

INSPECTION REPORT

SEATON SLUICE SOUTH FIRST SCHOOL

Seaton Sluice, Whitley Bay

LEA area: Northumberland

Unique reference number: 122234

Headteacher: Mrs Y Waller

Lead inspector: Mr C Quigley

Dates of inspection: 28 February – 2 March 2005

Inspection number: 272667

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3-9
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	170
School address:	Granville Avenue Seaton Sluice Whitley Bay Tyne and Wear
Postcode:	NE26 4BX
Telephone number:	0191 2371839
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Appropriate authority:	Local Education Authority
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs G Ewen
Date of previous inspection:	22/3/1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Seaton Sluice First School is an average sized first school in Northumberland. The school caters for pupils between the ages of 3 and 9 and has 170 pupils on roll. The school serves the local community, where most of the pupils live. Almost all pupils are from a White British background. The proportion of pupils who are entitled to free school meals is lower than the national average. A lower than average proportion of pupils have special educational needs but the proportion who have statements of special educational needs matches the national average. There are seven classes. When children start nursery, their attainment is slightly below the national expectation. The school is involved with a number of projects such as 'Healthy Schools' and 'Eco Schools'. Until recently, the school has been working as a Beacon School.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
32507	Mr C Quigley	Lead inspector	Foundation stage of learning, art and design, geography, history, information and communication technology, music.
19431	Mr J Holmes	Lay inspector	
19226	Mr S Flood	Team inspector	Science, mathematics, religious education. special educational needs
27777	Mr R Greenall	Team inspector	English, design and technology, physical education, personal, social and health education.

The inspection contractor was:

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Seaton Sluice First School is a **very good** school with some outstanding features. All pupils achieve very well and standards are very high. Pupils very much enjoy coming to school and parents are extremely pleased with the quality of education. The school provides **very good** value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Standards are well above average in English, mathematics and science and in other areas they are above the expected level
- The leadership of the headteacher is outstanding and is supported by the very good leadership across the school. Teamwork is exceptional.
- The quality of teaching is consistently very good. Because of this, all pupils are absorbed in their learning and this helps all pupils to achieve very well.
- The curriculum is exciting and interesting and provides very well for pupils of all abilities.
- The school is committed to giving the very best deal to each pupil. In this school, every child matters as shown by the very good personal development of pupils.
- Systems to check the standards of pupils work are good but could be further developed.
- The way in which teachers give feedback to pupils is good, however, there are inconsistencies across the school.
- The governors know the school very well and influence it's development by very effective challenge and support.

The school was last inspected in March 1999 and since then has made **good** improvements. There were no major issues for the school to address but it has nevertheless met all of the recommendations of the last inspection. Improvements to the outdoor play area for children in Nursery and Reception have been very good and provision is now outstanding. There is now a very clear complaints procedure and governors monitor the school very well. The school has made many more improvements than were recommended and has maintained very high standards.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

Key: A - well above average; B – above average; C – average; D – below average; E – well below average

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

All pupils achieve **very well**. The table shows that very high standards in reading and writing, which put the school in the top 5 per cent of schools nationally, have been maintained well over a number of years. Standards in mathematics are usually very high. When children start Nursery, their attainment is slightly below the expected level for their age. They make good progress throughout nursery and begin the Reception class at a standard that matches the national expectation. This represents very good achievement, which continues during their time in Reception. When pupils start Year 1 their attainment is above the national expectation and the very good progress seen in the Foundation Stage of learning continues. By the end of Year 2, pupils attain very high standards and they have achieved very well. This continues throughout Years 3 and 4, where every pupil makes very good progress and achieves very well in English, mathematics and science. Standards

in all other subjects are above the normally expected levels in each class and, in art and design, standards are well above the expected level.

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **very good**. Attendance is very high and pupils very much enjoy what the school has to offer. This is due, in no small measure, to the very good ethos of the school, which helps all pupils to become absorbed in their learning. Pupils are taught to make a positive contribution to society through the very effective 'eco-schools' work. The 'philosophy for children' programme is very effective in helping pupils to become self-assured and eager to learn. The very good nurture group is helping a group of pupils, who find school difficult, to achieve well.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is **very good**. The very high standards achieved by pupils are a result of consistently very good teaching. Teachers are expert in the subjects and curriculum areas they teach. Their carefully planned lessons help pupils learn as well as they are able. Their innovative approaches to teaching capture the imagination of all pupils. Teaching assistants are used very effectively and their high level of expertise helps all pupils to achieve their very best. A significant amount of group work helps pupils to learn from each other extremely well. Teachers give pupils very good verbal feedback in lessons and this helps them to know how well they are getting on. Other feedback, such as marking and the use of learning targets is good but does not always give pupils enough advice about how they should improve their work. The curriculum is very good and the theme weeks organised throughout the school year are a good example of innovative learning, currently being encouraged by the government. The curriculum is very inclusive and, as a result, pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs, enjoy their learning and achieve very well. The school puts a high emphasis on pupils' safety and there is a very good level of care, guidance and support. Partnerships with parents are very positive and as a result, learning at home supports learning at school very well. The school also has very strong links with other local schools and has been a 'beacon school', acting as a centre of excellence and a positive example to other schools in the area.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Overall, the leadership and management of the school are **very good** and the leadership of the headteacher is outstanding. The headteacher has created a highly effective team where leadership is focused sharply on each pupil getting the best deal possible. This means that enjoyment and a very strong emphasis on high standards pervades all areas of the school's work. Governance is very good. Governors know their school very well and are devoted to making sure all pupils achieve their best. Seaton Sluice First School has strong leaders at all levels. Subject leaders are very good role models and help to make improvements to the quality of education through their dedication and expertise. Their work in checking standards of pupils' work, however, is still in the early stages of development. This is recognised by the school and some leaders have made a good start at addressing this.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents and pupils are very satisfied with the school. Parents believe that the headteacher is a very special person because of her commitment to helping every child to achieve well. Some parents voiced a concern at the parents' meeting about their pupils receiving too much homework. The inspection found that there had been an isolated example of this, but the general level of homework is appropriate and one of the factors for the high standards achieved by pupils.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Further develop the way in which standards of pupils' work are checked
- Further develop the good practice seen in some classes in giving high quality written feedback to pupils so that they know how to improve their work

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Standards in the basic skills are very high and all pupils throughout the school achieve well.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children in Nursery and Reception have a very good start to life at school and achieve very well. From a low starting point, they reach standards above the expected level by the time they leave Reception
- Pupils achieve very well in all subjects and standards in reading, writing and mathematics are very high because of very good teaching, an exciting curriculum and strong leadership
- Pupils' art work is impressive and standards are well above the expected level and, in all other areas, standards are above the expected level

Commentary

1. Children start Nursery with attainment that is below the expected level in all areas of learning. In their first months in Nursery, however, they make rapid progress and achieve very well. Because of very good teaching, children finish their first year of education with attainment that matches the national picture in all areas of learning. Very good achievement continues into Reception and by the time they begin Year 1, pupils' attainment is above the expected level. All staff in the Foundation Stage of learning work as a very effective team and plan programmes of work so that all children enjoy school and achieve their very best.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	19 (18.9)	15.8 (15.7)
writing	17.7 (17.5)	14.6 (14.6)
mathematics	18.8 (17.9)	16.2 (16.3)

There were 27 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

2. The table above shows how this picture of very good achievement continues so that by the end of Year 2, standards in the basic skills are very much higher than the national average. The school has maintained this position well since the last inspection and has continually driven up standards. Although the oldest pupils in the school do not take national tests, they leave the school very well equipped for the next phase of education with standards that are well above the national expectation in the basic skills and above average in most other areas. In science, standards are well above the national expectation in all year groups and pupils achieve very well. This is due, in no short measure, to the highly effective team created by the outstanding headteacher. Her strong leadership has helped to create a group of dedicated teachers that are committed to giving all pupils the best possible deal at school, and the curriculum captures the imagination and interests of all pupils. As a result, all pupils achieve very well. Pupils achieve particularly well in reading. Since the previous inspection, standards have risen much faster than the national trend. Most pupils reach the expected level, whilst the proportion reaching the higher level is more than double the national average.
3. Standards in art and design are very impressive and all pupils achieve very well in this subject. This is because of the strong emphasis the school places on the creative arts and because of the very good subject knowledge of staff, in particular the subject leader. Pupils' attitudes are extremely positive and this helps them to achieve very well. The way in which art

and design is incorporated into other curriculum areas is having a positive impact on standards. In all other areas of the curriculum, standards are above average and this impressive picture reflects the school's determination to promote the best possible outcomes for all pupils.

4. Pupils with special educational needs, the very able pupils and those pupils who are at risk of poor outcomes due to disrupted family life achieve well because of the very good provisions made for them. Again, this is because of the school's commitment to high achievement for all pupils. In this school, every child matters.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and attendance are all **very good**. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils very much enjoy coming to school and attendance is well above the national picture
- All pupils have very good attitudes to their work and towards each other and this helps them to achieve very well
- Provision for the most vulnerable pupils is very good
- The headteacher acts as an outstanding role model for pupils' moral development and there are some very good examples of pupils' spirituality being developed across the school
- Pupils' awareness of their own culture is very good

Commentary

5. Pupil attendance is well above the national average and pupils very much enjoy coming to school. Parents are very good at ensuring that their children come to school. The headteacher and school administrator monitor attendance closely so that any patterns of absence are picked up at the earliest stage.
6. Pupils' attitudes to learning are very good. They are keen to learn and, during lessons, are clearly excited by their learning. Pupils work both independently and in collaboration with other pupils very well and this ensures that they can learn very well even without direction from the teacher. Pupils talk with enthusiasm about their work and enjoy the rich range of activities provided by the school. A group of pupils take extensive responsibility for the 'eco project' and closely monitor re-cycling initiatives. The eco committee meets regularly to set targets for further development. Older pupils act as 'playground pals' for lonely pupils, an initiative that works very well. In discussion with pupils, they were very insistent that there was no bullying or other kind of harassment at the school. All members of staff share the same view that the school should be a happy place in which pupils can achieve their very best. Consequently, positive relationships between all members of the community are very good and pupils feel secure and confident.
7. Provision for the most disadvantaged pupils is very good. The school has responded very quickly and extremely effectively to a growing number of pupils whose personal circumstances put them at risk of poor educational outcomes. A nurture group has been established and a teaching assistant provides a very high standard of support for these pupils. Activities encourage pupils to explore their feelings and strategies for establishing and maintaining friendships. As a result of this very good support these pupils have very good attitudes to school and achieve well.
8. Pupils' moral development is very good. The headteacher is an outstanding role model and school assemblies continually explore key issues of right and wrong in relation to school life. There are many very good examples of teachers developing pupils' spirituality. For example, Year 3 pupils respond very well to mood music and reflect deeply on readings and their

meaning, giving some extremely thoughtful responses. Circle time successfully develops calm, thoughtful attitudes through the varied use of light and music to set a mood. Candlelight focuses attention very well and deepens levels of thinking. The development of thinking skills during these sessions is outstanding and makes a considerable contribution to the pupils' personal and social development.

9. In discussion with pupils, it is clear that they have a very good appreciation of their culture because of the very good work done in music and the arts. Pupils speak with enthusiasm about local events and the history of the area. They have an adequate understanding of other cultures and the school is working to improve this further.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is **very good**. Teaching brings about very good achievement and the curriculum is exciting and interesting. All pupils are cared for very well and the school works very effectively with parents.

Teaching and learning

Teaching, learning and assessment are all **very good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers have a very good, and sometimes excellent, understanding of the areas they teach and this helps them to challenge and support all pupils extremely well
- Teachers' planning is excellent because it meets the needs of all pupils very well without being overly bureaucratic. This helps teachers to give very good verbal feedback to pupils, but written marking does not always tell pupils how to improve their work.
- The 'philosophy for children' programme has led to examples of outstanding teaching in which pupils take a great deal of responsibility for learning
- Teaching assistants are used outstandingly well

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 26 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
4	16	6	0	0	0	0

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

10. The picture of exceptional teaching, as shown in the table above, shows that learning is exciting and interesting for pupils at Seaton Sluice First School. This is because staff have a very good understanding of the areas they teach. Such expert knowledge allows staff to give pupils exciting and challenging learning experiences. In all lessons, every pupil is challenged to reach their full potential and support is well placed to allow thinking time and discussion. Pupils learn a good range of ways in which to demonstrate their understanding and, in the best lessons, an element of choice helps pupils very well to take responsibility for their own learning. In the Foundation Stage of learning, all staff have an exceptional understanding of the curriculum and they very clearly understand how young children learn. This results in the rapid progress seen in the Nursery and Reception classes.
11. Teachers' planning is extremely effective because it meets the needs of all pupils very well. By setting 'success criteria' - a checklist of what work needs to include- for each ability group,

teachers set very high expectations and give pupils the means to judge whether they have completed work well. Despite this close concern for each group of pupils within a class, planning is not overly detailed nor time consuming. Because teachers know what they expect from pupils, they give very good verbal feedback, which helps pupils to make improvements to their work. Some very good examples of written marking that gives clear advice were seen in pupils' books but this is not consistent across the school.

12. Learning is particularly strong in lessons in which pupils take a leading role. The 'philosophy for children' programme is helping pupils to develop their own questions, which they attempt to answer through high quality discussion and debate. For example, in an excellent Year 3 lesson, pupils posed some outstanding questions about a box the teacher held, that helped them to make inferences and to deduce exceptionally well. In other lessons, pupils think of questions to ask whilst working and these are displayed on a board ready for discussion. In some classes, the 'display committee' consult with other classmates as to which questions to include on displays. This is a very good example of the philosophy for children programme, which gives pupils a thirst for learning.
13. High quality teaching assistants are used exceptionally well in a wide range of situations. This helps all pupils to achieve very well, and leads, in some cases, to outstanding lessons. For example, the teaching assistant in the reception class led children on an exhilarating and fun packed 'bear hunt'. Because of her expertise in questioning and very good use of the digital camera, the lesson was outstanding. In other classes, teaching assistants provide expert input into computer lessons and to groups of pupils in lessons and this helps pupils to learn effectively. The teaching assistant who runs the nurture group has an outstanding understanding of the needs of the pupils and is expert in helping them to achieve well, despite some of them finding school difficult.

The curriculum

Curricular opportunities are all **very good**, including activities that enrich the curriculum and the school's accommodation and resources.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum is lively and exciting for pupils, who achieve very well and reach standards that are higher than expected
- The work undertaken as part of the eco schools programme is very effective in helping pupils to understand environmental issues
- Pupils with special educational needs are very well supported and they achieve very well
- The school building and grounds provide a very good base for learning
- Teaching assistants are used very well to support learning and to help all pupils achieve their best

Commentary

14. The way in which the school enlivens the curriculum for pupils is very good and the school has maintained its position well since the last inspection. The school makes very effective use of expertise from the wider community to enrich learning experiences for pupils in music, writing, art and dance. For example, a group playing the Northumbrian pipes visited the school and extended very well pupils' appreciation of local song traditions and country dancing. Other visitors, such as authors, are used very effectively to stimulate writing and drama during the school's innovative 'theme weeks'. Storytellers support whole-school projects such as the study of North American native people. This resulted in pupils designing and making very effective totem poles and mosaics, now situated in the school grounds. The school hall has a display of paintings that celebrate the school's locality produced during a visit by an artist. These experiences make a very good contribution to the good achievement of pupils across

the curriculum. The government is currently encouraging schools to enrich and enliven the curriculum and it is done particularly well in this school.

15. As part of pupils' work in many areas of the curriculum, they have been taking part in an on going 'eco' and re-cycling project. Year 4 pupils are very enthusiastic about their experiences during this programme. They have a pride in their achievements, and the school has gained the European Gold Award for the project because of the very good understanding pupils have for environmental issues. As part of the programme, pupils take on a range of responsibilities very well. Members of the school's Eco council direct the Eco project very efficiently and although the school has no school council, it is effective in giving pupils a voice on the day-to-day running of the school.
16. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. Staff employ a range of very effective strategies including support in the classrooms, outside the classrooms, and specialist support from outside agencies. Teaching assistants work closely with teachers to ensure that pupils work towards targets described within individual education plans. Because of this very good support, pupils achieve very well and have full involvement in the wide range of educational experiences provided by the school.
17. The quality of the accommodation is very good. All areas of the school building are attractive and enhanced by display of a very high standard. Displays are usually interactive and invite pupils to either raise questions or answer questions. The very well presented school library occupies a central place in the school building and is very successful in drawing pupils towards reading a range of texts. Very good use has been made of disused rooms in the building. Since the previous inspection, a very well used computer suite has been developed and has made a significant contribution to the improvement in standards that pupils achieve. The outdoor play area for Nursery and Reception has improved dramatically since the previous inspection and is now an outstanding feature of provision for the youngest children in the school. The school's grounds are used extensively and very successfully to enrich the curriculum. In particular, the Eco project has enabled pupils and parents to make greater use of the grounds to support learning. Gardens provide very good opportunities for pupils to learn about nature, pollution, recycling and growth.
18. The development of teaching assistants to support learning is very good. The school has identified and developed the individual skills and strengths of teaching assistants. They all work in close partnerships with teachers to give very effective support to pupils. A teaching assistant very effectively supports lessons in the computer suite to ensure that lessons are not slowed by technological failure. Another teaching assistant gives very good support to pupils in the nurture group. This support is of a very high standard. Pupils experience a series of learning exercises that explore feelings and visions of sharing and making friends. These pupils are able to access the wider curriculum and participate fully in year-group activities. The school uses the expertise of the local behaviour support team very well.

Care, guidance and support

Provision for the care, guidance and support of pupils is **very good**. Pupils' views are taken into account very well through discussion and the eco council.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school takes very good care of its pupils and this is evident in every aspect of the school's work.
- Pupils become confident and self-assured by the time they leave school because of a very good programme of work in personal, social, health and citizenship education.
- The involvement of pupils in the school by seeking and acting upon their views is very good.
- The level of support, based on monitoring is good.

Commentary

19. The headteacher and staff have the best interests of every pupil at the heart of all school activities. This is a strong feature of the school's work and can be seen very well in the way that everyone works very effectively to ensure that every pupil is well looked after. The headteacher, governors and the caretaker all work well together to ensure that the school grounds and buildings are safe and secure. All statutory testing of equipment is carried out to a rigorous schedule and the school is maintained and cleaned to a very high standard. Very effective child protection arrangements are in place. Care within the school is very good, with all staff trained in first aid to deal with minor incidents.
20. Pupils feel confident that they can approach members of staff with a problem and get good help. The staff are cheerful and friendly both to visitors and pupils, and a general calm atmosphere pervades the school. Lunchtimes are orderly and the pupils are well cared for by the lunchtime supervisors. The supervisors have a handbook, which gives good advice on the care and treatment of pupils. The good systems in place to help children settle into school include a meeting arranged for their parents, and visits paid by staff to their homes. This good introduction helps children to settle quickly into school life and to achieve well right from the start.
21. The school helps pupils to become confident and self-assured by the time they leave school. This is because of a very good programme of personal, social, health and citizenship education and a strong emphasis on pupils taking responsibilities. Pupils with special educational needs are supported very well through very good programmes of work and very effective help from teachers and support staff. The nurture group is a strength of the school benefiting those pupils that are at risk of achieving poor educational outcomes.
22. The school has a very effective eco council with representatives from each class. The classes elect the council members and the pupils take their responsibilities very seriously. The pupils undertake litter collections around the school. The pupils are proud of the eco award and it helps pupils to take responsibilities. The pupils have access to good support and advice that is provided by the staff, who have a very good knowledge and relationship with the pupils.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school's work with parents is **very good**. The school has **very good** links with other schools, colleges and the local community.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents are very satisfied with the school and a very good working partnership has been established
- The school has very good links with other schools and community partnerships.

Commentary

23. Parents are extremely satisfied with the school. The school works in very good partnership with parents, who do all they can at home to support their children's learning. This helps all pupils to achieve well.
24. Responses from the questionnaires sent out before the inspection showed that a minority of parents feel the school does not keep them well enough informed nor take into account their views. However, the inspectors judge that the school's open-door policy gives many good opportunities for parents to express their views. The school has two very well attended consultation sessions each year for parents to discuss their children's' progress, and the end-

of-year report. The school's system of reading diaries is a good two-way communication device should parents wish to use it. The headteacher and staff are available at the start and end of the day to listen to immediate concerns, and they have a visible presence around the school.

25. The school prospectus and annual report to parents fully meets the requirements are both very helpful and informative. The school provides regular and thorough information with newsletters, and parents feel very comfortable to approach the school to discuss any issues of concern. The parents and friends association are supportive of the school and raise funds as well as organising social events. Parents play an active role in the school with regular helpers and others are involved with assisting their children with homework and learning at home. Some parents expressed a concern that too much homework is given. The inspection found the level of homework to be appropriate.
26. The school has very good links with the community through visits and visitors coming into the school. The pupils visit the local church and the vicar takes assemblies. The school's Eco gold award has been won in conjunction with the very good partnership with Blyth Valley Council. The headteacher is part of a group of local headteachers that work together very effectively. This has helped the school to develop well and to spread the very good work it does to others during its designation as a 'beacon school'.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The headteacher's leadership is **excellent**. Other key staff share her vision and high aspirations and provide **very good** leadership. Governance and management are very good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher's outstanding leadership sets the tone, direction and standard for this high achieving school.
- All staff and governors share and support a clear and ambitious vision of excellence for every pupil.
- The quality of teamwork is exceptional, and all teachers lead by example and strive for ever better performance.
- The governors know the school extremely well and influence its development by very effective challenge and support.
- Financial management strongly supports the achievement of the school's educational priorities.
- Some subject leaders do not know enough about how well pupils are doing in their subjects.

Commentary

27. All staff and governors uphold the headteacher's excellent vision and high aspirations for the school. Her vision centres on valuing all pupils, and enabling them to develop the best possible mental and emotional tools for life through the richest and most personally fulfilling educational experience. All staff share this vision and are excellent role models, fully committed to improvement and achievement. Because governors and parents also support the vision, the school has a clear purpose across its entire community.
28. Teamwork is outstanding. The headteacher's non-bureaucratic style means that she is a constant, visible, approachable and unifying influence around the school. She is very much a teamplayer and enacts her vision by example and through teamwork. Each teacher leads development as required and this has led to some very good improvements. Non-teaching staff are fully included and feel part of the highly successful team.
29. The school's very good strategic planning reflects its values and ambitions. Each year's improvement plan is part of a far-sighted and coherent long-term process. It is prefaced by a

careful review of the present position and the effect of previous developments. It specifies clear, well-informed priorities and actions for improvements, together with relevant costs and success criteria. All teachers contribute to planning in relation to their leadership roles. They carry out regular audits and set agendas for improvement. However, in subjects other than English, mathematics and science, this auditing process seldom pays enough attention to the standards actually attained by pupils. In design and technology, the regular monitoring of pupils' work across the school is beginning to make this subject an exception to the rule and an example to follow.

30. This apart, the school's self-evaluation is very good and thoroughly embedded in its work. It is rigorously based on analysis of performance and evaluation of provision. Its findings review current initiatives, shape future actions, and inform the performance targets of the headteacher and her colleagues. The process ensures that all personal targets relate to standards in some way and link directly to the school's priorities. It also ensures that the pattern of professional training mainly serves these priorities. All staff are committed to their further professional development and eager to share new learning. Through the school's work as a 'beacon school', most teachers have confident expertise and wide experience in leading professional development. As a result, the staff are well able to provide for most of each other's needs.
31. The governing body fulfils all aspects of its role very well, particularly in the way that it understands, supports and challenges the school. The governors have an extremely clear, full and accurate view of the school and make a very good contribution to its development. They put themselves in a very good position to support, challenge and influence constructively because their frequent visits and specific roles and areas of interest give them good contact with pupils and teachers, and a strong appreciation of the school's day-to-day work and quality. The membership of the governing body has changed considerably since the previous inspection. At the same time, it has radically revised its committee structure. These changes have increased its effectiveness, and governors have a very clear sense of their individual roles and of how these enable them to contribute actively to the development of the school and its processes of self-review. Their willingness to take part in training illustrates governors' commitment to the school. This training, combined with their range of individual experience and expertise, sharpens their ability to challenge senior managers in many areas, as well as to help them to drive the school on towards its demanding goals.
32. The governing body and key staff manage the school's finances very well to ensure that the budget is balanced and best value secured. The governors' finance committee is well-informed and makes sure that the budget is set to support the school's educational priorities. Major spending is checked carefully in relation to principles of best value, whilst the secretary manages everyday finances efficiently. Governors work enterprisingly with the school to find and use sources of additional income. The very good developments of the computer suite and the school grounds reflect the success of those efforts.
33. When the relatively low cost of educating each pupil is set against the school's very good quality of education and its good improvement and achievement, it is clear that the school gives very good value for money.

Financial information for the year 2003 to 2004.

Income and expenditure (£)		Balance (£)	
Total income	434,583.00	Balance from previous year	45,500.00 *
Total expenditure	396,770.00	Balance carried forward to next year.	37,813.00 *
Expenditure per pupil.	2,200.00		

* These figures include funding to continue work as a Beacon school. Beacon funding brought forward: £26,380.00; carried forward £16,381.00.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Provision in the Foundation Stage of learning is **very good**. All Staff have an expert understanding of the curriculum and how children learn and this helps all children to make good progress and to achieve well. The leader of the Foundation Stage has created a very effective team that works to ensure that children have the best possible education. The quality of teaching is consistently very good and the curriculum is exciting, stimulating and very well planned. All lessons seen in the inspection were either very good or excellent. Every child receives a very good level of care and their individual progress and achievements are tracked very well. The outdoor learning environment is excellent and is having a very positive impact on achievement in all areas of the curriculum. This is a very good improvement since the last inspection, when the outdoor play area was found to be inadequate. In all areas of learning, children start nursery with attainment that is lower than the expected level. They make good progress and achieve very well. By the time they leave Nursery their attainment matches the national picture and is above the expected level by the time they leave reception. There has been a good improvement in provision since the last inspection, with many high standards being maintained well.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children's independence is promoted very well in all areas of learning
- Children have very good attitudes to learning and this helps them to achieve very well.

Commentary

34. Staff plan very good opportunities to develop children's independence. This begins with the youngest children learning to take off their own coats and finding their coat hooks by themselves. The coat hooks all have pictures that start with the same letter as children's first name, which is a very effective way of learning to recognise their own name. Children in both Nursery and Reception register their attendance by finding their name and adding it to the register as they come in to school. In physical activity lessons, children in Nursery and Reception are encouraged to change independently. By the time children reach the end of Reception, the majority change quickly and sensibly, manipulating buttons, zips and laces well. Although children are encouraged to be independent, there is also a high degree of support and guidance, which gives them the confidence to make decisions for themselves. Relationships are very good and children feel relaxed and confidently explore all areas of learning. By the end of Reception, the majority of children exceed the expected levels and achieve very well in their personal, social and emotional development.
35. Children enter Nursery below the expected level of attainment in the curiosity they show but they very soon begin to explore and develop a very positive approach to their classroom. This is because of the very good and stimulating environment created by an expert team who know very well how children learn. By the time children leave nursery, they show confidence in linking up with others for support and guidance, which is typical for this age. Reception-aged children continue to be interested, excited and motivated to learn and the majority show a maturity above the expected level for their age. All children achieve very well.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children become confident and accomplished readers because phonic skills are taught very well
- Adults interact with children extremely well, which promotes language development very well in all areas of learning.

Commentary

36. By the time children leave Reception, they read with confidence and have a love of books and reading. Their attainment is above the nationally expected level because they have a range of strategies for working out how to read words. Phonics is a key strategy that children use and they have a good awareness of letters, of collections of letters, and the sounds that they make. Most children also use their phonic understanding to write words and this helps them to achieve well in reading and writing. The most able children in Nursery are given very good guidance and challenge. For example, in one lesson one child noticed that Goldilock's chair began with a 'ch' sound and the teacher helped her to write it. This is above the expected level of development. Most children recognise their own name by the end of Nursery, talk about books, and enjoy discussions about their favourite part. This is similar to the national picture of attainment and, from a low starting point, all children achieve very well.
37. An impressive feature of Nursery and Reception is the high degree of interaction between adults and children. All staff are expert at talking to children and modelling good speech, thinking and behaviour. Because of this, children in Nursery begin to build up a wide vocabulary and begin to have the confidence to experiment with descriptive language at an appropriate level. In Reception, children continue this good progress and achieve very well. They speak clearly with confidence and control, and show a very well developed awareness of the listener by extending courtesies such as 'please' and 'thank you' as they talk.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **very good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children's calculation skills are developed well
- Teaching aids help children to engage in counting activities very well

Commentary

38. Children's mathematical development is rapid throughout Nursery and Reception. This is because of the very good use of counting songs and awareness of the names of numbers. This good knowledge is developed into calculation skills very well. Nursery-aged children show an interest in number problems and practise counting groups of objects to an appropriate level. They achieve very well, reaching the expected level by the end of Nursery. In Reception, children continue to achieve well. They have a good mathematical vocabulary, using words such as 'more', 'fewer', 'total' and 'altogether' with a great deal of confidence. They understand how to double numbers and the most able can recall a range of doubles rapidly. The majority of children reach levels above the national expectation by the time they leave Reception.
39. In lessons, teachers use some very good resources to help children understand mathematics. In a very good mathematics lesson in Reception, children ordered numbers using a 'washing line' and could read and order numbers to 30. Children are captured by the interesting way staff use teaching aids, and this imaginative and very effective teaching helps all children to achieve very well.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The outstanding outdoor environment helps children to achieve very well

Commentary

40. The outdoor play area helps children to explore using all of their senses. Sand, water and a good range of construction equipment give children the scope to investigate outside the classroom. However, the area is much more than a place to play outdoors. It is a special place that is very carefully designed as an outdoor classroom. It is used very well to promote learning in all areas of the curriculum.

Example of outstanding practice

'We're going on a bear hunt!' – Staff use the outdoor environment and ICT to help children to explore, develop their imagination and find out about the natural world.

As they stepped out of the classroom door, the teaching assistant instantly transformed the usual outdoor environment into a world of imagination and excitement. 'We're going on a bear hunt...' they chanted as they headed towards the play equipment on the field – giant pencils planted in the grass. Off the children went, pushing their way through, always on the look out for the bear. One child stood to one side and took a photograph of the others with a digital camera, which would later be put on to the computer and captions added. This happened as children reached a deep dark forest, splish splashed through the river and fought their way through a whirling swirling snowstorm. All of the school gardens and grounds were used very well and the look of delight on the faces of children as they waded through mud told the teaching assistant that they were achieving very well. At last, it was time to work out where the bear could be and the teaching assistant questioned children expertly until they worked out that a dark damp cave could be the shed. Off they ran shouting 'We're not scared!' The drama unfolded further as the children listened silently outside the shed. Eventually, they carefully opened the door to see a large fat bear sitting in the corner. 'Shh one child said to the others – we don't want the others to find out where he is.' With this, they crept back to the classroom checking their list and looking at the screen of the digital camera to see themselves hunting for bears.

41. Children leave nursery with a sound understanding of the world around them and know how to operate simple construction equipment. A recent initiative to develop an awareness of other cultures has been successful in both Nursery and Reception. By the time they leave Reception, children's attainment is above the expected level and all children achieve very well.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **very good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The 'healthy schools' programme has helped children to have a good awareness of the need for exercise
- There is a good range of equipment that helps children to achieve very well.

Commentary

42. Children are encouraged and have access to a healthy curriculum. The outdoor play area is used on a daily basis and all children get a great deal of worthwhile exercise. The school's involvement in the 'healthy schools' programme has helped reception-aged children to gain a very good understanding of the importance of keeping healthy and how they can do this,

taking them beyond the expected level of attainment for their age. Physical activity lessons in Nursery also promote this and the youngest children are beginning to talk about how they feel when they do exercise. Nursery-aged children show an appropriate level of personal hygiene and discuss ways of keeping healthy.

43. The excellent outdoor environment is full of very good opportunities for children to climb, balance, run, jump, hop and skip. All children achieve well in physical development and make good progress throughout Nursery and Reception. Movement is developed very well because of these very good opportunities. Indoors, there is also a good range of equipment to help children develop a good control of small equipment. Physical activity lessons develop large and small movements very well. For example, in a very good nursery lesson, children developed skills in rolling balls in and out of cones very well. By the end of Reception, children's attainment is above the expected level for their age, with a good degree of confidence in movement, awareness of space and in using equipment.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **very good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children's artistic skills and imagination are developed very well

Commentary

44. The judgement in this area is made upon limited observation of teaching but discussions with staff and records of work give a good picture of provision in this area. Children's artwork is very impressive. Children in Nursery explore a good range of media such as paint, paper and crayons. They produce pictures that communicate ideas such as 'going on holiday'. At an early stage, children use the outdoor environment to develop their observation skills and, because of this, they develop a good awareness of textures, and their artwork reflects this well. Reception-aged children have very good observation skills, and their portrait paintings display a good likeness and a great deal of control beyond the expected level. In their musical development and in role-play, children develop very good imagination. They make up stories, and enact situations with enthusiasm.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **very good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are high and continue to rise, particularly in reading.
- Across the school, achievement is very good in reading and good in writing and spoken English.
- Very good teaching and learning consistently drive this high achievement.
- The very strong quality and use of the library make a significant contribution to pupils' achievement as readers and to their learning generally.
- More could be done to involve pupils in setting their own targets for improvement.

Commentary

45. Standards in both Year 2 and Year 4 are high in writing and spoken English, and very high in reading. Since the previous inspection, standards have risen much faster than the national trend. All pupils reach the expected level, whilst the proportion reaching the higher than expected level is more than double the national average. These standards represent good achievement for all pupils. This is remarkable, and it clearly reflects highly effective provisions that are made consistent by the exceptional teamwork, dedication, skill and enthusiasm of all teachers and support staff, and by the shaping vision of the headteacher.
46. In Year 4, pupils' skills in literacy have developed to a high level for their age. Pupils understand very well, both as writers and as readers, why texts differ and how words and structures vary to fit changing purposes. As readers, most pupils show impressive skills in choosing and using books both for pleasure and for learning. They are beginning to see different layers of meaning in a fiction text, and to give well-argued reasons why certain books and authors suit their tastes and interests. The excellent school library has a prominent role in raising these standards. It has a prime location and is extremely well stocked and organised. Its imaginative and efficient use ensures that it plays a major part in reading development and general learning throughout the school. For example, the most able pupils explain in detail how they use the library independently to search for, gather and use specific information to support their learning in different subjects.
47. Teaching and learning are very good. None of the lessons seen fell below this level of quality and, in Years 3 and 4, the lessons seen were outstanding. Across the school, teachers' very strong understanding of the subject enables them to plan very effectively. Teachers have crystal-clear aims for learning that have a strong focus on speaking and listening and this is helping pupils to achieve well. Very good relationships across the school support learning and all staff set a very good example. They teach interactively to praise, encourage and enthuse. They promote confident participation by valuing pupils' efforts, and they provide interesting opportunities for pupils to talk and learn together in formal and informal ways. Despite a relative lack of procedures to assess progress and set targets in this area, teaching and learning are often excellent.
48. The subject is very well led and managed. The consistently high quality of provision for pupils' very different needs reflects this. It is seen in the effectiveness of recent moves to raise standards in writing and spoken English. However, pupils have little say in setting their targets for improvement. Teachers use assessment information to set individual targets, but these are largely for teachers' use. Teachers' marking of pupils' work is uneven in quality. Although there are very good examples, written comments seldom help pupils to see the next steps to take to improve their work. In lessons, however, teachers often share with pupils the specific success criteria that relate to their learning activities.

Example of outstanding practice.

How teaching promotes high achievement in speaking and thinking skills.

In an excellent lesson in Year 4, the teacher used pupils' strong interest in the rainforest to develop their questioning and debating skills. Two gifted pupils initiated the process by listing very clear reasons for and against the commercial exploitation of the rainforest. Other pupils then talked in pairs to frame specific questions, which they took turns to put to one or other of the initial 'experts'. The strong impetus of interest in the subject and fascination with the conflicting viewpoints drove the talk along at a high level that pupils themselves largely controlled. The process involved all pupils in learning how to use searching questions to challenge opinions, how to answer different questions whilst holding a clear position, and how to balance an argument.

In Year 3 the teacher's very imaginative use of a treasure-quest game caused and controlled a surge of excited interest and very demanding learning for all pupils. Her very skilful use of a mysterious box required pupils to use and extend their skills in spoken observation, questioning, inference and deduction. At the same time, she developed the 'mystery' in story-like episodes, each with its own effect. As a result, the pupils became characters in their story, with a heightened sense of the typical story effects of curiosity, anticipation, frustration, suspense and discovery. Both lessons combined excellence and enjoyment in ways that exemplified the school's distinctive quality and success.

Language and literacy across the curriculum.

49. English and the rest of the curriculum support each other very well. Pupils use their reading, speaking and writing skills independently and sometimes adventurously to develop their learning in subjects such as science and geography. Links with information and communication technology (ICT) are developing well, and interesting topics in history or religious education, for example, often enrich work in English lessons. In Year 3, pupils had written excellent diary accounts of a Victorian school day.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **very good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in all classes are much higher than the national expectation and all pupils achieve very well
- The quality of teaching is very good due to teachers' expert knowledge of the subject and the very good use of high quality teaching assistants
- All pupils have very good attitudes to their work and this helps them to achieve well
- Leadership is good and the subject leader acts as a very good role model
- The quality of written marking varies throughout the school but there are some good examples
- Mathematics is used well in other areas of the curriculum

Commentary

50. The standards attained by pupils in both key stages are well above those expected for their age and their past attainment. All pupils achieve very well and the very good position reported at the last inspection has been maintained well. The results in national tests at the end of Year 2, the work in pupils' books and optional test results in Year 3 and 4 support this judgement. Year 4 pupils, in discussion, are very confident with multiplication facts, partitioning, fractions, decimals and units of weights. Year 2 pupils have a very good awareness of number facts and they use them to make rapid calculations. They have a good awareness of fractions and the most able know the decimal equivalents. Year 4 pupils have a well-developed understanding of how to apply their mathematical skills to a range of problems

and they are quick to work out what sort of problem they are faced with.

51. Overall, the quality of teaching in all classes is very good. All lessons observed were characterised by an enthusiastic and confident delivery derived from very secure subject knowledge. Teachers' planning is of a high standard and teachers use plans to make ongoing notes about how pupils are progressing. This notation gives teachers very good information to plan the next steps for learning. Pupil enthusiasm is generated by lessons that move at pace with a good level of challenge and fun. An element of competition is used by teachers when pupils complete short mental arithmetic tasks, and all pupils of all abilities respond positively and with a high degree of enjoyment. Teachers deploy teaching assistants very effectively. The shared approach to planning ensures that pupils of a lower ability make good progress and are fully included in all activities. All teachers are very good at developing pupils' thinking by asking supplementary questions that challenge pupils to explain their strategies and justify estimations. Teachers are particularly effective in presenting pupils with tasks that involve the use of numeracy skills and problem solving. During a numeracy theme week, pupils designed and made a variety of board games and models that demand a high level of collaborative learning and problem solving. The most able pupils in the school receive a good level of challenge because teachers have a very good knowledge of how to extend learning. Homework supports class work very well and most parents are happy to support learning in this way.
52. Pupils in all year groups have very good attitudes to learning and school. Standards of behaviour are very high and pupils are capable of working independently whilst selecting appropriate resources. A high level of pupil:teacher trust is evident and pupils confidently share their anxieties with all staff. As a result, their problems are solved quickly and barriers to learning are removed easily.
53. Leadership of the subject is good and the subject leader is a very good role model. All staff work together to identify pupils that require further support. Some Year 4 pupils have been given extra support and teaching assistants are very well deployed. Consequently, achievement by this year group is very good when compared with the year group's attainment at the end of Year 2.
54. The quality of written marking varies across the school although verbal feedback given to pupils during lessons is very good. Year 3 workbooks contain examples of good marking where pupils receive clear guidance about how to improve their work. Discussion with pupils indicates that they are not sufficiently aware of the next steps they need to take to improve their own performance in mathematics.

Mathematics across the curriculum

55. There are many good opportunities for pupils to apply their mathematical skills across the curriculum. This is particularly evident in science projects, in which pupils measure accurately, analyse data and produce graphs. Opportunities are seized well in most other subjects because teachers have a very good understanding of the curriculum.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **very good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are well above the expected level and all pupils achieve well. This is particularly so in investigative work
- The quality of teaching is very good and this helps pupils to develop very good attitudes toward the subject
- The curriculum is lively and enjoyable for all pupils

- The subject leader acts as a very good role model but has yet to develop systems for monitoring standards of pupils' work

Commentary

56. The standard of pupils work seen during the inspection is well above the national expectation. All pupils make good progress and achieve very well. In discussion, pupils recall vividly previous projects and talk with enthusiasm about investigative aspects of their work. They outline very clearly the principles of fair testing and have many good opportunities to devise their own tests. They have a good understanding of how muscles work, how messages travel to the brain and know about insulating qualities of a variety of materials. They apply what they have learned to everyday uses very well. For example, they suggest which materials might be suitable for winter or summer clothing and give reasons based on the insulating properties of materials. Pupil workbooks are characterised by extensive recording of their ideas and logical recording of observations. Very good opportunities for prediction, fair testing and the application of numeracy skills are a strong feature of all units of work.
57. The quality of teaching is very good and this is helping pupils to develop very good attitudes towards their learning. Very well planned lessons that use teaching aids effectively help pupils in their investigative learning. Teachers consistently ask very good questions that both challenge and extend pupils' thinking. Teachers insist that pupils use appropriate scientific vocabulary and, in discussion, pupils confidently respond to questions about fair testing, classifying and grouping using the correct terminology. In Year 3, the very good teaching has ensured that pupils have a very secure knowledge and understanding of the rules of magnetism. High expectations for behaviour ensure that pupils carry out investigations independently and accurately whilst displaying a high level of collaboration with other pupils. Teachers devise a range of interactive displays that require pupils to either raise questions or put forward ideas. Consequently, Year 4 pupils have a very good awareness of the human body and its functions.
58. The opportunities provided for enrichment are very good and this is helping pupils to achieve well. The Eco Project has provided many good opportunities for pupils to learn about key environmental issues. In particular, pupils monitor pollution levels locally and are very involved in recycling initiatives. Gardens have been developed to provide very good opportunities for sensory experiences, monitoring growth and studying small creatures. Pupils are extremely enthusiastic about these learning experiences and have a real sense of enjoyment.
59. Leadership of the subject is good. The subject leader has played a key role in the development of enrichment opportunities and in arranging training for staff. Acting as a very good role model, the leader gives very good advice and support for other members of staff but has not yet developed a system for monitoring standards of pupils' work across the school.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology (ICT) is **good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average and all pupils achieve well
- The subject leader has created an effective team where teaching is good. This helps all pupils to achieve well.
- ICT is used well across the curriculum

Commentary

60. Pupils in all classes achieve well and attain standards that are above the expected level. Pupils in Year 2 use a range of software well. They have well developed skills in using databases, mix text with graphics and use the Internet. Pupils enjoy their work and have positive attitudes. Pupils in Year 4 produce extremely effective multimedia presentations linked to their visits. During the inspection, they were working on presentations that included sound, video and animation. Their understanding of how to save, edit and refine their work is impressive.
61. The subject leader has created an effective team. This maximises the skills of one of the teaching assistants, who plays a leading role in preparing resources and in teaching skills to pupils in good partnership with teachers. This is a good example of the school experimenting with the best use of staff, which the government is currently encouraging schools to do. As a result, teaching is effective, pupils make good progress in lessons, and achieve well.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

62. The way in which the school has included ICT in each curriculum area is impressive. Year 1 pupils experiment with pictograms and databases on computers that supports their work in mathematics well. Year 2 pupils use computers to support their topic work well. In Years 3 and 4, pupils begin to gain a great deal of confidence and apply their good ICT skills well. This is because teachers give good opportunities for pupils to decide how to demonstrate their understanding and many choose ICT. In Year 4 there are some very impressive examples of pupils' artwork being developed using digital photography. Pupils took self-portraits and then copied sections, manipulated the image and pasted it to create most effective compositions in the style of Picasso that emphasised features very well.

HUMANITIES

Geography

63. No geography lessons were seen during the inspection and, due to the school's teaching pattern, little work from this year was available. However, discussions with Year 4 pupils show that standards are above average, and all pupils achieve well. Pupils are particularly enthusiastic about the fieldwork they carry out. Because of this, they have well developed map skills using grid references, symbols and geographical vocabulary well. Pupils' knowledge of the British Isles and the rest of the world is impressive, and the work done on the 'eco schools' programme has helped them to understand issues around conservation and sustainability very well.

History

Provision in history is **good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above the expected level in each class, with pupils having a good sense of chronology. This is due to good teaching.
- Information and communication technology (ICT) is used well to support learning

Commentary

64. Pupils in each class achieve well, and reach standards that are above the expected levels. Pupils in Year 2 have a good understanding of the past and use a good range of words and phrases to describe the passing of time. Studies of famous people have helped pupils to

understand how to find out about the past. They use books, the Internet and video well as sources of evidence. In Year 4, pupils discuss sources of evidence very well and they have a good understanding that different sources tell us different things. They have a well-developed understanding that information needs to be questioned and that a range of evidence, including the study of artefacts is required to give a clear picture of the past. Teaching overall is good, and teachers help pupils to achieve well. In one very good lesson, pupils organised their thoughts about life in Victorian Britain in a way that developed creativity well, in particular original thinking. Pupils chose to use mind maps, the computer to write diaries and labelled diagrams to demonstrate their understanding very effectively. This is a similar picture as reported at the last inspection. Standards have been maintained well.

65. Pupils use their ICT skills well. Discussions with Year 4 pupils about their work in history gave a clear picture of their competence and confidence in using the internet to conduct searches. They also use their good skills to make multi media presentations and to write diary entries. This helps them to achieve well in history whilst developing their skills on the computer.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus and all pupils achieve well
- Pupils develop their writing skills very well and this helps them to communicate their understanding well
- Spirituality is developed well

Commentary

66. There were limited opportunities during the inspection to observe the teaching of religious education. However, by looking at pupils' work it is clear that standards in religious education are above average. Pupils have many good opportunities to reflect, think empathically and write with thorough knowledge and understanding of the Christian faith. All pupil workbooks are characterised by good opportunities for the development of writing. Year 3 pupils have written the Christmas story from the point of view of Joseph. Later in the year they had raised many questions about the events surrounding the Last Supper and, in discussion, they displayed an extensive knowledge of the key facts and events.
67. There was only one lesson observed during the inspection, so no overall judgement can be made about the quality of teaching. However, the quality of teaching observed in Year 3 was very good. Pupils worked very well in pairs to express contrasting feelings felt by followers and authority figures at the arrest of Jesus. The teacher skilfully guided pupils in their work, helping them to pose their own questions. This produced a very good contribution to the pupils' enjoyment of learning and their good achievement in this subject. The spiritual development of pupils during this lesson was very good with moments of silence, reflection and mood setting using gentle background music during the re-telling of the arrest of Jesus. Pupils displayed high levels of respect, concentration and enjoyment during these moments of reflection.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Art and design

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in all classes are well above the expected levels
- The quality of teaching is very good
- The subject leader has a very good knowledge of art and design

Commentary

68. Pupils in all classes achieve very well reaching standards well above the expected level. Pupils in Year 2 paint portraits that show very good observation skills. This is also reflected in their still life drawings of bicycle wheels, that pick out detail very well. Stunning examples of portraits of famous people in the style of Renoir's 'Les Parapluies' show how art is integrated into other areas of the curriculum, linking well with pupils work in history. These compositions mix the bright and vibrant colours that are interwoven with the dark tones of the umbrellas awash with rain. Pupils in Year 4 study a number of famous artists and base their own work upon this. For example, the work of Henry Moore was a good starting point for pupils to produce quick sketches that capture the form of people very well. They then used the sketches as a basis for clay sculptures. Pupils spoke enthusiastically about how they considered they could improve an environment with sculpture. Pupils' high standards of work reflects the school's success in developing thinking skills and this means that their ability to evaluate their own and others' work is very well developed. A very good example of this is 'The Picture' that hangs in the library, with books available for pupils to reflect on its meaning. Entries in the book are very thoughtful and a wide range of opinion is recorded very well.
69. The quality of teaching is very good and this is having an extremely positive impact on standards. Only one lesson observation took place during the inspection but discussions with pupils and a study of the work they produce gives a very clear picture of teaching. The observed lesson was very good, and helped pupils to improve observation skills very well. They were shown how to observe the lines of a partially covered picture and very good feedback helped them to improve rapidly during the lesson.
70. The subject leader is enthusiastic and has a very good knowledge of art and design. A good start in monitoring standards of work has helped to give a sound picture of the high standards achieved. The subject leader acts as a very good role model and gives help and advice to other members of staff, leading to the impressive standards seen throughout the school and a good improvement in provision since the last inspection.

Design and technology.

71. No lessons were observed in design and technology and therefore no overall judgement can be made on provision. However, discussions with pupils about their work clearly indicate that the subject is well managed and offers an interesting programme of work that enables all pupils to achieve well in different areas of activity.
72. In Years 2 and 4, pupils' standards are above the levels expected for their age. For example, pupils in Year 4 explain how their skills have developed over time in designing and evaluating different products, as well as in using different tools and materials to make them. They clearly enjoy the practical experiences of working with materials such as food, textiles and wood. The activities they describe not only cover the various branches of the subject, but also link imaginatively with other subjects and with various themes and events celebrated by the school. For instance, these pupils have made a huge and impressive dragon for Chinese New Year. The scale and quality of the work reflect ambitious planning and a strongly collaborative effort to bring different skills and contributions together. Pupils' talk also shows that the research that informed the making process raised their understanding of the meaning

of the dragon and New Year in Chinese culture. Together with the coordinator's very good records, all this evidence confirms that the improvements in provision and achievement noted by the previous inspection have been maintained. The coordinator has developed a very good system for monitoring standards in the subject and for using feedback to promote further improvement. This practice could be very productively used in other subjects, where too little is done to monitor standards.

Music

73. No lessons were observed in music. It is therefore not possible to make an overall judgement on standards or provision. However, discussions with the subject leader indicate that the subject is well led and that an emphasis on high standards has led to ongoing improvements in provision. The schools own monitoring, although limited, shows that standards are above average and that all pupils achieve well. A new programme of work has been introduced recently, with a high degree of challenge for pupils. Visits and visiting musicians enrich the curriculum well and music has a high profile across the school. A strong involvement in local music groups helps pupils to understand local history and culture well.

Physical education

74. As only one lesson could be observed in physical education, no judgement is given on the overall quality of provision. The subject is currently a focus for development. This is the result partly of the new national emphasis on physical education, and partly of the new subject leader's initial audit of provision. Planned improvements are not adequately informed by a clear understanding of pupils' standards. Nevertheless, good initiatives are being taken to improve provision in games and sports, partly by making more use of expert coaches. A particularly good development is enabling lunchtime supervisors to introduce a range of playground games to bring learning, purpose and structure to pupils' outdoor play in the lunch hour. A good programme in Years 3 and 4 enables pupils to learn to swim to the expected standard. Discussion with pupils clearly shows that they experience challenging and enjoyable programmes in dance and gymnastics through the school. Good new elements are improving these programmes. In the lesson seen, good teaching enabled pupils in Year 4 to achieve well in dance. The teacher used an interesting theme skilfully to enable pupils to develop creative ideas and express them through increasingly refined patterns of movement. Pupils' good attitudes and behaviour supported their learning, and attainment was above the level expected for their age.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Personal, social and health education

Provision in personal, social and health education is **very good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A very rich range of activities reflects the school's total commitment to this area of its work.
- The school expects and achieves very high standards in personal and social development.
- All staff are excellent role models.

Commentary.

75. Although only one lesson was observed, it is very clear that the school places this area at the heart of its work and gives it top priority. A very effective programme of lessons and 'circle time' promotes every pupil's personal and social awareness, appreciation and confidence by

involving them in various forms of discussion. This programme meshes with related learning in other subjects, for example in relation to healthy eating and exercise, conservation, substance abuse, moral values, relationships and cultural and religious differences. Awards gained as an Eco School and a Healthy School reflect the school's strong commitment to involving all pupils in developing an informed and active view of the health of themselves and their environment. New initiatives to promote thinking skills and a richer range of playground games further illustrate the school's imaginative and tireless commitment.

76. In the lesson seen, pupils in Year 3 experienced excellent teaching and learning. The lesson captured and reinforced the human values and the valuing of others that the school essentially standards for. With great calmness, sensitivity and effect, the teacher involved pupils in a variety of speaking, listening and thinking processes that gave them excellent opportunities to identify each other's personal qualities and to value and include differences. The methods used, together with music, poetry and other resources, gave the lesson a strongly spiritual tone, to which pupils responded very well. Lessons of this quality are at one with the strong ethos of the school, and with the high quality and effect of assemblies.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	2
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	2
Overall standards achieved	2
Pupils' achievement	2
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	2
Attendance	2
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	2
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	2
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2
The leadership and management of the school	2
The governance of the school	2
The leadership of the headteacher	1
The leadership of other key staff	2
The effectiveness of management	2

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