planning.

The curriculum

The curriculum is broad and balanced and meets requirements and overall it is good, with many strengths in extra-curricular activities. The accommodation is good, although some classrooms are small. The resources are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good provision for art and design and also music.
- ICT is insufficiently developed through other subjects.
- Extra-curricular provision enriches the curriculum very well.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good.
- There is a very good match of teachers and learning support assistants to the curriculum and an excellent match of support staff in the reception classes.
- There is equality of access and opportunity for all pupils.
- Pupils are prepared well for later stages of education.

Commentary

23. There has been a sound improvement in the curriculum since the time of the last inspection. The national strategies for English and mathematics are very well established. The curriculum provides a broad range of worthwhile activities and experiences, which meet well the needs of pupils, and meets all statutory requirements. The school is developing well its creative curriculum and pupils benefit greatly from very good provision in music and art. There is a

good emphasis on learning about different cultures and these opportunities are an important part of the curriculum. Many good opportunities are taken to link together subjects so that learning is meaningful for pupils. However, there is insufficient use of ICT skills in the teaching and learning in other subjects.

24. The pupils benefit from a curriculum that is enriched well by visits and visitors, including parents. There is a very good range of extra-curricular clubs for sporting, artistic and musical activities; extensive opportunities for instrumental tuition and Year 6 have the opportunity to take part in a residential visit.
25. The headteacher sets a positive atmosphere of total inclusion and this is reflected by the way the staff work hard to ensure that all pupils have equality of access and opportunity. Work is usually planned to challenge pupils at an appropriate level, and where pupils need some extra help, staff identify needs early and arrange for appropriate provision. If pupils have specific needs the school ensures that the necessary resources are available.
26. Pupils with special educational needs receive the full provisions of the school's curriculum. They are fully included in all its activities and given the opportunity to take responsibility where appropriate. Individual education plans contain realistic targets and strategies are well formulated and review dates set. The social development of the pupils is also a feature of the school's special needs provision, for example the effective use of the Wednesday afternoon 'Chat Club' to raise the pupils' levels of confidence, self-esteem and speaking and listening skills.
27. The curriculum for the children in the Foundation Stage is good. All areas of learning are planned jointly by the teachers and, in co-operation with the learning support assistants, the children are encouraged and taught effectively.
28. The children and pupils are very well prepared for subsequent stages of learning. This is because they have the necessary skills, knowledge and understanding to move successfully to the next stage of schooling. There is a strong emphasis on personal development so that pupils become responsible individuals and keen learners. The school ensures that there are good arrangements in place for pupils' transfer to secondary school through regular links with the receiving schools. The pupils are prepared well through homework activities and study skills for their work in secondary school.
29. The accommodation is good, although some of the classrooms are small for the age range and size of classes and this causes some constraints for activities such as investigative science. The computer suite serves the school well and is well equipped and the outdoor facilities provide the pupils with a good environment. The learning support assistants give excellent support to the pupils and teachers in the Foundation Stage and very good support in the other classes and especially to the pupils with special educational needs.

Care, guidance and support

The provision for pupils' care, welfare, health and safety is satisfactory. The school provides very good support, advice and guidance for pupils based on monitoring. The involvement of pupils through seeking, valuing and acting on their views is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are some minor health and safety issues.
- Staff are all very caring and eager to support pupils.
- Pupils have a great deal of trust in adults.
- Children settle very well when they start in the reception class.

Commentary

30. The headteacher provides very good direction for the care, welfare, health and safety of all the pupils. The school has effective procedures for child protection and staff are aware of what action to take should they have any concerns. The school now has a policy for the physical restraint of pupils but the child protection policy, although comprehensive, has not recently been formally reviewed.
31. The practical arrangements to deal with pupils who are ill or injured are good as most staff have first-aid training. However, the school does not keep sufficiently detailed records which include any treatment given.
32. The arrangements to carry out health and safety checks of the premises are satisfactory, with regular risk assessments undertaken. However, during the inspection there were some minor matters brought to the attention of the school. For example, some pupils wear jewellery in physical education lessons and this is potentially unsafe.
33. Although this is a large school, pupils are very well supported whatever their needs, as was the case at the last inspection when pupil numbers were smaller. The pupils with particular medical needs are looked after very well. All staff are very alert to any problems, and information is disseminated at staff meetings so that everyone can be aware of any issues and offer support. As a result, pupils who have had problems, such as schooling difficulties elsewhere, have been very well integrated and supported.
34. Each pupil has an assessment folder that is passed on to the next teacher with annotated examples of their work. Pupils also have targets for literacy and numeracy and their work is regularly marked with constructive and helpful comments. As a result, pupils are aware of how well they are doing and are very well supported to perform even better. The pupils with special educational needs are fully involved in all aspects of school life. They are aware of the targets set for them and they are offered a very good level of support to help them to achieve well. The help of outside agencies is sought and used very effectively by the school.
35. The pupils were very quick to name several adults in the school they would go to if they had concerns. These included the headteacher, class teacher and support staff including those in the office. They were very sure that they would be listened to and helped. As a consequence of the very high levels of support and guidance, all the pupils feel valued and encouraged to work to the best of their ability.
36. At the time of the inspection, reception children had only been in school for four mornings. However, as a result of the very good induction arrangements, they had all settled very well and were obviously very much enjoying their first experience of school. Older pupils who join further up the school also settle well and make new friends soon after they arrive.
37. Although the school does not have any formal pupil body such as a school council, it does involve pupils well in the life of the school. Their views are canvassed during assembly or circle time so that all have the opportunity to contribute ideas, such as what they would like in the playground. Pupils are also encouraged to bring any suggestions directly to the headteacher and this has resulted in pupils organising events, such as charity fundraising.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

There are very good links with parents and carers. The links with the community are good and there are satisfactory links with other schools.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are some minor omissions from the governors' annual report to parents.
- Parents make an extremely valuable contribution to their children's learning at school and at home.
- Links with the local area contribute to pupils' learning and experience.

Commentary

38. The staff make all the parents very welcome and meet them briefly each morning as the pupils are collected from the playground. Although the school has grown considerably since the previous inspection, the very good relationships with parents have been maintained. Parents speak very highly of the education their children receive, the high standards of behaviour and how much their children enjoy coming to school. These are all aspects that have been confirmed by the inspection. A small number of parents have some concern about the quality of information they receive about their children's progress, which was also the case at the last inspection. Overall, the annual progress report that parents receive is satisfactory, especially when read in conjunction with the information parents are given about test results. However, the targets for English, mathematics and science in the reports are not always specific enough. Nevertheless, teachers are very accessible on a daily basis to parents who have any queries or concerns about their children's progress. Parents receive information about what their children will be learning at the start of each year and they also get whole-school newsletters giving dates for their diaries and other information. The prospectus is an informative booklet, as is the governors' annual report to parents, although the latter document has two minor omissions.
39. Some parents also feel that their views are not sought or taken account of but the inspection team does not support this view. The school does not use formal methods of canvassing opinion, such as by questionnaires, but there are several ways for parents to pass on their views. These include the views expressed to the Parent Teacher Association (PTA) class representatives, parent governors, to parents who volunteer or work at the school and through the governors' annual general meeting or directly to the headteacher.
40. Parents' support of the school is an extremely important factor in many aspects of their children's learning. For example, parents ensure their children attend regularly and punctually and they also have an impact on the way their children behave and respond to adults. Parents support their children with their homework, which has a very positive effect on standards and they also give very important practical support such as through the high number who help in class or with out-of-school activities. The financial contribution that parents make, both through donations to the school fund and through the very hard work of the PTA, have made substantial differences to the quality of education and resources.
41. The links with the local church have strengthened - many parishioners are involved with the school, the rector is a very regular visitor and several services are held in the church. The school choir performs in several local areas, such as singing Christmas carols on the common and in a retirement home, and this has a very positive impact on pupils' understanding of the needs of others as well as enhancing their confidence and self-esteem. Pupils also benefit from the close ties with the town library and bookshop, which encourage them to appreciate the value of books. Visits to different places of worship in the area have been very beneficial in allowing pupils to experience other religions and understand their beliefs.
42. Pupils transfer to many different schools, including several grammar schools, at the end of their primary education. This has made it difficult to establish strong links with any particular one. However, the headteacher has ties with several other schools in the area and joint training sessions with another local primary school. In addition, older pupils benefit from attending specialist days, such as for design technology at a secondary school, which gives them a good flavour of the next stage of their education.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are very good. The leadership of the school by the headteacher is excellent and she is supported ably by the senior teachers so that the management of the school is very good. The governance of the school is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher has an excellent vision of the future developments for the school.
- The headteacher has built a cohesive and supportive team that is committed to maintaining high standards.
- The governing body carries out its responsibilities very competently and conscientiously.
- The senior teachers and the subject co-ordinators have established their monitoring, evaluating and management roles very effectively.
- The school has a very good commitment to the inclusion of all pupils in all that it does.
- The management of special educational needs is very good.
- The financial management of the school is very good, with the principles of best value for money being used very well.

Commentary

43. The headteacher provides an excellent quality of leadership. She has an inspirational vision for the future of the school and she has set out an excellent direction for the school's development. She is dedicated to improving and maintaining the high standards and achievement in all areas of the school's work. Through her excellent leadership, the staff work as a happy, coherent team that knows what they are working towards. She has brought about an ambitious school and pursues the best practice whilst sharing the understanding of the long-term aims of the school with everyone. Because of this, the parents, pupils and the community hold the school in high regard.
44. The management of the school is very good. The headteacher works very effectively with the deputy headteacher and the two key stage co-ordinators to maintain the high quality of management of the school. The school improvement plan focuses precisely upon the appropriate priorities for the school. These aims are established through very clear lines of responsibility defined for each member of staff. This ensures that everyone has an active role in planning for the future and ensures that policies are up to date. The staff promote the aims willingly and effectively. The headteacher has developed good strategies to check on the school's performance and carries out very good evaluations of what it achieves. She has fostered a very positive attitude throughout the school so that all adults and children make sure that all pupils are valued as individuals and that they are given very good guidance. The parents give the headteacher their full support. All pupils are totally involved in all that the school does. Consequently, the school has a very good ethos, which is a major strength.
45. The governing body, led by a very committed and very knowledgeable chair of governors, gives the headteacher and the school very good guidance and support. The governors have successfully maintained the very good quality of their governance since the last inspection. The governing body has prepared comprehensive action plans and has reviewed policy statements effectively. Their forward planning has raised the issue of the changes that will become necessary in the next few years as senior members of staff eventually end their careers. They also monitor what is happening in classrooms. Many governors visit the school frequently and have a very good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. The governors show a very good level of interest in the school's special needs provision, with the establishment of training sessions for all governors, the establishment of a link governor and through information in the twice-yearly reports from the special needs co-ordinator. All

governors follow further training sessions, which help to keep them abreast of the changing needs of the school.

46. Under the very good guidance of the headteacher, the co-ordinators and the subject leaders have continued to develop their management roles very effectively since the last inspection. They manage the resources for their subjects carefully and many have had opportunities to check on the quality of teaching for their subjects; however, most of this evaluation has been carried out successfully by the senior management team. Some emphasis has been placed on the development of the teachers' ICT skills but currently there is no co-ordinator for this subject and it is overseen by the senior management team. The management of the Foundation Stage curriculum is imaginative, with good planning routines and very good assessment procedures. The assessment co-ordinator maintains very good records about each pupil's achievements and these are used very well to inform the class teachers about each child. The very good support provided for pupils with special educational needs ensures that they achieve well and meet the individual targets set for them.
47. The teachers and the learning support assistants all follow relevant courses and have all completed extended national training in the uses of ICT to enhance the teaching and learning in other subjects.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	873,404	Balance from previous year	13,360
Total expenditure	938,432	Balance carried forward to the next	564
Expenditure per pupil	2,300		

48. The school has a very good monitoring procedure to ensure that funds are allocated sensibly and carefully. The income and expenditure per pupil was well below the national average for infant and junior schools for the last financial year. The parents made a substantial donation to the school during the last financial year amounting to over £52,000 to balance the budget. This extra funding was used carefully to maintain the level of staffing and without this additional funding the resources and staffing for the school would have been reduced significantly. Furthermore, the school makes good use of the resources available and deploys the teachers effectively to raise standards. The learning support assistants are deployed very well to give support to the pupils throughout the school and especially to those with special educational needs. In the Foundation Stage they give the children and the teachers their excellent support.
49. The school has developed very good principles of best value for money, and this is evident in the purchase of the resources to equip the ICT suite and also in the procedures it adopts for the payroll system. All funds made available to the school are used prudently and wisely.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Provision for the Foundation Stage is **good**.

All the children had been in school for only four morning sessions before the inspection started. Last year almost all the children entered their new Year 1 classes having completed successfully the early learning goals in all the areas of learning. It is clear that this year most have entered the reception class with attainment that is above the expected levels for their age. They are competently on course to reach the goals set for them well before the time when they enter Year 1.

The quality of teaching throughout the Foundation Stage is good overall and often better. The long-term planning for all areas of learning is good and consistent with the national guidelines. The teachers plan together effectively on a weekly basis and this close teamwork, involving the learning support assistants, is reflected in the many opportunities that are provided to develop the children's skills. Those pupils who may be a cause for concern are quickly identified and effective action is taken to provide them with appropriate support. The accommodation has been improved since the last inspection with a large grassed area outside both classrooms that is fenced securely. The classroom displays are colourful and stimulating.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Already nearly all children have achieved well and have quickly developed very good attitudes to learning.

Commentary

50. In these early days of the term, the teachers and the learning support assistants have concentrated on the children's personal, social and emotional development. The adults have high expectations and show very good care of and concern for the children. Already nearly all children have achieved well and have quickly developed very good attitudes to learning. It is evident that they enjoy coming to school. They have a good understanding of the classroom routines and settle very quickly when attending the school's assemblies. They move about independently with confidence as they tackle tasks that are appropriate for their needs and abilities. The teaching assistants are well prepared and they give very good support to all children, often working with a small group. They encourage the children very effectively to take turns, share equipment and tidy up. This positive support is successful and as a result the children are interested and keen to learn and are involved happily in their tasks with others. The good induction arrangements enable all the families to join the school confidently and the daily contact when children arrive or leave at the end of the day is most beneficial.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- All the children make good progress due to the good teaching.
- Their achievements since they started school are good.

Commentary

51. The teachers, ably supported by the learning support assistants, make accurate assessments of what each child can do. All the children make good progress due to the good teaching and very good assessment records that are used to plan activities suited to their needs and abilities. The teachers and the learning support assistants keep all the children involved with songs and stories. The activities to develop the children's knowledge of letter sounds are well devised. All children take an active part and several already know the sounds of many letters. For example, they were observed practising the sound of the letter 'c' and had collected objects that began with this letter. The development of writing is progressing well and the activities are varied well. These include tracing over letters, painting their names in bold paint strokes and using the computer to drag and drop shapes to improve pencil control. Most of the children speak clearly and in complete sentences when answering questions. Their achievements since they started school are good.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The staff intervene effectively to help the children understand well.

Commentary

52. The children were observed working with objects and figures up to five and many proved that they had knowledge of number order up to ten. By the end of the lesson, they had achieved well and made good progress. Most could place figures up to five to match the number of counters they had. The activities were appropriately balanced between teacher directed and child initiated. The staff intervene effectively when the children need help and use their time well to assess what each child has achieved during the lesson.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The classroom is well set up to provide opportunities for children's investigations.
- Role-play corners help the children to develop their speaking and listening skills as well as imaginative use of the equipment.

Commentary

53. The classroom has many areas designed to develop the children's knowledge and understanding of the world. The role-play corner is currently set up as a kitchen and they follow a theme of 'Myself'. This environment provides a familiar setting for the children's investigations and helps to develop their speaking and listening skills, although at this time in the term most children are a little reluctant to talk or act out their roles. The adults intervene effectively, using good questioning techniques to promote conversation and imaginative use of equipment. The outdoor area is not used sufficiently well to raise the children's awareness of the changes that occur throughout the year. There are no garden patches in the enclosed area and consequently the children do not get opportunities to grow flowers or vegetables.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The children enjoy their lessons.
- They achieved well and improved their skills during the lessons seen.

Commentary

54. The children's finer skills of writing and cutting are being developed well and, although there is no hard area adjacent to the classrooms, the teachers make good use of the main school playground for outdoor lessons in physical education. In the two sessions observed outside the children were taken to the school playground to jump, hop and skip. This was only their second experience of this type of activity and nearly all managed to dress themselves in physical education kit reasonably independently. They enjoyed the lesson and the teachers made good use of showing how well certain children could perform these skills. This helped to improve the skills of many others and during the lesson they achieved well.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The children have achieved well since joining the school.
- Good use of ICT promotes early writing skills.

Commentary

55. The teacher uses good links between all areas of learning. In a music session all the pupils were fully involved in playing and experimenting with percussion. They already enjoy singing and many of the younger ones have the confidence to sing their favourite song to the rest of the class. Children's hand skills are developing well when they use crayons and scissors. Media such as crayon and paints are used effectively to improve the children's writing skills. The computers are used well to promote the children's ICT skills and already most demonstrate good control of the mouse to drag and drop shapes onto the screen.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The pupils attain well above average standards in their reading and writing skills and also in the development of their speaking and listening skills.
- Teaching is good and sometimes very good.
- The pupils attain an overall good level of achievement.
- The pupils are given good opportunities to use their literacy skills in other subjects.
- The subject is well managed by the co-ordinator.

Commentary

56. Currently, even though the pupils had only been back at school in the autumn term for little more than four days at the time of the inspection, it is clear that the pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 are attaining standards that are already well above those expected nationally for their ages. This is similar to the standards seen at the time of the last inspection. This judgement is based on school assessment information and lesson observations. The pupils of all ages achieve well in the subject and a high proportion is exceeding the expected levels. There is no significant difference between the performance of the boys and girls. The school provides a very good level of support for pupils with special educational needs and their achievement is good, in line with that of their peers.
57. The majority of pupils have a standard of speaking and listening skills well above that expected nationally for their respective age groups. In Year 2, for example, pupils learn to express their ideas confidently and listen carefully to what is being said to them. A significant number of pupils in Year 6 reach a very good level of speaking and listening and this enables them to contribute well to activities designed to encourage them to listen to others and express their own points of view.
58. Nearly all the pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 are attaining standards in reading that are well above those expected nationally and a high proportion exceeds this level. In Year 2, pupils react well to the books they are reading and demonstrate an ability to discuss their favourite characters and give accounts of the plots. All the pupils interviewed in both year groups expressed their enjoyment of reading and understand the use of books as sources of information. For example, they understand the functions of indexes, glossaries and contents pages. When discussing books they show a very good understanding of the respective functions of publishers, authors and illustrators. The school provides a good range of fiction and the non-fiction section of the library is well set out with books that are easily accessible and in good condition.
59. The pupils are making good progress with the development of their writing skills. The range of writing opportunities provided for them is good and includes poetry, persuasive writing, in the form of letters, extended stories and instructions. For example, in Year 6, pupils have written very exciting accounts of events in the form of front pages of newspapers. In an example of good descriptive writing one pupil wrote, "... The last faint gleam of light faded. The forest looked so scary at night." Most of the pupils are able to produce complex sentences and use punctuation to full effect. The handwriting skills of the pupils are developed well by the school.
60. Lesson observations and a scrutiny of the pupils' work clearly demonstrate that teaching and learning are good overall with some being very good. Lessons have a good level of challenge and expectation and adult support are well used. The needs of more able pupils are well planned for by setting in ability groups and opportunities for extension work.
61. The level of subject management remains good. Pupils are set individual targets and the general assessment procedures are good. Written work is well marked by teachers and provides a good level of feedback for their pupils.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

62. Pupils are given a good level of opportunity to use their literacy skills across the curriculum. During the inspection some good examples of extended writing in history were seen. Opportunities are provided for pupils to use their ICT skills in the production of written work for display. Pupils are given a good level of opportunities to use their speaking and listening skills in many different situations.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards attained are very high.
- Pupils' achievement is very good.
- The quality of teaching and learning in Year 6 is very good.
- Teachers track pupils' progress rigorously to ensure their standards improve quickly.
- The leadership and management of mathematics are very good.
- There is some good use of ICT to support learning but this is not developed enough.
- The sessions at the end of lessons are not always effective enough.

Commentary

63. Inspection findings confirm that standards for the current Year 2 and Year 3 pupils are very high. This is an improvement since the last inspection and there have been consistently very high standards over a number of years. The pupils start in Year 1 with above average levels of attainment and make good progress so that by the end of Year 2, their achievement is good and their standards are very high.
64. The standard of work seen during the inspection for the current Year 6 pupils is very high. A high proportion of pupils already achieve Level 5. The pupils' achievement over time is very good. There is no significant difference between boys' and girls' achievement.
65. In Years 1 and 2 the teaching and learning are good. The teachers have good subject knowledge. They plan and resource lessons well and their expectations of what pupils can achieve are good. There is adjustment of work to ensure that all pupils can learn effectively depending on their prior attainment. Sometimes the beginning part of the mathematics lesson lacks pace and there are sometimes insufficient strategies to involve all pupils in the lesson; consequently, pupils do not have enough opportunities to answer questions
66. In Years 3 to 6, the teaching and learning are very good overall even though one lesson in Year 3 was unsatisfactory. This was because the teacher's management of the class and the level of challenge in the tasks set for the pupils led to unsatisfactory learning. Nevertheless, there were two excellent lessons seen and the other lessons were good or better. In one lesson in Year 5 the teacher challenged all pupils very well because she had planned different work depending on their prior attainment. Activities were set up so that all pupils were fully involved, her questions challenged pupils to explain and justify their reasoning and good use was made of the interactive whiteboard by the teacher and a group of pupils to support learning. It was clear from the pupils' enthusiastic response that they were enjoying solving problems. In the other lesson in Year 6 the pupils were challenged extremely well with very demanding extension tasks. In both of these lessons the teachers were able to teach successfully very difficult ideas and skills. In some lessons the final session is not used effectively enough to assess thoroughly what pupils have learnt and understood. In discussion with younger pupils, they expressed an enthusiasm for and enjoyment of this subject.
67. Assessment systems are rigorous and used well to ensure that pupils are sufficiently challenged and given support when necessary so that they can progress well. Detailed analysis of test results has taken place over time to ensure that any areas that may be weaker are addressed. .

68. The quality of leadership and management in mathematics is very good. The co-ordinator is a leading mathematics teacher and is, therefore, well placed to support and monitor provision. She is aware of the strengths and any areas for development. There is some good use of ICT by teachers and pupils to support learning but this is an area for development. There has been a good improvement in provision since the last inspection.

Mathematics across the curriculum

69. The pupils use their numeracy skills well in other subjects. The school has recently reviewed its curriculum to ensure that pupils are taught the necessary mathematical skills before they need to apply them in a particular subject. They are developing the use of spreadsheets and can interrogate simple databases in ICT. There are many opportunities to measure and handle data in science and geography.

SCIENCE

Provision for science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards have been maintained at well above the national average since the last inspection and pupils achieve well.
- Teaching and learning are good. There is some outstanding teaching.
- Leadership and management are very good.

Commentary

70. Standards at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are consistently above the national average and have remained so over the past four years, with a very high proportion of pupils exceeding the expected levels. Raising achievement in investigative science is a focus of the school improvement plan. There has been a very thorough analysis of the test data, including national test papers, and advice has been sought from the local education authority science adviser. As a result of these measures the curriculum has been reviewed so there is now a much stronger emphasis on independent investigative work. The pupils have responded well to this and hold the view that science lessons are 'more fun'. The school's assessment data predicts an improvement in standards for the current Year 6.
71. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. Some very good and outstanding lessons were seen during the inspection. Characteristic strengths of teaching are the ways in which teachers plan and prepare lessons and make very good use of resources to stimulate interest and help all pupils learn. For example, in order to help pupils in Year 2 to classify different types of food, the teacher provided a 'shopping basket' for the children to explore. Consequently, the data gathering activity was more strongly related to 'real life' experiences and became more purposeful for the pupils. This investigative approach features strongly in all lessons, and promotes good learning through experimenting and subsequent discussions. Learning for pupils in a Year 5 lesson was outstanding because they were able to select materials to make 'string telephones', then freely experiment with different techniques. They discovered for themselves the effectiveness of having either taut or un-stretched string. Some were very excited by the discovery that the telephone was more effective when they wrapped the string around a wooden bench and went on to investigate other possibilities. The teacher's questioning to probe pupils' understanding encouraged them to enquire even further, ensuring that all pupils achieved very well in the lesson.

72. Very good relationships are established in all lessons. There is often a very good rapport between teacher and pupils. The pupils know that their contributions to lessons are valued so they are confident and readily share ideas. Learning support assistants work very effectively as part of the class team. They are skilled and in some cases highly qualified and made significant contributions to pupils' progress and achievement.
73. The very good leadership and management continue from the last inspection and are key factors in maintaining the high standards and teaching quality. Vigorous leadership, currently by the deputy headteacher, motivates staff and pupils very well. The pupils' standards are monitored rigorously and assessment procedures enable accurate prediction of pupils' attainment levels. The teachers' marking is challenging and supportive. There is a strong commitment towards improvement and effective strategies are planned to achieve this.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in ICT is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The pupils' standards are broadly in line with the expected levels but these do not match the higher standards seen in other subjects.
- The provision for ICT has improved since the last inspection with the addition of a computer suite and with the national training followed by all the teachers and learning support assistants.
- The ICT technicians give very good support to the teachers.
- There are good assessment systems in place.
- The leadership of the subject is held by senior members of staff in the absence of a co-ordinator.
- The school does not make sufficient use of ICT to enhance the teaching and learning in other subjects.

Commentary

74. Only two lessons were observed with the pupils using the computers in the computer suite, one in Year 1 and the other in Year 4. Further lessons were observed in classrooms where the teachers used the interactive whiteboards very competently. The pupils were also beginning to use this recent addition to ICT facilities. However, by talking to pupils in Year 6 and inspecting the work held on the computers for all year groups, it is evident that the pupils are developing a secure base of skills of the curriculum. This is because of the structured coverage across all the elements of the subject. Currently, the standards are in line with the expected levels by the end of Year 6 and in Year 2. The pupils' achievement is satisfactory. These standards are not as good as indicated at the time of the last inspection and they do not match the higher standards seen in English, mathematics and science. However, it must be remembered that the curriculum is now more demanding and the school has had to work hard to raise the level of the pupils' skills. The school has concentrated successfully upon ensuring that the gaps in the pupils' skills and knowledge are being filled. This is now possible because of the improved facilities and regular use of the new computer suite.
75. The school's curriculum has been widened since the last inspection. Currently, the work of these oldest pupils shows that they are competent in the use of the text processing, graphics and are beginning to grasp an understanding of the functions of spreadsheets. Even so it is clear from their work that very few of them can enter formulae to calculate columns of figures. They have built simple data-handling programs competently. During the inspection a group of pupils in Year 6 demonstrated their knowledge of controlling devices using computers, but very few can write, amend or save procedures to control, for example, a set of traffic lights. The work stored on the computers shows that last year some pupils in Years 5 and 6 had experienced constructing slide presentation shows but very few had the skills and knowledge

to incorporate sound or import photographs. They do not use electronic mail sufficiently well to communicate with each other but have touched upon the uses of the Internet to research history topics.

76. The teaching is satisfactory overall and the pupils' learning is satisfactory. The two ICT technicians and the learning support assistants give the teachers very good support and this is invaluable in ensuring that lessons run smoothly and that all pupils are given equal opportunities to succeed with their tasks. Good assessment procedures are completed for each pupil. The teachers are very competent in their uses of the interactive whiteboards. These new techniques were used to bring these lessons alive.
77. Currently, the school does not have a specific co-ordinator for ICT and the responsibility for monitoring and evaluating the development of the subject is overseen by the senior management team of the school. Under the management of the senior management team, there is a renewed emphasis to continue the improvements that have been made since the establishment of improved facilities.
78. Only the computers in the computer suite are networked and this prevents the pupils from following up a particular line of work whilst in their classrooms. This whole-school networking is a priority of the school but it is faced by many problems due to the layout of the building.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

79. The uses of the interactive whiteboards are being developed very well and the teachers are becoming more competent in the use of this new facility in teaching other subjects. However, the use of ICT across the curriculum with access to the Internet and e-mail is not sufficiently developed and the stand-alone classroom computers were not seen being used regularly to support learning during the inspection except in the reception classes. There is evidence that the pupils research some topics in history but currently the teachers do not plan enough opportunities for the pupils to pursue their ICT skills whilst being involved in topics and themes from other subjects.

HUMANITIES

Geography and history

80. The provision for **history** was sampled. Not enough evidence was available to enable secure judgements to be made on the standards of attainment reached by the pupils or the quality of the teaching. However, in the two lessons seen in the subject the pupils made good progress in their understanding of the influence of Florence Nightingale on the medical profession and the importance of the Nile to the ancient Egyptians. In both lessons, teaching was judged to be good. Both lessons provided effective learning experiences for the pupils thanks to the use of interactive whiteboard technology and well chosen texts.
81. The pupils are given a wide range of experiences - the pupils' art, drama and literacy skills are also used to good effect. The work completed about the Tudors and World War Two is monitored closely and the pupils are encouraged to produce very good quality projects. In this work the pupils produce some very good art work and present their findings in an interesting and informative way. In the case of pupils' work on World War Two, information is presented in the form of a drama called 'Air Raid Archie'. In discussion, the pupils in Year 2 showed a very positive attitude towards the subject, as did the work done by pupils in Year 6.
82. No lessons were seen in **geography**. However, the work that was sampled indicated an interest in the subject on the part of the pupils and a developing knowledge of the world around them. In a good link to their work in mathematics, pupils have carried out surveys on

a proposed local development and produced graphs to illustrate their results. Older pupils have a good understanding of the use of water and the rain cycle. Pupils are given a good range of opportunities to use their literacy skills.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

83. Insufficient lessons were seen during the inspection to enable an overall judgement on provision for **design and technology** to be made. From the evidence of work displayed, it is clear that pupils achieve well and the quality and standards of work at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are above expectations. National subject guidance has been successfully adapted to ensure that the pupils develop good skills systematically. The co-ordinator has continued to build on the positive picture reported previously. Planning is more purposefully linked to other subjects, there are better resources and standards overall have improved. A very good feature of the pupils' work is the way in which literacy skills are promoted through pupils' written evaluations.

Art and design

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above expectations for pupils at the end of Year 2 and Year 6.
- Teaching is good.
- The curriculum is well planned and offers a good range of creative experiences.

Commentary

84. The pupils continue to make the good progress which was reported on in the previous inspection and achieve better than expected standards in art and design by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. The curriculum is planned thoughtfully so that pupils have a good range of opportunities for observational work, collage and work with clay and textiles. The leadership and management of the subject are good and the commitment, enthusiasm and expertise of the co-ordinator are a positive influence on staff and pupils. There is a flourishing art club after school where pupils benefit from the skills brought in by working artists. Exciting projects such as the creation of a large scale mosaic are planned to further stimulate pupils' creativity. The school is currently broadening this aspect of provision in order to gain the national Artsmark award.
85. There are many good examples of art work displayed in the school. The pupils achieve particularly well in Year 3 where they benefit most from the co-ordinators' skills. There is an impressive display of Egyptian masks and very successful application of technique resulting in the 'winter tree' landscapes. There are good links with other areas of the curriculum; for example, a collage reflecting a religious theme and also portraits of characters from history made in textile add a further dimension to pupils' learning.
86. The teaching and learning in the lessons seen were good overall. The teachers' subject knowledge is very good, consequently basic skills and techniques are taught very well. The pupils in Year 1, for example, learn to mix and apply paint confidently and the pictures they create by 'string printing' (having first made their own print blocks) are of a very good standard. The pupils are challenged well in lessons to apply the skills they have been taught. In a Year 2 lesson, the pupils had to create a larger picture by matching colour and tone to one they had cut out to use as a starting point. Many showed a good understanding of perspective and almost all demonstrated a mature sensitivity in their use of colour. The teachers encourage pupils to use sketch books to practise techniques as well as to develop

ideas. This encourages a more thoughtful approach and makes pupils more confident about expressing their ideas.

Music

Provision in music is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above the levels expected and achievement is good.
- Pupils enjoy singing to a high standard. They are enthusiastic performers.
- Teaching and learning are very good.
- Co-ordination is very good.
- The curriculum is enriched very well.

Commentary

87. Pupils sing very well in assembly and the quality of their singing makes a very good contribution to the spirituality of school worship. A large number of pupils take part in lunchtime choir, where they are skilfully taught to achieve high standards by knowledgeable and enthusiastic teachers. Whenever pupils sing, they demonstrate their enjoyment and are sensitive to the meaning of the words they are singing. They pitch well and their singing is tuneful. The school has a tradition of producing concerts and other performances, in which a large number of pupils take part. Parents appreciate these events very much.
88. The quality of teaching and learning in lessons, worship assemblies and choir sessions is always at least good and often very good or excellent. The pupils are all achieving well and are all fully included in all activities. This is because the curriculum has been very well planned, teachers are knowledgeable and enthusiastic, and there is a very good range of musical resources, including multicultural instruments. Teachers give pupils the time and space to experiment with different instruments and ways of making sounds when composing. They plan activities that develop pupils' social skills well because they need to discuss, justify decisions and co-operate with other pupils. The pupils benefit from a designated music room and adjacent classroom, which mean they are able to work effectively because they have the space to perform well as a group. There is a planned programme of music for assemblies so that pupils can appreciate a wide range of different kinds of music from all over the world. In addition, pupils have opportunities to learn from visitors like the Watoto choir from Africa.
89. About a quarter of the pupils have instrumental lessons either outside the school day or on a rota basis during the school day, so that they do not miss the same lesson every week. There is no school orchestra but groups of pupils have opportunities to take part together in musical events.
90. The leadership and management of music are both very good. The co-ordinator has a clear vision for the development of the subject being a very enthusiastic and knowledgeable musician. She has developed a good music curriculum, with appropriate resources and actively supports other teachers when required. However, the school benefits from having other teachers who are also knowledgeable and enthusiastic about this subject. The school has started to build up ICT resources but recognises that this is an area for development. There has been a good improvement in provision since the last inspection.

Physical education

Provision in physical education is **satisfactory** overall but there are weaknesses in gymnastics.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The pupils' standards and their achievement in gymnastics are too low in Years 5 and 6.
- Monitoring of the gymnastic standards in Years 5 and 6 is not rigorous enough.
- A good range of extra-curricular activities enrich the curriculum.

Commentary

91. Standards in most aspects of physical education are broadly in line with expected levels throughout the school and the pupils' achievement is satisfactory. However, in gymnastics in Years 5 and 6 the standards are too low. This is a decline since the last inspection. This is because teachers' expectations in Year 5 and Year 6 lessons are not high enough and the pupils' achievement was not good enough. Too much time was taken in one lesson in reinforcing routines about putting out apparatus and mats and in another lesson, the teacher's class management skills were not effective enough. In these lessons there was insufficient attention to safety because some pupils were wearing jewellery and long hair was not tied back. The feedback given to the pupils was not rigorous enough and pupils were not involved in the evaluation of their own and other pupils' work. However, in Year 1, teaching and learning were good because pupils were appropriately challenged, including being given responsibility for selecting movements and discussing difficulties. These pupils are achieving well.
92. The teaching and learning in most games lessons are satisfactory. The pupils are achieving satisfactorily but in Year 2 they were not given enough responsibility for their own learning or an opportunity to discuss and evaluate what they had been doing. In the lesson in Year 5, the pupils learnt well about the safety aspects of hockey but because there were insufficient hockey sticks pupils were not active enough.
93. The teaching and learning in a dance lesson in Year 3 were good. The pupils achieved well because the teacher was enthusiastic and insistent on high standards of performance and behaviour. This series of lessons on Chinese dance contributes well to the pupils' cultural development. In Year 4, pupils have the opportunity to learn other Asian dances as well.
94. There is a good range of extra-curricular opportunities, including links with Wycombe Wanderers Football Club. The pupils in Year 6 take part in a residential visit where they have opportunities to experience abseiling, go-karting and riding a zip wire. All pupils learn to swim in the summer term in the school's pool and the vast majority of them attain at least the 25 metre standard.
95. Leadership and management of this subject are satisfactory but there are weaknesses in knowledge and skills in gymnastics of some teachers in the upper year groups. The co-ordinator has been developing the curriculum resources satisfactorily over the last few years. Staff have received training in gymnastics and dance. However, the monitoring of teaching and learning has not been rigorous enough. Some of the newly appointed teachers have not received the guidance they need in order to improve their teaching of gymnastics. There is no assessment system in place and consequently there is no check that pupils are attaining the expected levels. Some parents expressed concerns in the parents' questionnaires about provision in physical education, particularly games. In the current action plan, the school is focusing on the development of football, netball and athletics. There has been satisfactory improvement in provision for all elements of the curriculum with the exception of gymnastics in Years 5 and 6 since the last inspection.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

96. The school has good arrangements to develop pupils' personal, social and health education (PSHE) and to increase their understanding of citizenship. For example, older pupils learn about democracy and parliament through role-playing an election. Their personal safety is enhanced through discussion and a visit to Hazard Alley where they solve real-life problems about their safety. Topics such as sex education and drug and alcohol abuse are covered at

different stages as pupils move up through the school. PSHE lessons for younger pupils focus on issues such as fairness and how litter affects the environment. In addition to the formal time-tabled lessons, the school provides for pupils' personal and social development through the consistent approach to showing respect for others and an awareness of the responsibilities of living in a community.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	2
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	2
Overall standards achieved	2
Pupils' achievement	3
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	2
Attendance	3
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The quality of education provided by the school	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	2
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	4
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	4
The leadership and management of the school	2
The governance of the school	2
The leadership of the headteacher	1
The leadership of other key staff	2

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