

INSPECTION REPORT

TURNFURLONG INFANT SCHOOL

Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire

LEA area: Buckinghamshire

Unique reference number: 110359

Headteacher: Mrs J A Tyson

Lead inspector: Ms R Frith

Dates of inspection: 18 – 20 April 2005

Inspection number: 268151

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 to 7 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	230
School address:	Turnfurlong Lane Aylesbury Buckinghamshire
Postcode:	HP21 7PL
Telephone number:	01296 489265
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Brian Billingham
Date of previous inspection:	10 May 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Turnfurlong School is an average size community infant school. Pupils come from a range of social backgrounds but, overall, the socio-economic status of families is broadly average, with a well below average percentage of pupils receiving free school meals. This percentage is probably lower than the number entitled to free school meals as some families do not claim because no hot meals are available and the younger children prefer a packed lunch from home. Nearly 60 per cent of pupils come from outside the catchment area. When children join the school, they bring with them a wide range of experiences and abilities but, overall, their attainment is broadly similar to that usually seen for children of this age. However, a significant number of children have lower than average communication skills and a few enter each year speaking little or no English. Currently, 34 pupils are supported through the Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant and 13 pupils are at the early stages of learning English. Pupils mainly come from White British heritage, with a few coming from a range of minority ethnic groups. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs is below the national average and those pupils receiving additional support have a range of learning difficulties. Few pupils join or leave the school at other than the usual starting or leaving times. Over the last two years four teachers have left the school and four have been appointed. The school received the Investors in People award and the Basic Skills Quality Mark in 2004, and the Artsmark in 2003.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
2490	Ruth Frith	Lead inspector	English as an additional language Foundation stage Science Geography Religious education
9519	Sue Pritchard	Lay inspector	
2756	Michael Barron	Team inspector	Special educational needs Mathematics History Physical education
24528	Garth Muton	Team inspector	English Information and communication technology Art and design Design and technology Music

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a very good school. The headteacher provides very good leadership and, together with senior managers and governors, has created a school with a happy and stimulating atmosphere where children flourish. Teaching is frequently very good because staff provide lessons that are interesting and help pupils to achieve very well. Staff are particularly effective in developing the pupils' personal and social education, which provides a very good basis for learning across all subjects. Consequently, by Year 2, most pupils reach standards that are at least well above average in English, mathematics and science. The school provides very good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Teachers and support staff form a strong team and their work helps pupils to achieve very well.
- The school's ethos is very good and strongly influences the pupils' attitudes to school and their learning, both of which are very good.
- Very good provision helps to develop pupils' personal qualities and this leads to very good relationships and very good behaviour.
- Leadership, management and governance of the school are very good.
- Pupils are presented with an excellent, exciting and innovative curriculum that stimulates their learning and meets their needs very well. The outside areas for children in the reception classes are not yet fully developed, however, and this restricts the range of activities provided.
- Overall, good systems are in place to ensure that pupils are well cared for and that the school is a safe place in which to learn, although there is no school council and arrangements for collecting children from school pose problems for some parents and children.
- Staff have developed very good links with parents and the community.

Progress since the last inspection has been very good. Pupils' academic standards have improved, particularly in mathematics and their personal and social standards are now higher because of improvements in teaching and the development of the curriculum. Staff have successfully addressed the issues identified in the last report and demonstrate a strong commitment to continual development and improvement.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

Key: A - very high; A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average; E* - very low.*

Similar schools are those with similar percentages of pupils eligible for free school meals.

Pupils achieve very well during their time in school. In the reception class, children make a good start because teachers have high expectations of work and behaviour. Children quickly develop very good attitudes to learning and, by the time they enter Year 1, nearly all are working at least at the levels expected nationally for pupils of that age in all areas of learning, and many are working above that. In Years 1 and 2, pupils continue to achieve well and, by the end of the academic year, pupils in Year 2 frequently attain standards in reading, writing, mathematics and science that are well above those expected for children of this age. Standards are above average in information and communication technology and religious education. Pupils with special educational needs achieve very well due to the effective support provided. Pupils speaking English as an additional language and higher-attaining pupils similarly achieve very well.

Provision to develop pupils' personal qualities is very good. Pupils enjoy school and attendance is good. Staff are particularly effective in developing pupils' confidence and self-esteem, which helps them to enjoy their learning and achieve very well. Pupils are encouraged to respect the views, feelings and values of others. This results in very good behaviour, attitudes and relationships.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school and the quality of teaching are very good. Throughout the school, teachers have high expectations of pupils' personal and social education, which helps them settle well and become confident, happy learners. Teachers have a clear understanding of what they want the pupils to learn and provide activities which stimulate learning and the pupils' desire to do well. Pupils' learning is also enhanced by the very effective support staff who, together with teachers, form a strong team.

The curriculum for the reception classes is very good, overall, although staff are restricted in what they can do by the inadequate outdoor provision. In Years 1 and 2, the curriculum is excellent and a key factor in developing pupils' very good attitudes to learning and very good behaviour. Pupils are too interested in what they are doing to waste time or misbehave. The curriculum is also particularly effective in maintaining very good academic standards because the work matches the needs of all pupils. Curriculum development is excellent as staff constantly review what they are doing and also provide an excellent range of enrichment activities. Staff ensure that pupils are all included, well cared for and feel supported. Teachers respond very well to what pupils say in lessons. Staff have developed very good links with parents and the community and good links with other schools.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership, management and governance of the school are very good. The headteacher, deputy headteacher and governors have a clear vision for the school and, place the well-being of pupils at the heart of this. They are fully committed to running a school where all pupils are included and helped to develop well, both academically and socially. The headteacher has high expectations and is particularly effective in creating a school where pupils and staff have the confidence and desire to try new things in order to improve. Her influence can clearly be seen through her presence around the school when she speaks with pupils and staff.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents have very positive views about the school. They are pleased with the quality of education provided and the impact of this on their children's learning. They believe that the school is well led and managed, that teaching is good and that their children make good progress. Some parents have concerns about arrangements for transfer at the beginning and end of the school day and inspectors agree that these should be reviewed. Pupils like school and talk enthusiastically about the clubs and activities provided. They feel well supported and are confident that any problems they might have will be taken seriously by staff and dealt with quickly.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Further develop the outdoor learning areas for children in the reception classes.
- Make better provision for pupils to put forward their ideas on school improvement.
- Review arrangements for the care of children during transfer at the beginning and end of the school day.

and, to meet statutory requirements:

- Ensure that the governors' report to parents and the prospectus contain all the required information.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Overall, pupils achieve very well and by the time they leave school have attained standards that are well above average at least and sometimes very high.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve very well throughout the school because of their very good attitudes to learning, the very good teaching and the curriculum.
- In the 2004 national tests and assessments, pupils in Year 2 reached very high standards in reading, writing and science and well above average standards in speaking, listening and mathematics.
- Pupils with special educational needs achieve very well because their needs are identified early and very good quality additional support is provided.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language also achieve very well because they are well supported.
- Higher-attaining pupils achieve very well.

Commentary

1. On entry to school, children have a wide variety of skills and experiences but, overall, their attainment is similar to that of other children of the same age nationally. A significant minority have lower than average communication, language, personal and social skills and, each year, a few pupils join the school speaking little or no English or with special educational needs and this affects the overall standards on entry. Due to the quality of teaching and provision of a broad and interesting curriculum, most children achieve very well. In the reception classes, staff focus on developing the children's personal and social skills and on encouraging communication. Progress is very good and children use these skills well in all lessons so that their mathematical, creative and physical skills as well as their knowledge and understanding of the world improve very quickly. By the time they enter Year 1, nearly all children are working at levels above those usually seen for pupils of that age in all areas of learning.
2. When compared with all schools, the results of the tests and assessments in 2004 show a continuation of the high standards from the previous year and place the school in the top five per cent of schools nationally for reading, writing and science. When compared with schools with a similar number of pupils receiving free school meals, pupils attained very high standards in science, well above average standards in reading and writing and average standards in mathematics. There was a slight dip in mathematics compared with the standards in 2003 and the school did not reach its targets for mathematics in 2004. However, due to improvements in teaching and the curriculum, standards are improving. Over the last five years, the school's trend of improvement was above the national trend.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	18.6 (18.4)	15.8 (15.1)
writing	17.3 (16.9)	14.6 (14.6)
mathematics	17.3 (18.2)	16.2 (16.3)

There were 90 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

3. The work undertaken in the reception classes creates a firm foundation on which very good learning takes place in Years 1 and 2. Evidence from this inspection indicates that pupils in Year 2 are currently working at levels well above those expected for their age in reading, writing, mathematics and science. Standards are above average in information and communication technology and reflect the recent changes in the curriculum and the improved resources and facilities. Standards are above those expected in the locally Agreed Syllabus for religious education in Year 2 because the teaching is good, overall.
4. No significant difference was noted in the achievement between boys and girls during the inspection, although there have been some differences in the Year 2 national test results. For example, over the last three years, boys did very slightly better than girls in reading and better in mathematics while girls did better than boys in writing. Staff recognise the differing styles of learning and use a good variety of teaching styles to accommodate this. Consequently, there is no evidence of underachievement.
5. Pupils of higher attainment are very well challenged, as the results of the 2004 national Year 2 tests show. In reading, writing, mathematics and science a much higher than average percentage of pupils achieved a level higher than that expected for their age. Teachers have high expectations and set work to match the capabilities of each pupil so that all work hard and progress very well. The school has made significant improvements since the last inspection in its provision for those pupils who are gifted and talented and currently their needs are met very well. Appropriate work is set in lessons and additional challenge provided through a wide range of clubs and additional activities. The achievement of pupils who have special educational needs is very good throughout the school. It matches that of other pupils because of the very effective care and support they receive from both the special educational needs co-ordinator and also the very effective learning support assistants.
6. From the information provided by the school, and through observation and discussion with pupils, it is clear that there is no significant difference in the achievement of pupils from various minority ethnic groups. This is because the school places a very good focus on inclusion and all pupils have access to a stimulating curriculum which meets their needs and helps them to achieve very well. The progress in English language development made by pupils who speak English as an additional language is also very good and they achieve very well. Recent additional support is proving to be very effective for the youngest children, who are encouraged to speak in English and their home language, when appropriate. The school's very good ethos is effective in helping all pupils to succeed but particularly those at the earlier stages of learning English when they need to listen carefully, develop their confidence and practise their speaking skills.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils behave very well, establish very good relationships and have very good attitudes to learning. They have a good record of attendance and their punctuality is very good. Very good provision is made for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils of all ages and abilities work and play together very well. They really enjoy school.
- The school boosts pupils' confidence and self-esteem extremely well.
- Pupils have responded very well to the much improved provision made for their personal development, particularly the spiritual, social and cultural aspects.

Commentary

7. Staff work as one in promoting the very high standards of behaviour achieved by all pupils. Pupils show a lively interest in learning and want to do well. They are very keen to involve themselves in the exciting range of activities offered through a very well-planned curriculum. Staff and parents expect good behaviour and the pupils respond accordingly. The simple

'grumpy/happy peg' behaviour management system is accepted by all as being easy to remember and easy to apply. It has proved successful in helping pupils feel good about themselves while at the same time dealing with potentially challenging behaviour sensitively and effectively. There were no exclusions in the previous academic year. As parents were eager to point out, the rare incidents of bullying, harassment or racist behaviour in school are always dealt with swiftly and to their satisfaction. On a day-to-day basis, pupils are quick to apologise to the other party involved in their minor quarrels or scuffles, as they are much more interested in getting on with each other than keeping up an argument.

8. The pupils from minority ethnic background show equally positive attitudes and are fully involved in the life of the school. Pupils with special educational needs are integrated very well in all activities. The school's inclusive ethos ensures that pupils with special educational needs play a full and active part. As a result, they show a willingness to learn and have access to the full range of activities provided by the school. Pupils show very good attitudes to work because their efforts are valued by teachers and because the rich and varied curriculum provides opportunities for pupils of different abilities to learn a variety of skills in different ways. The well-chosen range of extra-curricular activities, for example, successfully motivates the interest of the school's young artists, athletes, environmentalists and musicians.
9. Pupils' cultural development is very good. In lessons and assemblies they learn about the influence faith has on the way people choose to live their lives. Visiting artists, authors and dancers, for example, as well as representatives from local churches, enhance pupils' learning. Eye-catching displays in school help pupils to recognise the distinctive architecture, scenery, costumes and traditions found in certain other countries and cultures. They also provide evidence of pupils' developing a very keen sense of spiritual awareness when reflecting on the uniqueness and creativity of the world around them. Their carefully crafted models of musical instruments, fantasy insects and bugs, and their imaginative and inspired stories about the adventures of animals and people living in far off lands show pupils with a very high degree of emotional involvement in their learning.
10. The school also provides a very good range of opportunities for pupils to learn about British cultures and traditions. The pupils benefit from their visits to libraries, galleries, museums and other places of interest. Traditional country dancing around the Maypole also features in the school's calendar. Harvest-time celebrations give pupils the chance to reflect on and recognise the value of others in the community.
11. Pupils' moral development is very good. The essential values of self-respect and care for others form the basis of all assembly themes. Ten minutes are set aside after morning play for pupils to reflect on the theme of the day and judge whether their conduct has met the desired focus for it. The school fully recognises the importance of building on pupils' own life experiences in this way. Pupils have a very strong sense of social awareness and an ability to adapt their behaviour to different situations. Members of the public regularly praise the school for the high standard of behaviour of the pupils on visits out of school. Pupils are also on their best behaviour in assemblies, respecting the sense of occasion these bring to the day. They lean very much towards 'doing the right thing', a quality instilled by the parents who support the school and its rules. However, a significant minority of the older pupils in particular, feel that the school could take more account of their views than it does at present. As there is no school council, opportunities are missed for pupils to share their opinions and aspirations for the future of the school in this formal way.
12. Most pupils have a good record of attendance. Their punctuality is very good. A breakfast club helps to ensure that all pupils have equal opportunities to be ready and prepared for school at the right time each day. Although the level of absenteeism for the last reporting year matched that of most other primary schools, rigorous monitoring revealed that too much of it was due to holidays taken in term-time. Governors, quite rightly, then decided that the school should no longer authorise this category of absence. As a result, fewer parents now request holiday leave for their children and the overall absence rate is lower now than it was at the

same time last year. Pupils show by their very good attitudes and behaviour that they enjoy school.

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	5.1	School data	0.1
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.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is very good. Teaching is very good, overall, and pupils are supported well through experiencing a very good curriculum and good levels of care. Links with parents and the community are very good and links with schools and colleges are good.

Teaching and learning

Teaching, learning and assessment are very good, overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are very good in English, mathematics and science and this helps pupils to achieve very well.
- Teaching assistants support the pupils very well and help them to make very good progress.
- Staff have high expectations and provide appropriately challenging work, which ensures that pupils of all abilities achieve very well.
- Staff use their knowledge of the pupils, gained through thorough assessment, to plan work that ensures they are able to succeed.
- Expectations of pupils' behaviour are high and pupils respond well. This helps to create a very good ethos for learning.

Commentary

13. Pupils make very good progress throughout their time in school and achieve very well. This is because of their very good attitudes to learning, the very good quality of teaching and very good curriculum provision. Significant improvements to the teaching and curriculum for children in the reception classes have resulted in much better overall provision, and these younger children now quickly develop very good skills of learning and high levels of confidence. The teaching covers all areas of learning well and staff use a good variety of methods and activities that maintain the interest of all. This very good practice continues throughout Years 1 and 2, where children further develop their confidence and self-esteem, which helps them to tackle new tasks with interest and enthusiasm. The chart below gives an outline of the quality of lessons seen during the inspection and reflects the focus that all staff place on giving pupils very good early learning experiences.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 41 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1 (2%)	19 (47%)	17 (41%)	4 (10%)	0 (0%)	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.

14. Teachers' knowledge of how children learn and their expertise across a range of subjects are significant features of the best lessons. They use this well to plan lessons which match the learning needs of all pupils and maintain an excitement when finding out about new things. Teachers have a clear idea of what they want pupils to learn and share this with them at the start of the lesson. They provide appropriate support and challenge, which ensure that pupils of all levels of attainment maintain a good pace in their learning. A particular strength is the way they use the information gained from assessing pupils so that the activities provided build systematically on previous learning. Teachers use their knowledge of pupils well in lessons and encourage them to improve and work harder if they think they can. These features are particularly successful in the teaching of reading, writing, mathematics and science. Teaching in ICT is good, as staff develop their skills in using the new facilities and resources. It is also good in religious education when staff encourage pupils to think beyond the literal and relate Biblical teachings to their own experience.
15. The expertise of teaching assistants and specialist teachers is directed well for the best effect. This may be by working with individual pupils or small groups, or through assessing and evaluating the curriculum and pupils' progress in order to allocate appropriate support. All staff are effective in using a wide range of teaching methods that stimulate the pupils' interests and help to raise standards. Lessons are frequently built up of short sessions with input from the teacher, work from the board, using ICT or a book, individual reading or writing and discussions between pupils. The teachers' use of questioning is a key feature in developing pupils' learning, through encouraging them to 'think things through' by using previously gained knowledge and understanding, and by getting pupils to explain their answers. The latter is used well as a way of encouraging pupils to develop their communication and thinking skills and use of language. This results in pupils who ask thought-provoking questions and leave school with the ability to communicate clearly and effectively with adults and one another.
16. There is a strong ethos of learning in the school, which builds confidence among staff and pupils. This develops teachers' skills and experiences as they try different activities or ways of teaching and also encourages pupils to 'have a go' when faced with new challenges. Also, the quality of relationships between staff and pupils is very good. This helps pupils to gain trust in their teachers and also has a significant influence on how staff manage the pupils in their care successfully. Staff are very encouraging and supportive, which results in pupils becoming confident in their abilities and aware of how they can help themselves and one another to improve. Staff have consistently high expectations of behaviour and pupils respond well to these as they know what they should do.
17. Pupils who have special educational needs are supported very effectively. Their work in subjects such as English and mathematics is often designed to reflect targets in individual education plans. On the occasions when pupils are withdrawn from lessons for extra support, the tasks they complete closely follow work given to the rest of the pupils in the class. Consequently, they are fully prepared for reintegration into lessons and make very good progress in learning as a result. This is a key factor in ensuring that their achievement matches that of other pupils in all year groups. The school has improved its work with higher-attaining pupils and those who are gifted and talented. More capable pupils were seen being well challenged, for example, in the Bamboo Club where they are given a very good range of additional tasks to stimulate their thinking and develop their skills. This work extends to encourage work at home, which often involves contributions from parents. Teachers are also

aware of differences that may occur in the responses and learning of girls and boys so use a good range of methods to ensure that all are included and interested.

18. Pupils who speak English as an additional language have their needs met very well within mainstream classes and when working with specialist staff. Teachers and support staff are particularly effective in encouraging them to participate in lessons by ensuring that they fully understand new vocabulary and by boosting their confidence. Those at the early stages of learning English are encouraged and supported very well and make very good progress in acquiring a good range of vocabulary. They are encouraged to use English and, when appropriate, their home language. Those pupils who are fluent in English are encouraged to develop the richness of their vocabulary, for example, when writing both in English lessons and in other subjects. Pupils from minority ethnic groups and people of different faiths and backgrounds are well supported, so that they are included in all class activities and progress at a similar rate to their peers. Staff are sensitive to the needs of such pupils and value the diversity within the school.

The curriculum

The range of curriculum opportunities is very good. Opportunities for enrichment are excellent and accommodation and resources are good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum in Years 1 and 2 is excellent.
- Extra-curricular opportunities and participation in the arts are excellent.
- Evaluation and innovation in the curriculum are excellent.
- The outside area for children in the reception classes is inadequate.

Commentary

19. Opportunities for learning are provided in all the subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education. There is a major commitment towards creativity but not to the exclusion of other subjects. The excellent teamwork by the school staff results in a continuous striving for improvement in all areas of the curriculum. The high standards achieved by the pupils are an important part of the very good preparation for the next stage of their education. There is a great deal of attention given to the needs of individual pupils, including gifted and talented pupils who are given extra challenges in the subjects in which they excel as part of the schools 'challenge for all' approach.
20. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. The special educational needs co-ordinator has developed highly effective procedures for the early identification and very close monitoring of pupils with possible learning, emotional, physical or behavioural difficulties. As a result, pupils who are assessed as having special educational needs are provided with individual education plans that detail the support they require. These plans contain quite specific targets, feature suitably small steps in learning and are very well implemented. Consequently, pupils with special education needs make very good progress and achieve very well
21. A particularly impressive feature of the school is its system for planning and reviewing the curriculum. All staff have an input into the planning for the different year groups and co-ordinators ensure that the specific requirements of individual subjects are met. There is also an open-minded flexible approach, which has resulted in successful changes to the organisation of the teaching of literacy and other adaptations to the curriculum to promote high achievement. Co-ordinators and teachers work together rigorously to evaluate lessons and programmes of work, and there are many examples of improvements being made as a result of this process.

22. The range of lunch-time and after-schools clubs is excellent. These clubs are very well attended and, in common with the whole-school approach to equal opportunities, are open to both boys and girls. Imaginative renaming of the choir to 'jazz choir' and country-dance to 'movers and groovers' is specifically intended to encourage boys into these groups. In addition to some of the more usual activities, pupils can join clubs for French, nature studies and computer studies. There is a writers group and a club run by the headteacher for more able pupils.
23. Imaginative planning, as well as a commitment to take advantage of every available opportunity, means that pupils' learning is continually being enriched by visits, visitors and special projects. The school environment is impressively enhanced by the sculptures produced as a result of having a 'sculptor in residence', as part of the National Gallery initiative 'Take one Picture', and the local museum is currently exhibiting work done by the pupils in connection with a masks and puppet feature. These are just two examples of a very long list of exciting projects organised by the school. Special theme weeks, such as culture week, book week or science week, provide extra opportunities for learning and excitement across the curriculum. Year group and whole-school music performances are popular with both pupils and parents.
24. The accommodation is good, overall. Excellent opportunities for learning are evident throughout the school; however, the inadequate outdoor facility in the Foundation Stage does inhibit the quality of physical, investigative and other work that the reception children do outside. The number and range of books available to pupils is very good and this makes an important contribution to reading standards. Resources in other subjects are good and the recent acquisition of interactive whiteboards provides a very good teaching resource. The expertise of both teachers and their assistants is very good, although the number of teaching assistants available means that some teachers, especially in Year 1, often have to manage without an assistant.

Care, guidance and support

The school promotes a good level of care for all its pupils. Pupils have very good access to well-informed support and advice. Good account is taken of their responses to questions set by the school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are sensible and responsible, owing to the good support and guidance they receive. They have a healthy respect for adults.
- The school monitors and promotes pupils' academic progress and personal development very effectively.
- Staff are very knowledgeable about the arrangements for dealing with child protection issues.
- Some parents would like to be more involved in the arrangements for the care of their children at the beginning and end of the school day.
- There is no official forum for pupils to make their own proposals on what they would like to see improved in school.

Commentary

25. Pupils trust the staff and know there is always someone to whom they can turn. Teachers make the best use of the discussions they have with the pupils to gauge the right level of support and encouragement for the individual child. All teachers spend time at the beginning of a lesson helping pupils understand the purpose of it, and again at the end, encouraging them to evaluate what they have gained from it. Pupils often use the 'thumbs up/thumbs down' system of sharing their feelings with teachers. There are also regular slots in the timetable for pupils to talk to their class teacher about any problems they may have encountered that day. As well as providing the teacher with first-hand assessment

information, these arrangements are effective in helping the pupils become more aware of their own learning and personal needs. Teachers make very good use of the information they have at their disposal to 'fine tune' their lessons and, within them, incorporate the most achievable targets for each pupil. As a result, the pupils have a good idea about what they should be doing to move closer towards their desired goals, both academically and personally.

26. Procedures for monitoring and supporting the academic progress and personal development of pupils with special educational needs are very good. Information about pupils is used very effectively to produce very detailed individual education plans, which are systematically reviewed at regular intervals.
27. The school makes good use of the responses pupils give to the termly surveys of their views by providing targeted support for any pupils who have indicated some concern about the care they receive. Pupils with special educational needs receive good support through well-focused individual education plans. Great care is taken to ensure that they do not miss out on the learning taking place in their class when they are withdrawn from a lesson for a short period of time. Good liaison is maintained with parents of children with specific medical needs in order that these pupils take a full part in all activities in school. All staff are aware of the duty they have towards children at risk. All are alert to any unusual patterns of behaviour or conduct. Effective liaison is maintained with the relevant outside agencies for each of these groups and also for the few pupils who experience problems with their attendance.
28. All the routine health and safety checks are carried out in school to an agreed schedule. Risk assessments, and any issues arising from them, are managed effectively, with due consideration given to making the school accessible to people with disabilities. Staff are properly trained to deal with minor accidents and injuries and know exactly what to do in an emergency.
29. A group of six older pupils felt moved to tell the inspectors that, in their opinion, their teachers were "absolutely brilliant". The overriding feeling amongst all pupils is that staff listen to them and are fair. There is, however, no official forum to enable the school collectively to consult with pupils through class representatives or to allow the pupils to raise issues and concerns for themselves in a structured and more inclusive way. This is a relative weakness within the overall good methods the school has of seeking and acting on pupils' views.
30. Deliberate efforts are made by the school to employ a team of staff who are genuinely concerned about children's well-being. Recognising the personal needs of pupils, teachers and support staff are particularly careful to make sure that new arrivals are gently introduced into the demands of the full and exciting curriculum. However, because parents are asked to say goodbye to their children at the school gate rather than on the premises, a few feel their children miss out from not having their parents around to help settle them into their first activity and also to see how the teachers support their children. A significant minority believe the school should review its arrangements for transferring the care of pupils to that of their parents at the end of the school day. The inspection evidence, which included the views of pupils, found the parents' concerns on these two issues to be justified.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Links with parents and the community are very good. The good links with other schools support learning and achievement well.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school has a high standing in the local community and is valued by parents and visitors.
- Very good use is made of parents' skills to promote the pupils' spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development.
- Some parents have concerns about the contact they have with the school at the beginning and end of the day.

- Links with local schools and local organisations enrich and strengthen the curriculum.

Commentary

31. Parents have very favourable views on the work of the school. They are especially pleased with the success it has in encouraging children to behave well, achieve their best and enjoy their lessons. The school is valued and respected locally and it is easy to see why. The pupils' very good conduct in and out of school impresses all who witness it. Once inside the school, parents and visitors are invariably taken aback by the interesting collections and high standard of displays that confront them, but are singularly impressed by the quality and range of pupils' work on view.
32. Local groups are proud to be connected with the school and are happy to lend their support, often in handy, practical ways. Members of the Royal Air Force, for example, have begun work on transforming the central courtyard into an ecological garden area. Excellent use is made of the talents, skills and expertise that parents offer the school in this and other directions. As well as the graphic designer, nurse, photographer and farmer there is also a parent who has developed the skill of playing a didgeridoo to an audience of children! The school has been particularly successful in encouraging parents to contribute something of themselves in a way that celebrates the diversity of cultures that make up today's society. Parents are valued for the talks they give to pupils about the cultures and traditions of their faith. Events hosted in school by the very supportive parents' association, the seasonal festivals and the May Fair, enable the whole community to meet and celebrate together. These productive, innovative and worthwhile links make a very strong contribution to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
33. Information to parents in newsletters is very good as it originates from a variety of sources including governors, parents, the school and the local community. Parents are keen to support their children's learning and co-operation between home and school is very good. There are signs that parents have taken heed of recent requests not to take their children on holiday in term-time. The end-of-year reports form a good basis for a constructive discussion at the regular parent/teacher consultation sessions. The quality of information produced by the school to inform and consult parents about the nature of individual pupils' special educational needs and about their identification, assessment and progress is very good. Parents are given opportunities to be involved both in the drawing up of individual education plans and in the review processes. They are also actively encouraged to become involved in helping pupils to achieve their individual targets.
34. With two relatively minor omissions, the prospectus and the governors' report meet the requirements on information that, by law, must be given to parents. Parents are routinely encouraged to share their perceptions about the school and its work but these are more often focused on the success of particular events rather than the practices about which the school has known for some time that parents have concerns. This situation is currently hindering the development of the otherwise helpful procedures the school has of involving parents in settling their children into school and keeping them in touch with their progress on a day to day basis. Staff ask parents to share their views and opinions through questionnaires, comments on reports, a comment box, and in the newsletters.
35. Significant advantages arise from the well-established links with a network of local schools. Teachers make very good use of the opportunities these present to share resources and good practice, exchange ideas and find joint solutions to common problems. The impact of this can be seen in the research and effort that has gone into developing the very good, broad and balanced curriculum that prepares pupils very well for their transfer to secondary school. The good links have also helped develop a structured approach to pupils joining and leaving the school that most parents feel happy with.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are very good overall. The headteacher provides very good leadership and is well supported by senior staff. The governance of the school is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher's very good leadership has ensured that staff work excellently as a team in order to achieve and maintain high standards.
- The school's use of self-evaluation to improve standards is excellent.
- The overall quality of leadership and management is very good and senior managers provide very good support for the headteacher.
- The governing body supports the school very well.

Commentary

36. The very good quality of education provided by the school is, in many ways, a direct result of very good overall school management and the very effective leadership of the headteacher, who has succeeded in building up a highly enthusiastic group of teaching staff who work excellently as a team. Her leadership of the curriculum and teaching is excellent. She has succeeded in ensuring that both teachers and learning support assistants display a very strong commitment to school improvement and share their sense of purpose very well with all other adults involved in school life. This has been a key factor in the school's success in raising and maintaining high standards, especially in English, mathematics and science.
37. Another key factor in raising standards has been the extremely efficient way the school has developed highly effective systems to continually examine its performance. This has included the tracking of individual pupils' attainment and their progress over time. The information gathered has been used to continually review patterns of achievement and to take effective action to bring about improvements in provision when needed. As a result, pupils' achievement is very good and standards of attainment are high. However, the current school improvement plan is cumbersome and lacks sufficient focus and detail to adequately reflect the quality of education provided by the school.
38. Senior staff and curricular leaders carry out their responsibilities very conscientiously and provide very good role models for other staff and pupils. Provision for staff development is outstanding and is very closely linked to school improvement planning and also linked very effectively to staff performance management targets. Teachers' planning is regularly monitored and a programme of regular lesson observations is carried out in order to check the quality of provision. Teachers are deployed very well according to their strengths and are used very effectively to ensure that the needs of all pupils are met. There is a strong sense of teamwork and a feeling that pupils' talents should be encouraged and celebrated. As a result, pupils are encouraged to feel they matter as individuals and this has a very positive impact on their attitudes to learning and their enthusiasm for school.
39. Leadership and management of special educational needs are very good and this is reflected in the very good quality of provision for this group of pupils. The special educational needs co-ordinator has a very good understanding both of the strengths of the school's provision and the areas which require further development and has set up very effective systems to help in the early identification, assessment and monitoring of pupils with special educational needs. She has also ensured that the school has developed very good relationships with the parents of pupils with special educational needs and also with outside agencies.
40. The governing body takes its responsibilities very seriously and challenges and supports the school very well in its role as a 'friend and critic'. It is fully involved in strategic planning and has been very effective in monitoring the curriculum and ensuring that nearly all the criticisms of the previous inspection have been fully addressed. Governors have helped to shape the vision and direction of the school through continued close contact with the headteacher and her staff. Several governors make frequent visits to the school and this has helped the

governing body not only to work in close partnership with the school, but also to build up a clear understanding of the school's strengths and those areas requiring further development.

41. Financial management and administration are now good and the school uses effective systems to monitor all aspects of income and expenditure. As a result, there is every indication that the school will swiftly erode its current budget deficit which is the result of the school changing from four-form to three-form entry. This has been agreed with the local education authority. Educational priorities within school improvement planning are closely linked to the school's finances and this helps to ensure that spending is targeted towards those areas of greatest benefit to the curriculum and to pupils' learning. Overall, the headteacher and governing body apply the principles of best value very well.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	561,006	Balance from previous year	-23,096
Total expenditure	562,493	Balance carried forward to the next	-24,583
Expenditure per pupil	2,053		

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Very good improvements have been made since the last inspection so that current practice now reflects national guidance well. Very good leadership and management has resulted in the school addressing all the points made, although the school has not yet completed all its work on extending the outside areas and improving facilities. Staff have a very good understanding of how young children learn and use this well to plan activities which are appropriate to the age of the children and their stage of learning. There is a good balance between the time spent on adult-led and child-initiated activities and, as children move towards learning in the National Curriculum, a more formalised approach is taken. This prepares them well. Discussions with staff indicate that when the extensions are completed, planning will be developed to ensure that all areas of learning are taught outside in a systematic way. Information gained from assessing children's progress is used systematically to provide a planned curriculum to ensure good, consistent learning across all areas. This is very good. All staff assess the children's learning on a day-to-day basis through careful observations and use this information successfully to build up an individual profile of learning for each child. The Foundation Stage curriculum is very good, overall, as there is a very good range of interesting activities where children develop their confidence to try things out and co-operate well with others.

Teachers and support staff form a good team and teaching is very good. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good and this ensures that they develop appropriate skills and achieve well. Children for whom English is an additional language also achieve well. Their needs are quickly recognised, and very good support is given to extend their language and to ensure that they fully understand what is said to them and what they are expected to do.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching is very good, enabling children to achieve very well.
- Most children are already working above the expected standard.
- Children are quickly encouraged to develop very good behaviour and attitudes to learning.

Commentary

42. Children develop very good attitudes to learning because they are interested in what they are doing and the activities stimulate this interest. They are encouraged to persevere and to complete activities before moving on, and levels of concentration are usually very good. Due to very good support and teaching, by the end of the reception year, children have developed very good attitudes to learning and very good behaviour. Relationships are frequently also very good. Children respond well to the staff because they are confident that adults will listen to them and treat them fairly. Teachers and support staff remind children of the importance of sharing and taking turns, and provide activities that promote these skills, for example, board games. There are good opportunities for children to make choices and to develop confidence and independence.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching and learning is very good and this helps children to achieve very well.
- Most children are expected to reach the standard expected for their age by the time they enter Year 1 and many will be working above this.
- Children receive good support from the support staff.
- Letter sounds are taught thoroughly, which gives children a good foundation for developing reading and spelling skills.

Commentary

43. Teachers and support staff use a good range of strategies to encourage the development of the children's oracy and literacy skills, either through specific sessions led by the teacher or through the provision of appropriate activities. In one excellent lesson observed, children were encouraged to talk about the book they were reading together as a class and add to their knowledge about snails. They identified the difference between fiction and non-fiction texts and, because they were interested, used their information well to label their pictures. Children's good knowledge of letters and the sounds that they make help them to spell out new words. Children achieve well because staff realise the importance of developing their communication skills and encourage their interest in reading and writing. They are also encouraged to speak clearly when answering questions and talking about their work and have the confidence to speak to adults and one another. Children's speaking skills are also systematically developed through the provision of specific activities, such as in the imaginative play areas. Staff are effective in encouraging children learning English as an additional language as they speak clearly and emphasise any unfamiliar words. This was seen when a small group of children listened to a story and made comments. They responded very well, either in English or their home language, when appropriate, and this helped their learning. On entry to the school, children develop their writing skills by learning how to hold the pencil correctly and recognising and writing their own names. This is extended when children write for a variety of purposes, for example, explaining what they have done or describing their pictures.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are very good and help children to achieve very well.
- Most children are likely to reach the standard expected for their age by the time they enter Year 1, with many attaining above this.
- A good range of practical activities reinforces the children's learning.

Commentary

44. The children's mathematical skills and understanding are taught during specific sessions, and consolidated through daily play activities. Lessons start well with a session of mental mathematics, which encourages children's recognition and understanding of numbers. In one very good lesson observed, children were very keen to stamp out the numbers from 1 to 20 whilst also reciting them. They found this a fun thing to do and were not really aware of how effective this was in getting them to remember a sequence of numbers. All children have a good understanding of weight and time and indicate this when playing with a range of resources. They know the sequence of the day but the lower-attainers needed prompting

when asked about the time of the year or the month. Most had a good understanding of length and could identify the longest and shortest lengths. A small number, however, experience difficulty when ordering four different lengths. Children's skills were very well developed as they built a tower to see which one could be the longest, with few using the term 'highest'. Throughout, children behave well because they are interested in what they are doing and the pace of learning is good.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching and learning is very good and children achieve very well.
- Most children in the current reception year are likely to reach the standards expected for their age by the time they enter Year 1 and many are already working above this in some aspects.
- Children are learning the early skills of scientific enquiry well.

Commentary

45. Teachers' planning and classroom observations show that children enjoy a good range of experiences over time. During the inspection, much of the focus of work was on snails and this gave plenty of opportunity for children to develop their skills of observation as snails were brought into the class. Several children, who at first were not sure whether they wanted to be involved, very quickly became overtaken by the excitement of the activity and spent some enjoyable time looking intently at what the snails were doing. Very quickly, they were using correct terms and putting forward their ideas about how the snails were eating their food and how they moved. Skills in this area were above those usually seen for children of this age. In another very good lesson, children showed above average skills when using a paint program on the computer to draw snails. This lesson was particularly good because children evaluated the use of the computer against other ways of making snails from circles.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children reach standards above those expected for their age by the time they enter Year 1.
- Teaching and learning are very good.
- The outdoor area for the children currently restricts some physical play.
- Children develop their physical skills well during formal physical education sessions.

Commentary

46. Teaching, learning and achievement are very good, overall. Children have formal lessons which are planned to develop their skills systematically over time and get them used to work in the National Curriculum. In one very good lesson observed, many children showed above average ball skills. This was due to the high expectations of the teacher and the support given by the teaching assistant. Adults encouraged independence and promoted confidence by praising effort and encouraging individual children to demonstrate what they were doing to the rest of the class. Most children followed instructions well and by the end of the session were able to travel around the hall and control a ball using a bat. The end of the session was used particularly well to assess progress and confirm learning. For example, children were asked to outline what they had learnt and replied by saying things such as, "I learnt to stop the ball well" and "I learnt to control the ball when moving". Specific activities are provided which encourage children to practise their manipulative skills, such as using building kits, and many

of the daily activities include an element of manual dexterity; for example, using scissors to cut out a spiral in a mathematics lesson.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children enjoy their creative work and achieve very well.
- Teaching and learning are good and children are likely to reach the standards set nationally for children of their age at the end of the reception year. A substantial minority of children are currently working at a level above that expected for their age.
- Imaginative play helps to develop children's understanding.

Commentary

47. Children are introduced to a good range of activities, which helps them to develop their creative skills. They enjoy painting and talk about their work explaining what they have painted and the colours they have chosen. The class displays enhance the learning environment and encourage children's self-esteem through the valuing of their work. Their work on display in a local museum was of a particularly high quality and reflects the high standards of teachers and support staff. In one effective lesson, children were observed making snails out of clay and were able to describe clearly what they were doing and what would happen to the clay over time. They understood the use of a template and use their own ideas well to make patterns for the snails' shells. Imaginative play in the Minibeast Café resulted in the inspector being offered butterfly cakes and spider soup as the children acted out the roles of waitress and cook. Children play very well together with this kind of activity and develop their speaking and social skills effectively. A very good music session kept children working hard throughout as they were encouraged to identify high and low sounds and respond to music.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in all aspects of the subject are well above average.
- The quality of teaching is very good and this helps pupils to achieve very well.
- Leadership and management are very good and help to maintain high standards.
- Teamwork and planning are excellent.

Commentary

48. Standards in all aspects of English, including speaking, listening, reading and writing, are well above national averages and have been very well maintained since the school's results in the national tests of 2004. Overall, the achievement of pupils is very good, including those who have special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language. No differences were observed between the achievement of boys and girls. Improvement from the time of the last inspection has been good.
49. Teachers have achieved commendable success not through any particular inspirational approach but through excellent teamwork, excellent planning and consistent high expectations for their pupils. Pupils are very attentive in lessons and ask questions confidently when they

are not sure of something. Pupils' competence in speaking and listening is a striking feature of the school. Teachers encourage confidence in their pupils so that answers to questions are very well articulated.

50. All pupils are given every possible opportunity to write; they are enthused and encouraged by teachers and their assistants so that they approach new tasks with energy and enthusiasm. Pupils in Year 2 are taught to write in a number of forms, including stories, letters, reports and instructions. Teachers and their assistants have very good relationships with the pupils and have a consistent approach to developing good work habits throughout the school. As a result, pupils sustain concentration on writing tasks for a much longer time than usually seen for pupils in Years 1 and 2. There is a continuing and relentless drive to improve pupils' spelling so that spelling accuracy is well above average and pupils attempt new spellings confidently.
51. The very thorough whole-school approach to teaching in the subject means that every lesson is focused upon a particular aspect of reading or writing and that difficulties encountered by groups or individuals are followed up. The specific attention given to the teaching of reading has resulted in high standards, which enable pupils in Years 1 and 2 to access information from textbooks, worksheets, computer screens and other sources. As a result, pupils are much more independent in their learning than most six and seven year-olds.
52. Leadership and management of the subject are very good. The co-ordinator is a very skilled teacher, extremely enthusiastic about the teaching of literacy and provides a very good role model for her colleagues. Her leadership has ensured that there are very cohesive and consistent planning systems in place, that assessment in the subject is very good and that all pupils are making expected progress. Excellent teamwork is reflected in a common approach to the reorganisation of the timetable to ensure effective group reading and sustained writing tasks. Her enthusiasm, which is shared by her colleagues, means that teachers are continually looking for ways to improve the learning experiences for pupils. Current development includes an aim to use more drama and role-play as a stimulus for writing.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

53. Teachers are very aware of the need to provide pupils with different purposes for writing and this is reflected in their science, history and religious education books. However, the co-ordinator is very keen to ensure that all lessons do not become literacy lessons by placing too much emphasis on literacy skills when pupils are really trying to learn aspects of other subjects. This is a difficult balance and currently the pendulum has swung a little too far the other way with regard to pupils' writing. Although this aspect of the subject is good, more could be done to ensure that the high expectations in literacy are not lowered when pupils are writing in other subjects.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good teaching leads to very good achievement by pupils and well above average standards of attainment.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are very good.
- The co-ordinator manages the subject very well.
- The use of ICT within lessons is not as effective as it could be.

Commentary

54. Inspection evidence confirms that pupils' attainment in mathematics in Year 2 is well above the national average and there is a steady pattern of very good achievement in the subject in both Year 1 and Year 2. Standards are now better than those reported by the previous inspection and reflect the importance the school has placed on a structured approach to improving overall provision in the subject. There is now an emphasis on teaching mathematics through an investigative approach, where possible, and this makes learning enjoyable and interesting. In addition, the school's strategy of setting pupils into ability groups for mathematics lessons, and within these groupings matching work to differing capabilities, has had the effect of making work more challenging for all pupils. Pupils requiring extra help with their learning achieve very well because of the support they receive from very effective teaching assistants. Extension tasks for the comparatively more able in all ability groups are often demanding but attainable and this enhances the achievement and overall progress of these pupils, as they often work to their full potential as a result.
55. The vast majority of pupils in Year 1 work at a level well above that expected for their age. Nearly all are able to solve numerical problems and are also capable of, for example, finding out information from studying block graphs and tables. By Year 2, pupils have made very good progress in the development of their numeracy skills and nearly all are secure when, for example, investigating rules for tripling numbers. Pupils are also able to try different approaches when working in mathematics and have developed the confidence to discuss aspects of their work with others. The most able pupils in the year group have developed the ability to try out their own mathematical ideas in order to overcome difficulties when solving problems.
56. The school's investigative approach to teaching mathematics has encouraged pupils to develop very good attitudes to the subject and this was evident in lessons when pupils were usually keen and eager to learn. Whilst the quality of teaching observed during the inspection ranged from satisfactory to very good, it was evident from a scrutiny of pupils' work and from the standards attained by pupils that the overall quality of teaching over time has been very good. Better teaching in observed lessons was always very well structured and stimulated learning because activities were very well matched to the needs of pupils. Teachers were often careful to use the correct vocabulary when explaining things and worked very well with knowledgeable learning support assistants in order to make learning meaningful. The level of questioning was often adjusted to keep all pupils interested and introductions, though sometimes overlong, were often used effectively to recap previous learning and to prepare pupils well for the tasks they were expected to complete. During a very well taught lesson to a group of lower-attaining Year 1 pupils, learning support assistants were used very effectively to support and enhance their learning. In addition, a small number of pupils with special educational needs were integrated very effectively back into the lesson after they had been withdrawn for additional support. As a result, the achievement of all pupils was very good and they made very good progress in developing their ability to describe and extend number sequences. However, in the one observed lesson where teaching was less successful, the level of challenge was too high for a significant number of pupils. They had difficulty in completing all the tasks set for them and this affected their achievement and limited their progress.
57. The co-ordinator leads and manages the subject very well. Together, with the rest of the staff, she has ensured that the school's comprehensive systems for tracking the achievement of individual pupils have been used to very good effect. These monitor performance and look for any patterns of underachievement, as the school is keen to maintain and to further improve the very good standards the pupils attain. Overall, the co-ordinator has a very good idea of both the strengths of provision and of those areas still requiring further development.

Mathematics across the curriculum

58. The use of mathematics and numeracy across the curriculum is good. Subjects such as history, science and design and technology are used effectively to support the practical use of mathematical skills. However, whilst lessons in the ICT suite are used well to support learning in mathematics, the use of ICT within the classroom to enhance learning in mathematics still remains an area for further development. Staff recognise this and are already developing their practice.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve very well and reach well above average standards.
- Teaching is very good, overall, and this ensures that pupils make very good gains in their learning.
- There have been good improvements since the last inspection due to very good leadership and management.
- Although some use of ICT is very effective, planning for its systematic use across the school was not seen.

Commentary

59. Inspection findings and national assessments for pupils in Year 2 indicate that pupils make very good progress in science and achieve very well. By the time they leave school, they reach very high standards. These results show improvement since the last inspection. There is now a greater emphasis on investigative science and this has been a key feature in raising attainment, particularly that of more able pupils, and stimulating pupils' enquiry skills and thinking.
60. Most pupils in the school respond very well to the way science is taught and enjoy the practical nature of the tasks. When asked, they say they like 'doing science' and see it as a very practical activity. Staff have focused well on developing the pupils' skills of scientific enquiry so that by the time pupils leave school they can suggest a suitable way of finding things out when trying to answer a scientific question. Pupils suggest what might happen, for example, when asked "Does the person with the biggest hands have the biggest head?" Pupils base their answers on previously gained scientific knowledge and understanding. A particular strength of the teaching is the way in which teachers pose questions that encourage the pupils to think scientifically and to explain their ideas. This was observed in a very good Year 1 lesson on light. Looking at a good range of materials and objects, pupils were asked which gave light. When a pupil picked out a mirror, the teacher carefully asked if it gave off its own light. This developed the pupil's thinking and he soon began to speak about the light reflecting off the mirror.
61. In some lessons, such as that mentioned above, the interactive whiteboards were used well to impart knowledge and maintain the pupils' interests. Although some teachers very effectively encourage activities where pupils develop their own ICT skills, these are not planned systematically at a whole-school level so it is difficult to see how pupils progress over time. This has been identified as an area for development by the school.
62. The subject is very well led and managed. The co-ordinator is very knowledgeable and has an enthusiastic approach. She has ensured that the curriculum fully meets national expectations and the pupils' needs. Through effective monitoring, she has a clear view of how to maintain high standards and extend provision further. This reflects the school's drive for continual improvement. Using the results of very good assessment, the weaker areas of

pupils' work are identified and appropriate training given so that staff raise the level of their teaching. The profile of the subject has been raised through the provision of additional activities and visits, and these have widened pupils' experiences. Pupils are very well prepared for their work in the junior school. Improvements since the last inspection can be seen in the quality of teaching and assessment, pupils' attitudes and the progress pupils make, particularly that of the higher-attainers.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

Provision in ICT is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above national expectations.
- The quality of teaching is good and this helps pupils to achieve well.
- Pupils' are very good independent learners.
- Computer software and schemes of work are being tried out and evaluated with the aim of improving overall provision.
- Computers in classrooms are underused.

Commentary

63. Standards attained by seven-year-olds in ICT are above national expectations. Overall, the achievement of pupils is good, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language. No differences were observed between the achievement of boys and girls. Improvement from the time of the last inspection has been good.
64. Pupils' abilities in reading means that they are well equipped to read instructions on computer screens and use word-processing programs with a greater degree of independence than usual for six and seven year-olds. They navigate around CD-ROMs to find out about information in science, history and geography and also do research on the Internet on sites selected by their teachers. They input data to produce graphs and program the movements of a screen 'turtle'. They produce pictures using paint programs and combine these with text.
65. The characteristically thorough approach to teachers' planning means that all lessons are tightly focused. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and productivity so that pupils work hard and none of the valuable time in the computer suite is wasted. Teachers make good use of their assistants to support pupils with special educational needs. Assessment is good and teachers keep careful records of pupils' achievement so that they are able to plan the next steps in their pupils' learning. The design of the computer suite means that half the class has to work away from the computers on related activities. Whilst the quality of these activities is generally good, this arrangement does put extra pressure upon teachers to ensure that lessons are effective for all pupils whether or not they are using the computers.
66. The very good leadership of the subject by the co-ordinator has ensured that there is very thorough coverage of the whole range of ICT skills applicable to this age-group. The co-ordinator is recognised beyond the school for her expertise and has used this to continually develop the ICT curriculum. She is regularly evaluating the effectiveness of the software and programs being used. She has recently introduced a new scheme of work to make sure that all teachers and their assistants are able to offer all pupils progressive challenges according to their ability. She is already making decisions to improve the use of this resource. The co-ordinator has worked extremely hard to improve the facilities for learning, including the new computer suite and the current introduction of interactive whiteboards in every classroom.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

67. This is good and developing well. Pupils enjoy using computers to find out information for their topics. However, the 'stand alone' computers in the classroom are underused as a learning resource, especially in mathematics. Following monitoring by the co-ordinator, this has already been identified as an area for development.

HUMANITIES

68. Inspectors observed four lessons in religious education, one in geography and one in history. Inspectors also looked at pupils' work and teachers' planning and spoke with staff and pupils. It was not possible to make overall judgements on provision in history or geography.
69. The previous inspection judged pupils' progress in **geography** to be good, and evidence from this inspection would indicate that this has been maintained. Samples of work completed by pupils in Year 1 show good development of mapping skills as pupils create their journey from home to school, indicating the geographical features *en route* and drawing their own maps using a key. These skills are further developed as Year 2 pupils use maps to find out about the features of Aylesbury. A major strength of the geography curriculum is the way pupils are encouraged to study countries from around the world and make comparisons with their own experiences. This helps them to develop a good understanding of a range of different cultures and encourages them to respect values and ways of life different from the familiar. Interesting work shows how in Year 1, pupils discover differences between England, Peru, Brazil and France and in Year 2 they learn about Zambia and India. The Culture Week is a particularly successful event when each class studies a country in depth and produces a range of very interesting work. The corridor and classroom displays are of a very good quality; for example, the patchwork backdrop that represents a wide range of countries.
70. Evidence from an examination of school planning and pupils' work confirms that the requirements of the National Curriculum for **history** are taught throughout the school. Resources are good and the school's wide range of artefacts is used well to enhance learning. For example, in the only lesson observed, where teaching was judged to be very good, the teacher used a range of items such as an old pressing iron, a wash-board and a metal carpet-beater to bring the subject to life by comparing these Victorian items to what we use for similar purposes now. This engaged pupils' imaginations and, as a result, the teacher was able to use the lesson very effectively to further develop pupils' investigative skills.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **good**, overall, and this shows significant improvement since the last inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are good, overall, and this is helping pupils to achieve well.
- There is a better use of resources and this is helping to maintain the pupils' interest.
- Religious education contributes greatly to pupils' spiritual development.
- ICT is not used systematically to support the teaching and learning in religious education.
- Sometimes the amount of time allocated to the lessons is insufficient.

Commentary

71. Standards of work are above those expected in the locally Agreed Syllabus, particularly in the way children learn from religion. They make good progress throughout Years 1 and 2 and achieve well. This is because of their very good attitudes to learning, their interest in the subject and the good quality of teaching. All children are encouraged to participate and do so

with much interest. This means that all pupils make similar progress, including those with English as an additional language, the more able pupils and those with special educational needs.

72. Provision has improved because the good leadership and management has ensured that the issues from the last inspection were addressed and the school has kept up-to-date with curriculum changes. Planning and assessment are now good. The planning is monitored regularly to ensure that the full curriculum is taught at an appropriate level and that the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is developed systematically. Staff assess pupils' work regularly and use the information gained from this to set tasks that challenge children and match their abilities. Since the last inspection, the marking policy has been developed and is used consistently across the school. This has addressed the issue raised.
73. Teaching is mostly good, with some very good teaching seen in a Year 1 lesson. Here, the teacher was particularly successful in creating a lesson where pupils became very interested and wanted to know more. She offered a good range of resources, which showed how different religions had special artefacts of importance. This led to one pupil asking "What country does God come from?" when he saw a model of a Hindu God, a prayer mat and a crucifix. During the following discussion which focused on there being a range of different religions and beliefs he wanted to know more, "Isn't there only one God?" This shows how pupils' thinking is constantly being developed and, because they are in a comfortable learning environment, feel able to ask and answer questions. The teacher was also very successful in using the experience of a Muslim boy to explain some of the practices and beliefs at a level where all understood.
74. In several lessons seen, insufficient time was allocated for the pupils to finish their work and consolidate their learning. Each lesson was only 30 minutes long and because the pupils were so interested in the topics and contributed well, this was insufficient. The school has a better range of resources than at the time of the last inspection and uses experts and visits to enrich the pupils' learning. Although the use of ICT is developing, for example, when telling a Biblical story through an interactive whiteboard, the use of ICT to enhance children's learning in this subject is not systematically planned over time.
75. Cultural events and visits fully support the religious education curriculum and spiritual values guide the school's very good ethos. For example, pupils now visit places of worship and celebrate festivals such as Eid, Diwali and Christmas. Parents contribute to pupils' learning through presenting Hindu and Jewish weddings and links are successfully made with art and music, for example, when pupils create Mendhi patterns. Assemblies also contribute to pupils' understanding of religion through the telling of stories and the imparting of values. A visitor was very successful in speaking about the value of water when demonstrating a baptism and this led to some very interesting questions.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

76. Two lessons were seen in art and design, and one each in music and physical education. No lessons were observed in design and technology. Inspectors also spoke to staff, analysed the school's curriculum provision and evaluated pupils' work from the previous year and displays around the school. It was only possible to make an overall judgement on art and design.

Art and design

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Whole-school commitment to providing opportunities for creative work leads to some very interesting projects.

- Very good leadership and management of the subject has brought about significant improvements since the last inspection.
- Pupils experiences are enriched by visits, visitors and special projects.

Commentary

77. Standards of work are above those usually seen for pupils of this age and show good improvement from the time of the last inspection. Overall, the achievement of pupils is good – including that of pupils who have special educational needs and those who are particularly talented in creative work.
78. The quality of teaching is good, as teachers place a lot of emphasis upon teaching specific skills as well as providing opportunities for individual creativity. Teachers pay attention to detail and have high expectations of their pupils.
79. All teachers contribute ideas for promoting achievement and are confident in trying out new ideas. As a result the whole school is alive with pupils’ paintings, drawings, models and textile work. The subject co-ordinator successfully leads an enthusiastic team of staff who take part enthusiastically in ‘hands on’ professional development so that teachers and their assistants investigate new techniques which they can pass on to the pupils. Pupils use sketch-books to try out and develop their ideas more effectively than most six and seven year-olds. They use and mix watercolours confidently and make textile pictures based on Indian designs. They are familiar with the work of artists such as Van Gogh and Seurat
80. An outstanding feature of the school, however, is the range of new initiatives and projects to enhance pupils’ learning. Just a few examples of this approach include an artist in residence, who is currently having a major impact upon pupils’ work with watercolours; all pupils contributing to the illustrations in a school story book which is being professionally published; a visit to the National Gallery by pupils in Years 1 and 2; and an exhibition of pupils’ work on masks and puppets in the local museum.
81. The headteacher and subject co-ordinator are totally committed to promoting creativity. The co-ordinator evaluates the work done in the subject very thoroughly and takes action to improve the school provision. The work produced by the pupils is monitored closely; teaching skills are developed by the co-ordinator working with other teachers, teaching assistants are given ‘in-house’ training and the co-ordinator encourages teachers’ participation in professional development courses. As a result, pupils’ creativity has become an essential part of their personal development and an important factor in the drive to promote high standards.
82. It is evident that all aspects of the **design and technology** curriculum are planned and covered and that the same commitment to creativity found in other subjects is a major influence in the teaching of the subject.
83. From the evidence available, it is clear that the school is highly committed to promoting achievement and enjoyment in **music**. Pupils’ enthusiastic and joyful singing in assemblies is above the standard expected for Years 1 and 2 and the ‘jazz choir’ is an absolute delight, with twenty or more boys and girls performing both upbeat songs as well as more subdued ones with equal skill and enthusiasm. The co-ordinator has made sure that the subject is well resourced; a specialist musician has modelled music lessons and the quality of teaching is monitored regularly. All elements of the subject are taught, including the appreciation of music. All pupils are involved in musical performances in and out of school and visiting musicians to the school enrich their experiences. Pupils who are learning musical instruments outside of school are encouraged to demonstrate their skills. The evidence gathered during the inspection indicates that provision is at least very good.
84. The work in **physical education** is well led and managed and a scrutiny of planning indicates that all strands of physical education are taught during the school year. Resources are good

and are used well, especially in the wide range of sporting activities provided for pupils outside the school day. This enhances overall achievement.

85. In a short lesson observed during the inspection the quality of teaching was good but not all tasks were matched to pupils' individual capabilities. As a result, the level of challenge and difficulty was quite high for a small minority of pupils of lower ability. Even so, nearly all pupils made good progress in developing skills related to catching, throwing and kicking balls and their achievement was good overall. Pupils displayed evidence of increasing confidence and co-ordination.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

86. Provision in personal, social and health education is **good**.
87. The school has developed a good programme to promote personal, social, health and citizenship education and this helps pupils to develop a safe and healthy life style, gain belief in themselves and also in their ability to interact well with others. As a result, pupils display a growing confidence and an ability to learn independently. The development of responsibility for living in a society is promoted well through a variety of appropriate activities. Pupils are encouraged to make their views about school known through activities such as 'Circle Time' and also through termly questionnaires. However, the lack of a school council or class councils means that pupils have no effective means of formally putting forward their shared views. For example, when interviewed by an inspector, several Year 2 pupils mentioned weaknesses in the present arrangements for meeting their parents after school. The lack of a school council had limited their opportunities to put their collective views on this important aspect to teachers. The school meets all its statutory duties to provide the appropriate sex and drugs awareness education to pupils.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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