

INSPECTION REPORT

THREE BRIDGES INFANT SCHOOL

Three Bridges

LEA area: West Sussex

Unique reference number: 125901

Headteacher: Mr Matthew Westgarth

Lead inspector: Mrs E W D Gill

Dates of inspection: 15 – 17 November 2004

Inspection number: 269627

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and Nursery
School category: Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils: 3 – 7 years
Gender of pupils: Mixed
Number on roll: 216

School address: Gales Place
Three Bridges
Crawley
West Sussex
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Telephone number: 01293 524076
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Appropriate authority: The governing body
Name of chair of governors: Dr C Wylie

Date of previous inspection: November, 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Three Bridges Infant and Nursery School is an average sized school that caters for 216 girls and boys aged three to seven years old. Approximately one-third of the pupils are from Asian, African and European backgrounds and a high percentage of those pupils are at a very early stage of learning English. The social circumstances of the families whose children attend the school are less favourable than the national picture although the proportion of pupils who can claim eligibility for free school meals is below the national average. The pupils' attainment on entry to the school is usually below average but can vary year to year. The attainment on entry of the children in the present reception year was well below average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is well above the national average and the proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs is high. The school manages a special support centre (SSC) for pupils with significant speaking and listening difficulties. There has been a considerable turnover of teachers within the past two years due mainly to the reorganisation of the age of transfer from Year 3 to Year 2. The number of pupils leaving and joining the school other than at the usual times is low. Since the last inspection the number of pupils with special educational needs, those from ethnic minority backgrounds and those who speak English as an additional language has increased significantly.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
17766	Eira Gill	Lead inspector	Foundation stage, mathematics, art and design, music and English as an additional language
8919	John Kerr	Lay inspector	
21124	Ann Coughlan	Team inspector	Science, information and communication technology, physical education and religious education
2756	Michael Barron	Team inspector	English, design and technology, geography, history and special educational needs
27243	Ian Tatchell	Team inspector	Unit for special educational needs

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Three Bridges Infant School is a **sound** and improving school with several good features, and gives satisfactory value for money. Despite the change of age of transfer from Year 3 to Year 2 and the consequent movement of teachers, standards have improved and pupils are now very well cared for. The achievement of all pupils is good overall, teaching is satisfactory but improving, and leadership and management are good. Staff and governors work together effectively.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Good provision and excellent accommodation for the nursery and reception children ensure a good start to their education.
- Provision for pupils at an early stage of learning English is good.
- Provision for information and communication technology (ICT) is unsatisfactory.
- The excellent relationships in the special support centre (SSC) contribute to pupils' good achievement.
- Teachers' skills of questioning in mathematics need to improve further and a sharper focus needs to be given to the teaching of speaking, listening and writing.
- Timetabling needs a review to ensure pupils' skills and knowledge build up progressively in all subjects.
- Relationships within the school community are very good and result in pupils' very good behaviour and good attitudes.

Satisfactory improvement has been made since the last inspection in November 1998. At that time several aspects of the school were judged to be very good. Since then, significant weaknesses have emerged, particularly in standards. However, in September 2003 the new headteacher initiated several successful strategies to improve the school. As a result, standards as well as teaching and learning have improved, and there is now an enriched curriculum. Improved attendance has resulted in pupils' higher achievement and there have been very significant improvements to accommodation and resources. Nevertheless, the weaknesses in ICT, identified at the time of the last inspection, have not been addressed successfully.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

*Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average
Similar schools are those with similar percentages of pupils eligible for free school meals*

Achievement is good for all pupils across the school. Although performance in national tests in 2004 was below that of pupils in all schools, the school missed an average grade in reading and mathematics by a very small margin. Results in writing improved very significantly from the previous year. Higher attaining pupils performed well because of improved tracking of progress initiated by the leadership team. Improved relationships, punctuality, good personal skills and very good behaviour all contribute to the pupils' good achievement. The improvement in results is now above the national trend. The well below average grades against similar schools are misleading, because few pupils who are eligible actually take free school meals. Inspectors found that pupils in the current Year 2 from all groups and backgrounds achieve well overall, but in ICT achievement is unsatisfactory. Current standards are average in reading, mathematics, science, art and design, singing and gymnastics. Progress in the nursery and reception classes is now more consistent and children achieve well in all areas of learning from a well below average point of entry into the school, although most of the children will not reach the expected goals by the end of the reception year in all areas of learning.

Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, social, moral and cultural development, are **good** overall. Pupils' attitudes to work are good and their behaviour is very good. Attendance is good and punctuality is very good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The school provides a **satisfactory** quality of education overall with several strengths. **Teaching and learning** are **satisfactory** overall and there is good evidence of improvement. Teaching is good in the nursery, reception classes and SSC, with very effective teamwork between teachers and assistants. Teaching and learning are satisfactory in Years 1 and 2 with good teaching evident in reading and science. In mathematics, although some good and very good teaching was observed, teaching and learning are satisfactory overall because the teachers' skills of questioning need to improve in order to deepen the pupils' understanding. Assessment is satisfactory throughout the school but good in the SSC.

The curriculum is satisfactory overall. Although the curriculum is enriched well by visits, visitors and the good provision of clubs after school, it lacks balance. There is a strong focus on literacy and numeracy, but too little teaching time is given to ICT and, to a lesser degree, subjects such as design and technology, geography, history and religious education. During the inspection, pupils were withdrawn from lessons at crucial moments for extra tuition in aspects of English. This disrupted their learning in other subjects. Provision for pupils who are at an early stage of learning English is good. The very good standard of care helps pupils of all groups and backgrounds to feel secure and, together with the good partnership with parents and very constructive links with other schools and colleges, makes an effective contribution to pupils' learning. Relationships between the school and the junior school to which most pupils transfer have strengthened considerably as a result of the change to the age of transfer.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good overall. The leadership of the headteacher is very good and management is satisfactory. The headteacher is well supported by the

assistant headteachers, who are good role models. Most subject leaders have not been in post long enough to affect standards. Governors are effective as they work closely with the school and ensure that all legal requirements are met.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents' views of the school are favourable. Pupils are happy with most aspects of the school and their teachers.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning in speaking, listening, writing, mathematics and ICT in order to raise standards.
- Review the timetabling to ensure that pupils' knowledge and skills are built up progressively in all subjects.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Achievement is a measure of how well pupils are doing, taking their progress and their capability into account.

The achievement of pupils of all abilities and from different backgrounds is good overall by the time they leave school. The current Year 2 pupils, from a below average attainment on entry, are attaining average standards in reading, mathematics and science and below average standards in speaking and listening and writing.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement is good in reading and science because of consistently good teaching.
- Achievement in ICT is unsatisfactory.
- The initiative of grouping pupils according to their ability in mathematics has resulted in pupils making better progress over time.

Commentary

1. The current standards of all groups of children and those with different backgrounds in the reception year are well below average overall and they are unlikely to meet the expected goals in personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical development and creative development by the end of the reception year. However, achievement is good because teaching and learning are effective and the children are making good progress. The few higher attaining children will meet the expected goals and a very few will exceed them.
2. In the current Year 2, standards are average in reading, mathematics, science, art and design, singing and gymnastics. Higher attaining pupils attain appropriately as a result of the recent initiatives by the leadership team of tracking pupils effectively. Due to initiatives by the new headteacher, teachers now have higher expectations and the grouping of pupils in mathematics by ability has improved progress in lessons. Achievement is good when the pupils' below average attainment on entry into Year 1 is considered. In speaking, listening and writing, attainment is below average and achievement is satisfactory. The pupils' personal qualities, their punctuality and their very good behaviour contribute significantly to their overall good achievement. The achievement of pupils with special educational needs and those in the early stages of learning English matches that of other pupils. However, in ICT, achievement is unsatisfactory.
3. The factors that contribute to lower attainment in speaking and listening, writing and ICT are:
 - Very few strategies, such as role-play and drama, are used to improve the pupils' speaking and listening skills.

- Teachers' knowledge and understanding of how to improve writing needs to broaden and encompass wider strategies.
- There is insufficient direct teaching of ICT and it is seldom included in lessons in the classroom.

4. The figures in the table below show that improvement has been made in all three subjects from the previous year. Reading and writing improved very significantly due to improvements referred to in the paragraphs above. The school missed national averages by a very small margin in reading and mathematics despite the pupils' below average attainment on entry.

The tables shown in this commentary give average points scores for pupils. Each level in the National Curriculum is given a number of points. Pupils are expected to move on one point every term, so if a school's scores are one point above the national, their pupils are, typically, a term ahead.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	15.6 (13.8)	15.8 (15.7)
writing	13.9 (11.6)	14.6 (14.6)
mathematics	15.8 (15.0)	16.2 (16.3)

There were 71 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

5. The achievement of the pupils in the special support centre (SSC) is good overall and many of their difficulties are overcome through the specialist teaching and the good support provided. As a result, around 50 per cent of the pupils return to mainstream schools. The pupils enjoy listening to stories and take part in reading sessions. They enjoy the challenge of asking questions and are keen to try and complete work alongside their friends. The speech and language therapist works closely with specialist staff and contributes well to the pupils' progress. Pupils are grouped according to ability and, with the guidance of the teachers and support staff, generally make good progress. The grouping arrangements work particularly well during literacy and numeracy hours and are a very efficient use of the support staff.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils have good attitudes to their work and they behave very well. Attendance has improved and is now good, and punctuality is very good. Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good attitudes to learning and very good behaviour result in pupils' good achievement.
- Very good relationships between pupils, and between pupils and staff, contribute to the school's good ethos.
- Many pupils on entry to the school lack confidence and the school gives them plenty of opportunities to develop and take on more responsibilities.
- Pupils of all groups and backgrounds and from the SSC play happily together.

Commentary

6. From their early days in the nursery children come to school eager to learn. Not all have good listening skills but with guidance from their teachers and other adults they settle in quickly and enjoy getting involved with all the interesting activities available. They learn equally through work and play; they share resources and most are happy to try new skills. They enjoy taking on early responsibilities and enjoy the praise they are given for being helpful. Their behaviour is very good.
7. Attendance is good, having improved since the end of the last school year. It is now slightly better than the national average for similar schools. This is a direct result of the initiative of the new headteacher and with the improved co-operation of parents. At the meeting held before the inspection, parents said that they are told frequently in newsletters that their children's education will suffer if they take holidays in school time. There has been a marked reduction in additional holidays taken in term time.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%) 2003/2004

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	5.1	School data	0.0
National data	5.1	National data	0.4

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

8. In Years 1 and 2, pupils show good attitudes to learning in almost all lessons. They are attentive, listen to instructions and move to their next task with enthusiasm. When teachers maintain a high level of interest and challenge, pupils of all levels of ability have the opportunity to achieve well. When pupils are expected to spend excessive periods on the carpet, attention wanders and pupils lose the thread of learning. However, they seldom misbehave in these circumstances. The pupils are very polite and courteous to each other and adults.
9. Pupils with special educational needs have developed good attitudes and behave very well, especially in lessons. They show a willingness to learn and have access to the full range of activities the school provides, especially those provided after school. Those pupils with speech and language difficulties in the SSC generally display a positive attitude to learning. When working individually or in a small group with the support of a teacher or learning assistant they show an improved level of confidence. They persevere with challenging tasks and enjoy the sessions. Pupils from different backgrounds and in the early stages of learning English are developing the same good attitudes and very good behaviour as all pupils.
10. The pupils' behaviour is very good in the classroom, in assemblies, in the dining room and the playgrounds, where pupils play harmoniously together. Class rules are frequently discussed and agreed and pupils feel part of the organisation of the school as it works together as a community. Pupils act as helpers in the playgrounds, and regularly hold doors open for visitors and their friends. They share books and resources well and clear up work areas. This, together with the excellent example made by all staff, contributes to the friendly and caring ethos of the school. Standards of behaviour have improved with new leadership expectations and, during the first few months of the last school year, two pupils were excluded for unacceptable behaviour.

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	168	1	0
White – any other White background	6	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	2	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	8	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	7	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	2	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	16	0	0
Black or Black British – African	3	1	0
Any other ethnic group	4	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	7	0	0

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

11. Pupils are encouraged to express their feelings although, with a limited vocabulary overall, they often struggle to find the right words. Good use of whiteboards and scientific resources encourages pupils to react, very often in a spiritual way, to the world around them. Well-planned assemblies keep pupils' attention as they are encouraged to share their feelings, for example, by the use of puppets in a new and exciting way. Pupils work and play harmoniously, and work well in groups. Pupils are encouraged in circle time to consider the different experiences of the group. They learn to respect the feelings of others and learn how to become members of the school community. Pupils from all backgrounds and the SSC are very well integrated into the life of the school. The pupils visit a variety of places and people in the local community and are beginning to appreciate their own culture.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is satisfactory overall with several strengths. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. The school provides a satisfactory curriculum and enrichment is good. Provision for pupils' care and welfare is very good; guidance and support satisfactory. There are good links with parents and the community and the educational links with other schools and colleges are very good.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. It is good in the nursery and reception classes (Foundation Stage), for pupils who speak English as an additional language and for pupils in the SSC, and satisfactory overall in Years 1 and 2. Assessment is satisfactory overall and good in the SSC.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- In the nursery and reception classes, teaching is almost always good.
- All teachers have good skills in managing and controlling the pupils.
- Teachers' knowledge and understanding of how to improve the pupils' speaking, listening and writing skills needs a tighter focus.
- Teachers' skills of questioning need to sharpen up to ensure that the pupils' understanding of mathematics deepens.
- There is insufficient direct teaching of ICT.
- The relationships between all staff and pupils are very good throughout the school.

Commentary

12. Since his appointment just over a year ago, the headteacher has worked hard to improve the quality of teaching and learning. Parents indicated their satisfaction with the quality of teaching and were very positive about the teachers' high expectations. In reception, teaching is good overall with several strengths. In Years 1 and 2, the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory over time. However, during the inspection, a higher number of lessons were judged to be good and this is an indication of the improvement that has taken place. One unsatisfactory lesson was observed in these year groups and this was because of a lack of understanding of what the pupils needed to learn next in mathematics. The pupils agree strongly that they have to work hard.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 34 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	2 (6%)	19 (56%)	12 (35%)	1 (3%)	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.

13. In the nursery and reception classes, the ratio of children to adults is very favourable and the teachers' use of time is good. Good planning results in short teaching slots led by the teachers, and followed by effective work in small groups, each led by an assistant or nursery nurse. Within the context of good teaching for the pupils who speak English as an additional language, very good teaching was observed when children in the very early stages of speaking English were encouraged by the Ethnic Minority Achievement Strategy (EMAS) teacher to 'role-play' a story using excellent resources. The use of homework is good in the reception classes and parents are given every opportunity to find out how their children are learning. The teamwork between the teachers and other adults in the Foundation Stage is very effective and is one of the key factors in the children's achievement. The tracking of the children's progress is satisfactory overall as a new system has only just been initiated. However, the day-to-day assessment of children is good.
14. All the teachers in Years 1 and 2 are skilful at managing and controlling the behaviour of the pupils in lessons. This ensures a calm atmosphere with very few interruptions and no time is wasted. Pupils who have special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language are given good support by special educational needs assistants, the EMAS teacher and the bi-lingual assistant. However, in Years 1 and 2, pupils are often withdrawn from lessons for additional short teaching sessions in reading and writing by other assistants and the special educational needs teacher.

During the inspection this happened both at the beginning of lessons and in the middle of lessons - for example, in science just as the pupils were about to begin the exciting practical part - and disrupted the pupils' learning. The quality of teaching and learning observed during the inspection in the ICT suite was satisfactory or, sometimes, good. However, over time, teaching is unsatisfactory because it is clear from planning documents for the last two years that pupils have not been given enough opportunities to use classroom computers. The use of the interactive whiteboard in one lesson in mathematics was excellent and proved to be very effective in moving the pupils' learning forward.

15. Teachers in Years 1 and 2 have good attitudes towards improving their practice and this was exemplified when, after an unsatisfactory lesson in mathematics, planning was changed for the following day and teaching and learning improved because the pupils were given tasks to help them understand what they needed to learn next. The teachers have just begun to use the initiative of 'talking partners' in lessons to encourage the pupils to think more about the questions they are asked. This is a very appropriate initiative but needs to be embedded into the lesson structure before it will have an effect on improving pupils' speaking and listening skills. The use of role-play and drama to improve speaking and listening and simple, but focused, strategies to improve writing were not evident. An exception to this was observed when two special educational needs assistants taught a few pupils for 30 minutes in a very focused and effective manner. The pupils learned to listen better and their learning moved forward well. During several lessons observed during the inspection, the teaching assistants played an important part in moving the pupils' learning forward. The teaching of science is good in the school. This is because teachers have good knowledge and understanding of the subject and know how to interest the pupils by ensuring that they have every opportunity to explore and experiment during lessons.
16. The quality of teaching and learning in the SSC is good overall with some very good features such as the excellent relationships between pupils and staff. However, lesson plans do not always have effective links to the independent educational plans (IEPs). The group of younger children spend a significant amount of time integrated in the nursery and reception classes working alongside their peers and this is enhancing their personal and social development. A key strength of the teaching is the commitment by all staff to ensure that all the pupils are confident, enthusiastic learners who are helped to reach their full potential. Assessment is good in the SSC with effective systems that ensure the staff are knowledgeable about the pupils' progress.
17. Assessment is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2. There were no pupil tracking procedures in place when the new head was appointed, apart from pilot tracking procedures in mathematics. The new manager for assessment has made a good start in developing systems to track the progress of the pupils in English and mathematics. Together with the headteacher, he has introduced simple but effective tracking systems to make predictions and to ensure that the pupils have annual targets. He is helping staff to make use of assessment data to inform their practice. During lessons, it was evident that a few teachers have good skills in assessing the pupils during question and answer sessions. However, the school recognises that this is an area of expertise that generally needs improving.

The curriculum

The curriculum provided by the school is satisfactory. Opportunities for enrichment are good. Accommodation and resources are good overall and excellent in the Foundation Stage.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are good opportunities for learning outside the school day.
- The development of pupils' personal, social and health education is good.
- There is a strong focus on literacy and numeracy but the curriculum lacks balance.
- Some lessons are too long and give few opportunities for pupils to be active and creative.

Commentary

18. In the nursery and reception classes, the curriculum is broad and balanced and the children are offered a wide range of well-planned activities to support their learning. The manager of the Foundation Stage has led this aspect well and, in a relatively short space of time, has organised a stimulating learning environment. There is a generous staffing allocation and the excellent accommodation contributes to the good achievement of the children. Resources are good.
19. The new curriculum has been thoughtfully planned and restructured by the new leadership. It has breadth but lacks suitable balance in some subjects apart from English, mathematics and science. A heavy emphasis has been placed on the teaching of all the aspects of English and this is having a positive effect on the pupils' good achievement in reading, particularly in their phonic skills. A new structure for the curriculum has recently been put into place in Years 1 and 2 in order to ensure a cross-curricular approach to learning and to raise standards. However, the leadership is aware that there is a need to rethink the effects of the new curriculum on other subjects, such as religious education. For example, from discussions with pupils it is clear that the religious aspects of the story of Rama and Sita, used as a text for literacy lessons in all lessons in English in Year 1 and 2, were not emphasised. In daily planning, during the inspection week, there were few opportunities for the pupils to be involved in creative activities. The timetabling of lessons and activities is not well balanced over the week and this reduces pupils' overall capacity for learning in other subjects other than English, mathematics and science. There was little opportunity for practical work during the inspection and it is not surprising that several pupils, in discussion, said that science, with its practical aspects, was their favourite subject.
20. Included in curriculum planning are good opportunities for enrichment, for example, this term an author/illustrator visited the school and the pupils were given quality time, focused teaching and encouragement to concentrate on reproducing his illustrations. In addition, in the autumn term of the last academic year, all the pupils were given problems to solve, such as how to decide on the design for a new playground. They visited other playgrounds in the area; they made sketches and had a go at recreating three-dimensional structures. The pupils' work following these enrichment opportunities showed that they had made good progress in their learning.

21. Pupils benefit from the wide range of well-planned extra-curricular activities and visits and visitors to the school that enrich and promote learning. The opportunities for pupils to take part in sporting activities, music and the creative arts are good. However, there is little evidence of visitors from other religions or cultural communities. Overall, the school provides good equality of access and opportunity for all groups of pupils and prepares them well for the later stages of their education.
22. An effective programme of work has been put into place in order to develop pupils' personal, social and health curriculum, which is taught as a discrete subject throughout the school. In addition, the school council and group time known as 'circle time' effectively support this aspect of the curriculum.
23. Although the school has had a considerable turnover of teachers, the match of teachers to the needs of the school is satisfactory overall. There is a generous number of support staff to help the pupils' learning although their use is not always efficient or effective. The school benefits from spacious classrooms and other rooms designated for special needs teaching, the library and the ICT suite. However, the library and ICT suite need further development. Resources are improving and are satisfactory overall except that some computers need replacing with more up-to-date hardware.
24. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2 and good in the nursery and reception classes. The school has developed efficient systems to monitor the progress of pupils with learning and emotional and behavioural difficulties from the nursery class onwards. However, several of the IEPs contain targets that do not fully cover those small steps in learning that make it clear what the pupils need to learn next. Provision for pupils who are in the early stages of learning English is good. The EMAS teacher is very experienced and ensures that the children are fully involved in the nursery and reception activities. The teacher is alert and quick to spot pupils who may be having problems in understanding in Years 1 and 2 lessons, particularly in English, mathematics and science. The bi-lingual assistant is able to support children well when she translates into their mother tongue.
25. Provision for pupils in the SSC is satisfactory with an appropriate range of activities matched to their needs. The needs of the pupils' statements and those in the annual review recommendations become part of the pupils' IEPs. They are discussed and agreed with parents and pupils to comply with the recommendations of the Code of Practice. Pupils' IEPs match their specific needs and the targets set are generally sufficiently challenging and easy to measure. The integration of a few pupils into mainstream classes is effective because teachers and support staff ensure that they receive the support needed. Each year, the children in the SSC visit a holiday camp in Bognor Regis for a week when they are given every opportunity to enjoy environmental activities. Pupils from the junior school accompany them and act as 'buddies'. This opportunity enhances their personal development skills considerably.

Care, guidance and support

The school makes very good provision to ensure that pupils work in a safe and secure environment. It provides pupils with adequate support and guidance. Pupils are successfully involved in the work of the school and its development.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are good procedures for introducing children to school life.
- The pupils feel very secure and work in an exceedingly safe and clean environment.
- The school council is working well following the change in the age of transfer.

Commentary

26. The school is very successful in providing a happy environment in which the pupils can thrive at work and play. Very close attention is paid to health and safety issues using the expertise of trained staff. Arrangements for looking after pupils who are injured or unwell are very efficient; careful records are kept and parents informed. Procedures for child protection are very well defined; staff have recently been trained and know their responsibilities. Staff and governors carry out routine effective checks of premises and equipment and defects are dealt with swiftly and efficiently.
27. The leadership of the school realises that procedures for the assessment of pupils' learning are only adequate except in the SSC, and this aspect is a major part of school improvement. This applies also to the pupils who are in the early stage of learning English. However, their records are kept consistently up to date with comments about how they are settling in and their progress in learning English. At present, pupils have only a rudimentary knowledge of their standards of achievement and what they need to learn next to improve. Teachers and staff know their pupils and their families well and are able to give sensitive advice and guidance as they meet day to day. All pupils stated confidently in their response to the questionnaires that they know who to go to if they have a concern.
28. Procedures for monitoring and supporting the academic progress and personal development of pupils with special educational needs are satisfactory. Information about individual pupils is used appropriately to produce individual education plans. However, the plans vary in quality as the targets are not specific enough to be effective as an assessment tool. Intervention programmes that are designed to support and aid pupils' progress in reading and writing skills need to be reviewed. Pupils are withdrawn from lessons in other subject areas and find catching up with what they have missed difficult when they return to the classroom.
29. Induction procedures are very clear and staff work very well together to ensure that the children settle happily at the start of their school life. The exciting new accommodation with its space and light for the nursery and reception children makes a valuable contribution to this process. Parents are encouraged to come and choose books with their children as they help to settle them at the start of the school day.
30. The school council was introduced in 2002 for Year 3 pupils. Membership has now been changed to Year 2 pupils because of the change in age of transfer. This year's council members understand their role in representing the opinions of their classmates and take their duties very seriously. They have already made some realistic plans of what they aim to achieve. The council works very closely with the headteacher, who has awarded the group a hundred pounds to spend on improving the school.
31. Teachers and support staff in the SSC successfully create a warm and caring learning environment. Pupils generally receive good support from teachers, assistants and from the pupils in the main school. The pupils are included well in all aspects of school life; they register with their mainstream class and join whole school assemblies, playtimes and lunchtimes. Monitoring and guidance of the pupils are good through the continuing appropriate assessment and this contributes to their good progress. Specialist support from a variety of external agencies is sought when needed and is

used effectively. Pupils also participate in the annual reviews of progress with their parents or carers.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has good links with parents and the community, and very good links with other schools and colleges.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There has been a continuing and positive improvement in the links with parents.
- The school takes full regard of parents' views.
- Good links with the community help to enrich the curriculum and to make pupils aware of their own culture.
- There are very good links with other schools and colleges.

Commentary

32. Parents from all backgrounds are well satisfied with the school and those who attended the meeting before the inspection were unanimous in their praise for the new headteacher. The many changes since his appointment, including the planning and building of the new accommodation for the nursery and reception children, have stimulated considerable interest. The new leadership team has recognised the need to consult parents and to take account of their views and suggestions. This has strengthened the bond between school and home and has encouraged more parents to become involved with the school. This is evident in the increasing number of parent volunteers in school, those who responded to the school's questionnaire and those who take part in learning courses organised by the school.
33. Parents are well informed. The prospectus has been completely revised and now includes all necessary data. It is written in a friendly way with small booklets included, for example, on how the school teaches reading and how parents can help. There are regular newsletters from the headteacher and staff, and parents are given the results of the annual school questionnaires in full. The school has acted positively upon suggested improvements by parents. Parents of nursery children receive very good advice on how to help their children settle in and how to help with their development. Good links with parents are made in the Foundation Stage through simple homework tasks. There is good information about the pupils' progress through consultation evenings for parents, open days and well-written annual reports.
34. At the meeting held before the inspection, parents of pupils with special educational needs voiced their complete satisfaction with the school's actions taken to improve their children's attainment in reading and writing. 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 satisfactory. Parents are given opportunities to be involved in both the drawing up of individual education plans and in the review processes. The parents of pupils in the SSC are involved and informed appropriately at all stages of the pupils' assessment. Parents have full access to the manager and to the headteacher.
35. The bi-lingual assistant translates for those parents who are at an early stage of learning English and, sometimes, letters home are translated into their mother tongue. In addition, there are good opportunities for parents to join sessions in school on two afternoons a week when the EMAS teacher organises activities that will help the parents from all backgrounds to understand how their children learn. However, there are no welcoming signs that recognise that about one-third of parents are from minority ethnic backgrounds.

36. The 'Friends of Three Bridges Association' is very active and the system of 'Classroom Friends' helps parents and teachers to make contact easily. Good links with the community include strong links with the local church, which pupils visit regularly as part of the taught curriculum. The quality of assemblies is enhanced by support workers from the Crawley Christian Ministry, the local policeman and the school nurse who visit the school from time to time. The strong and successful fight to save the school from amalgamation by parents and governors strengthened community links. These were further established as the school kept the community informed of the new school structure and the building programme. Members are invited to school events such as the carol service and fireworks display. These links strengthen pupils' understanding of their own culture.
37. Links with other schools and colleges are very good. As a result of the change of age of transfer, professional dialogue between the two schools has strengthened relationships considerably. The shared links between the family of local schools have resulted in effective initiatives such as joint funding for social inclusion employing a small team of shared counsellors. The school already benefits from this scheme when pupils with social and behavioural problems are given the opportunity to meet skilled counsellors who give the pupils effective support. The school provides year-round support for students from two local universities. Training for young people studying child care is offered in the nursery and reception classes. These contacts with visitors are very beneficial to pupils' social development. A local NHS Speech & Language Service rents two classrooms which are used for office space and training.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are good overall. The leadership of the headteacher is very good. The leadership of other key staff and management are satisfactory. Governance is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The sense of purpose and clarity of vision of the headteacher are excellent.
- Senior teachers are very supportive of the headteacher and there is good overall management of the Foundation Stage, Years 1 and 2 and for pupils who are in the early stages of learning English.
- Governors support the school well and target financial resources effectively.
- The management of some subjects is in an early stage of development.

Commentary

38. At the time of the last inspection the school was led and managed very well. Since then, significant weaknesses emerged in many important areas of the school's work that resulted in a serious decline in quality and standards. The current headteacher, who took up his appointment in September 2003, quickly analysed the situation and, while conscious of the importance of retaining the remaining strengths of the school, brought in strategies that focused strongly on raising standards. After some initial misgivings, parents are now extremely pleased with the improvements they see taking place and strongly support the headteacher.

39. Through his energy and determination the headteacher has enabled a rapid pace of change that has resulted in a much better learning environment for pupils and teachers, particularly in the Foundation Stage. Despite a change in age of transfer from Year 3 to Year 2 last year and significant staffing difficulties, he has already succeeded in making good improvements to attendance, behaviour, relationships with parents and in working with the governing body. As a result, standards are beginning to rise. The headteacher is well aware that there is still much to be done; the school is currently implementing a new curriculum plan and developing 'assessment for learning'.
40. The change in age of transfer and staff changes enabled the headteacher to reorganise staffing in order to provide a structure with clearer line management. The two assistant headteachers, who each manage a key stage, and several subject co-ordinators were new in post in September. A few co-ordinators were also new to the school, so it is not yet possible to make a full judgement on their impact. Nevertheless, they have clearly embraced their new roles with energy and commitment, have thought out clear action plans and are putting these into place. The co-ordinator for assessment and learning has made a very good start in developing systems for recording pupils' attainments in English and mathematics, and in helping staff to make use of assessment data to inform their practice. New management systems put in place by the headteacher and senior staff are not yet fully embedded but have brought greater clarity to roles and responsibilities. The school runs very smoothly and can now monitor its performance more easily.
41. The leadership and management of special educational needs are satisfactory. The co-ordinator, who was appointed in September, has a sound overview of provision across the school and has ensured that all statutory assessments are completed in accordance with the policy. The manager of the SSC has been absent since April and the headteacher and senior staff have provided satisfactory leadership during this period. Pupils who are giving cause for concern are assessed appropriately and suitable action taken. All assessments and reviews are carried out accurately and regularly. A new teacher has recently been appointed and successfully administers the day-to-day organisation of pupils and is supported appropriately by the headteacher, the speech therapist and support staff. Since the last inspection the school has improved the accommodation and resources for pupils.
42. The management of the provision for pupils who speak English as an additional language is good. The manager is very experienced, has worked at the school for several years and is now employed by the school rather than the local authority. Every effort is made to ensure that the pupils are given as much support as possible during the time the teacher and bi-lingual assistant are employed. In addition, the co-ordinator organises two sessions a week for parents who have little English to join the adult learning sessions. There is good attendance at these sessions and parents expressed their appreciation at the meeting before the inspection.
43. Governors, and in particular the Chair of the Governing Body, have provided very good support for the school through a time of great change including a threatened amalgamation. They were very clear about the qualities they needed in the school's new headteacher and work closely with him, carefully considering his suggestions for change. Working through all the recent changes and a self-evaluation exercise has given them a much clearer idea of their responsibilities in holding the school to account and they are willing to question and challenge the headteacher. They are well led and organised with a good balance of new and experienced governors. They are

very well informed about the work of the school through a range of informal and formal means including focused visits and, as a result, have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	759,705	Balance from previous year	34,087
Total expenditure	696,183	Balance carried forward to the next	97,608
Expenditure per pupil	2,210		

44. Budget setting and monitoring have been complicated in the last year by reorganisation and the many staff changes but financial management is good and financial control sound. The governors and headteacher have targeted considerable amounts of money towards the school's priorities for improvement and these are already having a positive effect. Efficiency is good overall but the school needs to review the use of the learning support teacher and some teaching assistants and make more efficient use of computers for learning. The leadership and management know what the school needs to do next and there is a good capacity for further improvement.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

45. Provision in the Foundation Stage (nursery and reception years) is good overall. The school has a large open-plan teaching unit and this is organised into three classes. This is a new building and was opened at the beginning of the term in which the inspection took place. The accommodation is excellent and includes a staff room, a waiting area for parents and substantial walk-in resource cupboards. There is one class for the 56 nursery children who attend either in the morning or the afternoon. The 60 reception children are allocated to two teachers and have their own classroom areas. The time the children spend in the nursery varies from two to five terms and they are admitted in groups of six each week. The older reception children born between September and February attend full-time and the younger children attend part-time only during the autumn term, rising to full-time from the spring term.
46. When the children transfer to the reception group their attainment is below average overall although this varies year to year. This year's intake is well below average with an above average number of pupils in the early stages of learning English who still need considerable support by the EMAS teacher and bilingual assistant. In addition, more than a third of the children have special educational needs and a high number have statements. Most of the children are unlikely to meet the expected goals in all areas of learning although the few higher attaining children will meet them. At the time of the last inspection, the children were deemed to enter the reception year with average skills, the accommodation was in an old wooden building and the curriculum was taught in a very different manner. It is not possible to make comparisons.
47. Provision is well led and managed by the experienced Foundation Stage co-ordinator who ensures that the excellent, spacious accommodation is well resourced and used very effectively. The curriculum, both indoors and outdoors, provides a wide range of well-organised activities that are well matched to the children's needs. Planning of the curriculum is good and assessment is satisfactory. The school has only recently introduced a new system of long-term tracking of the progress of the children initiated by the local authority. However, day-to-day assessment is good and, for example, staff have identified that a few children need sessions with the speech therapist attached to the specialised speech and language unit. The three classes in the nursery and reception are generously staffed with experienced and effective assistants as well as a nursery nurse who all work as a team very effectively. All adults manage the children well and give very good care and support. There are very good relationships between the children and adults.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children are given very good support by all staff.

- Children are given every opportunity to develop skills at their own pace.
- Links with parents are good.

Commentary

48. From the current well below average standards on entry, children are achieving well. Most of the children are unlikely to meet the goals they are expected to reach by the end of the reception year. In the nursery, the children settle relatively quickly when their parents and carers leave and they are beginning to understand the routines. About half of the children can make independent choices of activities and play well together although several find it difficult to relate to other children socially. The children in the reception group are encouraged to remember the task boards and most know which activities they can choose in the different areas of the unit. Since September, when the new unit opened, the children have had the choice of working either inside the building or in the outside environment. They have made steady progress in becoming independent in their choices although the teachers and assistants give them very good support if they feel unsure. A few children, particularly in the nursery, need the security of staying near their teacher. Teaching and learning are good in this area of learning.
49. The support given to children who have specific needs is good and, sometimes, very good. Where children find communication difficult because they speak only a little English or they have speech and language difficulties, effective support is available. The fully inclusive nature of the nursery is evident in all that takes place. Children who speak English as an additional language often work alongside the bi-lingual assistant or EMAS teacher who can interpret for them. Children who have special educational needs are helped effectively by all staff and, in particular, by the special educational needs assistant. The generous staffing and very smooth organisation of the Foundation Stage give all groups of children plenty of opportunities to explore, to develop good relationships with all staff and to become more independent.
50. The children are encouraged to develop their independence and personal and social skills by choosing not only what time to have their snack but to pour their own drink and choose their piece of fruit. They know they need to wash their hands and wash up their plate and cup. There is no set time for snacks and the children are encouraged to choose when they have their drink and fruit. This routine works exceptionally well and is one of the new systems that is encouraging children to behave very well both indoors and outdoors. They tidy up and put away the equipment at the end of sessions, and most do so efficiently. They are careful not to hurt each other even when speeding around on the bikes. They make room for their friends when they are sitting on the floor and are friendly and curious.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are good.
- Resources are very good.

Commentary

51. In both the nursery and reception classes the children enjoy listening to stories and readily share books with each other and with adults. By the end the reception year most children will not attain the expected goals in this area of learning. A few children in reception are still struggling to grasp the very early stages of speaking and listening, reading and writing. However, the good teaching ensures that the few children who are higher attainers will attain and possibly exceed the goals and they are already able to form letters and simple words. Achievement is good for all groups of children. The systems the school has put into place to allow the children to choose where they will work has ensured that the development of children's communication and language skills is addressed in all activities.
52. The children in the nursery are beginning to listen and talk to each other although they have a limited vocabulary and several lack the ability to speak in whole sentences. Most can find their own names and enjoy posting them in the letter box. Very few children in the reception classes knew that it was Monday. Many activities encourage the co-ordination needed to help children to learn to write and the use of small whiteboards is particularly effective at encouraging the children to 'have a go'. A good teaching and learning session was observed when the teacher's effective organisational skills ensured that all children in the reception group moved forward very well in their learning. In pairs, they identified words printed on small cards and tried to put four words in order, 'I like my Mum.' The support of the assistant in this lesson was particularly effective.
53. The reception teachers have recently started to give the children some simple homework once a week and have informed the parents by letter about the methods they are using to teach the children to write. This is proving to be very good practice and the response from parents has been generally supportive. There is a noticeboard on the door of each classroom, 'What have we been learning this week?' designed to draw the parents' attention. The parents are encouraged to help the children to practise what they have been learning in school.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good use of resources by the EMAS teacher moves the children forward effectively in their English vocabulary.
- Teamwork between teachers and assistants is very good.

Commentary

54. Children's achievement is good and teaching is good in this area of learning. Most of the children are unlikely to meet the goals children are expected to reach in this area of learning by the end of the reception year. There are numerous opportunities throughout the sessions when the children can practise and consolidate their counting skills. Several are able to chant numbers up to ten and beyond although most cannot count objects accurately up to ten. In

the nursery, the children enjoyed counting the wheels on a variety of wooden vehicles. Imaginative strategies encouraged the children's independence about how to record what they discovered and they recorded how many wheels on vehicles by putting marks on sticky 'Post-its'. In a session in the nursery, good resources and strategies used by the teacher ensured that the children moved forward in their learning of how to count. Plastic biscuits in a jar were used to encourage the children to be confident and come to the front of the group to take one biscuit out of the jar. The teacher used lots of repetition, such as, 'If I had one more, how many would I have?' She had high expectations. However, very few children in the nursery were able to join in the chanting up to nine. Singing of rhymes to increase knowledge of counting is used effectively.

55. Children who speak English as an additional language moved forward in their learning well when the EMAS teacher used a 'story sack' very effectively. The children were very excitable but well controlled by the teacher, who encouraged them to count the toy animals and to use other resources in the sack to improve the vocabulary of mathematics. The excellent resource engaged the children, who stayed on task for considerably longer than expected. It was evident that the children's skills in the different areas of speaking, listening and mathematics moved forward well in this session.
56. Very good strategies and resources were in evidence during a lesson for reception children when they began to learn the meaning of the words 'heavy' and 'light'. They listened well and paid good attention to what the teacher was telling them because of her very good management skills. Children's understanding moved forward a little when they watched what happened to the balance scale when objects were placed in the baskets. Planning for this lesson was a good example of the effective teamwork of teachers and assistants in the Foundation Stage. The assistant worked effectively with a comparatively large group. It was evident in this lesson that the children's vocabulary is still at a relatively low level for this age group.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good use is made of teaching assistants, the nursery nurse and the special educational needs assistant.
- ICT resources are good.

Commentary

57. Children enter the nursery knowing little general knowledge and are unlikely to meet expectations in this area of learning. Every effort is made by the staff to ensure that planning covers a wide variety of experiences for the children and, as a result, they make good progress and their achievement is good. Photographic evidence shows that the reception children visited the older members of the community with harvest gifts and discovered how other people live. In the ICT strand of this area of learning, reception children were observed learning how to use the brush tool to fill in pictures with colour with the help of the technician. A few children are becoming more confident when using the mouse. Other children were supported when working with the interactive whiteboard, learning how to use the colour facility. A few children can change the colour of the pencil. Teaching and learning are good in this area of learning. Nursery children were observed in one lesson exploring the different materials of their special toys they had brought into school. This lesson was particularly effective due to the excellent use of other adults leading very small groups to help the children make progress with their

vocabulary. Very good questioning resulted in the children trying hard to understand that, for example, plastic is hard whereas a teddy is soft. A few of the children made good progress and one child was heard to say, 'Our cups in the home corner are plastic'. The children in the early stages of learning English made good progress in this lesson and described the colours of their toys.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The new outside working environment enhances the provision considerably.
- The planning and organisation for this area of learning are good.

Commentary

58. The imaginative development and very good use of the outdoor play area for all the children in the Foundation Stage has been a factor in helping the children to make good progress in the development of their physical skills. They can run, balance and ride the very good quality wheeled vehicles. They show awareness of the needs of others in the space around them. Many of the vehicles have room for two or more, and the children begin to trust other children who may be in charge of the vehicle they are sitting in. All the children have plenty of opportunity to use this outdoor space and the teachers, assistants and nursery nurse intervene well and ensure that the children are moved forward in their learning, for example, about how to walk across ramps safely. The children are also encouraged to use their imagination and a few can offer suggestions about how the adventure trail across the bark area can be changed.
59. Good support is given to the reception children to develop their fine motor skills. The few children who are still trying to hold a pencil correctly or have difficulty controlling a paintbrush were taught in small groups and have plenty of opportunities to cut, to paint and to use glue sticks. They have learned to pour out their own drinks carefully and steadily because they do this every day.
60. Teaching is good in this area of learning and, although the children are unlikely to reach the expected goals in this area of learning, their achievement is good. Reception children were observed in the hall being encouraged by their teacher to travel around in different ways. Although most can hop and crawl, they lacked imagination and were a little unsure about how to respond to the teacher's sensitive suggestions. Most children were reluctant to use all the space in the hall. When the nursery children had a session in the hall, the teacher used the 'Hokey Cokey' dance to stimulate their enjoyment. They loved carrying out all the actions and shouted the words enthusiastically.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

61. Very few observations could be made in this area of learning. However, the children enjoy singing rhymes and songs that increase their understanding of the curriculum. Most of them join in to the best of their ability. Musical instruments were available on display for experimentation. One small group was observed selecting from papers and

small 'sparkly' decorations to make decorations for a party on coloured triangles. The children were happy to share glue sticks and pass resources to each other. The activity encouraged the children to chat to each other about what they were doing. From the portfolio of photographs available of this year's range of activities, it is clear that the children have experienced a wide range of activities such as experimenting with rhythm work in music, colour mixing, and making musical instruments. The children have worked together creating large textured pictures out of pasta, lentils, wool, wood shavings and other materials. The staff reported that the children's vocabulary was extended during the lessons and they learned words such as, tickly, scruffy, like a cloud, squidgy and hard. The role-play area is a restaurant with the usual resources of cutlery and plastic crockery as well as party hats. Children enjoyed playing together and pretended to eat or to have a party. Staff intervene well and move the children's learning and language forward well.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The strong focus on reading and teaching of phonics results in good achievement.
- The subject is well led and managed.
- Role-play and drama are not used sufficiently to improve pupils' speaking and listening.
- The teaching of writing lacks a focus on specific strategies to improve pupils' skills.

Commentary

62. For pupils in the current Year 2, standards in reading are average and, in writing, they are below average. Evidence from the end of Year 2 national tests in 2004 shows there has been an improvement during the six years since the last inspection and that the standards attained by pupils in reading were just slightly below the national average. Although writing standards were still below average there has been a significant improvement over four years and the school's trend in progress is above the national trend. Achievement is satisfactory overall but good in reading. The results showed that higher attaining pupils performed well, particularly in writing, and achieved as well as others in all schools nationally. Inspectors found similar standards of attainment in lessons during the inspection.
63. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. The school has correctly identified the need to improve standards in English, and especially in speaking and listening skills, as a priority. Reading is well taught throughout the school and a significant amount of money has been devoted to buying a sufficient number of books to support the literacy curriculum. Each day, specific time is allocated to teaching phonics as well as group reading when pupils move into small groups and all read from the same book. These short sessions are taught well; they are organised efficiently and learning is good. In a lesson observed, when teaching was good, it was evident that a few pupils lacked understanding of what they were reading despite good support by the assistants. Nevertheless, most pupils made good progress. The teacher used the last part of the lesson very well to enthuse the pupils about the next day's work.

64. Overall, the pupils find writing difficult. They have been diligently taught to join their letters and all of them do so but with varying degrees of success. In one of the Year 2 classes, just over half of the pupils could write on the line consistently and a similar number had little control over the size, shape and orientation of their letters. Handwriting for this group is well below average. Standards of spelling are better than writing and by the end of Year 2 standards are likely to be average; this reflects the good teaching in phonics and in group reading. Most of the pupils are able to use phonic strategies and know how to spell some common words. The pupils' ability to write in simple sentences and phrases is below average.
65. The teaching of writing is satisfactory but the teachers' knowledge and understanding of how to improve writing needs to broaden and encompass wider strategies. Teachers are coping with a new curriculum well, expectations are appropriate and the teachers know the ability of their pupils and the progress they are making. The initiative this term of using texts in literacy lessons that link to other subjects is commendable but is reducing the opportunities for teachers to use high quality literature texts to teach writing. The initiative of 'talking partners' has very recently been introduced in Years 1 and 2 to encourage pupils to discuss what they are thinking about a story, or how they perceive the characters in a story in order to develop further their speaking and listening skills. However, the progress pupils made after talking to their partners was mixed. For example, in one class, it was clear that several pupils found it difficult to say anything because, for most, the topic or scenario they were asked to talk about was too difficult for them to comprehend. In another lesson, the time allocated was too long for those pupils who lack confidence and have a limited vocabulary. However, the use of teaching assistants and other adults was good when they worked with the lower attaining pupils, who made better progress.
66. The pupils have below average speaking and listening skills overall and this is having a 'knock-on' effect on the development of their writing skills. Their vocabulary and, often, their understanding of a text are limited and they need more opportunities to develop both their vocabulary and their ability to phrase sentences verbally. Although teachers are making a start and there is evidence in lessons of teachers making every effort to build up the vocabulary of the pupils, nevertheless there was no evidence of the usual strategies of role-play and drama to help to improve the pupils' speaking skills. Nevertheless, good knowledge and understanding of how to teach pupils to improve their listening and speaking were observed in the library when two of the special needs assistants taught a few pupils for 30 minutes using very focused and effective strategies.
67. The subject is well led and managed by the experienced co-ordinator, who is very conscientious and has a good grasp of the strengths and weaknesses of provision in English. The co-ordinator has responded very quickly to the initiatives set in place and has worked hard to improve provision for English since the headteacher's appointment. Good tracking procedures have been put into place to follow the progress of all pupils from all groups and the school has identified those pupils who are at risk of underachieving. Resources for English have improved dramatically since last year but the library is in need of refurbishment and resourcing.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

68. The new leadership of the school and co-ordinator of English have worked hard to incorporate quality texts in literacy lessons from different subject areas within the newly planned curriculum in order to support learning in other subjects. However, there was little evidence during the inspection that suggests that literacy has been developed appropriately in other subjects.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A good management initiative has been to group the pupils for their ability.
- Where teaching is good, day-to-day assessment is effective.
- Teachers' skills of questioning need to be more focused on the individual needs of pupils or groups of pupils.
- Occasionally, planning does not meet the needs of pupils in terms of what they need to learn next.
- A few pupils miss the first session of lessons to be taught reading skills.

Commentary

69. Standards in the current Year 2 in mathematics are average and achievement is good from a below average entry into Year 1. Standards in the end of Year 2 national tests in 2004 showed good improvement on the previous year's results. The results showed that higher attaining pupils performed well and made the same progress as pupils in all schools. The inspection confirms average standards. The school has adopted a system of 'setting' the pupils into groups of similar ability and this is proving to be a successful initiative. Pupils in all groups and from all backgrounds are achieving well. The scrutiny of pupils' work showed that planning ensures appropriate coverage of the mathematics curriculum. Pupils' understanding of shape and space has deepened as a result of activities earlier in the term. The chosen mathematical tasks were fun and the pupils had enjoyed, for example, finding out how many three-dimensional shapes make 15 faces.
70. Although standards have improved and achievement is good, the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. In one lesson, where teaching and learning were judged to be unsatisfactory, expectations were too high and pupils made little progress. The teacher was very aware of this and changed the planning the next day. However, teaching and learning in other lessons were judged to be good overall. In a lesson for average and higher attaining pupils, excellent use of the interactive whiteboard by the teacher ensured that most pupils had a very clear understanding of how to add up numbers that had two digits each, for example, $15 + 22$. A very good pace was kept up and the teacher ensured that whenever there was a change of emphasis in the learning process, the pupils had a very clear understanding of what was expected. In addition, the pupils who speak English as an additional language were making very good progress, and they contributed well in question and answer sessions. Throughout the school, the teachers ensure that they use appropriate methods to improve the pupils' understanding of number.
71. In all lessons observed, the teachers' management and control of the pupils were good. Their subject knowledge and expertise using mathematical vocabulary are sound and, although questioning skills were satisfactory overall, the use of questioning to move pupils forward in their learning is, mostly, at an early stage of expertise.
72. Although assessment to track the pupils' progress over time has only recently been put into place, the teachers do assess the pupils on a day-to-day basis through questioning and, where teaching was good, assessment was effective. Teaching assistants give good support and are usually provided with appropriate work for lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs. They achieve well. However, the school needs to review the use of learning support teachers, whose teaching sometimes lacks a clear focus. In a few lessons, there were

too many adults for the sessions to be efficient and effective. A few pupils were withdrawn at the very beginning of lessons for extra help in reading and this led to some inefficiency when the teacher was diverted to give instructions on their return.

73. The management of mathematics is satisfactory overall. The new leadership of the school has changed the organisation of teaching mathematics in Year 2 and there is now a large group of higher attaining pupils and a slightly smaller group of lower average and lower attaining pupils. This is enabling all pupils to make better progress in lessons because time is used more efficiently. However, planning needs to ensure that pupils are taught what they need to learn next and the withdrawal of pupils from lessons needs review. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory and there is a good capacity for further improvement.

Mathematics across the curriculum

74. A very few examples of mathematics in other subjects were identified during the inspection. However, mathematics across the curriculum is underdeveloped, particularly in science.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' achievement is good and has improved since the last inspection.
- Pupils' below average writing skills limit the standard of their recording of science.
- The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' speaking and listening skills and their personal development.
- Not enough use is made of ICT to support the subject.

Commentary

75. Teachers' assessments in the 2004 national tests showed a slight improvement in standards. A well above average proportion of pupils attained the higher Level 3 and, when compared to similar schools, standards were in line. The work of the current Year 2 pupils confirms that standards are average and higher attaining pupils are well catered for. Pupils are achieving well, given their well below average levels on entry to the nursery in knowledge and understanding of the world, and below average attainment at the end of the reception year.
76. This good improvement is the result of good teaching overall. Teachers throughout the school encourage the pupils to investigate and think about science in an enquiring way. Owing to their good knowledge and understanding of the subject they provide interesting and motivating activities such as helping pupils to explore which materials allow light to pass through, so as to choose the most appropriate materials to use to make a kaleidoscope. Teachers introduced the words transparent, translucent and opaque with demonstrations to help the pupils understand their meaning. Initially, pupils worked in groups to sort samples of materials into these categories and teachers encouraged them to think of reasons and express these by requiring each group to agree before recording their finding. Teachers then introduced the idea of

fair testing when pupils in groups each selected a material to find out which were really translucent or opaque. Through prediction and discussion, constant reinforcement of vocabulary resulted in pupils beginning to use the words spontaneously and correctly. The teachers' good questioning skills and the way they allowed pupils to express their own ideas helped them to develop their understanding well.

77. Although analysis of pupils' recorded work shows appropriate progress from Year 1 to Year 2, the poor writing skills of many pupils are a barrier to consolidating their good work in science. There has been use of data handling, for example on eye colour, but the use of pupils' mathematical skills is underdeveloped and insufficient use is made of ICT. The pupils thoroughly enjoy the subject and develop their practical skills well. It is unfortunate, therefore, that motivation for some pupils is reduced when they are removed at the start of exciting practical work for phonic practice. Pupils' understanding and personal development are promoted by their learning about the parts of their own body, what constitutes a healthy diet and about the value of keeping fit through exercise. Work in the school grounds and a beach survey enhance provision.
78. Assessment is at an early stage of development but teachers modify work accordingly for the different abilities in their class. Teaching assistants provide effective support for lower attaining pupils because they help pupils to understand vocabulary and concepts rather than just helping them complete tasks. In one lesson seen the teacher for pupils with English as an additional language provided very effective support, allowing them full access to the learning.
79. The co-ordination of science has been inconsistent over the last few years owing to changes in personnel. The current co-ordinator took over responsibility at the beginning of this term and has drafted a sound new policy for science and is aware of areas where resources need to be improved, including those for ICT. Planning based on national guidelines ensures coverage of all aspects of the subject and at the end of the current cycle the co-ordinator intends to review and modify this to provide more detailed schemes of work for each year group. There is an appropriate plan for improvement and the monitoring of teaching and learning. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory and there is good capacity for continuing development.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is insufficient direct teaching of ICT.
- Classroom computers are not used enough on a day-to-day basis to support learning across the curriculum.
- The use of the computer suite for Years 1 and 2 is inefficient.

Commentary

80. Raising attainment in ICT was an issue at the last inspection. Although some improvements were made and the school has responded suitably to changes in the subject, standards in Year 2 remain below average so improvement is unsatisfactory.
81. Although the subject is planned appropriately in line with national guidelines and meets statutory requirements in that all aspects are covered, much of the work is too superficial to promote appropriate progress. Achievement is unsatisfactory. ICT does not have a very high profile and too little time is allocated on class timetables for the direct teaching of ICT. Very little teaching of ICT was seen during the inspection and it is not yet integrated into classroom work in such a way that pupils fully recognise computers as a valuable tool to support their learning. The computer suite for Years 1 and 2 stood unused for most of the time during the inspection. An exception to the practice found in most classes is the very good use is being made of the one interactive whiteboard that is located in one of the Year 2 classrooms.
82. There is a mixed range of computers for each class, but no Internet link in the classrooms. With help pupils can combine text with their own drawings and send and receive messages. They can enter information and interrogate a database appropriately and give commands to a programmable floor robot. They are beginning to use a digital camera. As a result of work in the Foundation Stage, pupils have good mouse skills and can use the mouse to select icons, enter programs and move the cursor around the screen. However, although keyboard skills were being taught during the inspection, these are very limited. This slows pupils down and also prevents them using the computer to develop their writing skills. There is insufficient use of computers to help pupils with special educational needs or those for whom English is an additional language owing to lack of appropriate software.
83. Although the teaching seen in the computer suite during the inspection was satisfactory or good, teaching and learning are unsatisfactory overall as teachers provide too little lesson time to explain and illustrate techniques and skills in ICT. The main reason for pupils' unsatisfactory achievement is that pupils do not have anything like sufficient opportunities to use computers. No classroom computers were used during the inspection. There is little evidence of effective rotas or the monitoring of pupils' time at the computers. The amount of work covered is less than expected as many opportunities to develop computer skills are missed because these are not included in teachers' planning. Assessment is underdeveloped and pupils are not sufficiently clear about how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve.
84. The school's computer suite is rather small and only has sufficient computers for small groups of pupils to be taught at one time. The school's ICT technician provides satisfactory teaching here on a part-time basis. Overall, the use of learning resources for ICT is inefficient and better use could be made of the generous number of teaching assistants to help in this area.
85. No judgement could be made on the management of ICT because there is currently no co-ordinator.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

86. There are isolated examples of ICT being used satisfactorily but the overall use of ICT across the curriculum is unsatisfactory, as it is not yet built in routinely into the planning for other subjects.

HUMANITIES

No lessons were timetabled for religious education during the inspection and so the subject was sampled. Geography and history were also sampled.

87. **Geography** was sampled through an analysis of a limited amount of available work as well as a scrutiny of teachers' planning. Long term planning is linked well to the National Curriculum and medium term planning is blocked in specific weeks of each term. Geography is integrated within other subjects and, for example, the pupils' work in geography was linked to the visit of an author earlier this term. Little evidence was available of the outcome of planning in geography and, sometimes, links with other subjects are tenuous.
88. A little more evidence was available to sample **history** but not enough to judge standards. Pupils learn about the Great Fire of London and study the effects of the plague on the people. They are given opportunities to build a copy of a 17th Century London house and learn about Charles II and Pepys, and make comparisons between Britain then and now. Due to the way the subject is timetabled, there is insufficient emphasis given to the progressive building-up of pupils' knowledge and skills.
89. In **religious education** the work provided is based on the locally agreed syllabus. The principle focus is the teaching of Christianity, but similarities and differences in other religions are explored through the study of some of the world's major religions, mainly through their festivals. For example, Diwali was the theme for the inspection week and a day was allocated at the end of the inspection week for exploring the festival through art and design, design and technology and dance. Religious education is frequently integrated with teaching literacy and, for example, the story of Rama and Sita was the text for this week. While this has some advantages, the religious significance of the story to Hindus was not brought out in the literacy lessons seen and the similarities and differences to Christian stories were absent. These specific aspects of the subject were lost. Teachers make good use of assemblies and discussions in class to help pupils to explore things that influence their behaviour and qualities such as consideration and perseverance. They are given time to reflect on these.
90. The subject co-ordinator took over responsibility for the subject in September and is enthusiastic about her subject. She has made a good start in assessing the strengths and weaknesses in religious education in the school and has a clear idea of how she would like to move the subject forward. She provided good support for colleagues in collecting some very attractive and inspiring resources to display in classrooms to support the work on Diwali.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Art and design, music and physical education were sampled. Design and technology was not inspected.

91. The scrutiny of work in **art and design**, from displays around the school as well as in portfolios, show that standards by Year 2 are at least average. There is a wide range of work covering all aspects of the art and design curriculum. Pupils' work is displayed well and shows that the school values their work. Examples of the work of famous artists are also evident and this complements the pupils' good efforts. However, the sketchbooks are not always used appropriately and contain only completed art work or pasted in completed paintings. The work in the Year 2 classrooms and corridor exemplifies the very good response the pupils made following the visit of the author and illustrator, Paul Gerraghty, earlier this term. After hearing an explanation from Paul Gerraghty of how he begins to work on his illustrations, the teachers and pupils made every effort to reproduce the unusual and empathetic compositions that illustrate his story, 'The Hunter'. Newly learned techniques included planning a design, colour wash practice, blowing ink and silhouettes. In addition, the pupils gave a lot of thought about how to portray the emotions of the story into their paintings. This proved to be very effective in improving the pupils' speaking and listening skills and their personal development in the spiritual aspect. This aspect of the school's work enriches the curriculum. The paintings show good skills for pupils of this age and show how valuable first-hand interaction is between an author/illustrator and pupils.
92. Only one lesson was observed in **music** and this was when all the Year 2 pupils sang together, led by one of their teachers. The standard of the pupils' singing was satisfactory and they clearly enjoyed singing very much. The very encouraging methods used by the teacher ensured that pupils listened attentively, sat up straight and quickly learned the melody and chorus of a new song, 'Together'.
93. In the two gymnastics lessons observed in **physical education**, pupils demonstrated average skills. Teaching was good in one lesson and satisfactory in another. The lessons were structured well to increase the challenge in moving across a mat using only specified parts of the body, while keeping low to the ground. Pupils made good progress in the skills involved and found where they reached a limit in retaining their balance. The teachers used demonstrations by pupils effectively to develop pupils' evaluation skills. Calm, firm management of the lessons encouraged pupils to listen attentively to instructions, move mats safely and also allowed time for the teachers to help individual pupils to improve. Teaching assistants supported pupils with particular needs well. The school's spacious indoor and outdoor accommodation makes a very good contribution to pupils' physical education. A recent theme of 'Fitness Fun' has encouraged their personal development. Pupils have further opportunities to enhance their skills and social development through football and tennis clubs, and through the school dance festival and another festival for several schools.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

This area of the curriculum was sampled.

94. The curriculum for this aspect is well organised. The outcomes of the school's approach were observed in the very good behaviour, good attitudes, relationships and personal development of the pupils. The programme for personal, social and health education is good and includes work on diet, health and personal safety. Sex education and education about drugs are addressed at the appropriate level for the age group of the children. Work in this area helps pupils to know how important a

healthy lifestyle is, to gain confidence and learn how to interact with others. It is supported by visits from members of the community and from outside agencies. The school's very good links with the community enable pupils to develop their knowledge and begin to understand the ideas of citizenship. One excellent feature of links with the community is the shared counsellor in the family of schools that visits the school on one day each week. The school refers to the counsellor any children who may be giving cause for concern. One lesson was observed in this area of the school's work and teaching and learning were satisfactory. Although the pupils were drawn into useful discussions about how important it is to be a good friend, the lesson was too long for this age group and pupils became a little restless. Opportunities were missed to introduce role-play and act out appropriate scenarios about what constitutes good friendships.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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