

INSPECTION REPORT

THE NEW LEAKE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Boston

LEA area: Lincolnshire

Unique reference number: 120466

Headteacher: Mrs Hazel Belcher

Lead inspector: Mr C Parker

Dates of inspection: 4th and 5th July 2005

Inspection number: 268080

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Primary
School category: Community
Age range of pupils: 4 to 11 years
Gender of pupils: Mixed
Number on roll: 42

School address: Fodderdyke Bank
New Leake
Boston
Lincolnshire
Postcode: PE22 8JB

Telephone number: 01205 270285
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Appropriate authority: Governing body
Name of chair of Mr M Smith
governors:

Date of previous 18th May 1999
inspection:

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The long serving headteacher left the school in 2003 and was replaced by an acting headteacher who has subsequently become the substantive post holder. The resignation of the headteacher was followed by other staff changes. As a result, the teaching staff has changed completely since the last inspection.

The 42 pupils on roll are taught in two classes; 39 are white British and three are of Black African heritage. All of the pupils speak English as their first language. A third of pupils have special educational needs; two have a Statement of Special Educational Need. Over the last few years there has been a high proportion of pupils with special educational needs, often exceeding 40 per cent. Mobility is at a relatively high level. In the previous Year 6 half of the pupils joined the school after the reception year. Four pupils have joined the school during the course of the last year. There are four looked after children. Attainment on entry varies from year to year but is well below average, particularly in personal and social development. In some areas of learning there is considerable variation in the abilities of boys and girls.

The school has recently achieved an Investors in People award.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
11897	Chris Parker	Lead inspector	<i>Mathematics; science; information and communication technology; art and design; design and technology; physical education; personal, health and social education; special educational needs</i>
13526	Richard Barnard	Lay inspector	
16892	Julia Elsley	Team inspector	<i>English; history; geography; religious education; music; the Foundation Stage</i>

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

The **overall effectiveness of the school is satisfactory**. There has been significant improvement over the last year that has raised standards in English and mathematics but much remains to be done. Teaching and learning and the resulting achievements of the pupils are all satisfactory. The leadership and management are good and are the key reason why the school is improving rapidly. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Because the teaching in Years 3 to 6 is good the older pupils are making particularly good progress
- Standards are rising sharply but are not high enough in writing, science and information and communication technology (ICT)
- The pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development are good
- The curriculum, accommodation and resources for the Foundation Stage are unsatisfactory
- The headteacher gives the school clear direction, good organisation and a determination to improve

Overall, improvement is satisfactory but in the last year major strides have been taken to rectify a range of weaknesses in teaching, the curriculum and leadership and management. The new headteacher with the active support of the local authority is leading a well planned improvement strategy to good effect.

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	E*	E*	E
mathematics	C	E	E*	E
science	A	E	E	C

Key: A - well above average; B – above average; C – average; D – below average; E – well below average

Similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 2.

Achievement is satisfactory overall. The children make a steady start in the Foundation Stage and most reach the goals set for their personal, social and emotional development. However, a smaller proportion than usual reach the goals set for the end of the reception year in most areas of learning. Although there have been fluctuations in the results of national tests over the last few years generally they have been low. In 2004 the results in all subjects in both Year 2 and Year 6 were well below average and in most cases in the bottom five per cent of schools. Analysis shows that pupils did not make enough progress between Year 2 and Year 6. Although the school has a high proportion of pupils with special educational needs, past assessments and results indicate there was significant underachievement. Recent efforts to raise standards in English and mathematics have had a good deal of success. The results of national tests in 2005, which have yet to be validated, show significant improvements in both English and mathematics at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Standards are now broadly average in both subjects but in writing they

are not yet as high as they should be. Pupils with special educational needs are now doing well because there are good arrangements to meet their needs.

In science, the pupils' have a sound factual knowledge. However, scrutiny of the pupils' work reveals a weaknesses in the pupils' use and application of investigative skills. In ICT the pupils have too few opportunities to develop a broad range of skills and apply them across the curriculum. Consequently, standards are below average.

The very good development of pupils' social skills helps them become mature and responsible individuals by the time they leave school. Pupils' attitudes to learning and behaviour improve as they get older. Behaviour at playtimes is very good. This is helped by the good supervision, an improving range of playground activities and the good space provided. In the Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2 behaviour is generally good but when the pace of lessons slows the pupils' concentration and attention is easily deflected. Relationships in the school are very good.

THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is satisfactory. The teaching is satisfactory overall. In the Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2 lessons are carefully planned but occasionally they lack the urgency to ensure rapid progress. In Years 3 to 6 the teaching is good and a major factor in the improvements in standards in mathematics and English. The marking of the pupils' work is an effective feature of the teaching and learning. The teachers' comments help the pupils' to improve their work. In tandem with good use of individual targets in Years 3 to 6 and increasing self assessment by the pupils, this is providing a very good focus for continuing to raise standards. The curriculum, accommodation and resources are satisfactory overall but in the Foundation Stage they are not. The cramped accommodation, absence of a dedicated outdoor area and limited opportunity for children to make choices weakens the overall provision for the youngest children. The curriculum for Years 1 to 6 is well planned and ensures all subjects are taught. Literacy skills are developed well across the curriculum but ICT skills are not. Health and safety arrangements have been given high priority for the last two years. As a result the care, welfare, health and safety of the pupils are good. Every child is given equal importance by the school and provided with useful guidance. The involvement of pupils through seeking and acting on their views is good.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The headteacher is providing strong leadership. She has successfully taken steps to bring about improvements through a comprehensive school improvement plan although recognising that there are further improvements to be made in a number of important areas of the school's provision. Systems for tracking the pupils' progress and setting targets linked to an improved and well organised curriculum ensure the differing needs of the pupils are met. The governing body has been operating with a number of vacancies but has recently added co-opted members to strengthen its complement. Overall governance is satisfactory but there is an over reliance on a small number of governors to provide strategic influence. The headteacher welcomes rigorous scrutiny of her work but governors say that in the past they were given limited information and few opportunities to challenge the school's performance. The governors do not have a planned programme to check that the school is performing effectively. The governing body makes some checks to ensure that statutory requirements are met but the last annual report to parents did not provide the full range of information.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Most parents are happy with the quality of education the school provides and they agree that the school is improving. The pupils in Year 6 speak about how the school has improved over the last two years. One pupil commented that, '...the decoration and lessons have improved.' They also feel that behaviour has improved.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Continue to raise standards in the core subjects, placing particular emphasis on writing and investigative science.
- Make good use of ICT right across the curriculum
- Implement plans to improve the provision made for the children in the Foundation Stage

In addition, the governors should:

- Ensure that the annual report to parents meets statutory requirements

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Overall achievement is satisfactory; for pupils in Years 3 to 6 it is good. Standards in English and mathematics are average by the end of Year 6 and are now rising

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Year 6 pupils are making particularly good progress
- Standards are rising sharply in English and mathematics but are not high enough in science and information and communication technology (ICT)

Commentary

1. The children make a steady start in the Foundation Stage and most reach the goals set for their personal and social development. However, a smaller proportion than usual reach the goals set for the end of the reception year in communication, language and literacy and in mathematical development. The limitations of the accommodation and resources coupled with over direction by adults restrict the extent of the progress being made in some areas of learning.
2. In 2004 the results in all subjects in both Year 2 and Year 6 were well below average and in most cases in the bottom five per cent of schools. Similar school comparisons were equally low except in science in Year 6 where, on the basis of prior attainment, results were average. Value added measures were also very low and show pupils had not made enough progress between Year 2 and Year 6 in the past. Although the school has a high proportion of pupils with special educational needs past assessments and results indicate there was significant underachievement. This assessment is confirmed by the local authority's concerns that the school had serious weaknesses prior to the appointment of the new headteacher.
3. During the last year the headteacher and staff have focused their efforts on raising standards in English and mathematics with a good deal of success. The pupils' work and the school's tracking of test results shows they are making secure progress in Years 1 and 2; satisfactory and in some cases good progress through Years 3, 4 and 5 and particularly good progress in Year 6 where many of the pupils have made twice as much progress as usually expected in one year. The results of national tests, which have yet to be validated, show significant improvements in both English and mathematics at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Standards are now broadly average in both subjects.
4. Further evidence of improvements in standards is found in the scrutiny of pupils' work and in lessons. In the very small current Year 2 cohort pupils are achieving satisfactorily and have completed a good range of work in English and mathematics. The overall standards are average but in writing they are not yet as high as they should be. In Year 6 the quality and quantity of completed work and the pupils' performance in lessons confirms the significant improvements that have been achieved, although the legacy of earlier underachievement is still evident in their writing. Discussions with teachers, governors, parents and pupils all support the view that improvements in standards are a result of good leadership, a well planned curriculum, a positive ethos and target setting that helps the pupils to make progress. When discussing the recent changes and improvements to the school one Year 6 pupil added, '...and standards are much higher.'

5. Pupils with special educational needs are now doing well because there are good arrangements to meet their needs. Support is well organised with a daily English and mathematics lesson planned to meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs in Years 3, 4 and 5, making a significant contribution to their good progress.
6. In science the pupils' have a sound factual knowledge which was well illustrated during a lesson on forces in Years 5 and 6. However, scrutiny of the pupils' work shows there are weaknesses in the pupils' use and application of investigative skills. The absence of a planned programme of opportunities to develop these skills means that the oldest pupils are not working with the degree of independence that is expected by Year 6.
7. In ICT the pupils have too few opportunities to develop a broad range of skills and apply them across the curriculum. Consequently, standards are below average.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Attitudes and behaviour are good. Personal development is good due to the effective provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education. Attendance is satisfactory and punctuality good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils show good maturity and responsibility as they get older
- Relationships are very good
- Attendance levels have improved in the current year

Commentary

8. Pupils' attitudes to learning and behaviour improve as they get older. The older pupils pay good attention, listen well and show interest in their learning and the activities set for them. The pupils all say how much they enjoy school. The pupils in Year 6 speak about how the school has improved over the last two years. One pupil commented that, '...the decoration and lessons have improved.' Pupils and parents feel that behaviour has improved over the last two years. Behaviour at playtimes is very good. This is helped by the good supervision, an improving range of playground activities and the good space provided. In the Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2 behaviour is generally good but when the pace of lessons slows the pupils' concentration and attention is easily deflected. The cramped classroom and distractions such as noise from low-flying aircraft and clearing up by the classroom assistant on occasions make listening difficult.
9. Neither pupils nor parents show concerns over bullying and they feel potential incidents are dealt with appropriately. Pupils know right from wrong and what to do if squabbles or accidents happen. There is no evidence of sexist or racist attitudes. Moral issues are dealt with very well in personal, social and health education (PSHE) lessons, for example, in a very good session relating to teasing in Years 3 to 6. Pupils demonstrated a very mature attitude when discussing 'hitting back', concluding that they should develop strategies to deal with potential violence such as 'talking around situations'.
10. The very good development of pupils' social skills helps them become mature and responsible individuals by the time they leave school. They undertake a very good range of duties such as head boy and girl, house captains, monitors and peer mediators with enthusiasm and pride. They act as very good role models to the younger children by

organising a very successful lunchtime games club for them. Their understanding of becoming good citizens is encouraged well through an increasingly effective school council.

11. Relationships are very good between all pupils and between them and the adults at the school. They share resources and co-operate in groups well and undertake a range of helpful duties. Relationships at play and lunchtime are particularly good especially between older and younger pupils. The small number of looked after children are very well integrated into the school community.

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	6.7	School data	0.0
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.

12. The attendance rate was well below average for 2003/4 because of the very poor attendance of two pupils. However, attendance levels in the current year are close to the national average. Good systems record and monitor attendance and place appropriate emphasis on promoting good attendance.

Exclusions

There have been no exclusions over the last two years.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is satisfactory.

Teaching and learning

The teaching, learning and assessment are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The teaching in Years 3 to 6 is good
- Some lessons have a lack of urgency in Years 1 and 2
- Marking is good and effective

Commentary

13. The teaching in the Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory. Lessons are carefully planned and the teaching assistant well briefed. The youngest children have an adequate range of opportunities but the accommodation and too much adult direction mitigate against providing choices for the children and encouraging greater independence. Occasionally, there is insufficient interest in the tasks to engage the children in effective learning but in most lessons the children make appropriate gains and make satisfactory progress. The children enjoy the opportunities they have for

learning outside and benefit from, for example, steering wheeled toys in and out of cones and their role play as road side recovery drivers. The teaching is effective in extending each child's personal and social development both inside and out of the classroom.

14. In Years 1 and 2 the teaching is consistently satisfactory. Lessons are well planned, have an appropriate element of challenge and build on what the children already know. The missing ingredient in many lessons is a sense of urgency to move learning along at a rapid pace. Consequently, the pupils make satisfactory rather than good progress. The pupils' work shows that they are completing a reasonable range of tasks but lesson observations indicate even more could be demanded to raise standards further.
15. In Years 3 to 6 the pupils are taught in one class for many subjects but for English and mathematics the youngest and least able are taught by the headteacher. This strategy is particularly effective in supporting and helping those who have special educational needs and creating an opportunity for the older and more able to be stretched. The teaching in the lessons seen was good and in some it was very good.
16. The marking of the pupils' work is a good and effective feature of the teaching and learning. The teachers' comments are clear, accurate and help the pupils' to improve their work. In tandem with good use of individual targets in Years 3 to 6 and increasing self-assessment by the pupils this is providing a very good focus for continuing to raise standards.
17. In Years 3 to 6 assessment is used well to support learning in English and mathematics, and in Years 1 and 2 it is satisfactory. Records of pupils' progress are kept in key areas but in ICT, for example, they are not used effectively to inform planning or influence the pupils' learning.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 16 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	2	5	8	1	0	0

The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons.

The curriculum

The curriculum, accommodation and resources are satisfactory overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum, accommodation and resources for the Foundation Stage are unsatisfactory
- The programme for personal, social and health education is good.
- Literacy skills are developed well across the curriculum but ICT skills are not

Commentary

18. The planning for the curriculum draws heavily upon national guidance and provides a broad and balanced range of opportunities for the pupils. It is appropriately organised to

ensure all subjects are taught but in some, such as science and ICT, not all elements are covered effectively. The pupils' literacy skills are now promoted effectively in their work in other subjects such as history and geography. Adequate opportunities are provided for pupils to use and apply their numeracy skills in, for example, science. Some progress has been made in the development of the pupils' skills in information and communication technology (ICT) but they do not have the opportunities to learn a wide range of skills or to apply what they have learned in other areas of the curriculum.

19. The Foundation Stage curriculum for the youngest children is inadequate because of the cramped accommodation and the absence of a dedicated outdoor area limit the range of opportunities that can be provided. Lessons are carefully planned to involve the children in activities that develop their personal and social skills. The adults engage the children so that they enjoy learning and make use of role-play to develop their language.
20. The planned programme for the personal, social and health education of the pupils is working well. Discussions with the headteacher and the pupils show that this programme alongside high expectations of good behaviour and clear guidance for pupils has been very effective in improving behaviour, attitudes and the ethos of the school. Currently, the school is working towards a healthy schools award part of which includes a transport plan for travel to school, which given its isolated location, requires the co-operation of parents to be successful.
21. Arrangements for pupils with special educational needs are well managed. Individual education plans have clear attainable targets and are reviewed regularly. Parents are fully involved and kept informed. At the pre-inspection meeting parents spoke very positively about the improved provision made for children with special educational needs.
22. There are increasing opportunities for involving pupils in sport and music. For example, visiting coaches lead physical education lessons in athletics. The playing field is being improved to provide a better surface, which pupils can use safely for a range of sporting activities, and the potential of collaboration with other school is being explored. The older pupils run a lunchtime activity club for the younger children providing good opportunities for both groups.
23. The accommodation has undergone a transformation over the last year. Photographic evidence shows that areas of the school were poorly maintained and used ineffectively. As a result of decoration and re-organisation the building is now well presented and provides a much more attractive environment for learning although the space available for the Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2 imposes some restrictions, particularly on the opportunities for the youngest children. Much has been done to improve the accommodation and resources but there is a pressing need to implement plans to improve the conditions for learning for the children in the Foundation Stage.

Care, guidance and support

The provision for pupils' care, welfare, health and safety is good. The provision of support, advice and guidance based on the monitoring of pupils' achievement is good. The involvement of pupils through seeking and acting on their views is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Health and safety arrangements have been given high priority for the past two years
- The care of every child is given equal importance by the school

Commentary

24. Both the pupils and their parents appreciate the good care and concern for pupils' needs. The rigorous approach to child protection procedures, health and safety risks, fire precaution arrangements, security arrangements, good first aid procedures and supervision of pupils enables them to feel secure and work in confidence. The school has very effectively reviewed and implemented new health and safety arrangements over the last two years. From the photographic and reported evidence the priority given to this was essential in providing the pupils and members of staff with a clean, tidy, pleasant and safe environment in which to learn.
25. All pupils are confident they have a supportive adult to speak to if they have worries or concerns. Good arrangements ensure that younger pupils are collected by a responsible person or put safely on the school bus or a taxi at the end of the school day. Pupils are encouraged to have water bottles in class as part of the school's promotion of a healthy lifestyle.
26. Good induction arrangements ensure pupils quickly settle into the reception class. Personal development is supported well as pupils move through the school. Academic support and advice for pupils is improving as assessment procedures and target setting becomes well established. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, are supported well and very good care is given to looked after children to ensure they are fully included in all aspects of school life. All members of staff know each pupil very well and the school has an atmosphere of care and respect. Good arrangements ensure that pupils and parents receive good support and advice on the transfer to secondary school. Pupils in Year 6 speak confidently about the move recognising how different it will be in a large school.
27. Pupils feel that members of staff value their views and this gives them confidence to discuss issues and raise questions. They are consulted well; for instance through the school council where they are confident to raise issues such as the provision of a school travel plan and wearing a uniform physical education kit when representing the school. Pupils' views are sought, considered and acted upon well.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Newsletters give good information for parents
- The parents' association supports the school very well
- Pupils benefit from good links with local secondary schools

Commentary

28. Parents are given a good range of information about the curriculum and how they can help in their child's learning in the attractively presented and regularly distributed newsletters. Annual reports give a satisfactory review of progress and achievements but the teachers do not follow a consistent approach. Some reports give good, honest assessments of achievement and provide specific targets for improvement whereas others give little detail and contain targets of a general nature. The school is open to parents; teachers are available at the start and end of the day to talk to parents and any issues are dealt with promptly and to very good levels of satisfaction from parents.
29. Many but not all parents are supportive of the school. The headteacher recognises this well and through the good provision of information is seeking to make the school a key part of the local community in order to improve aspirations. The good use of surveys ensures parents have a say in issues such as the provision and payment for swimming. The parents and friends association give good financial support as a result of a good range of fundraising and social events. Their contributions have helped to provide equipment for the playground and computer room.
30. The school makes some good use of the very limited opportunities provided by the isolated local community to support learning. Local people such as grandparents, local artists and a churchwarden provide regular help in school. Pupils use the local area well for walks and visits. The headteacher ensures all local houses receive a copy of the school newsletter. A local firm sponsors 'baked potato day' each Friday. The partnership with the local schools, especially the local secondary school benefits pupils through sporting opportunities and by providing good support as pupils move to secondary school.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good. Governance is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher is providing strong leadership
- Governors do not have a planned programme to check that the school is performing effectively

Commentary

31. There have been significant improvements in the leadership and management of the school over the last 18 months. The local authority's concerns that there were serious weaknesses in both the leadership and management of the school have been addressed by the new headteacher. Firstly as acting headteacher and now as the substantive post holder she has quickly identified key areas of weakness and systematically developed plans to address them which are clearly now coming to fruition. Having very quickly come to the conclusion that behaviour and the ethos of the school were unacceptable and standards not high enough she has taken steps to bring about improvements through a comprehensive school improvement plan.

32. In some areas, most notably the pupils' behaviour, considerable improvements have been made in a relatively short space of time and behaviour is now good. Systems for tracking the pupils' progress and setting targets linked to an improved and well-organised curriculum to ensure the needs of the pupils are being met have been implemented. The results of national tests this year show these developments have had a significant impact on the pupils' achievements.
33. The headteacher has a very clear understanding of the issues still facing the school and the organization it requires to be successful. She also has clear and high expectations of what can and should be achieved and the manner in which teachers have to work in order to obtain the results she expects. In addition, her own good teaching provides a role model for others. There is strong agreement amongst governors and parents that the school is improving. The headteacher has been successful in bringing about improvement but is very realistic and recognizes there is much still to do to provide the pupils with a good quality of education right across the curriculum.
34. Subject leadership in English and mathematics has been particularly effective. The headteacher and her assistant have led the developments in these subjects and have established a well planned curriculum, effective marking and appropriate challenge for the pupils, which have brought about much improved progress and standards, most notably in Years 3 to 6.
35. The governing body has been operating with a number of vacancies but has recently added co-opted members to strengthen its complement. Overall governance is satisfactory but there is an over reliance on a small number of governors to provide strategic influence. The headteacher welcomes rigorous scrutiny of her work but governors say that in the past they were given limited information and few opportunities to challenge the school's performance. However, the governors are now making more effective use of training and have a clearer understanding of the importance of their role and how they can steer the work of the school. Systems to routinely monitor how well the school is doing are not well established. The governors do, however, make good use of consultation with local education authority officers to inform their view of the standards being attained and the quality of the provision being made for the pupils. The good working relationship between the chair and the headteacher and her willingness to share information is placing the governing body in a position to be far more effective than it has been in the past. The governing body makes some checks to ensure that statutory requirements are met but the last annual report to parents did not provide the full range of information.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2004 to March 2005

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	175 510	Balance from previous year	1 381
Total expenditure	181 488	Balance carried forward to the next	-5 978
Expenditure per pupil	4 321		

36. Expenditure exceeded income last year because the governors had to meet costs related to teacher absence and the termination of a contract not covered by insurance arrangements. Projected budgets are balanced but the governors are actively marketing the school to increase pupil numbers in the future in order to prevent further reductions in staff.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

The overall provision for the Foundation Stage is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The children make good gains in their personal and social development, communication skills and in their physical development
- Children do not have enough opportunity to make choices
- Accommodation and resources are unsatisfactory and have a detrimental effect on the curriculum

Commentary

37. The seven children in the Foundation Stage who share a very small portable classroom with the Year 1 and 2 children. Plans to develop an outdoor classroom environment are well in hand and work is expected to begin in September 2005. The work is planned by the teacher but the children are mostly taught as a discrete group by the teaching assistant. Very few children have the opportunity to have pre-school experience. The achievements of the children fluctuate year-on-year because of the variations in the size and composition of the cohorts. However, the overall abilities and attainment of the most recent intake are well below average when matched to the national assessment profile. The children are making steady gains in learning. By the end of the reception year the children are likely to achieve the early learning goals in personal, social and emotional development, communication skills and in physical development. In literacy, mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world and creative development they are below average. The overall quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. The children's progress is systematically noted, discussed and appropriately recorded. This information however, is not always used effectively enough to ensure that the level of work planned is independently challenging each child.

38. During the course of the inspection there were few opportunities to gather evidence to make an overall judgement on the children's **knowledge and understanding of the world** and **creative development**. In some cases opportunities arising from other activities when children could have used a computer or become involved in role-play were missed.

39. The **personal, social and emotional development** of the children is good. The children are well settled in their daily routine, enjoy coming to school and are happy and eager to learn. All the children have established good relationships with both their peers and adults, and they play together well. The social skills, emotional development, personal hygiene, self-confidence and self-esteem are being well established. The children share the available equipment and resources amicably. However, the activities offered are generally adult led and there is insufficient opportunity to encourage children's responsibility for their own learning. Older children during playtimes and lunch times are very caring of the youngest children.

40. The development of **communication, language and literacy** skills is broadly satisfactory over time. The children communicate well with adults and each other.

'Snack and story time' not only reinforces social skills well but makes a positive contribution to improving speaking and listening skills. The children are making good gains in their learning. The children have the ability to listen well and they make good progress in following instructions. Suitable attention is given to individual reading skills. Books are shared with adults daily and taken home. At group time, the children shared the reading of a postcard well and actively joined in by following the text as the adult read. They are beginning to understand that pictures and words convey meaning and that we read from left to right. There is a strong focus on the teaching of phonics but the method employed in one lesson had unsatisfactory outcomes because too long was spent on one activity and the children became inattentive and restless. The more formal writing skills, including handwriting, are being appropriately developed. Children are beginning to write letters but marking is not consistent enough to help the children to form their letters accurately in shape and size. This is also the case in formation of number. The writing is restricted in scope and too teacher directed with few opportunities for independent and creative writing through role-play.

41. The teaching of **mathematical development** is broadly satisfactory but does not provide sufficient opportunity for independent exploration through mathematical enquiry. For example, in the mathematical activity seen the children were asked to draw objects 'shorter than', or 'longer than' and were beginning to have a reasonable understanding of the terms. The task was well organised and the children followed instruction well. They became involved and clearly enjoyed the task but there were not enough opportunities for them to extend and enhance the learning and to investigate for themselves.
42. **Physical development** is satisfactory. The children are making steady and consistent gains in both the fine and larger movements. The teaching is satisfactory. The work in the children's books demonstrates an increasing control and confidence in handling scissors, pencils and crayons. Activities are tightly structured and the children follow instructions well. During the outdoor activities the children move around the playground freely or manoeuvre the bicycles in and out of the row of cones enthusiastically and skilfully. They have a good awareness of safety. At present there are limitations to what can be achieved because of the inadequate accommodation and difficult access to resources for fostering independent and child-initiated play.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

The provision for English is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The basic skills of reading are taught well
- The quality of the pupils' writing is improving but is not yet high enough
- The teaching in Years 3 to 6 is consistently good
- The marking of pupils' work is good

Commentary

43. Standards at the end of Year 6 are broadly average. The pupils are making good gains in their learning and achieving well because the quality of teaching is good. Each pupil's

progress is tracked carefully and the school's detailed assessments ensure that the targets set are ambitious but achievable. An analysis of the individual assessments demonstrates significant improvements in pupil's individual achievements and progress over time with many of the pupils in Year 6 making twice as much progress as might be expected in the last year.

44. In the small Year 2 cohort, standards are broadly average. The pupils are achieving satisfactorily and making appropriate progress. Lessons are well planned to ensure that pupils are on course to achieve their personal targets. However, one lesson observed got off to a slow start and, although the pupils made steady progress, they did not have the time to complete the task. This appears to be feature of the pupils' writing, with some tasks in their writing books left incomplete. Nevertheless, the pupils are responsive and engage well in dialogue. Where pupils were not sure of what was expected of them the teacher clarified the task and they became eagerly involved and worked well. Most of the pupils made satisfactory progress because they found the work interesting and because it was well structured. The overall quality of the teaching and learning is broadly satisfactory.
45. Standards in speaking and listening are good in Years 3 to 6. The pupils' skills are well developed by the teacher's good questioning techniques and ability to promote good discussion. The pupils listen carefully to the teacher, and to each other. They respect views and opinions thoughtfully and reflect on their responses. The pupils are developing effective reading skills and are willingly to discuss books they have read in some detail. They speak positively about books and have favourite authors. They can explain the reasons for their choices and are developing a strong personal taste in what they read. In discussion, the pupils expressed their love for poetry and explained that they particularly liked the range of vocabulary used. The Internet and the books in the library are used well to support non-fiction reading. In writing, there is a good emphasis on the use of basic skills, handwriting and presentation of the work. A wide range of writing for different purposes and audiences is evident in the pupils' completed work. They can record factual information well. They write stories and poetry confidently and competently but the work often lacks imaginative use of vocabulary and creativity. The subject leader has recognised that this is an area for further development. She also recognises that improvements in provision and greater opportunities to develop and encourage children as writers are needed throughout the school.
46. The marking of pupils' work has significantly improved and is now a positive feature of teaching and learning. It provides the pupils with clear guidance on how to improve the quality of their work by measuring progress against individual targets. The leadership of English is good. The subject leader has responded well to the need to raise standards in reading and writing over recent months. The action plan is clear and is driving the work forward. A significant strength is the innovative approaches to the curriculum, such as, the use of role-play to support learning for the less able pupils. One lesson seen was brought alive by the imaginative use of resources and story telling. The pupils found the learning fun and were proud of their achievement.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

47. There are good opportunities to use language and literacy across the curriculum. The pupils are encouraged constantly to use their spelling, grammar and punctuation in science, history and geography. Moreover, by Year 6 most pupils have developed a fluent, joined script that enables them to write neatly and speedily when jotting down

ideas or planning their work. The use of ICT to support literacy is underdeveloped, particularly in Years 1 and 2. The pupils take a pride in their work and presentation is good.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The pupils are achieving well
- The teaching is good in Years 3 to 6
- The subject is effectively led and managed

Commentary

48. Standards are average at the end of both Year 2 and Year 6 and significantly higher than the last two years when standards have been very low. The improvements are the result of the teaching of a well planned curriculum, good marking and assessment, effective target setting and a harnessing of the pupils' willingness to learn and make progress.
49. The teaching in Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory. In the one lesson seen the teacher made it clear to the pupils what was expected of them and set them tasks which contained an appropriate level of challenge. Some of the more able Year 2 pupils became more accurate in their estimations of the length of objects as they recorded their predictions and then measured them. By the end of the lessons one boy estimated a piece of carpet to be 180cm which proved to be 170cm. In recent national tests half of the small Year 2 cohort reached the higher level.
50. The teaching in Years 3 to 6 is good. The pupils are taught in two groups. One containing the younger and less able pupils, a high proportion of whom have special educational needs. The other group has the older and more able pupils. However, these groupings are flexible to allow for interventions and focussed 'booster' teaching. In the lessons seen the teaching was well planned, lively, engaging the pupils and motivating them to learn. In one lesson the pupils were using multiplication facts and investigating multiples of 2, 5 and 10. In this lesson the pupils made good progress because the work was well matched to their needs. The group containing the older and more able pupils were given an interesting and challenging task moving their knowledge of perimeter and area towards gaining an understanding of how volume might be calculated. This lesson was well managed and illustrated how well the teacher is making good use of self-assessment by the pupils.
51. The marking of the pupils' work helps them to see how well they are doing and to make improvements. They appreciate the comments made by their teacher and the opportunity to make their own assessments of the extent of their understanding. The tracking of each pupil's progress provides the teachers with a clear picture of how well they are doing. It also shows that the strategies used to raise standards are effective with pupils in most year groups making at least satisfactory gains and those in Year 2 and 6 doing particularly well.

52. The headteacher leads the mathematics curriculum well and the improvements in provision and standards are a direct result of the evaluation of what was required and the implementation of an action plan to address the weaknesses.

Mathematics across the curriculum

53. The pupils use what they have learned in mathematics in science particularly to draw and analyse graphs, in design and technology to calculate costs and to measure. The use of mathematics across the curriculum is satisfactory.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards have risen but are not high enough
- Investigative skills are not taught systematically

Commentary

50. Standards in science have improved by the end of Year 6 but remain below average. The pupils' work shows they have a secure knowledge of a range of topics but that the development of investigative skills lacks structure.

51. Scrutiny of the pupils' work and lesson observation shows that their skills of making predictions, testing ideas, observation, measurement and recording, using graphs and charts, evaluating methods and explaining results are not taught or developed in a progressive or systematic manner. The manner in which the pupils record and present experiments does not build on their previous learning. In a lesson seen in Year 1 and 2 an investigation into how sound diminishes over a distance limited opportunities for the pupils to make decisions but did allow them, collectively, to draw appropriate conclusions.

52. By Year 6 pupils are still reliant on a pro forma to provide the structure for the recording of experiments and investigations. While graphs are used occasionally to present findings, the pupils rarely create their own tables and charts or make use of ICT to either record or present their findings. Explanations of results and evaluations of the methods used are often superficial. In the factual and knowledge based elements of the science curriculum the pupils have made secure progress, explaining the improvements in standards. This was reinforced at the start of one lesson seen where the pupils displayed a secure knowledge of forces through the teacher's review of previous learning at the start of a lesson on upthrust.

53. While the teaching of science is satisfactory overall, and the curriculum comprehensively covers all of the knowledge areas, greater attention is needed on the development and use of investigative skills alongside more effective use of ICT.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision for information and communication technology (ICT) is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The range of skills and applications taught to pupils is narrow
- Pupils do not have sufficient opportunity to use ICT across the curriculum

Commentary

54. Although the pupils' work shows they are competent users of a word processor and can locate information on the Internet, they have too few opportunities to learn how to use other software applications. The older pupils have recently been introduced to spreadsheets but the use of ICT is not embedded into either teaching or learning.
55. During the inspection ICT played no part in any of the lessons observed and records of the pupils' skills and abilities show they have achieved little beyond competence in word processing.
56. The school has a small ICT suite but encounters difficulties with some of the hardware and its connection to the Internet restricting its usefulness and the range of opportunities for the pupils. It is reported that improved hardware is soon to be installed.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

57. There are examples of word processing being used in literacy and a spreadsheet to calculate the cost of ingredients for a pizza as part of a design and technology project but, overall, the use of ICT across the curriculum is wholly unsatisfactory.

HUMANITIES

58. No geography lessons were seen during the inspection and only one history lesson. Consequently, no judgement can be made about the quality of provision. Evidence was gathered from talking to children, looking at their work and talking to staff.
59. The teachers' planning indicates that the **history** and **geography** curriculum is satisfactory and based on national guidance. In Years 1 and 2, there is little recording because most of the work is through discussion. In the one short session seen the pupils were developing their knowledge and understanding of the work of Florence Nightingale well. The pictures and selection of books used captivated the pupils' interest and they enjoyed challenging the teacher by asking many questions about the hospital and the Crimean War. The older pupils have done extensive work this year on Ancient Egypt, the Victorians, contrasting localities in the United Kingdom and Mexico, and have looked at how tea grows in China, India and Sri Lanka. In discussion, the pupils were very enthusiastic about the projects and could talk confidently about a range of issues they had obviously researched from secondary sources to support their statements. A significant feature of the written work was the pupils' ability to apply their knowledge of basic grammar, punctuation and handwriting skills well and demonstrate a pride in its presentation. The good marking of work motivates pupils' interest and thirst for knowledge.

Religious education

The provision for religious education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum is well planned

Commentary

60. Only one lesson was seen, but further evidence in books and discussion with pupils indicates that by the end of Year 2 and 6 pupils achieve standards that are broadly in line with those expected in the locally agreed syllabus. The curriculum offered ensures that pupils have an opportunity to begin to acquire an understanding about the beliefs and key features of Christianity, Judaism, Islam and Sikhism.
61. The pupils in Years 1 and 2 have recently visited a local church. The suitable questioning by the teacher enabled the children to refresh their ideas about the purpose of the key features within it and describe it as a place of worship. They used their own experiences to talk about weddings, funerals and baptisms. The older children in Year 6 could confidently explain how dance plays an important roll in some faiths as well as, for example, the different signs and symbols used in the different faiths. In the written work, the pupils have used the Internet and researched information from library books to support their knowledge and understanding. They have applied the basic literacy skills well to their work.
62. The subject leader is confident about her subject and has a clear understanding about how the subject should be developed throughout the school. The religious education curriculum is identified as an area for review in 2006.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

63. One short observation of music was possible but no lessons in art and design, design and technology or physical education were seen during the inspection.
64. **Art and design** and **design and technology** are popular subjects with the pupils. One Year 2 pupil commented, 'I can't wait for Thursday's design and technology lesson.' The work on display shows that these subjects are given an appropriately high profile within the curriculum. In the hall, for example, there are attractive displays of batik and collage landscapes showing work of a good quality. The work in design and technology covers a good range skills and materials. Research forms an important part of the process. For example, looking into healthy diets prior to the design of a recipe for a pizza or how shelters are constructed for different purposes before undertaking their designs. Annotated diagrams are used to good effect to design a moving toy or a musical instrument. The pupils make good use of their literacy and numeracy skills for writing instructions and measuring but no use is made of ICT.
65. In **music**, the teacher's planning shows that all the required elements of the curriculum are taught. There is a recorder club, but the pupils do not have the opportunity to have any other instrumental tuition in school. In collective worship, pupils sing tunefully and with enjoyment. This contributes to their spiritual and personal development well. In the short music session seen the pupils confidently and competently chanted repetitive verses rhythmically and enthusiastically both individually and in small groups. They work well together and clearly enjoyed themselves. School concerts, and visits to hear 'live' music contribute to the pupils' overall musical experiences.

66. The school has a small hall that can be used for **physical education** lessons in poor weather. There is a hard play area and a good-sized playing field that is currently being improved to provide a better playing surface. The school uses coaches to develop, for example, the pupils' football and athletic skills. Improving links with other primary schools and the local secondary school are fostering a range of opportunities for the pupils to become active in a more diverse range of sporting events.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

67. The school has placed considerable emphasis on the personal development of the pupils and has used PSHE lessons as part of its drive to improve the ethos and encourage more positive attitudes and better behaviour. This has proved effective and was well demonstrated in a very good lesson in Years 3 to 6 where pupils displayed a good level of maturity in discussing the temptation to retaliate when being teased and suggesting ways in which 'hitting back' could be avoided.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	Grade
The overall effectiveness of the school	4
How inclusive the school is	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	4
Value for money provided by the school	4
Overall standards achieved	4
Pupils' achievement	4
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	3
Attendance	4
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The quality of education provided by the school	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	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3
The leadership and management of the school	3
The governance of the school	4
The leadership of the headteacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	4
The effectiveness of management	3

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