

INSPECTION REPORT

THOMAS HICKMAN SCHOOL

Aylesbury

LEA area: Buckinghamshire

Unique reference number: 110313

Headteacher: Mrs Carol Holman-Smith

Lead inspector: Mr Alan Fullwood

Dates of inspection: 23 – 25 May 2005

Inspection number: 268106

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:	3 – 11 Years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	402
School address:	Belgrave Road Aylesbury Buckinghamshire
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Mary Baldwin
Date of previous inspection:	Not previously inspected

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The school is situated in the town of Aylesbury in Buckinghamshire. Children's attainment on entry to the school is well below average. There are 402 full-time equivalent pupils on roll, taught in 14 single-aged classes and the school is bigger than an average primary school. Currently there are 196 boys and 216 girls. The nursery caters for 64 children part-time, and the Reception classes for 33 children full-time and 20 part-time. The socio-economic indicators for the area served by the school are well below average. Pupils are mainly of white ethnic origin but 130 pupils, 32 per cent are from a wide range of other ethnic backgrounds. This is high by national figures. Ninety-one pupils, approximately 23 per cent, have special educational needs. This is above the national average. The school also has a larger than normal percentage of pupils with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. The mobility of pupils in and out of the school is a significant factor. The school is an amalgamation of two previous schools in January 2001. The amalgamation did not go smoothly and the school has had five changes of leadership and a 50 per cent turnover of staff in the last four years.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
21184	Mr A Fullwood	Lead inspector	Science Physical education
9446	Mrs H Griffiths	Lay inspector	
23588	Mrs C Ajitsingh	Team inspector	English English as an additional language Religious education History Geography
32515	Mrs M Rees	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Design and technology
12764	Mrs W Thomas	Team inspector	Foundation Stage Special educational needs Art and design Music

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Thomas Hickman is an improving school that provides a sound education for all its pupils. Overall, teaching and learning are good and pupils are beginning to achieve well as a result. Leadership and management are good. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Standards at the end of Year 6 are below average in English, mathematics, science, information and communication technology (ICT) and religious education (RE).
- Generally, pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good but this is not the case in Year 4.
- Overall, teaching is good.
- Effective assessment procedures have been established in English, mathematics and science and these are used well to track pupils' progress and attainment.
- Effective assessment procedures are not established in other subjects.
- The leadership of the headteacher is very good.

The school is an amalgamation of two separate schools and has not been inspected before. Therefore, no judgement can be made of school improvement.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

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

Overall pupils' achievement is satisfactory. The results of national tests in 2004 at the end of Year 6 show that standards in English, mathematics and science were in the bottom five per cent of school's nationally indicated by the E* in the table above. In comparison with similar schools, standards were also in the bottom five per cent. Inspection evidence indicates that standards in Year 6 are improving but remain below expected levels in English, mathematics, science, ICT and RE. Pupils have made good progress since September but their achievement over time is satisfactory.

The results of national tests in 2004 at the end of Year 2 show that standards in reading, writing and mathematics were well below average in comparison with all schools. Standards in comparison with similar schools were below average in reading, and well below average in writing and mathematics. Inspection evidence indicates that the standards of attainment of pupils in reading, writing, mathematics, science, ICT and RE in the current Year 2 are improving but below average. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory.

Overall, children's attainment in the Foundation Stage is on track to be well below the goals children are expected to reach by the end of the reception year in all areas of learning, except in their personal, social and emotional development, where children are on track to achieve them. They make good progress and achieve well in their personal, social and emotional development. Their achievement and progress is satisfactory in their literacy, language and communication skills, their

knowledge and understanding of the world, and in their mathematical, physical and creative development.

Pupils with special educational needs achieve satisfactorily in relation to their prior ability. They are well supported by teachers and learning support assistants and achieve satisfactorily in relation to the targets set in their Individual Education Plans. Pupils with English as an additional language make good progress and achieve well because of the support they receive from class and specialist teachers and learning support staff.

The promotion of pupils' values and personal qualities and spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. Generally, pupils' attitudes to school and their behaviour are good. However, pupils' attitudes and behaviour in Year 4 are unsatisfactory. Pupils' attendance is unsatisfactory.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The school provides a good education. The quality of teaching and learning is good in Years 3 to 6 and satisfactory in other year groups. Examples of good teaching were observed in all classes. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory and good for pupils at an early stage in the acquisition of English. Across the school, the teaching of English and the numeracy aspect of mathematics is good and effective assessment procedures are used to track pupils' attainment and progress. Teaching in science, ICT and, in Years 3 to 6 in RE, is good. However, apart from English and mathematics and science, the school has yet to establish effective assessment procedures in other subjects. Homework is used satisfactorily to support pupils' learning

The curriculum is satisfactory and there are good opportunities for curriculum enrichment through clubs, activities, visits and visitors to the school. Staffing levels are good and the accommodation and learning resources are satisfactory. The school has satisfactory links with parents, the community and other schools. The school provides good care and support for pupils but its guidance for them requires further improvement.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good. The governance of the school is good and governors have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and development needs based on monitoring of the school's performance. All statutory requirements are met. The recently appointed headteacher provides very good leadership and, with the good support of the local education authority, has rapidly developed clear leadership and management strategies for improving standards and pupils' behaviour. The headteacher is ably assisted in these endeavours by the newly formed senior management team. The leadership and management of subject co-ordinators are good in English and mathematics and developing in other subjects. Much has been achieved in a short space of time.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents' views of the school are satisfactory. Most parents are happy with many aspects of the schools work but have concerns about the behaviour of some pupils, the information they have about their children's progress and how well the school consults with them. Pupils' views of the school are that it is good. They feel supported well by teachers and learning support assistants and enjoy the many clubs and activities they are provided with.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Improve standards in English, mathematics, science, religious education and information and communication technology.

- Improve pupils' behaviour, attitudes and achievement in Year 4.
- Establish effective assessment procedures in subjects other than English, mathematics and science.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Achievement is satisfactory in the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 to 6.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Although standards are improving at the end of Years 2 and 6, they are below average in English, mathematics, science, information and communication technology and religious education.
- Pupils achieve well in English and the numeracy aspect of mathematics.
- Pupils at an early stage in the acquisition of English make good progress due to the good support they receive.

Commentary

1. Children's attainment on entry to the school is well below average. Children make satisfactory progress and achieve as well as they should. Their attainment is on track to be well below the goals children are expected to reach by the end of the Reception year in all areas of learning. They make good progress in their personal, social and emotional development, and satisfactory progress in their literacy, language and communication skills, and in their mathematical, physical and creative development. Insufficient opportunities are given to children to learn to write or to use their mathematical skills.

Commentary

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	14.5 (12.5)	15.8 (15.7)
writing	12.5 (12.5)	14.6 (14.6)
mathematics	14.7 (14.0)	16.2 (16.3)

There were 55 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

2. The results of national tests in 2004 at the end of Year 2 were well below average in reading and writing in comparison with all schools. In comparison with similar schools, results in reading were below average and well below average in writing. Standards have varied from year to year but improved in reading in 2004. Generally, girls and boys perform similarly but below national averages. Inspection evidence indicates that currently pupils in Year 2 are on track to achieve below average standards in reading and writing and they make satisfactory progress and achieve well in relation to their attainment on entry to Year 1.
3. The results of national tests in 2004 in mathematics at the end of Year 2 were well below average in comparison with all and similar schools. Standards showed a downward trend between 2001 and 2003 but improved slightly in 2004. Generally, boys perform better than girls but both perform below national averages. Inspection evidence indicates that standards of attainment in the current group of Year 2 pupils are below average and that pupils are achieving satisfactorily. Good teaching of number skills is improving standards in this aspect of the subject and pupils are making good progress and achieving well. However, there was little evidence of work in other aspects of mathematics.

4. Teachers' assessments in 2004 for Year 2 pupils in science showed their attainment to be below average in comparison with all schools. However, the percentage of pupils achieving the expected Level 2 was average in comparison with similar schools but below average in the percentage achieving the higher Level 3. Inspection evidence indicates that the current group of Year 2 pupils are attaining below average standards and achieving satisfactorily. A greater emphasis on practical work and the teaching of pupils' scientific enquiry skills is having a positive impact on their attainment.
5. Standards in ICT and RE are below expected levels but pupils' achievement satisfactory. There was insufficient evidence to make a secure judgement about standards in other subjects.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	23.1 (22.4)	26.9 (26.8)
Mathematics	23.3 (22.9)	27.0 (26.8)
Science	23.7 (24.9)	28.6 (28.6)

There were 43 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

6. The results of national tests in 2004 in English at the end of Year 6 were in the bottom five per cent of all schools nationally and in comparison with schools whose pupils achieved similarly at the end of Year 2. The school's low targets for the percentages of pupils who would achieve Level 4 plus or a Level 5 were achieved. Generally, girls and boys perform similarly. Inspection evidence indicates that pupils are achieving well but that the attainment of the current group of Year 6 is on track to be below average. Pupils are making good progress in all aspects of the subject but they achieve better in speaking, listening and reading than they do in writing. Pupils achieve well due to the good teaching they receive, the good support given to pupils with special educational needs or who have English as an additional language, and the good leadership and management of the subject.
7. The results of national tests in 2004 in mathematics at the end of Year 6 were in the bottom five per cent of all schools nationally and in comparison with schools whose pupils achieved similarly at the end of Year 2. The school's low targets for the percentage of pupils who would achieve a Level 4 or 5 were achieved. Generally, boys and girls perform similarly. Inspection evidence indicates that pupils are achieving well in their numeracy skills and satisfactorily in other aspects of mathematics but that standards are below expectations. With the support of the local education authority, the quality of teaching of pupils' numeracy skills has improved and is good. Pupils' attainment is closely tracked and pupils are being set challenging targets for improvement. This is ensuring that all pupils achieve equally well, including those with special educational needs who have English as an additional language.
8. The results of national tests in 2004 in science at the end of Year 6 were in the bottom five per cent of all schools nationally and in comparison with schools whose pupils achieved similarly at the end of Year 2. Generally, boys and girls perform similarly. Inspection evidence indicates that standards in the current Year 6 are below average but that pupils' achievement is satisfactory. The school has improved teaching by ensuring that there is a much greater emphasis on a practical, enquiry approach to the subject. However, there are few opportunities for more able pupils to organise and carry out their own investigations in response to a question posed by their teachers and this limits their attainment.
9. Standards in ICT at the end of Year 6 are below the expected level. By Year 6 pupils have made good progress and the more able reach satisfactory standards. However, standards overall are below average. The use of interactive whiteboards in Years 5 and 6 is beginning to contribute significantly to levels of competency in using ICT.

10. Pupils' standards of attainment in RE are below average but pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Most pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress. Generally, pupils make better progress in work related to Christianity than other faiths as teachers have a greater depth of knowledge in this area and more time tends to be spent on this aspect.
11. There was insufficient evidence to make secure judgements about pupils' standards of attainment and achievement in other subjects.
12. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress in relation to the targets set for them and their achievement is satisfactory. Those pupils who are assessed as needing specific additional support for learning English as additional language, make good progress and achieve well because of targeted help by teachers and support staff, who know their backgrounds and individual needs well. Pupils not at an early stage in the acquisition of English achieve satisfactorily.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good. Attendance is well below average. Punctuality is satisfactory. Pupils' moral, social, spiritual and cultural development is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are enthusiastic and keen to learn. They concentrate well and want to succeed.
- The behaviour of the majority of pupils is good in lessons and around the school. The behaviour of a small minority of pupils, mainly in Year 4, is unsatisfactory.
- Relationships among pupils and between pupils and adults are good.
- Pupils are keen to take responsibility.
- Pupils show good levels of respect for one another's feelings and beliefs.
- The attendance rate is well below the national median.

Commentary

13. Most pupils enjoy school and all it has to offer. They have good attitudes to learning and want to do well. For example, in a Year 6 English lesson on extended narrative, pupils responded very well to their teacher's high expectations and worked hard consistently throughout the lesson. The great majority of pupils show good interest in their lessons: for example, in a Year 3 mathematics lesson on position and direction, pupils were very eager to put forward their ideas and demonstrate their understanding to the class. Pupils co-operate well and are trustworthy. The majority of pupils respond well to teachers' expectations of them and are confident, friendly and polite.
14. Pupils who have English as an additional language have positive attitudes to learning and, especially those who are at the beginning stages of learning English, respond well as they gain confidence and feel secure. They collaborate well with each other. They also relate well to their support and other teachers and classroom assistants. They show a lot of interest in school life and participate fully in school activities.
15. Behaviour is good in the majority of classes in lessons, assemblies and playtimes. Although a significant proportion of parents who responded to the questionnaire had concerns about behaviour and bullying, these concerns appear to be mainly historical and parents who attended the meeting felt that behaviour had improved considerably. The school has developed good strategies to improve behaviour, but the learning of a significant number of Year 4 pupils is being disrupted by a small number of pupils with unsatisfactory attitudes and behaviour. The school has done much to provide for these pupils, including receiving support from the local pupil referral unit and a school for pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties. Year 4 pupils are taught in small classes and are grouped by ability in English,

mathematics and science. However, from lessons observed during the inspection the strategies put in place by the school are not always effective in ensuring that a minority of pupils do not affect the learning of all pupils in Year 4.

16. Pupils respect their teachers, who offer them good examples of courtesy and fairness. Pupils are well aware of how they should behave and fully understand the difference between right and wrong. The behaviour system is effective and valued by pupils. No bullying or harassment was observed during the inspection and pupils knew what they should do if it should occur. The degree of racial harmony appears high. Pupils are friendly and polite to visitors.
17. Pupils are enterprising and respond well to the good opportunities for taking responsibility, for example, in the school council, the 'Buddy' system where older pupils make friends with those pupils experiencing friendship difficulties, and as monitors in a variety of areas. Relationships between pupils and adults and among the pupils themselves are good and this security gives pupils confidence to ask questions and put forward their ideas. Pupils are keen to take part in school activities and participation in extra-curricular activities is good.
18. Provision for pupils' spiritual and cultural development is satisfactory. Pupils have good opportunities to reflect on the beliefs of others through religious education, assemblies and lessons and to learn about the cultures of others. The provision for pupils' social and moral development is good. Most pupils behave with consideration for others and have a well-developed sense of how their behaviour might affect others. The school council and the good opportunities for pupils to take responsibility encourage a sense of community, for example, through the new House system, and pupils are strongly supportive of one another. The personal, health, social and citizenship education programme is beginning to make a good contribution to pupils' personal development.

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	4.5	School data	2.0
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.

19. Attendance is well below average. This is due to a number of families taking extended holidays in term time and to other families with attendance problems. Unauthorised absence is well above the national median. Punctuality is satisfactory. The office manager and the deputy headteacher monitor attendance weekly for patterns of lateness and absence. The majority of parents are conscientious about informing the school of any absence. The school is well supported by the Educational Welfare Service and the Traveller Support Service.

Exclusions

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	272	2	0

White – any other White background	10	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	18	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	1	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	6	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	57	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	1	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	3	0	0
Black or Black British – African	4	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	28	0	0

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

20. There were two fixed-period exclusions last year and there has been one permanent exclusion this year. Procedures in all cases were correctly followed.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides a good quality of education. Teaching and learning are good in Years 3 to 6 and satisfactory in the Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2. The curriculum is satisfactory and is enriched by a variety of extra-curricular activities. Levels of staffing are good, and the accommodation and learning resources are satisfactory. Links with parents, the community and other schools are satisfactory. Pupils' care and support are good but the guidance they receive is satisfactory.

Teaching and learning

Overall, teaching and learning are good. The quality of the assessment of pupils' work in English and mathematics is good but unsatisfactory in other subjects.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Across the school, the teaching of English, of the numeracy aspect of mathematics, of science and of ICT is good.
- Effective assessment and tracking procedures have not been established except in English, mathematics and science.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 53 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0 (0%)	8 (15%)	27(51%)	15 (28%)	3 (6%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

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

21. The quality of teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory overall and varies from good to satisfactory. As a result children make satisfactory progress. Adults have good relationships with the children and work well as a team and this ensures consistency in

approach and insistence on high standards of behaviour resulting in children making good progress in their personal, social and emotional development. Satisfactory opportunities are provided for children to develop their language and mathematical skills in teacher directed activities but opportunities for children to write or advance their mathematical development in self-chosen activities are limited. The arrangements for introducing the children to school and starting in Year 1 are satisfactory.

22. The teaching of English and of the numeracy aspect of mathematics are good. In English, teachers make good use of the literacy aspect of the National Primary Strategy in their planning and provide activities adapted effectively to meet the needs of pupils of different abilities. They manage pupils well and receive good support from learning support assistants. Teachers make good use of informal assessments to plan future work and pupils' attainment and progress are carefully tracked and challenging targets set to help them know what they need to do to improve.
23. In mathematics, lessons are planned well and resources are well organised. What pupils are to learn is shared with them at the start of lessons and they evaluate how well they have understood these objectives at the end. Teachers' good use of questioning results in pupils explaining how they calculated their answers and sharing their methods with their classmates. Effective assessment and tracking procedures have been established. As a result of the good emphasis on calculation pupils are achieving well in this area. However, pupils have had few opportunities to develop their skills in other aspects of mathematics and this is a weakness. The school has correctly identified this as an area for development.
24. The teaching of science is good. The recent greater emphasis on promoting pupils' scientific enquiry skills is having a successful impact on their attainment and progress. In discussion pupils particularly enjoy the practical activities they are provided with but a scrutiny of pupils' work so far this educational year indicates that this is better promoted in some classes than in others.
25. The teaching of ICT is good and pupils are making good progress as a result. The teaching of religious education is satisfactory overall but good in Years 3 to 6. Too few lessons were observed in history and geography to make a secure judgement about teaching and learning but frequent visits to places of interest and historical buildings excite pupils and provide firsthand experiences, which bring the subjects alive.
26. The school has worked hard and quickly to ensure that effective assessment and tracking procedures have been established in English, mathematics and science. These are used well to plan lessons for pupils of different abilities and to identify what they need to do to improve. Pupils know their targets and day-to-day assessment addresses how well they are achieving them. In other subjects, pupils' achievement is not tracked to ensure they make the progress of which they are capable. This is a current priority for the school.
27. The marking of pupils' work is variable. In some instances it invites pupils to answer the teacher's questions to ensure their understanding of the topics covered. However, it is often just a series of ticks or supportive comments. Homework is set regularly and makes a satisfactory contribution to pupils' learning.
28. The teaching and learning of pupils with special educational needs are satisfactory. The school is currently reviewing its provision for these pupils. The teaching and learning of pupils with English as an additional language are generally relevant to the learning, emotional and social needs of pupils, particularly in small groups and also those who are taught on a withdrawal basis. Specialist EAL teachers have a good understanding of pupils' language needs, which enables pupils to build on their earlier learning, acquire new knowledge and deepen their understanding. They know their pupils well and have good relationships with them. They provide good support in and out of class. They provide effective challenge coupled with good expectations of behaviour and standards of work. EAL teachers assess pupils' understanding on entry and they work closely with special educational needs and

teaching staff to enable them to assess bilingual pupils who may also have special needs, which they regularly review.

The curriculum

The curriculum is satisfactory. It is suitably enhanced by a good range of extra-curricular and after school activities, together with visits and visitors. The accommodation and learning resources are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum is enriched by a good range of sporting and other after school activities.

Commentary

29. All subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education are taught. There are appropriate programmes for sex and relationships education and for drugs awareness. The school nurse supports the sex education programme and is also available for pupils to talk to in confidence if they have concerns on any subject. Pupils greatly appreciate this offer. The school provides a good range of extra-curricular opportunities for pupils. These are well attended and much enjoyed by pupils. The school takes part in local festivals with other school for activities such as netball, football and dance. Older pupils have the opportunity to take part in a residential visit to an outdoor activity centre and an environmental centre. These provide good opportunities for pupils to develop their academic, personal and social skills.
30. The curriculum is enriched by visits to places of interest such as the National Maritime Museum, local churches and High Wycombe Chair Museum. There are also many visitors to school to support different curriculum areas. These have included the local community police, the local Member of Parliament, authors and storytellers. There are also very good links with local secondary schools, including a project with Sir Henry Floyd Grammar School for more able pupils in Year 5.
31. Throughout the school, pupils with special educational needs, or those with English as an additional language, have equal access to the National Curriculum. Individual Education Plans are in place for all relevant pupils and regularly reviewed. Pupils are well supported by teaching assistants.
32. The school has sufficient teachers and support staff who are appropriately qualified. Teaching assistants make an effective contribution to pupils' learning, including those pupils who have special educational needs. Resources for learning are satisfactory as is the accommodation.

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 satisfactory. The involvement of pupils through seeking and acting on their views is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are effective procedures for health and safety, child protection and first aid.
- All adults know pupils well and provide good levels of care.
- Systems for monitoring pupils' academic standards and progress are satisfactory.
- Arrangements for monitoring pupils' personal development are good.
- The involvement of pupils in the school's work is still at an early stage.

Commentary

33. There are good arrangements for pupils when they start at the school. Parents and children felt well prepared for their new experience.
34. The school has good health and safety procedures. Procedures for child protection are very good. The headteacher is the designated person for child protection and for pupils in public care. All members of staff have been formally trained. All staff are very aware of child protection issues and keep good logs of concerns. Links with social services are good. Pupils in public care have personal education plans and co-ordination on these with social services is good.
35. Arrangements for the administration of first aid and for monitoring pupils' medical conditions are good and very good numbers of staff have been trained in first aid. Supervision at lunch and play times is satisfactory. Risk assessments are regular and the highly conscientious caretaker works hard to ensure good health and safety practice around the school. Security is good.
36. There is a strong bond of trust between pupils and all adults who work in the school. Adults know the pupils very well and offer them good support. Personal development is monitored well through extensive class development files and reports. Parents felt strongly that their children were well supported and cared for. Academic monitoring is used satisfactorily to inform pupils how they can improve.
37. The PAFT (Parents as First Teachers) scheme, which has been running for some years, offers a valuable service in helping parents of children under three in the community before they enter the school.
38. Pupils' views are sought through the school council, circle time, assemblies and PHSE. The council has been in existence for only a short time and only in Years 3 to 6. The school is intending to extend it further.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school's links with parents and the community are satisfactory. Links with educational support programmes are good and links with other schools are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents have positive views of the school in most areas.
- The school does not yet seek to involve parents in the work of the school to any great extent.
- There are good links with parents of children with SEN
- The Friends Association is supportive.

Commentary

39. In a good return to the questionnaire, parents and carers expressed considerable satisfaction with many aspects of the school. A significant proportion of parents had concerns about the behaviour of some pupils. However, parents at the meeting felt that staff now handled behaviour well and that behaviour was improving. Some parents did not feel well informed about how their children were progressing: these concerns were not borne out by the inspection. A further significant proportion of parents, both at the meeting and in response to the questionnaire, did not feel that the school took account of their views. The school conducted its own brief questionnaire last year, but the results do not appear to have been shared with parents. The school accepts that many parents have not felt properly informed and involved through the past difficult year and is seeking ways of improving the situation.

40. The Friends Association runs a good range of social and fund-raising activities and helps to buy equipment to support children's learning. A very small number of parents help in school on a regular basis.
41. Information provided for parents is satisfactory. The prospectus and governors' annual report to parents are well written and presented and comply with requirements. The school has in the past provided parents with regular information about what their children are to learn, but this does not appear to have occurred this year. Links through homework books are unsatisfactory, since parents frequently fail to record comments. Reports are good overall: they give targets in English, mathematics and science and grades for attainment and effort in all areas, as well as giving parents the opportunity to comment. However, they do not always give any indication of how children are performing against national standards. Regular newsletters are helpful and keep parents well informed of events. Teachers are always available for informal consultation at the end of the day.
41. Parents who speak English as an additional language, are kept informed and they participate in their children's learning, because of the support provided by the EAL staff. Some parents work as volunteer helpers, thereby helping children particularly in the Foundation Stage who are beginning to learn to speak English.
42. The school held its first curriculum workshop this year and attendance by parents was good. The school quickly involves the parents of pupils involved in any racial incidents or in any behavioural issues. Induction procedures are satisfactory and include helpful information about starting at the school.
43. Links with the local Pupil Referral Unit and with the local school for pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties are good: pupils and members of staff from these schools regularly visit and help to train teachers in handling difficult pupils. There are good links with local secondary schools: for example, with the local grammar school through the Gifted and Talented scheme and through sports and science at the local secondary school. The school is now an active member of the local group of schools, which includes secondary schools. There are some links with other local primary schools through sports.
44. Arrangements for transfer to secondary schools are satisfactory. The school works well with the school to which the majority of pupils transfer. There are several opportunities for pupils to visit the school.
45. The school has satisfactory links with the local community and is seeking to improve its links with the local church and with the local community association. The local MP and councillors visit the school regularly. Several local visitors have been to the school to talk to pupils about World War II.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Overall, leadership and management are good. Leadership is good and the leadership of the headteacher very good. Management is good. The governance of the school is good. There is a strong sense of teamwork between staff and governors and a clear focus on driving up standards,

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good leadership by the recently appointed headteacher, who is well supported by the senior management team.
- Governors who are knowledgeable about the school and committed to its continued improvement.
- A clear focus on improvement supported by a commitment to continuing professional development.
- The role of subject co-ordinators is underdeveloped.

Commentary

46. The leadership of the recently appointed headteacher has brought stability and a clarity of purpose to a school which has suffered considerable disruption over the past few years. Staff and governors are united in their goal of raising standards for the pupils they serve, particularly those whom the unstable history of the school has most disadvantaged. This strength of purpose is already beginning to have a positive effect on pupils' learning. This positive climate for improvement has come about through fitting leadership, modelled on the headteacher, who inspires confidence. She effectively supports and challenges staff so that staff morale is high. As a result staff demonstrate an enthusiasm for teaching and a rising ambition for their pupils.
47. The good leadership offered by key staff is reflected in the clear focus on standards and a belief the pupils can do better. This is increasingly well transmitted to pupils who generally work hard and who are beginning to respond to the higher expectations made of them.
48. The school has recently begun to compare its performance with those of similar schools in Buckinghamshire. Standards of attainment and progress made by pupils have recently begun to be closely monitored and evaluated and have begun to influence what is taught. For example, the focus on calculations in mathematics came about through the analysis of tests, which showed a weakness in this area. The school's recent purchase of Essex Target tracker has begun to enable all staff to pinpoint underachievement in individuals and groups of pupils.
49. Governors are perceptive and increasingly well informed. They bring with them many skills and expertise gained through their own walks of lives, which are used to benefit the school. They are actively involved in the life of the school and have recently undergone training in how to monitor standards in the school. Governors now regularly visit lessons and evaluate data provided by the school and local authority. They now have much more information about the school and as a result are beginning to have an impact on its direction.
50. The leadership and management of the provision for pupils with special educational needs are satisfactory. The school does not currently have a permanent special needs co-ordinator, but support for pupils and deployment of staff are satisfactory. Support from the local Pupil Referral Unit is helping teachers manage a significant number of pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties. However, in Year 4, this is not yet having the desired impact, and the school is aware that further improvement in pupils' attitudes and behaviour are needed.
51. The leadership and management of the provision for pupils who are learning English as an additional language are satisfactory and ensure that pupils make at least satisfactory progress. There is a good working relationship between class and specialist teachers and support staff, who together help to ensure that pupils are fully engaged in lessons.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2004 to March 2005

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	1,176,033	Balance from previous year	-80,304
Total expenditure	1,069,855	Balance carried forward to the next	25,874
Expenditure per pupil	2,509		

52. The school's budget is managed very effectively. The bursar has managed to overcome a significant deficit, through careful monitoring and judicious spending. The school has now

achieved a credit balance and has regained control of its finances from the local education authority. The short-term school improvement plan has been used effectively as a tool for managing change and bringing about immediate improvements. The school now needs to apply these principles to a longer-term improvement plan for the development of the school.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Children start in the nursery after their third birthday. Children whose fifth birthday falls between September and February join the Reception class in September and those who are five between February and August join the reception class in January. At the time of the inspection there were two Reception classes. Children are taught in their year groups for most adult led activities. When they are choosing independent activities they are able to move between the classrooms and outdoor area as they choose. When children join the nursery their attainment is well below average, particularly in the areas of social development and language skills. Arrangements for children starting school are satisfactory. In the term before their children join the nursery, parents are invited to bring them to a series of open sessions. There is also an induction session for parents on children's first day at school to explain routines and answer questions. Parents are encouraged to stay and help their children settle for as long as is necessary. Staff have prepared a learning support pack for parents. This includes a range of activities for parents to help their children at home. Leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are satisfactory.

The outdoor learning area has recently been improved and there is a good range of wheeled toys. Good quality equipment is available for climbing and balancing activities. The area provides well for children's physical development but opportunities to promote the other areas of learning need to be developed further, since when children have free choice of activities the majority of them choose to play outside.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Relationships between adults and children are good
- Children behave well and are developing good attitudes to their learning
- Children make good progress towards the goals they are expected to reach by the end of the Reception year.
- Adults are good role models and help children develop their social skills.

Commentary

53. Adults in the nursery and reception classes work well together. They provide a good range of opportunities to help children develop their social skills. Children in the nursery play happily though some of the newer children find whole group activities difficult. Staff respond sensitively to this and allow children time to settle. As they move through the Foundation Stage, children show increasing confidence and begin to play co-operatively and develop their relationships with other children. They share toys happily and take turns when playing games. Children are familiar with class routine and know how they are expected to behave in class and around the school, for example, they walk quietly to the hall for singing session or PE. The majority of children achieve well and make good progress in their learning. They are likely to meet the early learning goals by the end of the Reception year due to the good quality teaching they receive.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children's attainment in all aspects of this area is well below average.
- Whilst direct teaching of reading and writing skills is satisfactory, the independent activities are not well planned to promote learning in this area.

Commentary

54. In the nursery, adults interact well with children in their chosen activities to help them develop their speaking skills. Many of the children have speech and language difficulties. Children tend to respond to questions with single words or gestures, such as shaking or nodding their heads. Many use gestures to make their needs known rather than asking for help. They enjoy listening to stories and learning rhymes. In the reception classes children are making satisfactory progress in their speaking skills but many still have difficulties. During the inspection there were few opportunities for role-play to encourage children to talk together. Many of the children for whom English is an additional language do not answer questions and are not confident in talking to visitors; however, they show by gestures and actions that they understand what is said to them. Many children have immature speech and their vocabulary is limited. They show good knowledge of letter sounds and recognise some familiar words. Whilst a proportion of children in the older reception class are on course to meet the required standard in reading, the attainment of the majority is well below average. Children's writing skills are well below average. Several children can write their names confidently but many of them do not. Most children can write recognisable letters and a small number attempt simple sentences. The quality of teaching in this area of learning is satisfactory and children achieve satisfactorily as a result. However, staff do not provide enough opportunities for children to write either in group situations or in independent activities. When children were making books about minibeasts, they were only expected to sequence and draw pictures. When children were able to choose their activities none were seen to choose a writing activity and opportunities for writing were limited. The majority of children are very unlikely to achieve the goals they are expected to reach by the end of the Reception year.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children's attainment in this area of learning is well below average.
- Direct teaching of mathematical development is satisfactory but there are missed opportunities to develop children's mathematical skills through their independent activities.

Commentary

55. Children's achievement is satisfactory in this area of learning. In the nursery children enjoy singing number games and rhymes. Most can count groups of up to three objects but many are uncertain beyond this, though they know number names. In the reception classes children count confidently to 10 but do not always match numbers to objects correctly as they count. A small number of the older children in the reception classes were able to write addition sums but several of the numbers were reversed. A small number of children chose to play with puzzles. Whilst some completed these confidently, some had difficulty in completing inset puzzles and did not use shape or colour to help them. Most children can identify the colours red, blue, green and yellow but some do not recognise many other colours. When drawing butterfly pictures for their minibeast books, the older children tried hard to make their patterns symmetrical. A small number of children are on course to meet the early learning goals for

mathematical development but the majority have skills that are well below the levels expected. The teaching of children's mathematical skills is satisfactory, particularly in teacher-focussed activities. However, not enough opportunities are provided to promote children's mathematical skills through play and self-chosen activities.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Adults provide an interesting range of activities to develop children's knowledge and understanding.
- Children make good progress.
- Children's attainment in this area of learning is below average.

Commentary

56. Staff provide an interesting range of activities to support children's learning. The topic during the inspection was 'minibeasts' and children enjoyed learning about butterflies and other creatures. They could talk about how caterpillars become butterflies and enjoyed colouring butterflies to hide against different backgrounds to demonstrate that some creatures use camouflage to protect themselves from predators. The younger children enjoyed watching the class tadpoles turning into frogs. Children enjoy using the computer but their skills are below those expected for children of their age. Several of them are not confident in playing the games, such as 'Dress the teddy', which requires them to use the mouse to move objects on the screen. Statutory requirements for a daily act of collective worship and teaching the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus are met. The quality of teaching and learning is good and in the direct teaching activities provided children make good progress and achieve well. However, their overall knowledge and understanding are below average and few children are likely to meet the goals they are expected to reach by the end of the Reception year.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The outdoor learning area provides good opportunities for children to develop their physical skills.

Commentary

57. In addition using the outside apparatus, the reception classes have PE sessions in the hall. They make good progress in moving safely, with co-ordination and control. They work with energy and understand the effect of exercise on their bodies. When they have free choice of activities, many of the children choose to play outside. They climb and balance confidently on the new apparatus. A few children riding tricycles are not always careful of others in the space around them, but most manage them safely. Many children do not have well developed hand control. This affects their writing and their use of small tools. Most of them are unlikely to meet the goals they are expected to reach by the end of the Reception year. Teaching and learning are satisfactory and children achieve satisfactorily.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Opportunities for imaginative and creative development are limited.

Commentary

58. Standards in this area of learning are well below average and children's achievement satisfactory. Children in the nursery enjoy a range of songs and rhymes. They use instruments to accompany songs. Very few opportunities for creative development were observed during the inspection. Children have opportunities to paint and use a variety of materials for printing and collage. Children were not observed taking part in role-play or other imaginative activities. Teaching and learning are satisfactory.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good and helps pupils achieve well.
- Reading standards are improving and are close to national averages in Years 2 and 6.
- The contribution of other subjects to English is not consistent across the school.
- Writing standards are below average but are improving faster because of special focus through the Intensive Support Programme.

Commentary

59. Inspection evidence indicates that at the end of Year 2, standards are improving overall but below average. Standards in speaking and reading are closer to expected levels, though still below average. They are below average in listening and in writing.

60. At the end of Year 6, standards are below average. This is an improvement on 2004 when standards were well below average. Inspection evidence indicates that standards in speaking and listening and in reading are better than standards in writing and that girls generally perform better than boys. Pupils' research skills and spelling are improving. Pupils in all year groups, including those who speak English as an additional language and those who have special educational needs, achieve well when additional support is provided.

61. Standards in speaking and listening are close to average at the end of both key stages but listening standards are lower than speaking. On entry to Year 1 pupils' attainment is well below national standards for their ages. In a Year 2 lesson observed, boys and girls, including those with SEN and EAL, with the encouragement of the teacher and assistant, joined in the discussion about the dinosaurs based on their study of the picture and the text shown to them. Most pupils respond to questions in short phrases such as 'very big' and 'very long' and the more able in sentences such as, 'The dinosaur has enormous teeth, it has powerful jaws.'

62. By the end of Year 6, pupils are much more confident and handle language more creatively, especially the more able pupils. After reading a chapter of 'The Borrowquest', Year 6 pupils correct punctuation in a paragraph using capital letters, commas, speech marks, question marks, apostrophes and full stops, as a whole class activity using the interactive white board. They work out how to edit a paragraph to make it more interesting by using more challenging

connectives in place of the word 'and', which was used six times in the text. They know how to distinguish the root from prefix or suffix; for example, 'ensign', 'signify', and 'sign'.

63. In reading at the end of Year 2, most pupils read texts confidently and fluently but have limited knowledge of the strategies they might use if they are stuck other than ask someone. The more competent readers use letter and sound recognition and word blending and the more able understand that text conveys meaning. Pupils read regularly to adults in school and sometimes to their parents at home. Year 6 pupils read a range of books: structured reading schemes, information books and library books chosen with the help of their teachers. They can recount stories and express preferences. Higher attaining pupils read fluently and expressively, with good understanding and demonstrate a strong interest in books. Lower attaining pupils read simple texts accurately but struggle with unknown or more complex texts. Average attaining pupils read accurately and expressively but do not always read for meaning. Most pupils know how information can be found by using contents and index pages of books and the more able know about the internet. Their researching and library skills are developing well due to their making regular use of on site public library.
64. Improving writing continues to be the focus of the Intensive Support Programme for the school as a result of which writing and presentation skills are improving well. In Years 1 and 2, pupils learn to copy write, using a consistent style of print, but they frequently forget to maintain the same size, or to use capital letters and full stops correctly. More able pupils express well their own ideas and begin to write for a range of purposes. For example, they re-write familiar stories in their own words and create their own imaginative stories. They write captions and labels in other subjects. However, most pupils have a limited vocabulary and their story writing lacks plot and characterisation.
65. In Years 3 to 6, pupils explore writing for an increasing range of purposes, including poetry, story, letter and report writing. Presentation is improving and handwriting is neater and more legible as they move through the school. Some word process their writing using the computer. More able pupils in Years 5 and 6 use vocabulary imaginatively making the most of grammar, paragraphing and advanced punctuation skills to create a good effect. In a Year 5 lesson on persuasive writing, pupils learnt to make a leaflet for parents with a view to persuading them to choose their school for their children. Most pupils picked up the special features of the school well in their writing. Two of the examples shared were, 'Come to a natural wonderland with three playgrounds so your son or daughter will never be bored,' and 'In ICT we have a fantastic selection of programmes which cheers people up.' By the end of Year 6, most have some knowledge of how to draft, revise and edit their work and present it well and there is an increasing sense of precision and self-discipline in spelling and grammar but a significant minority of pupils do not attain sufficiently well in sustaining ideas and in their spelling and punctuation. The response of pupils to their work and lessons is good. They show keen interest in books and particularly in fiction. Most work diligently and maintain good levels of concentration, even when some tasks lack a high degree of interest or the activity is too long. Most relate well to adults and other pupils. Where opportunities allow, they work well on their own, in pairs and in groups making choices and take responsibilities for their work and decisions.
66. Overall, teaching and learning in English are good and vary from very good to satisfactory. Most teachers have a good command of the subject. In Years 5 and 6, the use of interactive whiteboards is enhancing pupils' learning skills. Planning is clear and the methods used and organisation of classes meets the needs of all pupils, including those who have English as an additional language or special educational needs. Teachers manage pupils well and learning support assistants are generally effective in helping pupils with behavioural difficulties. Teachers support pupils well and make good use of informal assessments to plan future work. Older pupils, undertaking writing exercises, are appropriately supported and challenged by teachers. In the better quality teaching, teachers set imaginative and stimulating tasks for pupils and they make good progress as a result.
67. The literacy co-ordinator leads and manages the subject well. Assessment procedures are good and are applied for informing planning. The range of books and other resources is

satisfactory. Good use is made of story and poetry competitions and catching children reading. There is a newspaper club and competition winners get their work published in the monthly newspaper. This helps to enhance the language skills of pupils. The literacy governor regularly visits and monitors the curriculum and teaching in the subject.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

68. There is satisfactory practice in developing literacy across the curriculum but it is not fully embedded across all the subjects. Technical language and key words are taught in most subjects but approaches to reading and writing and the use of grammar and punctuation are not always consistent. The provision of meaningful contexts for writing in subjects such as history, geography and religious education to develop pupils' writing is working well.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are rising across the school and pupils make good progress in the numeracy aspect of the subject.
- Teaching and learning are consistently good across the school.
- Good procedures are in place for assessment, which are having a good effect on pupil progress.
- Leadership and management are good.
- The range of the curriculum is currently limited.

Commentary

69. The recent turbulent history of the school has led to standards in Year 2 and Year 6 being currently below average. However, consistently good teaching across the school means that pupils are now making good progress and the recent focus on calculations has led to standards in this aspect being average. The school is part of the local education authority's Intensive Support Programme and has focussed on the systematic teaching of calculation skills as this area was identified as weak in an analysis of test results. However, too little attention has been given to teaching and learning in other aspects of mathematics and pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall.
70. In Year 2 standards are below the national average. Standards in number are rising and by Year 2 pupils demonstrate a good degree of competence in their lessons, showing that they are developing good mental recall skills. In one Year 2 lesson observed many pupils could calculate 10 more and 10 less to two digit numbers. More able pupils were able to calculate number sequences using numbers up to 100, including doubling and halving. Average pupils demonstrated similar skills with smaller numbers, whereas lower attaining pupils were working on simple number sequences to 20 supported by their teacher. The analysis of pupils' work indicates that standards in number are satisfactory by the end of Year 2. However, because of the focus on calculations, pupils have had little opportunity to develop skills in shape, space and measures, or using and applying mathematics and these remain areas to be developed.
71. By Year 6 pupils are developing a good understanding of the number system and place value. They are developing quick recall of number facts and are beginning to use mathematical language to explain their ideas. In a Year 5 class pupils were engaged in a starter activity involving reading place value of decimal numbers from thousands to hundredths. The quick pace and good challenge ensured that all pupils were fully engaged in this "show me" activity all achieved well. Analysis of pupils' work shows that by Year 6 pupils use their understanding of place value to multiply by two and three digit numbers using the grid method and that they attain satisfactory standards in calculations but appear to have had limited access to other aspects of the mathematics curriculum which means that standards in these areas remain

below average. The school has correctly identified the need to give pupils wider mathematical experiences and has plans to address this issue.

72. Teaching and learning are consistently good across the school and some very good teaching was observed in Years 5 and 6. This means that pupils achieve well in the numeracy aspect of mathematics and are making good progress. All teachers plan their work carefully and resources are well organised prior to lessons commencing. This helps the flow of the lesson and ensures that pupils have the materials they need for their work. All lessons follow the numeracy aspect of the National Primary Strategy and teachers effectively plan work for pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language. Lesson objectives are shared with pupils at the start of lessons and revisited at the end. This helps pupils appreciate the learning and consolidates their understanding. Teachers use good questioning to target and challenge pupils' thinking and to deepen their understanding. "How do you know she's right?" or "Tell me how did you get that answer?" were often used to encourage pupils to explain further their thinking. In all lessons observed, pupils displayed very good attitudes to their work and worked hard to develop new skills. This helps to promote good progress and to ensure that pupils achieve well given their capabilities. Teachers throughout the school demonstrate a good knowledge of mathematics and use resources effectively to support learning. The recent installation of interactive whiteboards in Years 5 and 6 has significantly enhanced both teaching and learning in these year groups. Teaching assistants and support teachers are well briefed and deployed effectively. This ensures that pupils with special educational needs, or English as an additional language, take part fully in the lessons and make good progress.
73. The use of assessment to match work to pupils' abilities is a recent development and is beginning to target teaching and learning more effectively. Pupils in Year 5 and 6 assess their own understanding at the end of each lesson using the "thumbs up" system. The subject co-ordinator is currently monitoring the use of assessment and its effectiveness in promoting pupil progress.
74. The leadership and management of mathematics, by the recently appointed co-ordinator, are good. She has quickly identified where the school needs to develop and provides a good level of support for her colleagues. Teachers have received a high level of training through the local education authority's Intensive Support Programme to enable them to teach calculations effectively and this is helping to raise standards in this subject. The co-ordinator has devised a simple but comprehensive assessment system which is in use across the school and which is being monitored for its effectiveness in improving planning for individuals and groups of pupils.

Mathematics across the curriculum

75. Opportunities for developing mathematics and numerical skills across the curriculum are identified by the school. For example, work was seen where block graphs were used to represent findings in a history topic in Year 5, and where comparisons of size were made in a Year 2 literacy lesson. This aspect of the school's work is satisfactory but is not sufficiently monitored to ensure that opportunities are exploited to the full.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' standards of attainment are improving.
- Pupils have good attitudes and enjoy science.
- A minority of pupils in Year 4 misbehave and this adversely affects the progress they and their peers make.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good.

Commentary

76. Standards of attainment by the end of Years 2 and 6 are below average. The vast majority of the current Year 2 pupils are likely to attain the expected National Curriculum Level 2 but very few will achieve the higher Level 3. Pupils enjoy the practical enquiry approach adopted by their teachers and the opportunities provided for them to carry out investigations. As a consequence, they are making good progress in their understanding of the importance of a 'fair' test. Pupils' standards of attainment are improving due to the good teaching they receive. Year 2 pupils were observed classifying things into living and non-living but many were easily confused by the wilting plants they sorted as they thought these were now non-living. Teachers' good questioning ensured that pupils' misconceptions were corrected. Pupils achieve satisfactorily.
77. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 have a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of the scientific facts and concepts they have been taught this year. They enjoy the practical work they are provided with and work co-operatively, such as when demonstrating how the blood flows through the heart on a large diagram on the classroom floor. Teachers make good use of a range of resources, such as interactive whiteboards to involve pupils in their learning. Standards are below average but pupils achieve satisfactorily due to the good teaching they receive. Pupils in Year 3 are taught well and are making good progress in their understanding of forces and how to organise and carry out their own investigations. However, this is not established practice across the school. More able pupils have too few opportunities to carry out their investigations in response to a question posed by their teachers and this limits their achievement.
78. Pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs or those with English as an additional language, are supported well by teachers and teaching assistants and the quality of teaching and learning is good. In the lessons observed during the inspection, and from a scrutiny of pupils' work this year, teachers provide suitably challenging work for pupils of differing abilities. Good use is made of learning support assistants to support groups of pupils, usually the lower attainers or those with English as an additional language, to access the curriculum. Generally, pupils have good attitudes to their learning, particularly when their work is practical. A scrutiny of pupils' work indicates that not all teachers provide sufficient opportunities for scientific investigations and this is a current focus of the science co-ordinators. There is little evidence of pupils' ICT skills in accessing information and recording results in tables and graphs. In Year 4, where there is a significant number of pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties, lessons are well planned and teaching is good. However, despite being grouped by ability in small groups, all pupils' learning is slowed by teachers having to spend too much time dealing with inappropriate and immature behaviour.
79. The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The co-ordinator has held this position for only a year. He has recently observed some of his colleagues teaching and sampled pupils' work and teachers' planning. He is aware of the need to raise standards in the subject. However, he does not have a clear idea of the curriculum provided across the school, particularly in Years 1 and 2. Resources for the subject are satisfactory.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in Year 5 and 6 are good where interactive whiteboards are used extensively.
- Cross-curricular links are good in Years 3, 4, 5 and 6.
- Teaching is good across the school.
- Pupils' work is not systematically assessed.
- The behaviour of some pupils in Year 4 seriously undermines learning in that year group.

Commentary

80. By Year 2, pupils have a reasonably good grasp of the basic functions of a computer. Keyboard skills are developed through appropriate exploration of ICT tools such as games and word processing software but standards remain below average. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory.
81. By Year 6, pupils have made good progress and the more able reach satisfactory standards. However, standards overall are below average, as is pupils' achievement. Most pupils are able to use computers to access information and to use them to enhance work in other curriculum areas. The use of interactive whiteboards in Years 5 and 6 is beginning to contribute significantly to levels of competency in other curriculum areas, particularly mathematics.
82. The school has computers in each classroom, which are currently not linked to the network and a computer suite. It has also recently installed interactive whiteboards in Years 5 and 6. Resources are satisfactory and used well and pupils are now making good progress. The use of interactive whiteboards in Years 5 and 6 has had a very good effect on pupils' progress in these classes but in Year 4 a significant minority of pupils have unsatisfactory attitudes and do not behave well and this affects the learning of their peers. As a consequence, pupils underachieve.
83. The quality of teaching and learning is good.
84. The co-ordinator is successfully leading the development of this subject. Recently, she has focussed on the provision of adequate hardware and software and there is a programme to install interactive whiteboards in all classrooms and to connect all class based computers to the network. Subject management is unsatisfactory. At the moment there is a lack of any formal monitoring and pupils' work is not systematically assessed.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

85. Integrating ICT into other areas of the curriculum to enhance learning is a priority for the school. Pupils in Year 3, 4,5 and 6 use the ICT suite well. A Year 3 class used a music program to create, organise and re-organise sounds to make music reflecting particular moods by manipulating instruments and the tempo of their pieces. A Year 5 class used computers to compare the occupancy of households in a Victorian and more recent census. ICT was also used extensively in numeracy lessons and was used to good effect in a Year 5 religious education lesson.

HUMANITIES

86. Few lessons were observed in **geography** and **history**. An examination of pupils' work, observation of lessons and discussion with pupils, indicates that pupils follow a programme of work based on the National Curriculum and statutory requirements are met. These subjects are also taught through literacy and ICT. Pupils' achievement is good throughout the school as seen in their recorded work but their standards are below national averages. They are developing well in their understanding of the past events and key historical skills as well as how weather and landscape affect people's lives. Good use is made of visits to places of historical and geographical interest and this enhances pupils' learning. Geography and history make a good contribution to pupils' literacy skills, by using research skills and by extending the range of writing the pupils tackle when they cover areas such as fact, opinion and empathy. The co-ordinator leads humanities well and is aware of the need to develop better recording and analysing skills among pupils.

Religious Education

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are below the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus.
- In the lessons seen during the inspection pupils' achievement was good.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are good.
- Teaching was good in lessons seen in Key Stage 2.
- The school makes good use of the local faith communities in teaching about Christianity and Islam.

Commentary

87. Attainment in religious education, at the end of Years 2 and 6, is below the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus and pupils' achievement satisfactory. Throughout the school, attainment in learning facts about religion is satisfactory but it is below local expectations in learning from religion and especially other religions. By the time pupils leave the school they know the names of symbols and places of worship of the six world religions and can retell the story of the Life of Prophet Muhammad. They know the importance of belonging to a community and the meaning of Christian symbols of dove and fish and why candles are used in the church. Pupils have a satisfactory understanding of aspects of the Islamic faith such as the celebration of Eid but their knowledge of the holy Quran is limited. Year 2 pupils know a range of Bible stories such as the Good Samaritan, the Prodigal son and story about the birth of Jesus and the importance of Christmas. Their understanding of the aspects of the Christian religion is better than their ability to record what they understand. The more able write these stories in words and pictures. Year 1 pupils are putting together their whole class anthology after visiting the local church. They know words such as altar, font, vicar and organ.
88. Most pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress overall. The pupils generally make better progress in work related to the Christian faith as teachers have a greater depth of knowledge in this area and more time tends to be spent on this aspect, than on other religions particularly Islam. Pupils respond to religious education with interest. They use this learning to develop moral and social skills, share with each other their own experiences, learn from each other and develop positive relationships.
89. Overall, the quality of teaching is satisfactory. Some good teaching was seen in Years 3 to 6, particularly where there is good lesson planning. In the best lessons, teachers question and challenge the pupils introducing specific vocabulary to deepen the pupils' knowledge and understanding of aspects of how people express their faith. In less effective lessons, occasionally teachers are insecure in their knowledge of other religions and do not draw out the religious significance of symbols, pictures, artefacts and stories.
90. The religious education curriculum broadly meets statutory requirements. The school follows the locally agreed syllabus as well as using national guidelines. The local vicar and the imam also regularly address school assemblies to deepen pupils' understanding about religion. The subject contributes satisfactorily to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and to their literacy skills. The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory and resources are adequate.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

91. No **art and design** lessons were observed during the inspection and so it is not possible to make a judgement on teaching and learning. Teachers' planning and work on display show

that a satisfactory range of work is covered. Pupils use sketchbooks to record their ideas and practise techniques.

92. Only one **music** lesson was observed in Years 3 to 6. This was for two Year 5 classes. In this lesson the teachers showed secure subject knowledge but the pace was slowed by having to teach a large number of pupils. There were good links to pupils' work in science. Pupils worked in groups to produce a soundscape about space. Pupils made a good start to their work but the time of the lesson did not allow them to achieve a great deal. In a Year 3 ICT lesson, good links were made with music. Pupils used a computer program to combine and reorganise sounds to reflect feelings. Teachers used musical vocabulary effectively to promote pupils' musical understanding. In Year 1, pupils learned about rhythm and pulse. Year 2 pupils learned how to combine sounds to create musical effects. Not all teachers have secure subject knowledge and in one lesson, the time spent on behaviour management slowed pupils' progress. Pupils' attainment in music is below average at the end of Year 2.
93. Only one lesson was observed in **physical education** in Year 6 where standards were in line with national expectations. Short observations were made in some other year groups but there was too little evidence to make a secure judgement about standards or teaching and learning. Discussions with teachers indicate that effective use is made of the school's good sports facilities and learning resources. There is a wide variety of sports clubs and inter-school events and many pupils benefit from these extra-curricular activities. The subject is well led by the co-ordinator.
94. Only two lessons were observed in **design and technology**, one in Year 1 and another in Year 3 and this is insufficient evidence to make secure judgements about standards of teaching and learning. Evidence from an exhibition of work in Year 6 indicates that pupils use a good range of materials and are able to evaluate their work and indicate how they could improve further. The standard of work on display reached national expectations. Discussion with the new subject co-ordinator indicates that resources have been updated and a new policy document has been written which are beginning to have an impact on teaching. Planning has been monitored and reviewed to ensure curriculum coverage.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

95. Personal, health and social education is taught in all classes, using timetabled lessons and 'Circle Time' sessions, when pupils have opportunities to discuss relationships and their feelings. The good programme of work has been in place for less than a year, but is already beginning to have an effect on pupils' communal living. Statutory requirements for sex and relationship education and drugs education are met. The school nurse makes a valuable contribution and her services as a counsellor are much valued by pupils.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	4
How inclusive the school is	4
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	8
Value for money provided by the school	4
Overall standards achieved	5
Pupils' achievement	4
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	3
Attendance	5
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	4
The quality of education provided by the school	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	4
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	4
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	4
The quality of the school's links with the community	4
The school's links with other schools and colleges	4
The leadership and management of the school	3
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	3

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

poor (6); very poor (7).