

INSPECTION REPORT

PENCOMBE C of E PRIMARY SCHOOL

Pencombe

LEA area: Herefordshire

Unique reference number: 116907

Headteacher: Ms C Evans

Lead inspector: Paul Edwards

Dates of inspection: 10th – 12th January 2005

Inspection number: 270956

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Primary
School category: Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils: 4 – 11 years
Gender of pupils: Mixed
Number on roll: 57

School address: Pencombe
Bromyard
Herefordshire
Postcode: HR7 4SH

Telephone number: 01885 400255
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Appropriate authority: The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors: Mr Ian Coleman

Date of previous inspection: 8th December 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This is a very small but popular school with 57 pupils on roll; the number on roll has increased steadily over the last five years. The pupils come from a broad range of social backgrounds and from a wide area. Pupil mobility is very low. Attainment on entry to the school covers a broad spectrum but is above average overall. Almost all pupils are from white British backgrounds, though from time to time the school accommodates a small number of children from Traveller families. No pupils are learning English as an additional language. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is well below the national average. No pupils have a Statement of Special Educational Needs but 30 per cent have been identified by the school as having some learning difficulties. The school gained Activemark and Artsmark in 2003, the Basic Skills Quality Mark in 2004 and the Healthy Schools award in 2005.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
21069	Paul Edwards	Lead inspector	The Foundation Stage; mathematics; information and communication technology; art and design; design and technology; music; special educational needs; personal, social and health education.
9003	Bryan Findley	Lay inspector	
30398	Chris Scola	Team inspector	English; science; history; geography; physical education.

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a **very good** school with some outstanding features. Teaching and learning are very good and pupils achieve very well. The headteacher provides excellent leadership and management, enabling the school to provide pupils with a very good curriculum enhanced by excellent enrichment activities.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils attain high standards in English, mathematics and science
- Teachers meet the needs of pupils in mixed age classes very effectively
- The assessment of pupils' progress is excellent
- The headteacher is enthusiastic with high aspirations for the school, and provides excellent leadership
- The curriculum for all pupils is very rich and stimulating
- All pupils are very well behaved and have excellent attitudes towards learning. Provision for their personal development is very good
- Links with parents and their involvement in their children's education are excellent

Improvement since the school's previous inspection has been good. No key issues were identified at the time of the last inspection. However, the school has improved the quality of teaching and learning and enriched the curriculum further. Work has been undertaken to improve the accommodation and further improvements are at an advanced stage of planning. The high standards in English, mathematics and science have been maintained.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

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

In relation to their prior attainment, **the achievement of pupils throughout the school is very good** overall. National test results show that, over the last three years, pupils in both Year 2 and Year 6 have attained well above average standards. The asterisk in the table above denotes a place in the top five per cent of schools. With small year groups there are bound to be variations in test results from year to year. Inspectors found that pupils currently in Year 2 and Year 6 are attaining standards that are well above average in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils with special educational needs and the more able pupils achieve very well because the work is well matched to their ability.

Children in the Foundation Stage make very good progress and achieve very well in personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy and mathematical development. Most children are likely to exceed the early learning goals in these areas of learning. Whilst there was insufficient evidence to make judgements about

the progress of the current Reception children in knowledge and understanding, and creative and physical development, evidence from the current Year 1 pupils would indicate that they are likely to exceed the Early Learning Goals in these areas.

The pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is very good. They have excellent attitudes to school and their behaviour is very good. Attendance and punctuality are excellent. Relationships throughout the school are very strong.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The school provides a very good quality of education. Teaching and learning are very good overall. The very good teaching of language and literacy, numeracy skills and personal, social and emotional development boosts the start children receive to their education in the Foundation Stage. The teaching of English, mathematics and science across the rest of the school is very good. There are excellent procedures for tracking progress in all subjects and this enables the teachers to match the work very closely to the abilities of the pupils. Teachers mark pupils' work very effectively and all have a very clear understanding of what they need to do to improve.

The curriculum provided by the school is very good overall. There is an extensive range of enrichment activities that add significantly to the pupils' experiences. Given the size of the school, the range of experiences is excellent. The school's partnership with parents is excellent and good care is provided for the pupils.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are very good overall. There are high aspirations for the school and staff are excellent role models for the pupils. The teaching and non-teaching staff work together very effectively and they are led by an outstanding and committed headteacher who demonstrates a very clear sense of direction and whose classroom practice is a good exemplar for colleagues. Issues identified in the school improvement plan are centred on maintaining the high standards and enriching the curriculum further. The work of the governors is very good and the school fulfils its statutory requirements.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents think very well of the school and are very satisfied with the work. They feel that their children are making very good progress and are well taught. A small number indicated that they would like more information when children start school, although the inspection team found that the information provided is very good. Parents indicate that their children like school and are expected to work hard. The pupils are very positive about their school and in discussions were very enthusiastic about the curriculum opportunities, visits, visitors and after school clubs.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

There are no significant weaknesses. The school should continue to address the areas for development identified in its school improvement plan.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Standards in English are very high and in mathematics and science they are well above average. Overall, pupils achieve very well in all year groups. Children achieve very well in the Foundation Stage.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve very well in all year groups and standards in the core subjects are well above average by the end of Year 6
- Pupils with special educational needs are supported well and make very good progress overall
- The standards in other subjects have been maintained since the previous inspection

Commentary

1. Overall, standards have improved since the previous inspection. Parents feel that their children make very good progress and most pupils feel that they have to work hard. The inspection team supports these views. This is as a result of the very good teaching that ensures pupils make the progress of which they are capable. The pupils' excellent attitudes towards learning also contribute to their achievement.
2. The results of the national tests for pupils in Year 6 over the last four years show that standards are frequently at least well above average and they are often very high. Inspection evidence confirms what has been seen in the tests and shows that Year 6 pupils attain standards that are well above average in mathematics and science and very high in English and that they achieve very well. The test results for 2004 indicate that standards have been maintained. The trend in the school's average National Curriculum points score for all core subjects has been better than that seen nationally at both Year 2 and Year 6. The proportion of pupils attaining above the nationally expected Level 4 in all subjects is much higher than is seen nationally. This is because the teachers have high expectations of what the pupils can achieve. The school makes effective use of additional staff to enable pupils to be grouped according to their prior attainment. Its assessment procedures are outstanding and the use of the data helps to ensure that all pupils are given work that challenges them and they attain the standards of which they are capable. There is no significant difference between the attainment of boys and girls.
3. The children's attainment on entry to the Reception class varies considerably from year to year, but it is generally above average. The children settle very quickly and happily and achieve very well due to the high quality teaching and very effective support provided by an enthusiastic team of adults. Most children are likely to exceed the nationally expected goals in all areas of learning by the time they enter Year 1. The achievement of pupils in Years 1 and 2 is very good. Frequently, standards in national tests are well above average and inspection evidence confirms that this is the case with pupils currently in Year 2. Standards in science are also well above average by the end of Year 2. In some year groups there is an above average number of pupils with special educational needs but these pupils also achieve very well because of the early identification of their needs, enabling them to make the progress of which they are capable.

4. An analysis of the pupils' work shows that standards in ICT are at least above average at the end of both Year 2 and Year 6. They have improved since the time of the previous inspection, partly because of the much-improved resources but also because of the increased confidence of teachers. The regular teaching of skills and providing the pupils with opportunities to practise these skills to promote learning in other subjects ensure pupils achieve well.
5. The very good standards in history seen at the time of the last inspection have been maintained. This is because of the very good teaching and very effective use of visits and visitors which help to generate the pupils' enthusiasm for the subject. Although other subjects were not inspected in depth as part of the inspection, pupils in Year 6 spoke confidently and knowledgeably about art and design, design and technology, geography, music and physical education. Inspectors from the local diocese will inspect religious education.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils have excellent attitudes to learning and they behave very well. They mature very well during their time at school and provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. Attendance rates are outstanding and pupils are very punctual for school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Members of staff are committed to the pupils and inspire them to learn
- There are excellent relationships because staff encourage positive attitudes
- Pupils are keen to be at school and they involve themselves enthusiastically in activities
- Behaviour is very good
- Pupils are making very good progress to becoming responsible members of their community

Commentary

6. The school has built very successfully on the strengths mentioned following the last inspection. Members of staff work tirelessly to make lessons interesting and create a secure and trusting environment in which pupils learn very well. Parents are pleased with the way the school encourages pupils to mature and to become keen learners. Pupils enjoy their time in school and this is reflected in the excellent attendance rates that have improved even further since the last inspection.
7. Children in the Reception class settle quickly into school life and develop positive attitudes early in their learning. They soon develop very good relationships with others and show exemplary behaviour. By the time they enter Year 1 they are exceeding the Early Learning Goals in personal, social and emotional development and this progress continues during the remainder of their time at the school.
8. Behaviour is very good because pupils know fully what is expected of them and they have a desire to be helpful and supportive. They are polite and well mannered, whether in lessons, break times or at lunch. Pupils get on very well together and demonstrate helpfulness and sensible co-operation without any hint of silliness or competitiveness. Bullying is extremely rare and consists of verbal exchanges rather

than physical altercations. Pupils generally show no awareness of bullying and say that the school is a friendly place in which they feel comfortable. The school handles relationship difficulties very well and any incidents are short-lived. There have been no exclusions in recent years.

9. Pupils make very good progress in their personal development because of the thoughtful range of activities and experiences provided by the school. Pupils become mature and independent learners, well able to cope with routines and confident enough to be individually creative, such as seen in sketching styles used by Year 2 pupils in art and design. They are involved in their own assessment from Year 2 and this contributes to target setting and discussions on planning for their learning needs with teachers and their parents. Pupils are taught positive values, for example, through 'Value Education', which helps build a respect and consideration for others. Pupils learn to identify values and to use correct terminology when discussing moral and social issues. In this way they are building their own values very successfully and can be trusted to behave sensibly. This is seen in the many responsibilities they carry out around the school. Pupils are also taught to respect the beliefs and values of others and they celebrate festivals of many different faiths and cultures.
10. A very strong feature of pupils' personal development is through work done to extend their concept of community beyond the school. An extensive range of visits to community sites broadens the pupils' experiences and they also take on responsibilities, such as decorating fonts in the village church and helping the local Women's Institute group in an annual village spring clean. Visiting speakers and groups provide a wealth of material and lead workshops in activities such as African craft and Brazilian dance. Beyond this, pupils have more global links, for example, they raise funds to sponsor a child in Sri Lanka and pupils were anxious and relieved to know he was well following the recent tsunami in the Indian Ocean. A candle-lit shrine to the victims of the tsunami serves as a permanent and spiritual reminder that people are still suffering from its effects.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence	
School data	2.8
National data	5.1

Unauthorised absence	
School data	0.0
National data	0.4

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is very good. Teaching is very good. The school provides a very good curriculum that is enriched by an excellent range of out of school activities. The school provides good care and very good guidance and support for its pupils. Links with parents are excellent, and the links with the local community and other schools are very good.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are very good throughout the school. Assessment procedures are excellent.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good teaching in the Foundation Stage provides the children with a very good start to their education
- Teaching in Years 1 to 6 is very good because work is challenging and enables the pupils to make significant progress
- Procedures for assessing the pupils' work are excellent and the information is used very well to plan future work
- Pupils with special educational needs are provided with very good support and the teachers match the work very effectively to their needs

Commentary

11. The quality of teaching and learning have improved considerably since the previous inspection. There have been a significant number of changes to the teaching staff during the past year and those new to the school have added to the strengths already present and settled in very quickly.
12. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is consistently very good. The headteacher, who teaches this class, has a very good understanding of how young children learn. A new member of staff provides release time for the headteacher and the good liaison, sharing of information and excellent assessment information, ensures that the children have a very good start. Teamwork, whereby support staff and parent helpers are utilised effectively, together with high quality planning, ensures that all children are provided with work that not only matches their ability but also their level of maturity. Lessons move along at a brisk pace and pupils quickly develop confidence because of the teacher's ability to involve all pupils during question and answer sessions. There is a very good balance between teacher-directed and child-chosen activities and this helps considerably to develop the children's independence. Teaching assistants make a good contribution to the children's learning, providing them with good support and intervening when appropriate. The staff make very effective use of older pupils in the mixed age class to act as role models and this is very effective in spurring the children on to achieve very well.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 18 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	14	4	0	0	0	0

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

13. The quality of teaching and learning in both the infants and the juniors is very good and almost all lessons observed during the inspection were consistently very good. An analysis of the pupils' books shows that this quality of teaching is the norm. The high quality of teaching enables pupils of all abilities to achieve very well and to attain standards that are well above average in the core subjects. Teachers have high expectations of what the pupils are capable of doing and the pupils almost always live up to these expectations. Throughout the school the teachers are very good at using searching questioning to determine what the pupils know and can do and then using the pupils' responses to determine the next stage of learning. In all classes, the work is very well matched to the pupils' level of ability and this ensures that all make at least good progress. Discussions with the pupils show that they enjoy learning and their excellent attitudes towards lessons and this is because the teachers make learning exciting and fun.

14. Teachers in all year groups use specialist knowledge very well to support the pupils' achievement. For example, music is taught by a specialist who comes in to teach all classes on a regular basis. In addition, she is employed on a more regular basis prior to musical performances being given and this enables pupils to develop good musical skills and experience performing in public. In addition, the school makes effective use of outside coaches and tutors to help with physical education and games activities. In addition to improving the skills of the pupils it also improves the competencies of the teachers. Lessons are enlivened by the regular visitors who make learning opportunities more exciting for the pupils, for example The 'Viking Group' in history and the 'Flying Potter' in art and design.
15. The assessment of pupils' work throughout the school is excellent. Very detailed records of the assessment are kept and the information is used very effectively to plan the next stage of learning. All of the staff are involved in recording progress and regular meetings and dialogue with parents ensure they are kept informed and able to participate in their child's education. The assessments in the Foundation Stage are used very well to ensure a smooth transition to the National Curriculum. This is particularly evident with the gradual introduction of literacy and numeracy lessons for the younger children. The very effective assessment of pupils' work continues into the infants and juniors and the use of the data has a considerable impact on how the school is organised and on the teachers' planning. The very effective and consistent use of the assessment information enables the teachers to match the work closely to the pupils' needs and results in the very good progress made by the pupils. Of particular note is the 'Year Book' a record of achievement kept for each year of the pupil's school life and which is presented to each pupil on the completion of primary education. It gives a full and valuable insight into how the pupil has progressed throughout their time at school.
16. Pupils with special educational needs receive good additional help in lessons from competent learning support assistants. The needs of the pupils are identified early and this ensures that they receive additional support early on. Work in small groups enables them to receive good support. This combination of approaches ensures they make progress in line with their peers. Individual education plan targets are clear and concise. Teachers and learning support assistants use the individual education plans well to inform their planning and this ensures work is effectively matched to pupils' individual needs.

The curriculum

The quality of the curriculum for all pupils is very good and its enrichment is excellent. The accommodation is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The excellent range of extra-curricular activities covers many aspects of the curriculum both in and outside the school day
- Pupils with special educational needs are well supported
- Visits into the local community and further afield enrich many subjects
- Provision for pupils' personal, social, health and citizenship education is very good
- The school makes very good use of its limited accommodation

Commentary

17. The curriculum is very well planned and includes all subjects of the National Curriculum. The school deals very successfully with the mixed age classes by using a two-year rolling programme to plan most lessons. Curriculum planning is very thorough and includes some innovative features that interest and challenge the pupils. Very effective links have been

created between all subjects with a very good emphasis on promoting literacy, numeracy, science and ICT skills. This has had a very positive impact on standards.

18. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. Individual education plans for these pupils include targets for English, mathematics and personal development, which are clear, achievable and manageable. There are good links with support services, reviews are held regularly and parents are kept informed of progress. Teaching assistants, who work very closely with the teachers, play a useful and skilled role in supporting these pupils.
19. Provision for personal, social and health education (PSHE) is very good. There is a very strong emphasis in developing the pupils' personal and social skills, which permeates through the whole school. All teachers follow a well-structured PSHE programme that focuses on keeping safe and developing a healthy life style. One of the results has been the selling of 'Healthy Tuck Baskets.' The profit from this is used to support a pupil in Sri Lanka and information about his life develops the pupils' concept of world citizenship. A school council has recently been formed and one of the first tasks, it set itself was to consider how to support those who have suffered from the devastation caused by the tsunami.
20. The children in Reception work very well alongside the pupils in Years 1 and 2. The curriculum for the small number of children in the Foundation Stage is very good. Activities in all areas of learning are interesting and linked to national guidance. These youngest children receive a very good start to their school life. Although the accommodation is limited, the school makes very good use of community facilities to provide for the children's physical development.
21. The provision for very wide range of extra-curricular activities that enrich the curriculum is excellent. It is particularly impressive for any school and especially such a small one. Opportunities for every pupil to take part in activities in the arts include learning to play at least one musical instrument and taking part in various music, dance and drama festivals. All pupils take part in a very wide range of physical and sporting activities outside school hours. Despite being such a small school there are also many opportunities to compete with other schools in various inter-school sports events. All pupils take part in theatre workshops, give public performances, go on residential adventure trips, visit London and other places as part of their work in humanities and make extensive use the local area. There is also a very wide range of out of school clubs delivered through community support.
22. Although the school is very small, the combined expertise of the staff is more than sufficient to deliver a full and very rich curriculum. The accommodation is small, but all adults use the limited amount of space very well and very good use is made of the village hall and other local facilities to deliver a very wide curriculum. The current improvements to the accommodation will improve the Year 3 and 4 classroom area and plans to build a new reception area, which will further improve the school's facilities, are well advanced.

Care, guidance and support

The school takes good care of pupils' welfare and safety. Provision for support, advice and guidance is very good. Pupils are given very good opportunities to influence school life.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Staff know and care for pupils very well and enjoy their trust
- Pupils are given very high quality support based on excellent assessment of their work and personal development
- Very good arrangements help new pupils settle to school life

Commentary

23. The school continues to be a safe and caring place for pupils. Health and safety arrangements are good. Site inspections are properly recorded and followed through effectively. Guidelines for dealing with illness and individual needs are thorough and there is sufficient first-aid expertise to deal with emergency and special needs. There are effective procedures to deal with issues of child protection.
24. Support for pupils' learning is very high because of excellent arrangements for assessing how well they attain and for identifying areas where additional support is needed. There are very effective systems to track progress through the curriculum and this is linked very well to pupils' self-assessment from Year 2 onwards. So pupils are well in tune with their own learning and very aware of where and how they need to improve. Specialist expertise, such as support for highly able pupils, is jointly arranged between local schools and in this case is supported by a high school teacher. Personal support is very good because of the close and trusting relationships that exist between members of staff and the pupils. Pupils are given guidance for their developing role in the school, such as school council activities and working with younger pupils. All adults get to know pupils very well and information is shared informally where there are any concerns to watch over.
25. There is a very well managed programme of induction for new pupils and parents are pleased with arrangements to settle their children in when they first start. Parents are provided with a booklet of detailed information and a video of the school. Pre-school packs show the nature of work pupils will be doing and there is guidance on how to help. There is a sequence of visits to familiarise pupils with life in school and most will have contact through joint activities with the local pre-school group.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school promotes an excellent relationship with parents. Links with the community and with other schools are very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents are fully involved in their children's education
- The quality of information to parents is excellent
- The school is very well integrated into the life of the community to the benefit of pupils
- Learning is enhanced by a broad range of links with other schools

Commentary

26. There is an excellent partnership with parents, who think very highly of the school. They have confidence in the way the school is run and expressed no significant concerns in pre-inspection consultations. Parents take a keen interest in their children's learning and support homework very well. They are involved in discussions about their children's educational targets and subsequent planning for improvement. The school canvasses parents' views on matters of policy, such as behaviour and homework. The parents' group continues to raise substantial funds for school activities and events provide a social forum for the whole community.
27. Information provided by the school is thoughtfully prepared and the quality of formal publications, such as the prospectus, is excellent. Newsletters are published

frequently. Parents are provided with the school homework schedule and curriculum information to help organise the support they can give. Meetings are held on curriculum topics, such as writing, science and information and communication technology. Pupils' annual reports are detailed about what pupils can do, with appropriate indications about areas for improvement. Regular meetings are held with parents to discuss progress in relation to targets and to plan for future support. Parents are always welcome in the school, whether to help or observe pupils at work. An open relationship with parents allows for timely discussion about any issue.

28. The school is outward looking and harnesses community resources and expertise very well in support of pupils' learning. The range of outside visits and visitors to the school is extensive and supports both academic and personal development equally well, such as pupils' experience of a workshop with a disabled drama group. These activities also create many opportunities for pupils to experience other cultures, as in workshops in music, craft and dance from around the world. Links with the church are strong and the school contributes greatly to community life, such as supporting fetes, organising a keep-fit club in the village hall and producing a village edition newsletter. The school also has very good international links, such as the sponsorship of a child in Sri Lanka, through sales from the school healthy tuck basket.
29. The school has developed an impressive range of links with other schools and the local pre-school provider. Close ties with the local playgroup means that children have already had much contact before they start at the school. The school benefits greatly from the sharing of resources and expertise within the local cluster of schools, such as in the use of physical education equipment the school cannot provide because of the limitations of accommodation. Transition arrangements with the high school are very good with a comprehensive programme that includes visits and bridging work between the schools. Contact is renewed during the first term at the new school to see how pupils have settled in.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are very good overall. The headteacher provides excellent leadership and she is very well supported by the staff. Governance is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher provides very strong leadership
- Subject leaders provide good guidance
- The Foundation Stage is very well led and managed
- A strong team approach has established a very supportive and caring ethos
- The management of special educational needs is very good

Commentary

30. The headteacher provides dynamic leadership for the school, through her very strong teaching and through her ability to motivate staff and pupils. The headteacher has high aspirations for the school and works extremely hard to ensure the goals are met. She is very thoughtful and self critical about school practice and has visited many schools in other countries, for example Canada and Denmark, to see what their systems can offer and how the school might improve its provision. As a result, self-

evaluation procedures have developed well and the headteacher has a very clear understanding of where the strengths and weaknesses lie and, importantly, takes effective action to make improvements. Procedures for tracking pupils' attainment and for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning are now an integral part of day-to-day management and have resulted in continued improvements to the quality of teaching and learning.

31. There have been a considerable number of staff changes over the last 12 months but it is to the credit of the headteacher that these changes have not disrupted the pupils' learning. As in many small schools, there is one whole-school team. Although staff are clear about their roles and have some subject and aspect responsibilities, many school issues are discussed as a team. The contributions made by all staff are listened to and valued and decisions reached after all have had the opportunity to contribute. Teaching is very effective and all of the teachers enthuse and motivate the pupils. This is because there has been regular monitoring of teaching and learning with a clear desire to improve the quality. Teachers are very knowledgeable about current practice and are keen to implement new ideas. While the school has maintained a strong emphasis on the teaching of literacy and numeracy, the co-ordinators have been very effective in ensuring the curriculum is rich and varied and have utilised the skills of visitors to this end.

32. The management of the school is very strong. The high standards in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science have been maintained as a result of the excellent assessment procedures. These procedures also ensure that there is good coverage of the other subjects and enable the school to monitor and track the progress of pupils very carefully in all areas of the curriculum. The management of special educational needs is very good. It ensures that the needs of these pupils are identified early and individual education plans are implemented effectively for all pupils.

33. The governors make a very good contribution to the work of the school. They understand the school's strengths and weaknesses very well and many are regular visitors. They have clear ideas about the school's future development and have been very closely involved in planning for improvements to the building, some of which have already happened and others which are soon to commence. As a result of these improvements, the provision for children in the Foundation Stage is better and the Year 3 and 4 classroom is being extended. Grants have just been secured to improve the office accommodation and Reception area.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	199,412	Balance from previous year	12,548
Total expenditure	190,128	Balance carried forward to the next	9,284
Expenditure per pupil	3,521		

34. The governors fulfil their statutory duties. They monitor financial planning very carefully and ensure that they obtain the best value for the services with which they are provided. They look carefully at staffing arrangements and are particularly keen to ensure that the headteacher has sufficient time in which to carry out leadership and management tasks with as little disruption to the pupils' learning in her class.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Provision in the Foundation Stage is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very effectively planned lessons ensure children make good progress and achieve well
- Learning support staff are utilised very effectively
- Children show very good understanding of school routines
- Induction procedures are very good.
- Assessment information is used well to plan work

Commentary

35. Children enter the school in the Reception class during the term in which they attain their fifth birthday. There were six children during the inspection period, all of whom were in their second week of full time education and they were part of a mixed Reception, Year 1 and 2 class. To provide the headteacher with release time, two other teachers also work with the Foundation Stage pupils. Good links with children and their parents before children start school full time ensure that they settle in very quickly. Attainment on entry covers a wide range but the majority of children have above average skills particularly in communication, language and literacy skills, and mathematical development. Improved facilities have enhanced some aspects of the very good provision seen at the time of the previous inspection. The quality of teaching and learning is very good. The children achieve very well in literacy and numeracy activities. Lessons are planned very effectively and the teachers' knowledge of the children ensures that work offers the right level of challenge for all. Structured play is used effectively in all areas of learning. Excellent assessment procedures are used very effectively to ensure that work set matches the needs of the children. Assessment notes are very detailed and put in children's personal Year books, allowing both staff and parents to see how children are progressing. The teacher and her assistants work together very effectively, providing excellent role models for the children. Leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are very good. By the time they start in Year 1 the children exceed the Early Learning Goals in communication, language and literacy, mathematical development and personal, social and emotional development.
36. Children achieve very well in **personal, social and emotional development**. Children learn quickly from older pupils about class routines, such as entering the classroom and they soon get used to what is expected of them. The teacher and support staff have high expectations of behaviour and children respond very well. Children quickly learn that they have to put their hand up in carpet sessions and take turns when working in groups. Opportunities to work independently or in groups have a positive effect on developing social skills. Older children in the class are very good at providing role models for the younger children. When they leave Reception, children listen to each other and respond to instructions very well. The personal, social and emotional development of pupils in Year 1 show that very good progress is made in this area and that most children are likely to exceed the early learning goals in this aspect. The

children have very positive attitudes to learning and relationships within the class are very good.

37. In **communication, language and literacy**, the staff provide a wide range of activities to develop learning. There is a very good emphasis on developing speaking and listening skills. The teachers are very good role models when speaking with the children. They encourage the children to respond to questioning with more than simple answers and, consequently, the vocabulary of the children increases rapidly. The children play a significant part in lessons, whether during sessions when they are taught by themselves or during lessons with older pupils. Stories are used very effectively to develop an understanding that print has meaning and that pictures provide cues for understanding what has been written. The teachers use questions very effectively to develop learning, for example through the 'hot seating', when two children took the part of a rabbit and hedgehog and were asked questions by other children. Pupils now in Year 1 are keen to read and all children read simple sentences in books with the more able children showing good awareness of punctuation marks. Speaking and listening skills are well developed. Children speak clearly and listen to others very well. Writing skills are at a higher than expected level when children enter Year 1, with most children writing simple sentences and using basic punctuation correctly. There is a very good emphasis on correct letter formation and on pencil grip and this provides a very firm foundation for further learning.
38. **Mathematical development** is at a higher than expected level. Children achieve very well in their ability to count to 20 and beyond and in their ability to carry out simple addition and subtraction. Children of all attainment levels identify a number of two-dimensional shapes including square, circle and triangle and know how many sides they have. Planning for the recently admitted children is very good. Water and sand play are used very effectively to develop mathematical skills. The children's previous work clearly shows that they are taught to write numbers correctly and to develop basic mathematical vocabulary such as 'more than', 'less than' 'longer than' and 'shorter than'. Role play in the 'Florist's Shop' helps to develop the children's understanding of money and the concept of buying and giving change.
39. Evidence of learning in **knowledge and understanding of the world** is limited for the children who were admitted full time the week before the inspection. There are good opportunities to use construction toys. Very good use is made of computers to develop both information and communications technology skills and hand-eye co-ordination. By the time they enter Year 1, children have simple scientific understanding, for example, they know that there are special people and places and that there are healthy and unhealthy foods.
40. There is insufficient evidence to make judgements on standards or achievement in **creative development**. Children are encouraged to use paints to produce 'portraits' of themselves and to experiment with colour mixing. They use a range of simple tools and materials to make vehicles and most children demonstrate a good control of saws and scissors. The children readily join in singing and musical activities, the school making very effective use of a music specialist to provide the young children with a very effective introduction to music making.
41. There is insufficient evidence to report on **physical development**. Children were observed in the playground using skipping ropes as part of a whole school activity to improve fitness and co-ordination at the beginning of the school day. Although not competent skippers, the young children demonstrate improving levels of co-ordination.

Planning shows that a good range of activities is used to develop the children's physical skills.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are well above average by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 and pupils of all abilities achieve very well
- Teaching and learning are very good throughout the school
- Systems for assessing and tracking pupils' attainment and setting individual targets are excellent
- There are very good links with other areas of the curriculum
- The leadership and management of the subject is very good

Commentary

42. Standards in all aspects of English are very high across the school. In the most recent national tests two-thirds of pupils in Year 6 attained above average standards and no pupils were below the national average. In Year 2 almost two-thirds of the pupils achieve at the higher level in reading, but results are not quite as strong in writing. This could be due to the very rigorous teacher assessment, which particularly penalises the above average pupil, and this is an area the school is looking at. In the present Year 2 and 6, standards are well above average. Throughout the school, pupils' very high standards of motivation and enthusiasm explain why they all achieve very well, make very good progress and attain such high standards.
43. Most pupils have very good speaking and listening skills largely because of the strong emphasis the school gives to this area of literacy. Teachers' questioning skilfully addresses all abilities and ages, which results in all pupils being involved. Also, the ethos of the school ensures that all pupils and adults respect one another and therefore listen and communicate very effectively. One particularly effective feature of the literacy curriculum is the emphasis it gives to speaking and listening through drama. 'Hot seating,' and partner and group discussion form an important part of many lessons. Drama workshops, visits to and from theatre groups and the many opportunities the school gives to develop self-confidence, whether speaking in assemblies or performing publicly in a school production, ensure that all pupils achieve extremely well in this area of literacy.
44. Standards of reading are very high across the school because of very effective teaching. Teachers know their pupils very well and set challenging targets. They are very skilled at teaching literacy. The early skills of understanding how words are made from the sounds of different letters are very well taught. This quickly leads onto to virtually all pupils being enthusiastic and very competent readers. Year 6 pupils, for example, express and justify their opinions on a wide range of modern and traditional authors as well as poets and playwrights. The school has a good range of reading resources and the small library is well used. Also, the school makes very good use of

the local library service. Parents are very closely involved in the teaching of reading and give very good support. Comprehensive reading diaries are used very effectively for teachers and parents to monitor pupils' progress in reading.

45. The standard of pupils' written work is well above average. Basic skills of writing are very well taught so that pupils know how to organise and develop their ideas. Handwriting and presentation of work is very good across the school. Grammar and spelling are very well taught and pupils are motivated to improve their spellings. Teachers plan work very well to take account of the pupils' abilities. Pupils with special needs are very well supported and this enables them to work through all activities. All pupils throughout the school have many opportunities to write for a wide range of purposes and for different audiences. This link with many other areas of the curriculum is a particularly strong feature of writing. All pupils, but boys particularly, achieve very well because they enjoy and are challenged by purposeful writing. For example, pupils complete the school events book with humorous descriptions of events they have attended, they give sports reports, accounts of trips, letters of thanks to a story teller, book reviews, instructions on how to make a circuit board, narrative poems, and accounts of Tudor explorers' voyages. Much of their writing is attractively presented using ICT, such as a very well written and attractively presented guide to a local farm.
46. Leadership and management are very good. The school has a very well-planned programme, involving all staff, for evaluating and monitoring teaching and learning. This is one of the reasons why standards have remained so high over time. There are excellent systems of regular and thorough assessments. Pupils' progress, in all aspects of the subject, is very carefully tracked. Every pupil has agreed individual targets that often relate to areas of literacy.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

Literacy skills are used very well across the curriculum. Much of the pupils' extended writing practice is carried out in other curriculum areas such as, history, geography and religious education. Science and design and technology lessons also provide a good context for writing, and are frequently used for writing plans, instructions and results of experiments and evaluations. Information Technology is used well to support literacy teaching and learning such as when pupils use word processing to present their work or the Internet for research.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are well above average by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 and the pupils' achievement is very good
- Teaching and learning are consistently very good
- Assessment procedures are excellent
- Leadership and management of the subject are very good

Commentary

47. Standards in mathematics are well above average by the end of Year 2 and Year 6, an improvement since the previous inspection. The pupils work very hard at the subject and, as a result, achieve very well. The very good teaching and learning seen in all year groups contributes significantly to the pupils' achievement. Pupils with special educational needs achieve as well as their classmates. This is because their needs are identified early and they are provided with suitable support. There is no significant difference in the attainment between boys and girls beyond that seen nationally.
48. Teaching and learning are a strength of the subject. The teachers have very good subject knowledge and implement the National Numeracy Strategy very effectively. The teachers are very aware of the demands of mixed age classes and plan very effectively, ensuring all pupils are provided with work that is sufficiently challenging. Teachers have high expectations of what the pupils can do and place a strong emphasis on the pupils' personal development. Pupils are given responsibility for their own learning and are expected to work independently when necessary and this enables the teacher to work with small groups of pupils. Even the youngest pupils learn what is expected of them and show very good application in getting on with their work and completing tasks. Lessons have good pace and no time is wasted. Analysis of the pupils' previous work shows that they cover a good range of work and that all aspects of the subject are covered in depth.
49. The school undertakes a wide range of assessment of pupils' learning. In addition to implementing National Curriculum statutory and optional testing, the school also undertakes other diagnostic testing to determine how well the pupils are progressing. However, it is the effectiveness with which the school uses the information that makes such an impact on the pupils' learning. The assessment information is used for planning future work through the use of individual learning plans, and this enables the school to monitor the progress of individual pupils and to determine what action needs to be taken to ensure all pupils make the progress of which they are capable. This information is shared with parents and their contribution to their children's learning through homework is valued by the school.
50. Leadership and management of mathematics are very good. The high standards have been maintained as a result of the systematic monitoring of teaching and learning by the headteacher. The involvement of all staff in the management of the subject has resulted in little disruption when there have been staff changes. The excellent systems of regular and thorough assessments are understood and implemented effectively by all staff and the progress of all pupils is very carefully monitored.

Mathematics across the curriculum

51. Mathematics is promoted well across other areas of the curriculum. An analysis of the pupils' work showed good use of mathematical skills in subjects such as science through the collection of data and completion of graphs when determining the thermal insulation properties of particular materials. Work on spreadsheets is undertaken by older pupils in information and communication technology.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are well above average at the end of both Year 2 and Year 6 and pupils of all abilities achieve very well
- Teaching is very good and teachers provide a very good range of opportunities for pupils to develop their investigative and experimental skills
- Pupils have very positive attitudes, achieve very well and work well both independently and collaboratively
- Excellent systems monitor and track pupils' progress
- The subject is very well led and managed

Commentary

52. National Curriculum test results for Year 6 and teacher assessments at the end of Year 2 show that pupils' attainment was well above the national average in 2004. This is an improvement on the previous inspection. Standards in the present Year 2 and 6 are well above average.
53. Teaching is consistently very good throughout the school with some excellent features. There is a very rich, well-planned curriculum with a very strong emphasis on developing pupils' skills of investigation and experimentation. Because of this, the pupils are full of enthusiasm for the subject as they enjoy the interest and challenge of organising their own experiments. For example, Year 6 pupils explained that they really understood why air was a gas and could be compressed, but water couldn't because of all the practical work they had done acting as 'human particles' and organising and carrying out various experiments to demonstrate how different particles behave. Teachers have very high expectations of behaviour and manage pupils very well. Pupils are very well motivated and work very well both individually and in groups, collaborating very well and supporting one another. The teaching of control technology and data handling has improved considerably because of better software, and very good links have been developed with ICT in this area of learning. Teachers also organise many events to enrich the science curriculum such as a visit to the Natural History Museum and local science workshops.
54. The achievement of all pupils is very high. In each individual pupil's science book, there is a huge range of work covering every part of the curriculum. Pupils use scientific vocabulary well to explain their ideas clearly and accurately, and have a very secure knowledge and understanding across all elements of the very well structured science curriculum. They work together very well to carry out scientific investigations. Throughout the school there is a great deal of work carried out in science and it is consistently very well presented, reflecting the pupils' pride and motivation in their work. There are very good links to ICT, mathematics and literacy and other areas of the curriculum.
55. Assessment systems are excellent. There is a very comprehensive range of systems to assess and keep track of each individual pupil. The beautifully presented Year Books, for example, very clearly show each individual pupil's progress in science. They enable teachers to have a very clear idea of each pupil's progress and set appropriate targets.
56. The recently appointed subject co-ordinator has a high level of expertise in the subject. Already she has monitored planning, carried out some lesson observations and identified areas for improvement. She provides very good leadership and

management of the subject. For example, further improvements in the resources for control technology have been identified.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

57. It was not possible to make an overall judgement on the quality of provision in information and communication technology (ICT) as too little direct teaching of the subject was observed. However, from a scrutiny of pupils' work, discussions with both teachers and pupils and the small amount of teaching seen, it appears that the main strengths of the subject are the good levels of skill attained by pupils, the good resources and the strong support that ICT offers to other subjects.
58. The pupils are given a good range of opportunities to develop their ICT skills and to extend their knowledge and understanding of the subject. Older pupils talk confidently about the subject and identify a range of occasions when they use computers. Throughout the school, the pupils' word processing skills are developed well. Even the youngest pupils in Year 1 are confident in producing simple pieces of text. Pupils in all year groups are provided with the opportunity to contribute to the school events book and many pupils choose to use computers to produce their work. By the time they are in Year 6, pupils show a very good grasp of word processing and publishing, changing fonts and inserting pictures to make their work more interesting and varied. Younger pupils in Years 1 and 2 develop their drawing skills through the use of 'painting programs' and demonstrate good mouse control.
59. The pupils use the Internet to carry out research for example, when studying the Victorians, Second World War and life in the 1950's. Very good use is made of e-mail, many pupils also using the opportunity to take part in a lunchtime e-mail club. The pupils' awareness of the location of other countries is enhanced through links that have been developed with schools in Denmark.
60. Resources for the subject are good. Since the previous inspection a small computer suite has been installed and this enables groups of pupils to be taught skills and the evidence shows that the facility is being used well. There is a good range of software available although the updating of hardware has resulted in some of the software being outdated. The school plans to replace the software when funds become available. An interactive whiteboard is being well used in Years 5 and 6 as a teaching aid and, when the budget allows, a further board is to be purchased.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

61. The school uses ICT very well to support other areas of the curriculum. The analysis of pupils' work from all year groups provided examples of ICT supporting English, mathematics and science. Discussions with older pupils show that they have used computers for planning a party, developing their numeracy skills, collating data from a rain gauge and presenting the information in different formats and drawing graphs using information from the length of shadows. Although the school indicates it has further work to do on the use of control technology, the pupils' skills and knowledge in this area of the subject are at least satisfactory.

HUMANITIES

62. It was not possible to reach secure judgements about the quality of provision, or the standards and teaching in **geography** as only one lesson was seen in this subject.

However, from an analysis of pupils' work, from discussions with pupils and from evidence of work on display there is good coverage of the curriculum. Year 2 pupils for example, draw good maps of the local area and understand and use grids. They understand that life is very different in Mexico by studying the village of Tocauro. Year 3 and 4 pupils have good mapping skills and can identify various European countries on a world map. This is because of the very good links they have with schools in other countries such as Denmark, where the pupils plan the video they are sending to show the features of an English school and receive first hand information in return through e-mail. A wide range of visits to various places to develop pupils' understanding of geography is available to all pupils. For example, on their residential trip, Year 6 pupils measure river flow by tracking the speed of dog biscuits as they are taken by the current. They follow a local brook from its source to where it joins a larger river. A strong feature of teaching is the good links that are made with other subjects. Older pupils speak with great enthusiasm about geography topics they have enjoyed such as their homework project on mountains. They make good use of the Internet to undertake research.

History

Provision for history is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' learning is brought to life by interesting and lively teaching
- Standards are well above average
- Very good links are made with other areas of the curriculum
- A very good programme of visits supports the curriculum

Commentary.

63. Standards in history are well above expectations in both the infants and the juniors. The pupils speak with great enthusiasm about their history lessons and achieve very well. The subject is enlivened by links with other areas of the curriculum, particularly literacy, design and technology, ICT and geography.
64. By the end of Year 2 pupils have good recall of periods of history they have studied. They have good knowledge of the Black Plague through their studies of Pepys' diary. They have a good sense of chronology and understand that cooking a meal at the beginning of this century was very different to now. Pupils in the lower juniors really enjoy their work on ancient Egypt and make good links with literacy when they write using hieroglyphics. By the end of Year 6 pupils have a very good knowledge of different periods of history such as Ancient Egypt, the Roman Empire, Saxons, Vikings, Victorians, World War and the 1950s. Pupils recognise the importance of artefacts and speak knowledgeably about primary and secondary sources of evidence. They understand that different events are often interpreted differently by differently people.
65. Teaching and learning is very good and lessons are well planned to interest and challenge the pupils. In a very good lesson on collecting information to illustrate the life of poor Victorian children, the teacher provided an excellent resources bank for Year 5 and 6 pupils to access. This developed their skills of sifting and interpreting data to make conclusions very effectively. Across the school pupils thoroughly enjoy

studying different periods of history and Year 6 are particularly enthusiastic. They appreciate the very rich history curriculum and particularly enjoy the very wide range of visits they make to study history and the visitors who come into the school. One of the many highlights of the history curriculum is the visit by the 'Vikings' who behave as Vikings do! Year 6 pupils know exactly what Saxons used to eat because they have made Saxon butter and had their own Saxon lunch. They develop an empathy with the plight of evacuees as they enacted it during drama sessions.

66. All staff share the management of the history curriculum and together they have a good overview of the subject. Samples of work are put into the pupils' Year Books and provide the staff with good assessment systems. The curriculum has been refined and improved and an even greater range of visits to museums and historical

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

67. Provision in **art and design** was sampled by looking at displays of pupils' work and their sketchbooks together with discussions with teachers and pupils. The provision for art and design is well enhanced by visiting artists, for example, 'The Flying Potter'. He has demonstrated techniques to the Year 5 and 6 pupils who are then able to produce models. The models are then fired by the potter, providing the pupils with a permanent reminder of their activity. The wall displays show that, throughout the school, the pupils have the opportunity to experiment with a wide range of media and in the styles of different artists such as Mary Cassatt, Rene Magritte and Archimboldo as well as some of the more frequently seen artists.
68. In **design and technology** the pupils have covered a good range of activities and there is evidence that they have developed good skills in both designing and making. Pupils had designed and made slippers, a car with a solid chassis, powered by electricity, pop-up books and knitting skills have been developed through the 'knitting club'.
69. In **music**, the pupils' skills are developed very well by a music specialist. In the one lesson observed, the pupils in Years 1 and 2 showed good enthusiasm for the subject as they played a range of percussion instruments following the instructions of the teachers. Discussions with parents and pupils show that the wide range of musical activities significantly enhance the curriculum and provide the pupils with much enjoyment. Choir, handbell and recorder clubs are well attended and help to develop the pupils' love of music.
70. From examining documentation, having discussions with teachers and pupils and from photographic evidence of work, it is apparent that there is very good coverage of the curriculum in **physical education**. The school does not have a suitable hall for physical education but makes very good use of the local village hall for dance, gymnastic and physical education lessons. Outside facilities are used very well. The school places great emphasis on healthy living and the school day starts off with all pupils enjoying a skipping session on the schoolyard. They also take part in the Village Fun Run. Year 6 pupils speak with great enthusiasm about the range of sports such as Tag Rugby, cricket football, hockey, netball and cross country that they participate in after school. There is a very full programme of sports events held with other primary schools as well as the local high school. Records show that most pupils can swim at least 25 metres. Various coaches come into to give the pupils expert tuition. All pupils go on a residential trip where they take part in adventure activities such as abseiling, caving, canoeing and rock climbing.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION

71. The programme for PHSE is good and there is a strong emphasis on the importance of developing a healthy lifestyle. All pupils and some staff and parents take part in skipping activities before school several days a week. Pupils' previous work shows that the class has discussed and written about what it is they need to keep their bodies healthy, and a particular success has been the selling of the 'healthy tuck baskets'. The school has recently gained the Healthy School Award. The school makes effective use of outside expertise to ensure the pupils gain a clear understanding of the misuse of drugs and alcohol.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

The school's links with other schools and colleges	2
The leadership and management of the school	2
The governance of the school	2
The leadership of the headteacher	1
The leadership of other key staff	2
The effectiveness of management	2

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