

INSPECTION REPORT

FOWLMERE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Fowlmere

LEA area: Cambridge

Unique reference number: 110607

Headteacher: Mr. R Elcock

Lead inspector: Heather C Evans

Dates of inspection: 8 - 10 November 2004

Inspection number: 271486

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4-11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	100
School address:	The Butts Fowlmere Nr Royston Hertfordshire
Postcode:	SG8 7SL
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr John Rushton
Date of previous inspection:	6 March 2000

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Fowlmere Primary School is smaller than most other primary schools with 100 pupils. There are 50 boys and 50 girls aged between four and 11. Whilst the overall numbers of boys and girls are equal, in some classes there is understandably some differences in groupings. Currently six per cent of pupils have free school meals although some families are choosing not to claim their entitlement. This percentage is lower than in most other schools. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is above that usually found and about a quarter of the pupils have identified special needs including behavioural, physical and learning difficulties. The majority of this group has problems with reading and writing. The percentage of pupils with a statement of special educational needs is, at two per cent, close to national figures. The school has no pupils for whom English is not the mother tongue. Almost all of the pupils are from White British backgrounds. The mobility of pupils in and out of the school other than at the normal time of admission is very low. The socio-economic circumstances of the school are about average with pupils being drawn from the rural areas around Fowlmere. The attainment of most pupils on entry to the school is about average, although the above average percentage of pupils with special educational needs influences the overall level of attainment. The school is in the process of being remodelled and extended. As a result, the staff and pupils have had to work in difficult situations for some months.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
21374	Mrs H Evans	Lead inspector	English Science Information and communication technology Design and technology Physical education Religious education Special educational needs English as an additional language Personal Social and Health Education
9744	Mr P Brown	Lay inspector	
15236	Mrs M Thorpe	Team inspector	Mathematics Art and design Geography History Music Foundation Stage

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a very good village school with many excellent features where pupils achieve well. The overall standards achieved are above the expected level and pupils make good progress. The quality of teaching is very good overall and much is excellent. Pupils learn very well in a joyful atmosphere where investigation, creativity and co-operation go hand in hand. Immaculate planning and careful and detailed structure support all aspects of learning. The school provides a very rich range of opportunities for learning across the curriculum and there is excellent extra-curricular provision. The school is firmly established at the heart of the local community. It is led and managed very well by a very strong headteacher with a small but dedicated team of people who are all totally committed to seeking ways of working towards excellence. Finances are very well managed and the school provides very good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The very good quality of provision across the Foundation Stage provides a very good springboard for success.
- At the end of both Year 2 and Year 6 the inspection evidence indicates that standards achieved are above average.
- The quality of teaching and learning is very good and the very well organised curriculum is enhanced by many rich extension opportunities.
- Provision and support for the many pupils with special educational needs is very good.
- The leadership and management of the headteacher, with the support of the senior management team and the dedicated governing body, are very good.
- The dedication and skills shown by the teaching assistants are invaluable.
- Pupils' very good behaviour, attitudes to work and their relationships with others aid learning.
- Teachers use monitoring and assessment to facilitate specific planning very effectively.

The school has very successfully addressed all of the weaknesses identified at the previous inspection. The revised marking policy is implemented throughout the school and is working well. Poorly presented work is not accepted and staff are rigorous in monitoring the work of pupils and colleagues. Since March 2000 the staff and governors have successfully initiated many other improvements.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2002	2003	2004	2004
English	B	C	C	D
Mathematics	A*	D	A*	A
Science	A	C	C	E

*Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average
Similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 2. A* places the group in the top five per cent of schools nationally.*

The achievement of pupils across the school is good. The grades shown are unvalidated figures and caution is needed when analysing data when pupil numbers are small. The analysis of each individual's attainment against their personal academic targets gives a better guide and shows that all pupils do well. Inspection evidence indicates that pupils of all levels of attainment make good progress. The trend in improvement is similar to that in most schools nationally. The children

in the present Reception class are on course to achieve or even exceed all of the expected learning goals by the end of the year. In 2004 tests, standards in reading for individual pupils in Year 2 matched national expectations. In writing and mathematics they exceeded the national average. The inspection finds that standards in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology (ICT) exceed national expectations across the school. Work sampled shows that standards are good in art and design, history and geography, and at least at expected levels in design and technology, music and physical education. Pupils' attainment in religious education complies fully with the requirements of the local agreed syllabus; by the end of Years 2 and 6 attainments exceed expectations. Pupils with special educational needs and those capable of higher attainment do well. Overall, there are no marked differences between the attainments of boys and girls.

Pupils' personal welfare, including their spiritual, moral social and cultural development is well organised and is very good. Work to support these aspects of the pupils' development is threaded through different subjects very successfully. This work includes activities in 'ticket time' and 'team time', science, physical education and health education. Pupils have very good attitudes and behave well. Attendance and punctuality are excellent.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is very good overall. Teaching and learning are very good. Learning is very good when pupils are working collaboratively. Teachers then offer intensive support to groups that need extra support or additional challenge. All of the teachers have a very secure understanding of the National Curriculum and of how children learn through real life experiences. Teachers know in detail about pupils' prior experiences, achievements and knowledge. All lessons and learning opportunities are very well planned. They are packed with many stimulating opportunities. As a result pupils learn readily and achieve remarkably well. Most achieve the individual and carefully linked group targets set for them. They recognise what they know and readily demonstrate what they can do. The care and guidance provided by the staff are superb. Parents value the work of the school very highly and many are actively involved in their children's learning.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership, management and governance of the school are very good with some excellent features. The experienced headteacher leads the school by example. He demonstrates a clear, energetic and positive vision for the school's future. He provides excellent and strong direction for the teaching and support staff, as well as for the very knowledgeable, hardworking and well-informed governing body. Together this team works hard to ensure the continuing good of the school. Governors meet all legal requirements and manage and support their areas of responsibility very well. They actively pursue the strategies set out in the clear and useful development plans. The subject leaders work very well with one another and have excellent links with governors. The staff share the planning, monitoring and evaluation of work and its outcomes to very good effect. The talents of the support staff are used very well. Everyone shares fully in the process of working to attain the best possible standards across the curriculum.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents expressed a very high level of satisfaction with the school. They are full of praise for the headteacher and his staff and wish that the standard number for admissions could be higher. Pupils are fully involved in the many opportunities presented in school life and have no complaints.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

This is a very good school with no major weaknesses.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Pupils achieve well, overall. Children in reception achieve very well. All others, including the 25 per cent with special educational needs, do well. Overall, when the attainment of all groups is taken into account, standards are above the expected level in most subjects.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in speaking and listening, reading and writing exceed expected levels across the school.
- During the inspection, evidence showed that, in mathematics and science, pupils in Years 2 and 6 are on course to achieve above the expected levels.
- Attainment levels in information and communication technology (ICT) exceed those usually found by the end of Years 2 and 6.
- Attainments in art and design, history and geography exceed national expectations.

Commentary

1. From the level of attainment on entry, which is average overall, children in the Reception group make very good progress and most achieve very well. Most are on course to attain all of the expected learning goals before they move into Year 1, and some will exceed these. Attainment levels on entry fluctuate and numbers of pupils, including some with learning needs, vary and the very stringent assessment procedures are used very well. The evidence gathered is used in a sensitive way so that the provision is tailored to meet the needs of each individual. This personal planning helps pupils to know what they are expected to do in order to succeed and, as a result, they achieve well.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	16.4 (16.8)	15.8 (15.7)
writing	15.3 (16.1)	14.6 (14.6)
mathematics	17.3 (16.9)	16.2(16.3)

There were 14 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

2. The standards attained in national tests in reading and writing by the end of Year 2 in 2004 were below the national average. Standards in mathematics were above the level achieved for most schools nationally. Comparisons with other schools are not very reliable as the percentage value of one pupil distorts figures unrealistically. This distortion is equally unhelpful when it indicates tremendous gains as it is for apparently sudden falls in overall standards. With four pupils in the 2004 group having special educational needs, the analysis of individual performance set against personal targets is a better guide than test scores. What is clear, following the progress of these pupils into Year 3, is that every pupil is doing well. Each one is achieving to their best personal level. They are reaching their agreed personal targets, which have already been revised upwards and are working towards attaining higher levels.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	27.5 (27.5)	26.9 (26.8)
mathematics	30.3 (25.7)	27.0 (26.8)
science	28.6 (28.8)	28.6 (28.6)

There were 11 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

3. By the end of Year 6 in 2004, standards attained by pupils were close to the national averages in English and in science but were well above the expected levels in mathematics. The school's assessment and evaluation procedures identified problems with pupils' response to one question in English as a cause of results being lower than shown in their work in class and their predicted levels. Significant changes were made to the style of teaching and curriculum planning, and improvements can already be seen in pupils' completed work. In science some strategies that had been in place for some time had not fed through to the end of Year 6 by the time of testing in the summer. This difficulty has been resolved this year. Inspection evidence indicates that the strategies in place are now showing very positive results. Pupils capable of attaining higher levels are working very well using ICT and collaboratively with classmates to extend their horizons with the support of the class teacher.
4. Standards in ICT exceed the expected level and are better than those found in many schools. The use of ICT in other subjects is a particular strength as pupils have moved on from having a very secure skills base to looking at using these skills to enhance and extend other work. Although firm judgements were not possible, collected evidence indicates that standards are at least in line with the expected level in physical education, design and technology and music by the end of Years 2 and 6. Attainment in work in history, geography and art and design across the school is above the expected level. Work in religious education is imaginative and wide reaching and exceeds the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus.
5. At this early stage in the school year, pupils are achieving well. Inspection evidence indicates that those pupils who do not have special educational needs are on course to exceed the expected standards in reading, writing, mathematics and science by the end of Year 2. In Years 3 and 4, pupils are making good progress and are achieving well. These pupils are making especially good progress in reading. The new initiatives to promote opportunities for extended writing are working well. All pupils are challenged well. Those capable of working at a higher level are supported well and are encouraged to succeed. In these classes the lower attaining pupils achieve their individual targets because of carefully modified work and the dedication of the teaching team.
6. By the end of Year 6, the average and above average attaining pupils are on course to exceed the expected levels in English, mathematics and science. Those pupils with special educational needs, a quarter of most year groups, are working at the expected levels in class. This is because they are supported well and work hard. They learn very well and most make very good progress. In other subjects, pupils' skills and achievements in reading and ICT help to raise attainment levels, and pupils perform very well when undertaking practical work. In practically based work, as seen in 'team time' and 'ticket time', many pupils regularly exceed the expected levels. The school is pursuing a programme of work to use skills learned in writing in English to extend different styles of writing in other subjects to very good effect. Learning opportunities in creative subjects help to consolidate and extend basic skills. This venture is working very well. In many of these highly structured sessions, pupils' achievement is very good.

7. Individual pupils are encouraged to learn by using independent research and personal study. In mathematics pupils learn well and they use their knowledge and understanding of number. Standards in science are above the national average in all groups across the school because from the earliest days in school pupils are helped to learn through investigation how to become young scientists. Pupils' skills and confidence in planning, conducting and recording the findings of investigations are good, especially in Years 5 and 6. Pupils show good scientific knowledge by the end of Year 6. Work displayed in classrooms and around the school shows very good levels of presentation.
8. The achievement of pupils with special educational needs is good, due to the encouragement they receive from teachers and the learning support assistants. As a result, these pupils work as hard as they can. The achievement over time of these pupils is as good as might be expected, and some achieve particularly well in subjects where they are able to do practical work. Teachers measure progress against the targets set in pupils' Individual Education Plans as part of the school's assessment procedures for all pupils. Teachers adapt work to match the needs of lower attaining pupils, as well as for those capable of higher attainment that have been identified as being either gifted or talented in some subjects such as physical education, mathematics or music.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Attendance and punctuality are excellent. Behaviour, attitudes and relationships are very good, as is the provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Main Strengths and Weaknesses

- Levels of attendance and punctuality are excellent.
- Pupils display a very positive attitude to all aspects of school life.
- Behaviour is very good, with a virtual absence of oppressive behaviour.
- Relationships of pupils with adults, and with each other, are very good.
- Social and cultural development of pupils is excellent, and their spiritual and moral development is very good.

Commentary

9. The attendance of pupils is excellent, and at a level of 97.3 per cent far exceeds national averages. Punctuality of pupils is also excellent which makes it possible for lessons to start promptly and without interruption. Procedures to ensure regular attendance are very good, and parents are highly supportive of this aim.
10. Pupils display a very positive attitude to school in every year group. In class they are highly attentive and are very well motivated to learn. Outside of the classroom they enthusiastically embrace the opportunity to participate in the very wide range of extra-curricular activities available to them. The attitudes, values and personal qualities of pupils with special educational needs are developed very well.
11. The very good relationships that exist between pupils and with staff provide a secure basis from which learning can prosper. This was illustrated by a lesson called 'Circle Time' observed in the Year 5/6 class. In this lesson pupils were able to express their feelings about the significance of 'Poppy Day' and to recount experiences drawn from their own family history. The school provides very good opportunities for pupils to demonstrate initiative and to accept responsibility. This is achieved through a well-regulated and effective School Council. Monitors make good use of the opportunities for older pupils to assist their younger counterparts at lunchtime and with reading. Pupil confidence and self-esteem are, consequently, very high.

12. The behaviour of pupils is very good, both in and out of the classroom. Procedures for promoting good behaviour are used effectively and, as a result, pupils pay attention and are sensitive to the needs of others. The quality of collaborative working is very high from the Foundation Stage upwards. No cases of bullying, or oppressive behaviour, were observed or reported, but effective procedures are in place should any such situation arise.
13. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. A wide range of opportunities provides time for reflection, including time for collective worship. This is often led by local clergymen, and is supported by visits to local places of worship. Moments of wonder and amazement are provided within the classroom, such as when a group of children in the Reception class exhibited great delight when being allowed to touch, smell and eat a selection of exotic African fruits.
14. The school promotes pupils' moral development very successfully. Pupils of all ages demonstrate a clear understanding of the difference between right and wrong. Pupils are encouraged to debate moral issues. In a lesson in the Year 5/6 class pupils were invited to consider the moral implications of going to war. Social development of pupils is excellent and is promoted within every facet of school life. Pupils display a high level of social responsibility towards one another by providing practical help with tasks within the classroom and through emotional support when their school friends may be distressed. The emphasis placed on teamwork is highly effective in promoting pupil achievement. The cultural development of pupils is excellent, being carefully planned into the programme of work for each class and being skilfully delivered using a wide range of learning opportunities involving a wide variety of exotic foods, different birthday customs and traditions, and visits from representatives of different cultures, such as an Imam. A particular imaginative initiative was seen in one class where pupils were allowed to wear clothes in the fashion and fabrics of West Africa.

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year 97.3%

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	2.7	School data	0
National data	5.4	National data	0.4

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

Exclusions

15. There have been no exclusions for many years.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

Overall, the quality of education is very good. The quality of teaching, learning and the imaginative and totally integrated curricular provision are very good. An excellent range of diverse and interesting learning opportunities enriches the curriculum. The school is very successful in meeting the diverse needs of all of the pupils.

Teaching and learning

The overall quality of teaching and learning are very good across all phases and much teaching is excellent. Assessment is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers have very good knowledge and understanding of the subjects that they teach and have very good relationships with the pupils.
- Teachers have realistic expectations that are increasingly high and that regularly challenge pupils' thinking.
- The pace of lessons is very good therefore the rate of learning for all pupils is also very good
- The planning is very thorough, detailed and precise; teachers select from a good range of methods.
- The revised strategies for assessment are proving to be very effective; these are incorporated into longer and short-term planning and information gathered is used very well.
- The strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy are very good and are working well.
- Innovative methods for enabling independent and collaborative learning are impressive.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in [number] lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
11	13	2	1	0	0	0

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

16. The quality of teaching is very good and is maintained at a consistently high level across the school. The proportion of excellent lessons is above that usually found in most schools. In all lessons teachers' knowledge of the subjects taught is very secure and the learning objectives set are clearly explained to pupils. There was no unsatisfactory teaching observed and the overall quality of teaching is better than that seen at the previous inspection. Teachers link learning objectives well to earlier work or to practical experiences. This is a particular strength of work in mathematics, science and design and technology. Practical experiences and investigations are planned to provide good opportunities for revision and consolidation.
17. Although the required skills for ICT are taught very well, it is the consistent use of ICT to support and extend learning in many subjects that is a particular strength. In all of the classes lessons are very well organised and teachers' planning is very good. With most classes catering for mixed age groups it is the use of innovative methods for enabling independent and collaborative learning that are impressive. These strategies are called by different titles across the school and are very effective. The time is managed very tightly. The work involves a highly structured integrated approach to learning. Teachers, children and parents and governors have a very comprehensive knowledge of what happens and of how pupils benefit from the structured process.
18. The methods chosen and the available resources are always suitable. Teachers engage pupils' interest at the start of lessons. Work is interesting and the pace of learning is brisk. In all classes the work is challenging and, as a result of the very positive relationships, there is a shared sense of joy in learning. The quality of teaching and learning in English, mathematics and science are particularly good.
19. The school's assessment, monitoring and tracking systems and their use are very good. The process is relatively new and a full evaluation of its effectiveness is scheduled for later in this academic year. All teachers follow the agreed marking policy meticulously as an important strand of the shared assessment procedures. This is a marked improvement since the last inspection. The staff make very good use of the information gathered. The systems in place enable teachers to analyse the strengths and weaknesses in standards and provision and information is used to set relevant targets for improvement. Across the school, planned work is well matched to the attainment and achievement of pupils.

20. The quality of teaching for pupils with special educational needs is very good. Teachers use pupils' Individual Education Plans well and incorporate stated targets into their lesson plans. Pupils with identified special needs are fully included in all classroom activities. Teachers ensure pupils of all ability levels are constantly and appropriately challenged so that they work to the very best of their ability. Assessment and tracking procedures of pupils identified as having difficulties in learning are very good and are used well to ascertain the rate and levels of achievements. There are practical and supportive links with the relevant outside agencies for pupils with multiple and complex special needs.
21. The imaginative use of the trained support staff in lessons is invaluable in the work to maintain the rapid rate of learning. Their skilled intervention when pupils experience any difficulties enables lessons to move at a brisk pace. Everyone builds purposefully on the sense of success. The very well developed partnership between the teachers and the support staff makes a significant contribution to the very positive ethos of the school and to the superb working atmosphere in all classes. Homework is set at suitable levels each week with time allowed to complete it. Changes in the pattern of setting homework were made following consultation and collaboration with parents. During the inspection the review of marked work indicated that homework in its different forms was proving to be a positive aid to learning.

The curriculum

The curriculum is very good with many excellent features. There are frequent high quality and exciting opportunities to extend learning through cross-curricular and extra curricular activities. Accommodation and resources are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Provision for children in the Reception year is very good with many excellent features.
- The strategies for developing pupils' skills in literacy and numeracy are very effective and contribute to pupils' levels of achievement.
- Very good target setting procedures guide curricular planning.
- The school provides very well for all aspects of pupils' creative development. An outstanding strength is the structured manner in which the school develops pupils' creative thinking, ensuring rigorous development of basic skills.
- The school provides excellent levels of enrichment especially by the wide range of visits, visitors and extra-curricular activities.
- Although the planned building development is nearing completion, some residual inconveniences remain with which the school copes very well.

Commentary

22. The curriculum has been audited, revised and improved in recent years and fully meets the requirements of the National Curriculum and the local agreed syllabus for religious education. Very well structured schemes of work are in place for all subjects. There is a very rich curriculum in place for children in the Reception Year. This work is based on the nationally agreed areas of learning and is enriched by many visits and visitors. Curricular planning ensures very high quality continuity from Reception to Year 6 and very good provision for the different age and ability groups within the mixed age classes.
23. Rigorous planning ensures very good progression across classes for all subjects. Cross-curricular planning is very effective and, during the inspection, key elements from many subjects were combined and were threaded sensitively through lessons. An excellent example was planned for pupils in Years 3 and 4 where they incorporated their understanding of Ancient Egyptian culture and ways of life into their designs. Time is used very resourcefully as teachers' planning enables pupils to incorporate many curriculum subjects purposefully within

one activity. This imaginative work develops pupils' creative thinking whilst ensuring rigorous development of basic skills.

24. A very good feature of the school's work is the way that all teachers value pupils and include them in all aspects of learning. Consequently, girls and boys, pupils with special educational needs, and the gifted and talented pupils all achieve well. The pattern of including all pupils in every part of the learning process contributes to the above average levels of achievement. The revised Code of Practice for pupils with special educational needs is fully implemented. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. With support they share the same curriculum as other pupils. Tasks are adapted when necessary, or additional help is provided to ensure that they experience success.
25. The strategies for literacy and numeracy are implemented very successfully resulting in pupils' achievement being above that expected throughout the school. These subjects are applied very well to all other curricular areas. The effectiveness of the curriculum is monitored regularly and developed according to the skills and needs of pupils. In this small school, all pupils are in mixed aged classes and benefit from a curriculum that is very well matched to their individual needs.
26. Physical education, science and design and technology contribute very well to pupils' personal, social and health education and drug awareness. Pupils understand the value of frequent exercise and the important elements of a healthy diet. They enjoy the many opportunities including extra-curricular activities that the school offers. An extremely dedicated staff and a group of volunteers of friends of the school and parents help with a very wide range of activities. Residential visits are arranged for older pupils and enable them to experience a wider range of more adventurous activities than the school can accommodate. The school calendar is overflowing with activities aimed at developing pupils' cultural, multicultural and environmental understanding. The school has developed and maintains very strong links with the community, which contribute to pupils' overall development. The many visitors to school share their skills and experiences with pupils and greatly enhance their learning.
27. Staffing levels are sufficient to meet the needs of all pupils. A skilled team of classroom assistants supports the class teachers very well. This team of adults makes a very positive impact on pupils' achievements. The building is in a very attractive setting and is maintained to a very high standard by the caretaking staff. It is further enhanced by very attractive and stimulating displays of pupils' work. The resources for teaching and learning are good and are used imaginatively. The school is undergoing wide-ranging improvements to the building, only some of which have been completed at present. The accommodation is therefore judged to be no more than satisfactory. The headteacher and governors have worked extremely hard in their efforts to improve the building and grounds and, when the work is completed, all pupils will have a very high quality environment in which to work and learn.
28. The imaginative outdoor features, spacious attractive classrooms, as well as the swimming pool, provide opportunities for a curriculum that is planned to be even richer than that already in place. Opposite the school the community playing field provides a well-maintained space for the games and athletics aspects of physical education. The planned building programme will ensure that the needs of any pupils and adults with disabilities will have total access to all areas.

Care, guidance and support

The school provides a very safe and healthy environment in which pupils thrive. The support and guidance provided for pupils are excellent. Very great value is attached to pupils' opinions.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of pastoral care provided to pupils is very good.

- The school provides a safe and healthy environment in which pupils thrive.
- The views of pupils are very well taken into account.
- Induction arrangements for pupils starting at the school are very good.

Commentary

29. Health and safety procedures, including those associated with child protection, are very good. Risk assessments are of very high quality, particularly those associated with educational visits and the new building project. The health and safety group carries out a termly inspection of the school premises and initiates an appropriate programme of safety improvement. The health and safety policy provides comprehensive information concerning organisational arrangements and procedures. Health and safety factors are very effectively incorporated into classroom teaching, as was evident when, prior to the preparation of the 'Lighthouse Keeper's lunch', pupils were reminded about the importance of personal hygiene and instructed to wash their hands thoroughly.
30. The school provides excellent care, guidance, and support. Teachers and other staff provide first class pastoral support. This is based on their close personal knowledge of each individual pupil and the very strong relationships that exist. Pupils say that they feel totally confident in approaching their teachers for help and advice should the need arise. As a result of very effective monitoring and tracking procedures, support provided to pupils is timely and is relevant to their needs. Pupils with special educational need are supported very well by the staff.
31. Induction arrangements for pupils joining the school are very good and help facilitate a smooth transition into school life. The Foundation Stage teacher makes regular visits to local playgroup providers. In turn children from local playgroups visit the school during the summer term and are then enabled to make full use of the various resources available.
32. The school actively seeks the views and opinions of the pupils. Staff take very full account of pupils' views and, wherever appropriate, they act on them. This is achieved formally through the School Council and through annual questionnaires but also happens more informally through day-to-day discussion in class. Pupils' opinions were sought, and taken into account, during the re-drafting of the behaviour policy. They were very involved with the design of the paving for the refurbished Class 1 play area. Regular consultation with pupils promotes their self-esteem and maturity very effectively.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has established an excellent partnership with parents and the local community. Links with other educational establishments are very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- An excellent partnership with parents greatly enhances the quality of learning.
- Extremely strong links with the local community enrich the curriculum very well.
- There are very strong links with local playgroups and schools, both primary and secondary.

Commentary

33. Parents and carers hold the school in the very highest regard. They believe it to be very well led and managed and teaching to be very good. They are sure that pupils make good progress within a safe and secure environment and that their children receive excellent pastoral care. The inspection evidence supports these views.

34. Communication with parents and carers is excellent. The school prospectus, handbook for parents, the website and Governors' Annual Report are very informative. They are presented very professionally. Newsletters are lively, reader-friendly, and provide an excellent summary of what is happening in school. The weekly newsletter FIFA, published by the pupils themselves, is of the highest possible quality and is much valued by parents. Annual written reports are clear, succinct, and provide an excellent summary of pupils' progress and of future targets to be attained. One parent commented, "The school reports reflect teachers' remarkable knowledge and understanding of our children".
35. Parental involvement in the life of the school is excellent, with regular assistance provided in class, with the garden, swimming pool and with visits. The expertise of particular parents and friends is utilised very effectively. For example, in taster lessons in French, the Stamp Club, support with football, and with the design, manufacture, and sale of very professional looking Christmas cards.
36. Parents are extremely effective in supporting their children's learning at home with homework and various project activities. The school assists parents to perform this role very effectively through regular evening workshops, covering such topics as homework, reading and numeracy. A particularly imaginative initiative involves small groups of parents actually sitting through a real numeracy lesson. Class teachers meet parents each term to discuss the curriculum plan for the next set of lessons. The school consults parents very effectively through the use of questionnaires, parent governors and informal discussion. New homework arrangements that are proving to be very effective were decided as the outcome of detailed parental consultation involving meetings and a comprehensive questionnaire.
37. Targets agreed by the special educational needs co-ordinator and the class teacher are shared with parents and when appropriate with pupils. Parents are invited to attend the termly review of Individual Education Plans and the annual review of statements of special educational need.
38. Links with the local community are excellent and greatly enhance the curriculum. Strong and effective partnerships have been established with local churches, the business community, and with military institutions. A half-day visit from Coldstream Guard bandmen excellently complements and supports the music curriculum. A historical wartime link with the American Air Force is still maintained. This provides a direct involvement with local history as well as financial contributions from wartime veterans. A very close liaison with the village community is maintained through open days, which allow local residents to be updated as to progress with the building project.
39. Partnerships established with local playgroups and schools are very good. The school greatly benefits from its collaboration with local primary schools through a cluster arrangement and enjoys very close links with Melbourn Village College. The very close co-operation in sport, cultural activities, and the curriculum ensures that pupils transfer into secondary education with minimal stress and disturbance.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership, management and governance of the school are all very good. The leadership of the headteacher is excellent.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher has excellent vision and aspirations for all aspects of the school's development; these aspirations are reflected in the above average achievements of all pupils.
- The leadership and management by all staff are very good.
- The governance of the school is very strong with many excellent features.

- All aspects of strategic planning are very good and have contributed to the improvements in standards and all aspects of provision since the last inspection.
- The financial planning based on principles of best value is very effective in all aspects.
- In this small school, the headteacher and governors are very aware of the issues concerning the heavy workload of this highly committed team of teachers. They are seeking practical ways to improve it.

Commentary

40. The headteacher and senior staff provide very good leadership and management. There is a shared commitment to raising standards and providing a very good education for all pupils. They have worked to implement the school's vision of providing an inclusive and wide-ranging curriculum with tremendous success. There has been very good sustained improvement in the leadership and management of the school since the last inspection.

41. The overall leadership of the school is very good. The headteacher provides excellent educational direction. The clear commitment of the headteacher to the principles that drive the school forward is shared by the staff and the governing body. The headteacher and senior management team support and motivate one another very successfully. The use made of the skilled support staff is very effective. This contributes very well to the good achievement made by the pupils. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is led and managed very well by the co-ordinator. Initiatives are kept on course through rigorous monitoring and evaluation. They are not allowed to drift. In this small school where staff share subject leadership, they ensure that agreed strategies for teaching and learning are followed. There is an excellent supportive network throughout the school where everyone is valued and is given as much help as possible.
42. The school is managed very well. Clear goals are set for everyone. They are shared with teachers and pupils. The headteacher has extremely high expectations of himself, the staff and the pupils. Teachers' roles and responsibilities are very clearly understood. Subject leaders are given very high levels of responsibility for developing their subjects. There are consistent and detailed curriculum plans. Teachers ensure that the skills of each subject are acquired within the context of creative application and enjoyment. They have been very successful in raising standards in all subjects and aspects. The effective use of collected assessment data contributes well to the now rapid improvement. Subject leaders are very good role models. They manage their areas of responsibility very well. They provide excellent support for colleagues and pupils.
43. The school is very well governed. Governors fulfil their statutory responsibilities very well. Their understanding of which aspects are good and where there needs to be additional work is excellent. They have benefited from regular training and have a very clear awareness of their role in supporting and assisting the headteacher in his work. Performance management is very securely rooted in the governance and management of the school. The governors set practical measurable goals for the headteacher who, in turn, sets equally relevant goals for the rest of the staff. The managers of the school have used the guidance from previous inspection reports sensibly, welcoming support from the local education authority. While recognising the importance of high academic standards, they place an equally strong emphasis on pupils' personal development. They promote and celebrate pupils' enjoyment and independence in learning. Across the school there is an atmosphere of mutual respect, understanding, challenge and very high expectations. The headteacher and the staff form an extremely strong team committed to raising standards and providing a very good quality of education for all pupils.
44. Members of the governing body have a very wide range of experiences that they use to ensure very effective provision in all aspects. There is a positive and productive relationship between the governing body and the school. Governors have a high level of confidence in the headteacher. They ask searching questions and have a very good understanding of the strengths of the school. They are ambitious and have a strategic plan that includes additional ideas for future developments. Through the reports from the headteacher and the subject leaders' and through visiting lessons, governors have a very good understanding of the quality of the teaching and learning in the school. They monitor standards and are actively involved in the evaluation of how well the school is performing. Governors check that spending decisions lead to measurable improvements in standards and overall provision.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	279361	Balance from previous year	-1892
Total expenditure	274493	Balance carried forward to the	2976

Expenditure per pupil	2745

next	
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45. The school has moved from a position of paying back a manageable and agreed deficit amount to having a small surplus. Governors seek very good value for money, not only in cost, but also quality. This is reflected in the high standards of the new building and the improved facilities. The outstanding vision of the headteacher coupled with a commitment to provide the best quality of learning and accommodation that the school can afford is reflected in the developing accommodation. The long-term strategic planning of the headteacher and governors reflects their commitment to improvement, often building on what is already very good. The school has developed an attractive and informative website that provides very good up-to-date information for parents and the community.
46. Systems of self-evaluation are rigorous. All members of the school community, including parents and pupils, are consulted regularly. All comments are welcomed and considered. The governors and the headteacher are not afraid to make bold decisions in the best interests of the school. Administrative support in the school is highly professional and very efficient. The chair of the finance committee provides a very detailed analysis of income and expenditure and the headteacher and governors are very well informed. Reserves are minimal and every penny has to be spent very prudently. To ensure that requirements are met, spending is closely linked to the provisions of the very clear school development plan.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is **very good**. There are several **excellent** features in every area of learning and the work in this part of the school has improved significantly since the last inspection.

Pupils enter the Reception Class in the September before their fifth birthday. The attainment on entry varies from year to year but is average overall. No children in the present Reception class have benefited from nursery education, although most have attended a part-time playgroup. As there is only a small number of children in the group, they are taught with Year 1 pupils. All children achieve very well. The curriculum is very well planned to provide a wide range of interesting, challenging and relevant activities. It is enhanced and enriched by an excellent range of educational visits and visitors with special knowledge and expertise. All adults are very good role models and establish very good relationships with children and parents. They share a commitment to monitoring all aspects of children's learning and personal and social development. Children are very well prepared for starting work in the National Curriculum.

The accommodation and resources are good; children benefit from the extensive and imaginative use of the outdoor accommodation, which is planned to support all areas of learning. All adults have developed very effective links with families and the pre-school providers before children begin school. Even at this early stage in the school year the children are confident and interested learners. Parents enjoy the links and comment very favourably on the quality of provision in this class. Their involvement in their children's learning is a result of the very high quality communication. The leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are very good overall; the Foundation Stage leader has excellent aspirations for the development of each child. She enables them to learn in a creative, well-focused and caring environment.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in personal, social and emotional development is **very good** with some **excellent** features.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve very well and develop very positive attitudes because of the very good teaching and very high expectations of all staff
- Children are sensitively introduced to local customs, cultures and religions of people in multi-faith and multi-cultural Britain
- Very supportive relationships are quickly established and children develop confidence and enjoy learning

Commentary

47. Children achieve high standards in this area of learning and are on course to exceed the expected early learning goals by the end of the year. They know what is fair and acceptable behaviour. This is because of the consistent approach and security of well-considered routines. Children listen to and participate in the many interesting stories and activities. Most speak clearly and confidently. They are continually encouraged to feel proud of their achievements. Children are reminded regularly of the very high standards of behaviour expected. They are encouraged to share and take turns during activities. They put up their hands before answering questions. Groups of children are frequently observed working very well together with minimal adult intervention.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is very good and all adults make many opportunities to develop children's speaking and listening skills in all areas of learning
- Children achieve very well in reading because of very good teaching and the very effective involvement of parents
- Children achieve very well in writing as they have many planned and incidental opportunities for practising writing skills

Commentary

48. From discussions with children and the analysis of completed work, evidence indicates that children have achieved very well in the first half term and the higher-attaining children are well placed to exceed the Early Learning Goals. There is a wide range of ability in this class although standards are average overall.
49. Very good relationships give children the confidence to speak and all adults listen intently and respond to their comments. The teacher has developed an exceedingly rigorous and tightly-structured plan for the teaching of sounds. Great emphasis is placed on children's ability to say the sounds, recognise them in print and practise them in writing. Children are encouraged to hold pencils and crayons with the correct grip. ICT is very well incorporated into the planning.
50. Higher-attaining and most average-attaining children read fluently and accurately with good understanding. The books chosen are well matched to their abilities and interest. They use reasoning skills well and re-tell familiar stories in the correct sequence. They read familiar texts well. Lower-attaining children benefit from repetition of vocabulary and picture clues.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **very good** with some excellent features.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are very good and all children achieve very well
- The teacher plans a wide range of structured activities to ensure that children understand number and apply their skills to other areas of learning

Commentary

51. Attainment overall is about average although it varies widely across the group. The higher-attaining children are well placed to exceed the Early Learning Goals, average-attaining children are well placed to reach them and those with obstacles to learning at present are achieving lower standards.
52. The teacher has very good subject knowledge and rigorously ensures that assessment guides planning and the resources used. Most children can count to 20 and, during the inspection, were learning subtraction from 10. Nearly all children recognise a wide range of two-dimensional and some three-dimensional shapes. They create interesting mathematical

patterns showing a very good awareness of order, shape and colour. Teachers use their ICT skills very successfully in order to develop children's understanding of number, shape and space. Children are encouraged to reason and investigate all aspects of number. During the inspection, the outdoor area was used very well to reinforce children's understanding of counting in sequence and ordering by length.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children's learning is greatly enhanced by the exciting range of activities and excellent range of visits and visitors
- Children have many very good opportunities for using ICT.
- The excellent planning of this area of learning ensures that children apply the basic skills of literacy and numeracy progressively.

Commentary

53. As a result of the very good teaching children achieve very well in all aspects of this area of learning. Their attainment is good. During the year, the teacher provides very well for children's scientific, technical, geographical and historical aspects of learning. Children's learning is very well developed through the wide range of investigations planned. They are confident and capable users of ICT and know that many pieces of equipment are powered by electricity. Children have many opportunities for making models from construction equipment and are beginning to understand the order of seasons and seasonal changes. During the year, they compare present-day lifestyles and equipment with those of earlier historical periods. They learn about different regions of the United Kingdom and the world by following the journeys of Hammy Hamster. During the inspection, they learned some of the key elements of the Hindu festival of Diwali and made divas.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching, learning and achievement are very good in all aspects
- The good level of accommodation, including the high quality outdoor accommodation, and the good range of resources are used very effectively and imaginatively

Commentary

54. All children achieve very well in this area of learning and are well placed to exceed the requirements of the Early Learning Goals. The higher-attaining children are on course to exceed the expected goals. In the outdoor activities, children showed very good hand and eye co-ordination and balance and used the equipment imaginatively. The range of activities planned enhanced their co-ordination skills and their increasing ability to work in groups. Most children handle construction equipment, paintbrushes, scissors and pencils with good levels of dexterity and accuracy. Higher-attaining and average-attaining children hold pencils with the correct grip and consequently their standards of handwriting have improved very well during the half term. Children identified as needing additional help are given very good support and encouragement, and take pride in their learning and achievements.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is very **good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching, learning and achievement are very good in all aspects of this area of learning
- Children's very positive attitudes were evident in their knowledge and confidence during discussion.

Commentary

55. From the lessons observed, displays and discussions it is clear that most children are well placed to reach the expected levels of learning in this area; higher-attaining children are well placed to exceed them. Planning shows that over the year children have a very wide range of opportunities to develop their creative and language skills.
56. They are encouraged to experiment when mixing paints and using modelling materials; during the inspection, they manipulated clay very carefully in order to form holders for divas. A particular strength is their very good awareness of shape and texture in art. The teacher and the LSA skilfully extend children's language and encourage their imaginative and collaborative activities. They have a very clear understanding of the skills to be learnt from each activity. When children collected leaves, they accurately described shape, texture and colour. Children sing tunefully with accurate pitch, dynamics and rhythm. No teaching of instrumental work was observed.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is very good overall.
- Standards in reading and writing exceed national expectations for most pupils.
- The achievement of pupils, including those with special educational needs, is good.
- Literacy is used to very good effect in other subjects.
- There is very good leadership and management of the subject including very good assessment systems that are used very well.
- Learning support assistants are deployed well.

Commentary

57. Standards in English exceed the expected levels by the end of both Year 2 and Year 6. During the inspection evidence indicates that the attainment level for most pupils in Year 2 is already above the national average in reading, writing, speaking and listening, and pupils are on course to make further gains over the year. By the end of Year 6, attainment overall is on course to be above the expected level. Those pupils capable of attaining higher standards are on course to attain at well above the expected levels by the end of the year. In the present Year 6 class, one quarter of the group have special educational needs. These pupils are being supported very well but two or three of those with special educational needs are unlikely to reach the expected levels.

58. In recent years the numbers of pupils taking the tests at the end of Years 2 and 6 are too small to compare reliably with the overall national scores. The standards attained in reading and writing by the pupils tested in 2004 all matched national expectations and two thirds of the pupils attained the higher than expected Level 3 in Year 2 and Level 5 in Year 6. The teachers' tracking procedures demonstrate that all of these pupils made at least satisfactory individual gains and did as well as might be expected. The quarter with special educational needs achieved better than expected from their low level of prior attainment. Since the previous inspection pupils' levels of attainment have varied depending on the composition of each small group. The trend has been above that found nationally in both classes and in both cases, the school's position on the graph is above that for most schools nationally. The school is on course to reach the realistic but ambitious targets set for English this year.
59. The quality of teaching across the school is very good, with examples of excellent practice. The dedicated work by the teachers with the help of the well-trained support staff has a very strong impact on the progress that pupils make. The inspirational and very well organised teaching, combined with the pupils' very good attitudes and willingness to succeed, ensures that the achievement of all pupils, including those with special educational needs, is never less than good. Teachers use the National Literacy Strategy very well and have modified it very successfully for use in mixed-age classes. They also use skills developed in English to promote learning in the dedicated time each day to develop basic skills through the humanities and creative activities.
60. All pupils attain standards in speaking and listening and in reading that are better than those found in most schools and, for the quarter with special educational needs, are better than might have been expected. When sharing discussions about their reading pupils explain eagerly how they love books. The class teachers develop these skills successfully. Teachers plan a range of good opportunities for pupils to speak in front of an audience and to negotiate with a partner. All pupils are included and achieve well. Pupils mainly respond using whole sentences. Even the youngest explain confidently what it means to be a good listener. Pupils provide complex definitions, such as why and how they have identified their favourite part of a story. Standards in Years 3 to 6 are very good and reflect the very good quality of teaching seen. As a result, pupils achieve well, with higher attaining pupils achieving very well. Through discussions of texts, teachers develop pupils' ability to express opinions.
61. Reading is promoted strongly in the school. As a result, for most pupils the enthusiasm to read begins early. Pupils confidently explain that the index provides alphabetical clues but the contents page shows where to look for broader topics. By the end of Year 2, most pupils read from a wide range of texts confidently and fluently, with good expression. They enjoy spotting and explaining jokes in the texts. Their pleasure in books and their confidence in reading silently and to others grows year on year. In Years 3 and 4 pupils readily read prose and then change it to rhyming couplets. They manage to retain all of the meaning whilst incorporating stage instructions and dialogue with good attention to punctuation. In Years 5 and 6, most pupils read fluently, with very good expression that reflects and echoes the dialogue of characters and the meaning of the text. There are very few older pupils who experience any reading problems or need to figure out the meaning of unfamiliar words, but just a few less confident pupils still need some encouragement and support when they find this process difficult. They persevere very well, and sound out unfamiliar words, sometimes with help, and invariably succeed.
62. As part of the review of homework strategies, the school has revised the pattern of regular communication with parents using a diary system. This has extended the reading diary process that has been in place for some time. The homework and reading diaries are used well and provide a very useful link between teachers and parents. The reading records of older pupils have been maintained over several years and reflect the wide range of books that they have enjoyed.

63. Attainment in writing is good. In most classes it exceeds the expected level. The powerful use of writing by pupils is maintained in work in other subjects. This approach is lifting the standard of pupils' writing for different audiences to a much higher level, and the school is rightly proud of pupils' achievements. Pupils respond very positively to the very effective teaching, and they work hard. Teaching and learning groups based on the pupils' prior attainment enable work to be matched to the needs of the pupils to very good effect. The quality of handwriting varies. In 'best 'books and for work on display it is well formed and very attractive. Pupils in Year 2 are beginning to adopt a very pleasing cursive style. In Years 5 and 6 there are examples of high quality creative and factual writing, especially poetry. Examples of pupils' completed work are displayed throughout the school and often make gripping reading such as work describing the hopelessness of young mill workers in Victorian times. Overall, spelling is good and pupils' spelling logs reflect the care given to the review of written work and the care taken in marking and supporting re-drafting. The overall picture is very positive. The presentation of completed work in all classes is very good. This improvement in presentation is seen in all written work and is a great improvement since the previous inspection.
64. Those pupils who require additional support are helped by tasks being adapted to exactly match their needs and abilities, allowing them to succeed and make progress. This work is often seen in the imaginative and profitable time called 'ticket time' in the younger classes and 'challenge' or 'team time' in classes for older pupils. This time enables teachers and support staff to target difficulties identified through the marking process as well as to encourage collaborative and creative activities. Teaching assistants provide very good additional guidance to complement the work of the teacher. Additional support is focused on the targets set out in each pupil's Individual Education Plans that are shared with parents.
65. The subject is led and managed very well. Test results are analysed carefully, and challenging targets are planned well for the next stage of pupils' learning. Monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning include suggestions for improvement. Together with teachers and their parents, pupils agree new personal targets. The systematic monitoring of planning and assessment is very well organised and is driving up standards. The subject leader is passionate about the subject and committed to developing ways for raising the standard attained by every pupil to the highest possible level. Displays of books and pupils' work encourage and extend learning.
66. Shortly, library provision is to be established in the new multi-purpose research base where a bank of computers will be incorporated to support research and private study using books and the Internet. The provision will offer a good range of fiction and non-fiction books. Pupils need little encouragement to take their reading books home regularly to read with their parents and family.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

67. The pupils' skills in literacy and language are used to very good effect in other subjects. Examples include writing about planning healthy meals in design and technology projects. Pupils use accurate specific vocabulary when planning and writing up science experiments. Their written work in history and geography is persuasive and factual accounts are packed with detail. In Years 5 and 6, pupils research work in history and geography and develop their skimming or scanning skills very well. Strategies learned in English grammar and literature are linked very well with work in religious education, history and geography. English makes a very good contribution to pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural education. Overall, the carefully planned promotion of language and literacy across the curriculum is very good.

MATHEMATICS

The provision for mathematics is **very good** with some **excellent** features.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in the 2004 national tests are well above the national average at Key Stage 2 and place the school in the top five per cent of schools nationally.
- Pupils in Year 6 and Year 2 are well placed to achieve above average standards by the end of the year.
- Pupils' very high levels of achievement are reflected in high standards, especially considering that over 25 per cent of pupils have special educational needs.
- Pupils achieve very well and have developed very positive attitudes to the subject because of the very good teaching and very high expectations of all staff.
- The assessment, monitoring and tracking of each pupil's work are excellent and contribute to very high levels of achievement.
- The excellent quality of investigative work and application of numeracy to other areas of the curriculum develop pupils' understanding very effectively.

Commentary

68. Standards are above the expected level across the school. There have been very good improvements in standards, the quality of teaching and learning and in the leadership and management of the subject since the last inspection. Mathematics is a rapidly improving subject across the school. There is a greater emphasis on investigative work in all classes and pupils achieve very well overall. Most pupils in Year 6 are well placed to achieve standards above the national average with higher attaining pupils achieving very high standards. Higher attaining, including gifted and talented, pupils achieve very well because of the extremely high levels of challenge in all aspects of mathematics.
69. Pupils in Year 2 apply their number skills very effectively to all aspects of mathematics. They tell the time to quarter to and quarter past the hour and have a very good understanding of the concept of time and time intervals; for example during a lesson observed they understood the range of activities that could be achieved in a minute, the brevity of a second and longer time elements such as an hour, a day and a week. They classify a wide range of two and three-dimensional shapes using a range of properties including symmetry. Their data handling skills are also well developed. Throughout Years 1 and 2 pupils become very confident mathematicians. They rise to the challenges set by the teachers, try different approaches when solving problems and show very high levels of mathematical reasoning. Achievement is very good considering the standards on entry to the Reception Class that are no more than average and the high percentage of pupils with special educational needs.
70. Pupils in Year 6 achieve very well in all aspects of mathematics. The majority of pupils use a wide range of methods for problem solving and planning investigations; for example, their very high quality understanding of place value is reflected in their ability to multiply and divide using large numbers. Their understanding of equivalence of fractions and decimals is very good considering this early stage in the academic year. When solving number problems mentally, they use a wide variety of methods and explain their reasoning. Pupils have a very good understanding of the angle properties of triangles and quadrilaterals. Most pupils plot the co-ordinates of different quadrilaterals given three co-ordinates and have a very good understanding of co-ordinates in the first quadrant. During the lesson they were progressing to understanding the three other quadrants. During this excellent lesson, the teacher developed their reasoning skills and their understanding of plus and minus numbers applied to co-ordinates. They use a wide variety of different strategies for solving mental and written calculations. Pupils explain their work very well; pupils justify their reasoning and manipulate numbers easily and confidently. The small numbers in each year group account for the apparent swing in standards. This makes overall comparisons unwise although it is good to celebrate the success of individuals.
71. Throughout the school pupils show tremendous enthusiasm for the subject. They are very well motivated and extremely well behaved. Pupils' relationships with each other and their teachers and support staff are very good. The school has very successfully and rigorously developed the National Numeracy Strategy in order that pupils investigate and apply reasoning skills and creative thinking to aid their understanding. There is a very strong thread of mathematical challenge in work throughout the school.
72. Teaching overall is very good and in most of the lessons observed it was excellent. This is a very high level of improvement since the previous inspection. All aspects of teaching are strengths. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and understanding. This is reflected in very clear explanations and very good teaching of basic and advanced skills which contribute to pupils' very good levels of understanding. Planning for all groups is excellent and is based on excellent tracking of pupils' attainment and achievements. Sufficient time is given for revision of earlier learning and, as a result, pupils consolidate their learning very well. Teachers question pupils and use their responses to assess their understanding. They

have very high expectations of pace of work and its presentation; consequently they know how well their pupils have achieved and presentation is good. The extremely high quality of support given by classroom assistants, including those who support pupils with special educational needs, contributes to the achievement of all.

73. The excellent leadership and management by the subject leader have successfully raised standards and the profile of mathematics throughout the school. The excellent systems for assessment, monitoring and tracking give all teachers secure evidence from which to plan. Target setting is very well founded on a wide range of information about each pupil's ability. Daily planning, group organisation and curricular changes are soundly based on excellent analysis of standards. The school is constantly seeking ways of improving all aspects of mathematics. The high standards in mathematics are further enhanced by the effective use of ICT across all strands of the subject.

Mathematics across the curriculum

74. The headteacher and all staff have a shared commitment and belief that children should not only excel in but also enjoy the subject. This is consistently reflected in the ethos of the subject, the excellent levels of challenge and the many ways in which the diverse needs of mathematics are both learned and enjoyed by pupils who are confident learners. Pupils frequently use mathematics as an integral part of their work in other subjects. This is carefully planned to match the abilities of all pupils and extend their understanding of mathematics in the world; for example, they use graphs and charts when recording data in geography and science, shape and pattern in art and design and calculations with large numbers when comparing and contrasting historical periods and important events in religious education.

SCIENCE

Provision for science is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve very well and are now attaining above the expected level at the end of Years 2 and 6.
- Teaching and learning are consistently very good throughout the school.
- The method of working through experimentation and investigation is producing very good dividends.
- The use made of assessment and moderated work to inform planning is very good.
- The subject is very well led and managed.

Commentary

75. Very good teaching enables pupils to achieve standards that in most years are above the expected level by the end of Years 2 and 6. The standards at the end of Year 6 are as high as they are because the school concentrates on pupils being scientists and conducting interesting experiments and investigations. This process, begun as soon as pupils join the school, is built on systematically in all classes. Pupils of all levels of prior attainment get a fair deal as work is matched very closely to their earlier experiences. Those with special educational needs succeed because, besides having specially tailored work, they are very well supported by skilled teaching and well-informed classroom assistants. Pupils who are capable of working independently are provided with many opportunities to go beyond the level of the work planned for the class to discover for themselves the next steps in the process being studied. This means that teaching and learning time is used well and all pupils are encouraged to work to their personal capacity.

76. Teaching and learning are very good in all classes. The very good relationships enable teachers and pupils to work well in a calm and purposeful way. They make time for reflection and fun. Lessons are very well planned, often including options for individual development. Planned activities provide strong links between topics and other subjects that make knowledge secure through revisiting a variety of experiences. Resources and pupils are managed well and, in lessons, the different approaches regularly make learning brisk and time flies. Teachers question pupils very skilfully, causing them to think of answers to solve problems and to demonstrate their understanding of complex issues. Work begun in science is regularly linked with other projects in 'team time' or 'challenge time'. These opportunities to practise and extend skills learned in lessons during periods of personal endeavour are very useful in extending and sharing earlier experiences.
77. In a lesson in Year 2, using photographic information on the interactive board pupils worked successfully to establish a common pattern for questioning presented information. They showed how to wipe aside irrelevant facts until they reached the small details that established truths that could be tested and verified. When working on a topic about evaporation in a lesson for Year 5 and 6 pupils, they readily incorporated their experiences and ideas into their work. Discussions about sieving out larger particles prior to filtering through fine mesh and filter paper resulted in a deeper understanding of a process that they thought they had understood earlier. Later pupils used these considerations to speed the planning process for their next stage of investigation as they had consolidated earlier learning very well.
78. Assessment procedures are very good. They are built into lessons in the planning stage and possible alternative strategies are listed to engage pupils' imagination and to extend their thinking. Teachers use these processes very skilfully to adapt their work within lessons and to inform the next steps in planning. Marking is thorough in books and often shows a sensible way forward. Much, however, takes place beside pupils, where a comment or a word is enough to refocus pupils' thinking. The subject leader has put very good systems in place. She monitors planning and has a little time to work with colleagues in the classroom. All staff meet together regularly to moderate completed work with the intention of creating a common pattern and standard of marking. The range and quality of resources are very good.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

The provision for information and communication technology is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Strong leadership has had a very positive impact on improving the quality of provision.
- Pupils throughout the school achieve well and standards now exceed the expected levels.
- The use of the subject to promote and extend learning in other subjects is very well developed and is supported very well by the teachers.

Commentary

79. Standards exceed the expected levels in classes across the school. At the time of the last inspection, standards were about the expected level at the end of both Year 2 and Year 6. The improvement in this subject has been impressive. Pupils across the school have skills that are above the expected levels. The most impressive feature is not, however, that pupils have these skills but that they use them in almost every other subject throughout the day with skill and confidence requiring little if any help from adults. They have been taught to think for themselves and to extend the scope and range of their work through independent but monitored endeavour. The most confident pupils are working at levels expected for the next phase of education, in part because their understanding of investigation and their personal endeavour are so good. Every classroom has a bank of computers that are used very well. Some are far from new but are all used to meet differing needs. The new machines soon to

be installed in the research suite will extend the opportunities but will not replace the machines used so effectively in classrooms. All of the teachers and support staff have had high quality training and are very experienced. The scheme of work ensures that all aspects of the curriculum are taught.

80. Pupils in Year 1 know how the technology that underpins the subject is a vital part of their daily life. They access programs about mathematics, reading, spelling and painting with ease. They use the computer for word processing, using the mouse confidently, and are beginning to find their way around the keyboard and icons. By the end of Year 2, pupils understand the various forms of communication such as CD- ROMs, tape recorders, text and photographs. They confidently log on, use safe search engines with support, copy and insert pictures, edit text, save their work and log off. By Year 6 many pupils are confident and competent users of computers. They know the usefulness of ICT in their work and in the outside world. For example, pupils readily collect information and present it on spreadsheets and graphs. They use secure search engines to access websites on the Internet. Their skills in control technology are equally strong, as the school has good access to an interesting and up-to-date range of relevant software.
81. Teaching is very good overall but dedicated lessons in ICT are rare beyond Year 2. Instead new techniques are taught as required in whatever subject they are required. Teachers' knowledge and encouragement have a positive effect on raising standards. All teachers have good subject knowledge and explain the purpose of intended work to pupils very well. Planning is very good and learning objectives are made very clear. Emphasis is placed on the development of relevant technical vocabulary as the skills learned in ICT are used to support work in other subjects. There is a very good balance between formal instruction and the time allowed for pupils to get on with their independent work. This results in good learning. In all lessons, the pace is brisk and all of the activities used are broken down into manageable steps. Skilful questioning fully involves pupils in their own learning and support is well targeted at those who need it most. Positive attitudes and very good behaviour are important factors in pupils' achievement in lessons.
82. The leadership of the subject is very good and is shared between a very experienced teacher and a new member of staff. Strategies to raise attainment levels have been very well managed. There has been a comprehensive whole-school audit and evaluation of pupils' skills in the subject. All teachers have a very good understanding of what pupils do well and where more support or equipment might be needed. Very good systems for assessment are used to chart pupils' work and progress and to enable teachers to provide relevant extension work. Pupils follow a very structured self-evaluation process and know where they are skilled and where they need more help or practice. The resources including interactive boards are good. The additional computers expected shortly will enable more work by groups to support investigation and enquiry in other subjects.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

83. The use of ICT across the curriculum is purposeful and is very effective. Teachers' planning for other subjects always identifies opportunities for its use. Teachers and pupils regularly use work from other subjects as the means to extend or exploit computer skills. Developing skills and confidence in mathematics helps pupils to develop more advanced skills in the subject. Literacy skills are improved by the pupils' growing proficiency in word processing and by the use of programs to improve their skills in reading and spelling. Pupils use software programs and the Internet regularly for personal research in other subjects such as history, geography, design and technology and art and design. Data handling in science and mathematics using computer skills is another good development.

HUMANITIES

84. There were very few direct observations of teaching and learning in **geography** but from discussions with pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 and analysis of their written work, pupils are well placed to exceed the expected levels by the end of the year. At this early stage in the year pupils investigate and use a wide range of information including maps, ICT and a wide range of reference material. In Year 2 pupils followed the route of Hammy Hamster as he is taken to different parts of the United Kingdom, Europe and further away to Africa, Japan and China. Pupils use accurate geographical vocabulary and speak with interest and understanding about different parts of the village of Fowlmere, comparing it with seaside resorts in the United Kingdom. The stimulating and creative manner in which the subject is taught develops children's understanding of the impact of the locality on lifestyles and the environment.
85. In Year 6 pupils locate regions of the United Kingdom, such as the Highlands, national boundaries, rivers and major cities. They have extended their geographical knowledge and skills by studying physical features, such as rivers and mountains, and use a wide range of mapping skills. Pupils understand the route of a river from its source to the mouth and identify meanders, oxbow lakes and other physical features. Residential and local visits to places of educational interest are incorporated very well into the curriculum. The use of ICT to extend pupils' learning is another very strong feature. All pupils develop a very good understanding of environmental issues and how all individuals have a responsibility to care for the environment. There are many opportunities for developing literacy and numeracy skills and the planned curriculum contributes very well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Teachers' planning is monitored regularly and assessment is very good.

History

Provision in history is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above the expected level.
- There is a very good range of visits to enhance the curriculum.
- Consistency of approach is ensured through very detailed schemes of work and year group planning.
- Teaching is very good.

Commentary

86. Standards are above the expected level in all classes. The available evidence, which includes lesson observation in Years 3 to 6, curricular planning, analysis of pupils' work and discussions with pupils and teachers, shows that pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 are well placed to exceed national expectations. Particular strengths are in their knowledge and understanding of ancient civilisations and lifestyle in the Victorian period. They have very good understanding of the effects of historical events and inventions and present day lifestyles and customs. Pupils achieve well. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 learn about old and new toys and compare the range of holidays taken both now and in times past. They have very good opportunities for developing their speaking skills. During the inspection they spoke about Blackpool as a favourite holiday resort for people now and also those who lived many years ago.
87. Teaching is very good. Teachers are knowledgeable about the topics selected and the lessons are packed with interesting information and activities. In the lessons observed the pace of work was very brisk and purposeful. Pupils learned very well and showed tremendous enthusiasm and enjoyment. Pupils' accounts of life and times in Ancient Egypt are informative, accurate and demonstrate their enthusiasm for the subject. In Years 5 and 6, pupils have written very detailed accounts of the lifestyles of children in Victorian times and compared them with their lifestyles and hobbies in the present day. Their very high quality writing illustrates an exceptionally high level of knowledge of social conditions, employment

and the extensive differences between rich and poor children. Their writing shows excellent levels of empathy with children of that type as they described conditions in coalmines, in the factories and compared how Sundays were spent then with the present day range of activities. The quality of presentation and illustration are exemplary; children speak with enthusiasm and knowledge about this historical period using creative and emotive language, which reflects secure understanding and very good social awareness. The subject contributes very successfully to all aspects of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

88. History and geography are enhanced by the school's excellent commitment to the development of learning skills and the inclusion of literacy, mathematics and personal and social development across all subjects.

Religious Education

Provision for religious education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers are knowledgeable about the subject and promote a strong interest in the faiths and traditions of others.
- The school is alert to the opportunities to learn from experts in their own faith and to use the skills available to increase the pupils' knowledge.
- The school's planning includes traditions from other than Christian worship very well.
- The values of the school are an important part of the planning for all lessons.

Commentary

89. Attainment levels in this subject fully meet the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. In classes across the school attainment is better than that usually found in schools nationally. Work in this subject is exciting, imaginative and practical and pupils achieve well. There is a high level of spirituality in many lessons that is naturally reflected in this subject. Pupils learn about the Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Islamic, Jewish, and Sikh faiths and make visits to different places of worship. Much of the work is based on experiences and discussion. Pupils are developing an understanding of the traditions, customs and dress of different cultures and faiths. They are helped to compare the similarities and differences between the major world faiths. Teachers carefully draw out the common features of the faiths studied. Pupils learn about the customs and prophets of each tradition. Teachers incorporate the skills of experts and professionals from different faiths and traditions to extend the range and scope of the work for pupils to very good effect.
90. In the lessons seen the quality of teaching was very good. Teachers use work in the subject very sensitively to contribute to pupils' personal as well as academic development. Pupils read stories from the Old and New Testaments and from the sacred books of traditions other than the Christian faith. Work to compare the pattern of celebrations based on festivals of light enabled pupils to reflect on the Hindu and Sikh customs at the time of Diwali. Whilst working in groups, pupils reflected that there were many similarities with their family traditions at Christmas time. In a lesson about Diwali, pupils spontaneously began to sing a known song about the light coming to brighten the world at times of darkness.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

91. Completed work on display in **design and technology** indicates that pupils' attainment in this subject is at least in line with expected levels. Too few formal lessons were observed to make firm judgements about provision, teaching and learning overall across the school. In the few observations that were possible the standard of teaching and learning were both good. Many pupils were observed however undertaking personal or collaborative work in

design and technology during 'ticket time' and 'challenge time'. Discussion with pupils as they worked showed that they are gaining experience of a range of materials and techniques and are developing the expected subject skills through designing and making a variety of useful products. Younger pupils showed how they had designed and made models of houses that reflected some buildings in the village where they live and in periods that they had studied in history. Others were making the lighthouse for the keeper in the story whilst others designed healthy food for his lunch. Designing healthy meals as part of working towards the 'Healthy schools' award was described enthusiastically by pupils in Years 3 and 4. Clothes and resources have been designed for a coming production. Pyramids reflect work in history along with the pharaohs' chariots. The pupils have been very involved in designing the adventurous play equipment that enhances the spaces for play at the front and back of the school. Strong links with the geography of India and Africa have enabled them to create designer meals using traditional foodstuffs from these countries. Well-organised sketchbooks show that pupils have developed a strong set of criteria for design and for evaluation. Comments about suitability for purpose and possible improvements are part of all projects. This is an improvement since the time of the last inspection. Resources are plentiful and are of good quality. The use made of ICT to support learning either through planning, modelling and control is well developed.

92. Insufficient lessons and activities in **music** were observed in order to make an overall judgement on provision, standards, achievement, teaching and learning. From the activities observed and discussions with pupils, it is clear that they enjoy the subject. Those pupils who participated in the extra-curricular activities achieved very high standards in ensemble playing, maintained a steady beat, had a good rhythmic awareness and watched the conductor. In another percussion group, pupils told a story using drums to suggest the excitement of preparation for sailing; they contrasted the sailing on calm waters with the experiences and violent thunderstorms before reaching a safe haven back in the harbour. This performance was linked with the whole school's involvement with a "round the world" sailing race. They are particularly proud of their skills in drumming and moved with ease from one instrument to the next. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 have a good understanding of the pentatonic scale and those in Years 1 and 2 sing "Diwali is here" in accurate pitch and a good sense of rhythm.
93. The curriculum planning, timetables and other documentation and discussions with staff and pupils show that pupils have very good opportunities for instrumental tuition. This is taught by specialist teachers, one of whom is a parent. A very wide range of visits and visitors enhanced the subject. During the inspection a visitor from the Band of the Coldstream Guards performed for the pupils. The curriculum is further enhanced by opportunities for performance in school, in the community and through links with other schools. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral and social development and their knowledge and understanding of music from a wide range of cultures, genre and faiths.
94. **Physical education** was not a main focus for the inspection and too few lessons were observed to gather enough evidence to make sufficiently firm judgements on the overall provision. Attainment levels in the one lesson observed and in a number of games clubs were good and exceeded national expectations. The school is affiliated to a national scheme where professional training and support are available for teachers and pupils. This also links schools with others in a local cluster to enable groups and teams to join together successfully for competitive team games. There is a good scheme of work and resources are good. They are all readily accessible and in good condition.
95. Stretching exercises, good warm up activities and work designed to raise the pulse rate are regular features within lessons. Pupils know the value of regular exercise and enjoy the facilities provided by the school. All pupils enjoy swimming in the school pool during the summer months. Most pupils achieve the expected levels and many gain awards that exceed national expectations. During the winter months pupils attend lessons in a local pool.

Art and design

The provision for art and design is **very good** and has been greatly improved since the previous inspection.

Main Strengths and Weaknesses

- Pupils achieve very well because of the good teaching and the school's commitment to the development of artistic skills.
- The curriculum is enriched by a wide range of visits and opportunities for using a wide variety of media.
- The quality of teaching is very good across the school.
- The very good range of progression in artistic skills is reflected in the displays around the school and in pupils' sketchbooks.
- Pupils have very good opportunities for using the school environment and other areas of the curriculum as stimuli for creativity and the development of artistic skills.

Commentary

96. As a result of very good teaching and careful attention to detail in planning, pupils' attainment is above the expected level in both two and three-dimensional work in art and design. Teachers' knowledge and enthusiasm in this subject are very secure across the school. They work systematically through a range of topics and techniques to very good effect. Pupils' artistic skills and knowledge of art and artists develop very well as they progress through the school. They incorporate art from a wide range of cultures and different historical periods into their work. They build on a well-structured range of skills and consequently are very well motivated and confident when experimenting with new techniques. The analysis of the wide range of work displayed in school and pupils' sketch books shows very good achievement and standards above national expectations for pupils in Year 2 and Year 6.
97. In Years 1 and 2, pupils become increasingly skilled in using a wide range of techniques, materials and research skills. Their observational drawing of sea urchins showed very high levels of care, research and expertise in using pencils to show perspective, shading and shape. Their knowledge was enhanced by the excellent use of ICT during independent choice time where they used a digital camera and the interactive white board to enlarge the image. The subject is very well integrated into their topic 'The Seaside' and they used a wide range of media as they explored texture, colour and line and printing.
98. In Years 3 to 6, pupils have very good opportunities for extending the range of materials used and refining their use of pencils. The planned curricular links with history are exemplary as pupils design models and masks related to the Egyptian topic. In Years 5 and 6, an exemplary range of pencil work showed very high level of skills in texture, shading, perspective and mixed media. The landscapes drawn were of a particularly high standard.
99. Pupils' work is displayed very attractively, valued greatly and provides inspiration and examples for other pupils. Sketchbooks are used very purposefully and successfully as pupils are encouraged to investigate shape, pattern and texture. The high quality curricular planning and good resources as well as very good assessment of pupils' attainment and progress contribute to very high levels of achievement. The subject makes a powerful contribution to all aspects of pupils' social, moral and cultural development.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

100. Very few lessons were observed in this area of the school's work and it is not possible to give an overall judgement on provision. Those observed and parts of collective worship indicate that this aspect of the work of the school is regarded as important. Pupils' attitudes,

achievements and self-worth are valued highly and are promoted very well. The very good quality of teaching helps pupils to consider world events sensibly. Very good curricular enrichment, including visits to places of educational interest, helps pupils to build a holistic picture of society and the world in which they live. The staff welcome visitors to the school whose knowledge contributes to pupils' understanding of how many elements of the community and society work. Lessons called 'Circle time' are used to give pupils opportunities for voicing their opinions and concerns. The headteacher and staff listen to pupils and respond to their opinions. Pupils develop a very good understanding of how a fair society works. They learn many aspects of a healthy lifestyle, a topic that is very well covered in the curriculum.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

