

INSPECTION REPORT

THORNS COMMUNITY INFANT SCHOOL

Kenilworth, Warwickshire

LEA area: Warwickshire

Unique reference number: 125550

Headteacher: Mrs S B Davis

Lead inspector: Mr Sean O'Toole

Dates of inspection: 21st – 23rd February 2005

Inspection number: 273366

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant School
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 – 7 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	178
School address:	Blackthorn Road Kenilworth Warwickshire
Postcode:	CV8 2DS
Telephone number:	01926 853875
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Peter Waring
Date of previous inspection:	10 th May 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Located in Kenilworth, it is smaller than most primary schools. The school is oversubscribed. Almost all of the 178 pupils (92 girls and 86 boys) are from white UK heritage families. On starting school almost all pupils have at least average levels of skill, knowledge and understanding compared to those expected for their age and most have benefited from pre-school educational experience. The school is in an above average socio-economic area. The school has identified about 12 per cent of pupils with special educational needs and none has a statement of special educational needs; both figures are below the national average. The school has received several awards in recent years. It was designated a Healthy School in 2004, given Investors in People status in 2000 and received an Achievement Award in 2003.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
20891	Sean O'Toole	Lead inspector	Foundation Stage; Mathematics; Information and communication technology; Personal, social and health education and citizenship.
14178	Patricia Willman	Lay inspector	
18568	Mary Sinclair	Team inspector	Science; Geography; History; Religious education.
21858	John Pryor	Team inspector	Special educational needs; English; Art and design; Design and technology; Music; Physical education.

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This school provides a good quality of education with several very good features. As a result of good quality teaching and learning pupils attain well above average standards in reading, writing and mathematics and achievement is predominantly good. The school is led and managed very effectively and provides good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Pupils are very competent in reading, writing and mathematics and test results at the end of Year 2 are impressive
- Progress is good in almost all subjects and pupils achieve well
- The teaching is planned very effectively
- The pupils benefit from a very good curriculum
- The headteacher, staff and governing body make substantial contributions in promoting the pupils' success
- In some lessons, the pace is too slow and this results in some loss of interest among pupils
- There are insufficient opportunities to use information and communication technology (ICT) to support learning in some subjects
- Pupils are well behaved and have good attitudes

Improvement since the last inspection in May 1999 has been very good. The school has built upon its success in national tests and improved standards in reading, writing and mathematics. Good teaching and learning have been maintained. The subject leaders rigorously monitor and evaluate the school's performance which has led to improved standards. The issues raised in the previous inspection report have been tackled effectively and there is now very good provision for special educational needs, much improved spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, and a stronger and more vibrant curriculum. The school is well placed to build upon its many areas of success.

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*

Pupils of all backgrounds and abilities make good progress and achieve well. The school has maintained well above average standards in reading, writing and mathematics national tests for several years and in 2004 pupils' attainment in reading was among the top five per cent of schools. Inspection evidence points to similar performance this year. Over time, the school's rate of improvement has been in advance of the national trend. By making very good use of assessment, data handling and target setting, the staff set challenging targets and enable the pupils to meet them successfully. Pupils achieve satisfactorily in ICT and standards are average but pupils have limited skills in using computers to support their work in some other subjects. Standards in science, religious education, design and technology, geography, art and design, physical education and

music are above average. Pupils make good use of their literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects.

Pupils in the Foundation Stage achieve well and make good progress in all of the areas of learning; about 85 per cent are on course to at least attain the expected goals for their age by the end of the reception year. About half are working at levels in advance of those expected. Pupils are especially successful in personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy and mathematical development. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress and achieve very well, because of well focused and skilled support. Both girls and boys attain higher standards than those of a similar age in other schools. There is no significant difference in the performance of boys and girls.

Pupils' attitudes are very good; they work hard and respond positively to challenge. Behaviour is good and pupils play and work together well. There have been no exclusions. **The school makes very good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.** Attendance and punctuality are very good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

This inclusive school provides a good quality of education. Teaching and learning are good. Lesson planning is very good. Staff skilfully make links between subjects which enhance pupils' learning. Basic skills are taught thoroughly and result in high levels of competence among pupils in English and mathematics. Staff generally make lessons interesting, although occasionally they talk too much and pupils are not active enough. As a result, pupils are not always fully engaged in learning which leads to some loss of concentration, slow pace and limited productivity. The school's system of setting by ability works well and is enhanced by additional focus on the needs of more able pupils and those with special educational needs. Support staff make a good contribution to learning. The teaching of swimming is very effective. Pupils work hard, maintain good levels of interest and most present their work well. Teaching and the curriculum in the Foundation Stage are good. The very good curriculum in Years 1 and 2 is enriched by a wide range of opportunities, using expertise from a variety of sources. Rigorous planning and thoughtful consideration to linking subjects contribute much to pupils' understanding and progress. Personal, social and emotional development receives high priority. There are good extra-curricular activities and the swimming programme is especially effective. This is a very caring school. Pupils' pastoral and academic needs are met through well focused assessment and target setting.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The school benefits from very good leadership and management. The very good headteacher and her well motivated and cohesive team are ambitious for the pupils' success and are always looking for ways to improve the quality of education. They are backed by very effective governors. Focused monitoring of the school's performance by staff and governors has led to a clear strategic plan which provides a sense of purpose and challenge. The school is good at challenging itself through rigorous evaluation of the curriculum and learning. Any weaknesses are dealt with creatively and effectively. The governing body has ensured that all statutory requirements are met. Financial systems are robust. Management uses funds wisely to provide good levels of staffing, resources and a stimulating outdoor environment. The management of the curriculum is very effective as staff are given the opportunities, finances and time to carry out their duties. The school makes good use of best value principles when purchasing supplies and services.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Most parents have very positive views of the school and contribute much to its success. Some parents are concerned about staff changes in Year 2. Inspection evidence shows that

the changes have not had an adverse effect on the pupils' performance. The pupils enjoy school and take an active part in decision making through the school council.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Improve some aspects of teaching, especially the pace of lessons, making better use of time and providing increased opportunities for pupils to explore different ways of working
- Increase opportunities for the pupils to use ICT to support their learning

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Achievement for boys and girls of all abilities is good. Trends since the previous inspection show a rise in attainment. Test results at the end of Year 2 and inspection evidence show that standards in reading, writing and mathematics are well above the national average.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are very competent in basic skills which they use well to support work in other subjects
- Progress for boys and girls in the Foundation Stage is good and most attain the early learning goals by the end of the reception year
- Pupils with special educational needs make good progress
- Pupils have above average skills, knowledge and understanding in science, geography, art and design, music, physical education and religious education
- Pupils have limited skills in applying their knowledge of computers to work in a range of subjects

Commentary

1. Attainment on admission to the school is average. Almost all pupils benefit from some pre-school educational experience. Their social skills vary significantly but most are competent communicators and have a secure grasp of the world around them. Pupils make a good start to school because of the very good induction procedures which help them to grow in confidence. Progress for boys and girls is equally good. The rich and varied curriculum promotes effective learning and pupils make consistent gains in all of the areas of learning. By the end of the reception year at least 85 per cent of pupils have attained the early learning goals, and about half are working at levels which are about a year in advance of their age. Standards attained in personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy, mathematical creative and physical development are above average. The pupils are competent learners who are prepared very well for the next stage of their education.
2. Standards have improved much since the previous inspection. Trends over time show that standards in reading, writing and mathematics have been maintained at high levels for several years, due to very effective leadership and management which have ensured that the curriculum is broad and challenging and provides opportunities for pupils to apply basic skills in a range of contexts. The school makes very good use of data and analyses test results rigorously, making good use of the results to set demanding targets. Effective teaching ensures that these targets are met. Compared to the national pattern, there is very little variation in the performance of boys and girls.
3. Inspection evidence and national test results show that standards in reading, writing and mathematics are well above average. In 2004 the results in reading were among the top five per cent of schools. When compared with schools with similar contexts standards are also well above average. Pupils read very competently, with expression, fluency and accuracy. Their writing is interesting and includes a rich vocabulary and good use of punctuation, accurate spelling and neat and well formed handwriting. Pupils are articulate and express their ideas clearly although some, especially girls, show some lack of confidence when speaking to a large group. Pupils are competent mathematicians and have a good grasp of number, shape, measures and data

handling. They are skilful in solving problems and use mathematical vocabulary accurately. Pupils are confident when explaining mathematical processes.

4. Standards in almost all other subjects are above average and there is some impressive work which incorporates literacy skills in writing in history, geography and religious education. Pupils use their numeracy skills well in planning models in design and technology, making graphs and charts in science and creating patterns in art and design. Standards in ICT are average although pupils lack some confidence when applying these skills across the curriculum. This is partly due to limited resources. The school has this issue in hand and new resources have been purchased and staff training is planned. Standards in science, geography, art and design, music, religious education, design and technology and physical education are above average. Swimming is a notable strength and almost all pupils are able to swim a length of the pool by the time they leave the school. Pupils' work suggests that standards in history are average. The school has made substantial headway in raising standards in foundation subjects since the previous inspection because of rigorous curriculum leadership and development.
5. Progress for all pupils is good. Those with learning difficulties benefit from very good provision and well focused individual education plans which are used effectively to target their needs. Most of these pupils attain close to average standards by the time they leave the school. More able pupils are given sufficient challenge and the school makes good provision for those identified as gifted and talented. There is no significant variation in the performance of pupils in different classes in the same year group. Because of good assessment skills, knowledge and understanding are developed consistently and progressively.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	18.5 (17.7)	15.8 (15.7)
Writing	17.1 (16.7)	14.6 (14.6)
Mathematics	18.0 (17.4)	16.2 (16.3)

There were 66 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils respond very well to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural values promoted by the school. They have very positive attitudes to school and their behaviour is good. Pupils are punctual and attendance is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' very good attitudes, their good behaviour and relationships help to create a positive ethos for learning
- Pupils clearly understand the difference between right and wrong and are consistently encouraged and praised for making the right choices
- Pupils' involvement in school improvement through the school council makes a strong contribution to their personal, social and emotional development
- The provision for pupils' cultural development has improved significantly since the last inspection and is now very good

Commentary

6. Pupils are provided with a good range of opportunities to develop a spiritual awareness through their lessons, interesting visitors and visits out of school. Pupils recall with excitement the recent visit of the falconer. Art lessons make a good contribution to pupils' spiritual development. In Year 2, for example, they are learning about line and form and the abstract nature of art through their study of the work of Charles Rennie Mackintosh. The pupils sing with enthusiasm in assembly and many play instruments, enjoying the act of making music. Because teachers listen to their ideas in lessons, pupils feel valued and special. Those pupils who have special educational needs receive a very good level of support and participate and learn effectively.
7. Because the school promotes clear moral and social values which are supported by parents, pupils develop a good understanding of the boundaries of acceptable behaviour within the school community. All staff consistently praise pupils' good work and behaviour and this encourages them to try to live up to their teachers' high expectations. A few pupils, however, become distracted when the pace of lessons is slow and tend to chatter when they should be listening. Pupils show obvious pride in assembly when they are chosen to receive a certificate for their good work or positive attitudes. Opportunities are provided in lessons for pupils to collaborate together and pupils say that their friends often help them with their learning. Because of the good relationships between most pupils, there are few concerns about bullying. Pupils know that it is important to tell someone if they are unhappy and they trust the staff to help them. The school council plays an important role in decision making in the school and, because their views are respected, they learn how to bring about improvement.
8. The school has been very successful in its efforts to provide pupils with a wide range of cultural experiences. They learn about the lives and beliefs of others in their religious education lessons and show an open and natural curiosity about other lifestyles. They visit places of worship, taste exotic foods, dress up in unusual clothes and listen to music from different cultures. For example, a Scottish piper visited the school during the week of the inspection, extending pupils' understanding of that culture. Pupils talk with enthusiasm about the after school activities and take part in large numbers. They enjoy their life at school and their interest and involvement in their learning has a very good impact on their achievement.
9. During their time in the Foundation Stage, the children make good progress and achieve better than average levels for their age in personal, social and emotional development. Because of the very good induction arrangements the children in the Reception classes settle quickly into the routines of the classroom and begin to learn through the good range of interesting activities. They respond with enthusiasm and try hard to please their teachers. They behave well.

Attendance

10. Attendance in recent years has been consistently well above that found in most primary schools. Because parents are very good at notifying the school promptly about absence, there is no unauthorised absence recorded.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	3.3	School data	0.0

National data	5.1
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National data	0.4
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The table gives the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides a good quality of education overall and the curriculum is very good. Teaching, learning and assessment are good.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are good overall and have improved since the last inspection. Teachers' assess pupils' work in English and mathematics very well.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage are mostly good
- Pupils with special educational needs benefit from very good support
- The teaching of English is very good
- Some lessons lack pace and learning is slow

Commentary

11. Teaching effectively meets the needs of pupils of different abilities. The good quality of teaching identified at the time of the previous inspection has been built upon and there is now a higher proportion of good and better lessons. Parents are mostly pleased with the quality of teaching although concerns were expressed about changes in Year 2. Inspection evidence found no significant difference in the quality of teaching in these classes and both classes were taught effectively. There are several common strengths in the teaching which include very good planning linked to effective assessment of the pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding. Lessons are thoroughly prepared and good thought is given to helping pupils' understanding through the use of practical resources and examples. Relationships between adults and the pupils are very good and there is an underlying sense of care for individuals which is reflected in the very good attention given to those with special educational needs. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs has improved substantially since the previous inspection and there are now well crafted individual education plans, focused times for support and direct teaching to targets.
12. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is good overall and varies between very good and satisfactory. Staff have a good understanding of how young children learn and plan lots of practical work as well as providing opportunities for the pupils to explore and experiment. The teaching of communication, language and literacy is good with structured programmes for developing awareness of letter sounds, opportunities to read and listen to stories and imaginative activities involving writing for different purposes. The good teaching of mathematical development is rooted in using apparatus and in providing many opportunities to practise counting, learning rhymes and recording. In the best lessons adults intervene effectively with well timed comments and skilful questions which move learning on. However, in a lesson in the hall too much was expected of the pupils in visualising numbers and interpreting them in body shapes and this led to some unsettled behaviour which interrupted the flow of learning.
13. The teaching in Years 1 and 2 is good overall and varies between satisfactory and very good. The teaching of English is very good because basic skills are consistently reinforced and pupils are given challenging opportunities to practise and refine their skills. The more able writers are provided with stimulating teaching which is full of anecdote and interest and this inspires them to produce well written and imaginative

work. Reading is taught very well and includes a combination of learning the sounds that letters make, opportunities to learn new words, regular practice at home and school and a stimulating range of books which motivate the pupils. Good account is taken of the interests of boys in the selection of books. The use of setting by ability works very well in both English and mathematics and enables teachers to plan lessons which are matched to ability and pitched at the right level. Staff have good mathematical subject knowledge and plan their lessons effectively. There is a good balance between instruction and opportunities for the pupils to work independently although on some occasions introductions go on too long and the momentum of learning drifts.

14. Because of the very well planned curriculum teachers have a good understanding of how to teach the other subjects. They successfully combine skills where appropriate so that learning is interesting and purposeful. New ideas are explained clearly and activities are planned to build on previous experiences. Creative skills are taught well and teachers are successful in capturing pupils' imaginations through work such as making dreamcatchers and linking this to discussion about feelings, dreams and emotions to enhance pupils' conceptual development. Less confident pupils are gently coaxed and encouraged to join in and most teachers use well directed questions to ensure that these pupils have their say.

15. Generally, expectations are high and pupils respond well to their teachers. There is consistency in managing behaviour and using praise and reward to encourage and challenge. However, in a few lessons the momentum of learning is lost when teachers talk too much, which results in some loss of concentration and occasionally unsettled behaviour. These instances occur when pupils have been sitting on the carpet for too long during the lesson introductions. Most lessons have a brisk pace and there is a good balance between direct teaching and time for the pupils to work on their own or in groups. Marking is accurate and well focused with very helpful comments which guide the pupils on how to improve. Pupils are fully aware of their targets and feel that they are helpful in guiding them about the next steps in their learning. Assessment in English and mathematics is very good as staff use the information to plan the next aspect of learning and match the work to pupils' abilities. Other subjects benefit from good and accurate assessment.

16. Pupils are good learners and absorb facts and figures with interest. They are keen to talk about their work and most say they find school interesting and challenging. Pupils work hard and persevere with tasks. They present their work attractively and pay good attention to accuracy in spelling and calculating. Pupils cooperate effectively and work on projects together, listening thoughtfully to the views of others and taking account of feelings and opinions.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 39 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	10 (26%)	22 (56%)	7 (18%)	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.

The curriculum

The pupils benefit from an inclusive and very good curriculum. There are very good opportunities to enrich the pupils' learning. The school has good staffing levels, resources and accommodation.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Planning is very thorough and very good links are made between subjects
- The curriculum for the Foundation Stage is good
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good
- The outdoor environment is especially good

Commentary

17. The curriculum meets statutory requirements and has improved substantially since the previous inspection. This has had a significant impact on raising standards, especially in the foundation subjects, and in helping the school to maintain its impressive performance in English and mathematics. Very effective planning has been used to forge natural links between subjects and to make learning cohesive. Pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding are developed consistently and the result is that pupils are prepared very well academically for the next stage of their education. This is also true in their personal, social and emotional development. The school's very good provision for personal, social and health education includes good teaching about drugs, growth and relationships enhances pupils' self awareness. Significant improvement to the school's provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development link very well with the curriculum and enhance learning to provide rich experiences for the pupils and help to prepare them very effectively for life in a culturally diverse society. The curriculum for the Foundation Stage is good and much improvement has been made to outdoor provision.
18. The school works hard to meet the needs of pupils and is very inclusive in its policies and practice. The provision for pupils with special educational needs has improved substantially since the previous inspection and is very good. Early identification of potential weaknesses in pupils' learning leads to well focused support based on perceptively written individual education plans. These specific targets are used well to guide staff on courses of work. Parents are kept well informed and involved in the provision. The school has identified several gifted and talented pupils and works hard to meet their needs by providing additional challenges. The needs of boys and girls are catered for through careful choice of a balanced range of activities and resources which take account of differing interests.
19. The curriculum is enriched very well through an extensive programme of visits, visitors and special events. Pupils respond enthusiastically to these opportunities, including the choir's involvement in county wide events. Activities are open to all and are well attended. A good range of extra-curricular activities, including sporting, academic and cultural opportunities, are well attended. Many pupils learn French and participate eagerly in football training and other sporting opportunities. The before and after school clubs provide a valuable service to parents. Pupils talk enthusiastically about places they have visited and how they have helped them to gain an understanding of changes to their locality.
20. Good resources support each area of the curriculum, although improvements are needed in ICT. The school benefits from very good accommodation and the swimming pool, large hall and well stocked library contribute much to learning. The outdoor area includes imaginative use of different environments which are used well in science, geography and history. Staffing levels are good and support staff contribute much to learning. Staff have good qualifications and are involved in regular training. The caretaker makes a substantial contribution to the life and work of the school.

Care, guidance and support

The school makes very good provision for the care, welfare and health and safety of all pupils. The strong, caring relationships in school ensure that pupils receive very good quality support and guidance. Pupils' views have a very good impact on school life.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good procedures ensure the health, safety and protection of pupils
- Individual support systems for all pupils are very good and pupils have a clear understanding of how to improve
- Induction arrangements are very good and help to establish highly effective relationships with parents
- The quality of this provision has improved since the last inspection.

Commentary

21. Staff and governors are very well aware of health and safety issues. Regular risk assessments are carried out and the caretaker ensures that the school is a clean and healthy environment. Fire drills take place regularly and there is good provision for first aid. Training for child protection is up-to-date and the teacher responsible for this aspect ensures that all staff are aware of their duty of care in relation to the protection of pupils. Pupils learn about the benefits of good hygiene and a healthy diet through their science lessons and the school's participation in the Healthy Schools initiative encourages pupils to eat sensibly. Teachers emphasise the safe use of resources in lessons. Through their personal, social and health education lessons pupils learn strategies to keep themselves safe and learn about drugs and sex at an appropriate level for their age.
22. Because there are mostly very good relationships between pupils and the adults who work with them, pupils are confident that someone will help them if they are unhappy or worried. Any unsatisfactory behaviour is monitored and, in conjunction with parents, appropriate action taken. Personal, social and health education lessons provide good opportunities for teachers to informally monitor and support pupils' personal development and to identify any specific issues that may be troubling them. Educational support and guidance is good overall. Pupils have a very good understanding of their targets and how to achieve them. The very good induction arrangements for new arrivals ensure that parents are confident that their children will be well cared for.
23. The school council acts as a conduit through which all pupils put forward ideas for improving school life. Because the school takes this very seriously, the council brings about changes that are important to the pupils themselves. This not only teaches pupils about citizenship, but makes a strong contribution to their self-esteem and confidence.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has a very good, constructive partnership with parents and with other schools. Links with the community are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents express high levels of satisfaction with the work of the school and value the contribution it makes to their children's personal and academic development
- A few parents raised concern about the level of information provided about staff changes
- Parents' involvement in their children's learning has a very significant impact on the standards achieved
- Parents feel welcome in the school and are confident that their children are well cared for

Commentary

24. The parents who took part in the consultation before and during the inspection spoke very highly of the work of the school. Staff are easy to approach and always make time for them. They trust the school to take care of their children. They are provided with good information through the prospectus, the annual governors' report and the regular newsletters. The annual reports on the progress of children are good. They tell parents what their children have done and indicate how well they are achieving. Targets are shared with parents both in the report as well as at the two scheduled consultation meetings during the year. A third opportunity for consultation is offered in the summer term to discuss the report should parents wish to do this. Because the school provides parents with very good information about what their children will be learning, parents are able to focus their help at home very effectively. They read with their children and encourage them to complete their homework. Parents are regularly invited to assemblies and large numbers take advantage of this, keen to support their children. The parents' association organises a wide range of very successful social and fund raising activities which benefit from enthusiastic and generous support from parents. The funds raised are used both to supplement resources and to undertake major projects. The current project – the development of the 'Magic Willow Garden' - will add an exciting dimension to outdoor learning. Parents are regularly consulted about school developments and the parent governors have a significant input into decision making. While recognising that some parents did not feel well informed about the staff changes in Year 2, inspection evidence shows that the school, within the boundaries of staff confidentiality, informed parents of the actions taken to deal with the situation in a timely manner. Inspectors found no significant difference in the provision in the Year 2 classes.
25. The school has good links with the local community. Regular and interesting visits to local amenities increase pupils' enjoyment of school life. Visitors from the community support pupils' personal and social development as well as extending their learning. Very good links with the other schools promote a happy start to school life and a smooth transfer to junior schools.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are very effective. Very good leadership by the headteacher and other staff have brought very good improvement since the previous inspection. The school is managed very well. Governance is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a shared vision for school improvement
- Subject leadership is very good
- The staff make very good use of data to identify strengths and weaknesses in pupils' performance

- The governors have a very good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses

Commentary

26. The school has made very good improvement since the previous inspection and this is due to skilled leadership and perceptive support from the governing body. All issues have been tackled and many are now strengths, including the provision for special educational needs. Standards have been raised and the quality of teaching has improved. The school is in a strong position to build upon its success. The headteacher provides determined and incisive leadership and has communicated her clear vision for school improvement to all staff, who share common goals and ambitions for the pupils. There is no sense of complacency in the school but a determination to improve the quality of education and raise standards and this has been especially successful in the leadership and management of the curriculum which has resulted in good attainment in almost all subjects. The school's self evaluation is an accurate appraisal of its performance with clear identification of strengths and weaknesses.
27. The award for Investors in People is entirely justified as all are involved in school development. Subject leaders take their responsibilities seriously and have good plans for developing the subjects and links between them. There is regular and effective monitoring of teaching and learning as well as planning and this ensures that all pupils have equal opportunities. Recent changes in the teaching staff have been managed well to ensure continuity in learning. Subject action plans feed into the school's strategic development and there is a well focused programme of action which is reviewed, monitored and evaluated rigorously by the headteacher and governing body. Ambitious targets for performance in national tests are set and they are met because of regular checks and specific intervention where necessary.
28. Management is very effective; good systems ensure that the staff are able to fulfil the school's vision. There is a high priority on appointing the right staff to meet the needs of the school as identified in its improvement plans and the robust systems and guidance ensure that all are clear about their roles and responsibilities. Performance management is well established and linked to raising standards and improving quality. The leadership and management of the provision for special educational needs are very good. The very effective management of curriculum development has contributed significantly to improved standards since the previous inspection.
29. The governing body plays an important part in reviewing trends and managing change. Very good decisions have been made about workload balance and the appointment of additional staff has helped to provide teachers with time to plan and undergo training. The governors have a very good understanding of the schools' strengths and weaknesses and currently are tackling the shortfall in the school's ICT resources and have plans to improve the provision significantly. The headteacher and subject leaders share the school's achievements openly with the governing body and this enables the governors to take an effective part in decision making. Analysis of trends in test performance and the results of the school's assessments are shared openly and ambitious targets are set for further improvement. The governing body ensures that all statutory requirements are met and that good policies, which work well in practice, support equal opportunities, racial equality and access for the disabled.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	399,097
Total expenditure	402,436
Expenditure per pupil	2,163.63

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	15,720
Balance carried forward to the next	12,381

30. The school manages its budget very well and spending priorities are linked to educational goals. There are robust and effective office procedures and the headteacher and governing body are clear about trends in spending and their impact on standards. They make good use of this information when drawing up strategic plans. Best value principles are firmly embedded and much consideration is given to ensuring that supplies and services are purchased at the best price and provide real value.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

31. The school's provision for the Foundation Stage is good. There have been good improvements since the previous inspection, especially in the provision for outdoor play. The curriculum is thoroughly planned to promote the pupils' progress as staff make good links between the areas of learning. The needs of individuals are met well. Careful observation and assessment ensure that bright pupils and those with special educational needs are identified early and given support where needed. Good accommodation supports learning, especially in practical and outdoor activities. Resources are good. All pupils are cared for very well throughout the Foundation Stage.
32. On admission to the school the pupils' abilities are average overall and about a third of pupils have skills, knowledge and understanding in advance of their age. By the end of the Foundation Stage at least eight out of ten pupils attain the expected goals for their age and about half are working at levels above those expected. Pupils are successful in personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy, mathematical development and physical development and standards are above average in these areas of learning. Boys and girls of all abilities make good progress and achieve well. The quality of teaching and learning overall is good. Staff are accurate in their assessments of the pupils' progress. The leadership and management of the Foundation Stage is good and there is a strong sense of teamwork and commitment to equal opportunities. Staff's performance is monitored and this has helped to bring consistency to the quality of teaching.
33. All areas of learning are covered in the good curriculum. There was too little evidence to make a judgement about teaching and learning in knowledge and understanding of the world. Analysis of planning, observations of the pupils' completed work and photographs show that pupils steadily improve their **knowledge and understanding of the world**. Pupils have appropriate skills in using computers. They use programs linked to the reading scheme to reinforce their knowledge of key words and phrases. In construction play they build models of shops and houses working together effectively. The pupils avail themselves of the good opportunities provided to explore and experiment trying out new ways of making their constructions stable. Visits to places of local interest stimulate learning about the post office and shops and pupils gain an appropriate understanding of place. Available evidence suggests that pupils attain the early learning goals in this area of learning.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils make good progress and achieve well
- A large majority attain at least the early learning goals in this area of learning
- Teaching is good because it links personal, social and emotional development with other areas of learning

Commentary

34. The curriculum is well organised and staff are aware of the individual needs of the boys and girls. They teach effectively by providing opportunities for the pupils to learn on their own and in small and large groups which stimulates cooperative skills. Pupils

collaborate effectively on a variety of projects both indoors and outside. In one session, a small group played in the imaginary den, experimenting with drainpipes and containers, and building structures to make their *home* more comfortable. Pupils are taught to appreciate one another and there are good opportunities to listen to stories and to one another. Celebrations of major religious festivals help pupils to gain a good appreciation of life in a culturally diverse society. Staff are good role models and acts of kindness and care are the norm. Pupils reflect on how they are treated and how they respond and react to others. Staff help the pupils to develop positive self-image and value their work by displaying attractively and offering praise and reward. The pupils are confident and secure when starting school because of the very good induction systems. Staff are very welcoming of parents and this contributes to giving the children a good start to school life. Staff encourage respect for others and there is a good system of behaviour management which the pupils clearly understand. A strength in the teaching is the way in which adults make time for the pupils to share their experiences, cares and joys because they create a feeling of trust and security.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are good
- The curriculum is well planned and links between the areas of learning stimulate the use of language
- Boys and girls make good progress and achieve well
- Standards are above average by the end of the reception year.

Commentary

35. Adults provide good opportunities for the children to communicate their ideas, thoughts and feelings in a variety of ways. The teaching of basic skills in reading and writing is effective and there are opportunities to listen to stories, learn rhymes and songs and play a variety of games. In one lesson the pupils threw letter dice, spoke the sounds and built words. They concentrated well and responded to the intervention of the teacher making good gains in using the words in the correct context showing they had understood their meaning. Everyday situations such as planning a visit to the *Chip Shop* and the *Baby Clinic* are used effectively to enhance vocabulary and promote conversation. The pupils readily engage in discussion with adults and work together well. Staff mostly place good emphasis on speaking and listening and ask well focused questions which demand a full response. On some occasions the teacher does not ask sufficiently challenging questions and responses are limited to one word answers. The good range of books and the lively way in which staff tell stories stimulate in pupils a desire to learn to read. There are frequent opportunities to practise sounds and to read familiar stories as well as to work through an interesting reading scheme. Parents are involved in helping their children at home and this contributes to the good standards in reading. Writing is part of many activities and most write their names and those of their friends. Staff encourage initiative and independence through providing good opportunities; pupils make lists of friends who they will invite to a birthday party and the more able are already writing short and correct sentences using well formed letters.
36. The area of learning is planned very well and staff are imaginative in creating opportunities to stimulate the pupils' interest. Good and accurate records of progress are kept and staff use the information to plan the next steps in learning. Very good

support is provided for pupils with learning difficulties, often one to one. The provision is well managed and has improved since the previous inspection report.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average by the end of the reception year
- Pupils of all abilities achieve well and progress is good
- Teaching and learning are good

Commentary

37. Pupils rapidly grow in confidence in their mathematical development and most count in sequence and recognise small numbers. The more able attempt simple addition and have a good understanding of the value of numbers. Pupils match, sort and count making use of a good range of objects. Teaching is rooted in practical work and this helps the pupils to become competent in identifying pattern. Pupils identify many common shapes and differentiate between them by recognising and counting the number of sides. In their construction play, they sort large objects to make buildings making rough estimates of the size needed and cooperating well in making the building stable. Staff intervene well and encourage the pupils to use correct vocabulary for shape and size. Pupils with special educational needs receive good support and skilful questioning helps them to participate in a variety of activities. Staff capitalise on the pupils' natural interest in numbers and arouse their curiosity by providing a good range of resources and situations, including opportunities to measure large objects in outdoor play. Learning is enjoyable and linked to other areas of learning where, for example, the pupils experiment with containers in the water tray to find out about capacity. Staff are careful to track how well the pupils are making progress and record important milestones, making use of the information to plan new challenges which move learning on. Mathematical development is an integral part of the Foundation Stage provision and good planning and management ensure that staff provide a rich environment.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement is good and standards are above average by the end of the reception year
- The teaching is mostly good
- The provision is an integral part of the Foundation Stage provision and contributes much to pupils' general progress
- In some lessons too much time is spent on disciplining the pupils

Commentary

38. The provision has improved much since the previous inspection and contributes very well to other areas of learning. Boys and girls enjoy the wide range of experiences on offer and make good progress. Good planning ensures that there are suitable physical challenges and the use of the attractive outdoor area stimulates learning effectively. In addition pupils benefit from excellent opportunities to learn to swim. They enjoy their swimming lessons and show much confidence and well above average competence for their age when in the pool. Very good teaching and much support from parents mean that pupils quickly become aware of water safety. In a satisfactory lesson in the hall, the

pupils showed a range of movements and an appropriate awareness of space. Many struggle to use their body parts to make numbers, as they have difficulty in visualising them and this leads to some loss of concentration. At this point the pace of the lesson drifted because too much time was spent on controlling the pupils. In imaginative play outside, the pupils show good control, balance and energy as they plan, build and practise a variety of skills. Staff are very careful to provide challenges in a safe environment. Following a fall of snow the pupils worked very well together to make a sledge. They remain engrossed in the activity and work together very well. Some girls try to catch snowflakes and examine them and they giggle with delight at how they feel. The staff encourage the pupils to be independent in getting dressed and to prepare for physical and creative activities. Other physical skills such as holding pencils, cutting with scissors and manipulating a variety of tools are well developed as the staff provide good guidance on their use. The provision is managed effectively. Financial support from parents and other bodies has enabled the staff to provide good resources. Adults keep a close check on the pupils' progress and record their observations clearly. The information is used to keep track of pupils' performance and to plan new activities.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The teaching is good
- Pupils achieve well and by the end of the reception year standards are above average
- This area of learning is led effectively

Commentary

39. In creative development, the pupils experience working with a wide range of materials and have opportunities to take part in music making, role play and a variety of artwork. Pupils enjoy these experiences and they contribute to their personal, social and emotional development and communication, language and literacy skills. In a role play session in the *Baby Clinic* the pupils imaginatively took the part of receptionists, mothers and nurses and weighed, measured and bathed their babies engaging in purposeful and creative conversation. Effective intervention by the teaching assistant ensured that pupils learned new vocabulary and made good progress in understanding how babies need special care. As part of their work on the *Chip Shop* the pupils used potatoes to make good prints and the teacher extended their organisational skills by encouraging them to use a limited range of colours and to print a simple pattern. The teaching is good and promotes effective understanding of a variety of skills and techniques. Good observations and assessments ensure that pupils make consistent gains in their learning.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGE 1

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The teaching overall is very good, leading to high standards in all aspects of English
- Very effective assessment of pupils' work helps both the teachers and the pupils to know how to improve further

- The organisation of Year 2 pupils into three ability groups for extended writing lessons has improved standards and achievement
- Class teachers and the teaching assistants work together very effectively
- Some teachers spend too long explaining and introducing work so that lessons lose both pace and pupils' motivation

Commentary

40. The high standards identified in the previous inspection have been maintained and the subject has continued to improve at a rate better than schools nationally. Pupils' standards in reading and writing remain well above the national average. In reading, standards are particularly high. Both boys and girls read fluently and with appropriate expression, they tackle difficult words and sentences with confidence. Standards in writing have benefited from the targeted teaching the pupils receive as a result of the organisation of Year 2 pupils into three ability groups for this activity. This arrangement has provided the higher attaining pupils with challenges to which they have responded well. Handwriting is taught effectively throughout the school and the standard of presentation of work is generally high. Achievement in all aspects of English is good in all classes. There is little difference between the performance of boys and girls. Those pupils with special educational needs are supported well by the carefully briefed teaching assistants and as a result achieve levels that are not far short of those of their peers. This represents good, and sometimes very good, achievement.
41. The teaching of English is very good in most cases and never less than good. The planning is very carefully and imaginatively done so that natural links between subjects are used to increase the pupils' interest in their work. The breadth of the curriculum involving English is a significantly good feature of the work of the school. The marking of pupils' work is conscientiously done, the pupils pay attention to it, and teachers follow up their remarks. Pupils are provided with individual targets attached to their books. When each target is achieved the date is added, so that the pupils have a clear record of how well they are improving.
42. The pupils enjoy English. They write interesting stories, and clear and accurate accounts of visits to places such as Twycross Zoo. Their writing includes personal and arresting comments, and descriptions of processes. They write imaginative letters, often pretending to be another character drawn from a story they are reading. They make up interesting dialogues in their role-play areas in the classes and are good conversationalists. In speaking in class, however, some of the girls are diffident about talking to the whole group, even though the quality of what they have to say is good. Their fluency enables them to speak confidently with visitors to the school and to express their ideas clearly. The school has been successful in increasing the interest of boys in writing by providing a range of interesting non-fiction books. The supply of books in the school is good but the library, though functional, lacks a really inviting area to entice the children to browse and enjoy books. The selection of books for study provides the pupils with insights into cultures and countries other than their own as did the work of a visiting story-teller. English supports the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils well.
43. The leadership and management of the subject have been effective in maintaining progress at a very high level over a number of years. The teaching is carefully monitored and good practices are shared between teachers as a result of the joint planning of work in parallel classes. There is regular review of the work in the subject and new initiatives are devised to improve standards and achievement further. Currently

the school is looking to extend the use of English in other subjects for the greater benefit of both.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

44. Good use of English across the curriculum enhances achievements in writing. Thoughtful writing is encouraged in subjects such as history, geography and religious education. The use of a range of topics as the basis for reading in literacy sessions broadens the pupils' knowledge of the world and of other subjects and gives added interest to the work in English.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Inspection evidence and tests results show that standards at the end of Year 2 are well above average
- Teaching and learning are good
- The subject is led and managed very effectively
- More able pupils are given high levels of challenge

Commentary

45. Inspection evidence and national test results show that standards are well above average when compared nationally and with schools in similar contexts. The school has improved at a rate better than the national trend and standards are higher than at the time of the previous inspection. Boys and girls do equally well. More able pupils are well in advance of the standards expected for their age as a result of high levels of challenge. All pupils make good progress and achieve well because the curriculum is challenging and the teaching is effective. Those with special educational needs are clearly identified and good support ensures that they are successful. Most of these pupils attain standards which are close to the national average by the time they leave the school.
46. Pupils have a good grasp of number and work competently in solving problems using a variety of strategies. The good emphasis on explaining processes and the use of correct mathematical vocabulary impact well on standards. Pupils have a good understanding of data handling and competently make and interpret graphs. They have good skills in estimating and recognise, name and describe shapes precisely.
47. Teaching in the lessons seen varied between very good and satisfactory and is good overall. Lessons are planned in great detail and support staff are given clear guidance on working with their groups. The skilful use of the very good assessment procedures to plan work which is matched to ability and the use of setting by ability combine to make teaching and learning successful. Most lessons have a good balance between direct teaching and time for the pupils to practise and improve their skills. On some occasions too much time is given to introductions and the pupils become unsettled and this slows the rate of learning and hampers productivity. Marking is precise and helpful. Teachers provide constructive comments which guide the pupils on how to improve and the marking is linked to individual targets. This is a real strength as pupils know how well they are doing and what the next steps should be. Teachers have good subject knowledge and make effective use of the guidance in the National Numeracy Strategy when planning activities. The use of resources and pertinent examples brings the

teaching to life and promote understanding of new ideas. Pupils are enthusiastic about mathematics and work hard. They concentrate for extended periods and are keen to present their work well. They respond excitedly to opportunities to answer quick fire questions and to learn number facts and multiplication tables at home.

48. The subject is led and managed very well as good account is taken of previous performance in setting targets and in remedying any gaps in the curriculum or relative weaknesses in the teaching. Staff are well trained. Planning often includes opportunities for the pupils to use computers to support their learning. Assessment and record keeping are sharp and well focused.

Mathematics across the curriculum

49. The curriculum is planned very well and includes opportunities for the pupils to use their numeracy skills effectively in several subjects. In art and design the pupils create well balanced patterns showing a good awareness of shape and space. In design and technology they plan their models and make use of measuring and labels on diagrams. In science the pupils use graphs and charts to present their findings.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' achievement is good especially in scientific enquiry
- Most of the teaching is good and includes appropriate challenge
- Lesson time is not always used effectively

Commentary

50. Pupils at the end of Year 2 achieve standards that are above the national average and broadly in line with those in schools in similar contexts. The percentage of pupils achieving the higher Level 3 in national tests is well above the national average and average when compared with schools in similar contexts. Inspection findings confirm the assessments made by teachers. The curriculum for experimental and investigative science has been strengthened to provide more opportunities for pupils to learn from first-hand experience than at the time of the previous inspection. This is helping pupils to achieve well and has contributed to an improvement in standards. Progress for boys and girls is similar and pupils of all abilities make good progress. Pupils in Year 2 competently investigate how to create a working circuit using a battery, bulb and wires and make accurate observational drawings of these. They correctly describe the changes that take place when some materials are heated. More able pupils are aware that the changes to some but not all materials can be reversed.
51. The quality of teaching is good; in one lesson observed the teaching was very good. Planning is thorough and reflects a clear understanding of what needs to be learned and how pupils will be taught. Lessons are structured to provide a good balance between explanation and enquiry. Opportunities to apply literacy and numeracy skills are built into planning and enhance learning. The plenary session is used effectively to reinforce key ideas in the lesson, interpret findings and draw out general statements. Resources are selected to provide interest and challenge. Opportunities for pupils to use ICT to gather information are integrated into lesson planning; the use of ICT as a

teaching tool has still to be developed. Pupils are assessed each half term to establish whether they have achieved the intended learning outcomes for science. Class teachers make good use of these records to inform the next stages of planning.

52. Learning is particularly good when teachers have high expectations of all pupils and help them to see how to improve all aspects of their work. Pupils are encouraged to wrestle with problems and explore alternative approaches. They are expected to explain their findings using appropriate scientific vocabulary. More able pupils are challenged to deepen their understanding by making connections and providing general statements. Pupils with special educational needs are provided with additional resources to enable them to work independently. All pupils are taught to record for themselves in a variety of ways. Pupils rise to these challenges. They are keen to contribute in lessons and show care in their written work. Teaching is less effective when too much time is allocated to consolidation tasks.
53. Subject leadership and management are well developed. The co-ordinator monitors teaching and learning in science throughout the school through lesson observations and analysis of pupils' work. Where appropriate, recommendations for improvement are made. She has a good understanding of strengths in subject provision, has ensured that good resources are available and has identified areas for development to further improve standards.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards by the end of Year 2 are average
- Teaching and learning in Year 1 are good
- Pupils have insufficient opportunities to use computers to support their work in other subjects

Commentary

54. The school has made steady improvement since the previous inspection and has well advanced plans to improve resources and extend opportunities for the pupils to use ICT to support learning across the curriculum. Pupils have appropriate skills for their age in all aspects of ICT and make satisfactory progress. Pupils with special educational needs make similar progress to their peers. All pupils know how to load, save and print their work and understand several of the different applications of computers in everyday life. They make use of basic word processing skills to present their writing but few use the computers' tools to edit and refine their work. Most have a satisfactory understanding of how to use the Internet to find out information. Their skills in control technology are average and the pupils know how to program a simple robot and make it move forwards and backwards. They make good use of computers to make a variety of graphs which supports work in mathematics effectively.
55. The teaching overall is satisfactory, although several good lessons were seen. Lessons are planned well but the limitations of resources hamper some aspects of learning and pupils sometimes have to wait several days before they have the opportunity to practise new skills. Introductions are clear and objectives shared with the pupils so they know what to do. Teachers in Year 1 successfully linked work in English with developing pupils' dexterity in painting using the computers' tools. The work followed on from a discussion of the book *Handa's Surprise* and the pupils enjoyed using the brush and fill

tools. Much to the pupils' delight, the teacher deliberately made some mistakes to show the pupils how to use the undo button. The main strengths of the teaching in these lessons were in the clarity of explanations and the good use of teachers' subject knowledge to enhance understanding. In both year groups there is a good emphasis on using the correct technical vocabulary and pupils make good use of it when discussing their work.

56. Most teachers have adequate subject knowledge and there are plans for further training. They keep good records of the pupils' progress and assess their performance accurately. The use of assessment has guided the school on its strategic plans for improvement. The subject is led and managed well as there is a clear plan of action which is well advanced. The governing body are fully involved in these developments and have allocated substantial funds in order for the school to raise standards.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

57. The use of computers to support learning across the subjects is variable. It is satisfactory in Year 1 but there are limited opportunities in Year 2. In Year 1 pupils draw a water pot which they decorate in African style to link with their English work on *Handa's Surprise*. Some research using the internet is done in geography and history and throughout the school pupils regularly use ICT to support their work in mathematics, making use of a good range of programs.

HUMANITIES

58. Inspectors observed two lessons in religious education and geography but none in history. In addition, inspectors analysed planning and talked to the teachers and pupils about the subjects. They examined a variety of pupils' work. The planning for all the subjects meets the requirements of the National Curriculum. There is insufficient evidence to make a judgement about the quality of the provision in **history**. From the work seen, standards are average. Year 2 pupils use picture clues to identify whether people lived in the past or present. They select and record information about the lives of famous people and why they acted as they did. Year 1 pupils correctly identify similarities and differences between new toys and toys used in the recent past. They understand that materials can indicate whether a toy is old or new. The history curriculum has been strengthened since the time of the previous inspection. Greater emphasis is placed upon developing the skills of historical enquiry. Pupils use a range of sources including pictures, photographs, artefacts, the internet and visits to answer questions about the past. They are taught to record in a variety of ways.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers create a good climate for learning
- Pupils achieve well and acquire good knowledge and understanding of Christianity and other religions

Commentary

59. Standards have improved since the last inspection and are higher than the expectations set out in the locally agreed syllabus. The school has revised its curriculum to provide

greater breadth and depth and to develop spiritual awareness. Cross-curricular links have been strengthened. These improvements have helped pupils to achieve well. Pupils with special educational needs are given good support and contribute effectively in lessons. Boys and girls in Year 2 have a good understanding that people have different faiths and that some practices and stories are common to different religions. They have visited a mosque and know that Muslims follow Muhammad's teaching. They are aware that prayer is a characteristic of many religions and can explain how Muslims and Christians pray. They accurately retell the creation story and know that this story is shared by Jews and Christians. In an attractive display using a variety of media the pupils have created a telling picture of the story of creation. Year 1 pupils can explain that natural disasters such as the tsunami are nobody's fault. They consider the plight of victims and explain why they believe the victims should receive help.

60. Overall, teaching is good. Teachers relate well to their pupils and this encourages pupils to discuss and share their ideas. Teachers use a good range of teaching strategies and provide clear explanations that help pupils, including those with special educational needs, to understand. They make good use of assessment to identify strengths and weaknesses in learning and use the information to plan topics. The school's good resources are used imaginatively to help pupils grasp key concepts. Subject leadership is good and has led to a rise in standards. The co-ordinator monitors teaching and learning and this has helped to inform curriculum developments. The subject is well resourced.

Geography

Provision in geography is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum provides good opportunities for pupils to develop their knowledge, skills and understanding
- Teachers set relevant and suitably challenging tasks
- Pupils are well motivated

Commentary

61. Standards have improved since the last inspection and now are above average. Geography is taught in half-termly blocks as part of topic work. The curriculum has been strengthened to ensure that geography as a subject is sufficiently substantial and well-defined. Planning incorporates study visits and provides good opportunities for pupils to develop enquiry skills. This has helped boys and girls to make good progress.
62. Pupils in Year 2 locate Kenilworth on maps of different scales and show good awareness of the physical and human features of their locality. They appreciate how their own locality is similar to and different from Handa's Kenya as described in a story. Following a study visit Year 1 pupils constructed a three-dimensional model of Kenilworth Castle and related it to a plan so that they developed an understanding of bird's eye views. Overall, teaching is good and in one lesson observed teaching was very good. Teachers relate well to their pupils and establish a productive climate for learning. Their good command of the subject is shown in the thought given to the way in which knowledge and skills are built up. Challenging questions asked at the beginning of lessons are used to probe what pupils already know and to help them relate new

work to what has been done previously. Teachers capture pupils' interest so that they engage in tasks enthusiastically. They set suitably demanding but meaningful tasks which inspire all pupils to develop their ideas. Pupils are keen to learn and work at a good pace. Leadership and management of the subject are good. Teaching and learning are monitored and issues identified are addressed. There is a good range of resources to support learning.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Art and design

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The good quality teaching stimulates the pupils to be inventive and achieve well
- The resources provided are of a good quality and promote good quality work
- Pupils are very enthusiastic about the subject
- Art is used effectively to develop the pupils' understanding of a broad range of cultures
- The pupils' work is very effectively displayed promoting high standards of attainment and good achievement

Commentary

63. By the time the pupils leave the school they attain above average standards. They carefully explore ideas visually and make high quality and interesting pictures, drawings, prints or three-dimensional models to represent them. Throughout the school, the pupils are taught to observe things closely. In Year 1 paintings of different fruits, using a variety of media, reproduce the variations in shade and colour of a mango or banana very faithfully. Pupils throughout the school share their ideas with one another, and use a richer than average vocabulary to describe what they see or what they are doing. They explain clearly what they notice about the work of the artists they study, such as the distinctive curves and straight lines in the pictures and designs of Charles Rennie Mackintosh in Year 2.
64. The teaching of art and design is good, and sometimes very good. The planning, which is shared by teachers of parallel classes, is imaginative and based on good models. There is a good linking of different subjects within a single topic. Good use is made of in-service training to improve the quality of teaching and this has had a positive impact on the pupils' achievement. The teachers make careful judgements about where and when to make suggestions about the pupils' work. As a result both observation and painting or drawing techniques improve noticeably. Teachers make good use of the adult support which is available. As a result of skilful teaching the pupils are confident in art. This is clear from the strength of line in their drawing, the assurance with which they mix and use colour and the ease with which they discuss art topics. They also make good use of painting programmes on the computers which are regularly used in art lessons. Pupils of all levels of ability receive effective support so that all achieve well and enjoy the subject.
65. Art and design is well managed and led. As a result standards are higher than reported in the previous inspection. The scheme of work and monitoring of teaching and learning identified as lacking previously have been very effectively introduced with very positive

results. Art plays a full part in the all round education of the pupils, especially their spiritual, social and cultural development. A significant feature in the provision is the very effective use made of visits, such as to the mosque or Twycross Zoo, and of visitors, such as the artist/story teller in residence. These broaden the pupils' experience and enrich the visual imagery with which they come into contact.

Design and technology

Provision in design and technology is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good, imaginative and responsive to the pupils' needs
- Pupils are competent in designing and making skills
- Pupils enjoy the subject and work hard

Commentary

66. The quality of work on display and seen in lessons throughout the school is higher than that expected of pupils of a similar age. In designing, the pupils' drawings and occasional notes of developments show a good level of thinking. They use good techniques for joining materials, articulating models and handling tools for cutting out complex shapes. Boys and girls achieve well.
67. Teaching and learning are good. One significant feature is the successful use of time when a short session at the end of a morning is used for planning so that the longer session in an afternoon can be very effectively devoted to practical making activities. The work is imaginatively and jointly planned for parallel classes. It is, wherever possible, related to the overarching topic on which the pupils are working at the time. In this way design and technology is not only valued as a subject in its own right, but also as a tool for learning in other subjects. Good examples of this are the designs for animal cages for the models of Twycross Zoo following a visit, and the models of Kenilworth Castle mounted vertically on the wall as a guide to making plans and maps. The style of planning and teaching maintains the pupils' enthusiasm for the subject which most of them enjoy very much. Pupils with special educational needs are enabled to succeed and achieve well through the good quality help they receive from teachers and support staff. The teachers' very effective methods of assessment enable them to maintain a good quality of learning.
68. Work in design and technology supports the broad education the pupils receive, not least their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. One example of this is the planning and making of resources to be used in a role play area Post Office. This is related to real life, and it leads to a good deal of cooperation between pupils in making the resources and in discussing their plans.
69. Over time, the subject has been effectively led so that standards have been improved. A new and energetic subject leader has very recently been appointed who is busily ensuring that the stock of resources, which had declined, are brought back up to standard and that new ideas in teaching and learning are beginning to flow to support plans for further improvements in achievement and standards.

Music

Provision in music is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Enthusiastic and committed teaching inspires the pupils to enjoy making music
- The leadership and teaching of the subject continues to promote music learning of a good standard throughout the school.
- The very large and prestigious voluntary choir gives music a high status in the school; and gives the school a good name in the community
- In some lessons the introduction to the activities planned takes longer than necessary

Commentary

70. The standards achieved throughout the school are higher than those expected of pupils of a similar age. Pupils sing in parts and hold their own line well. By the end of Year 2, they sing and play tunes with remembered rhythms and melodies with accuracy and understanding. They write their own tunes using notation devised for the purpose. Younger pupils create simple musical patterns and follow those provided by the teacher well. The pupils' knowledge and understanding of music is also used when they devise dances in physical education. Pupils recognise and comment upon music and musical instruments from different cultures and times with understanding.
71. The choir which involves about a third of all the pupils is an important feature of the school. The choir participates in local community musical ventures. They also take part in local school music festivals, usually as the youngest contributors present. Members of the choir lead the singing in collective worship which is enthusiastic and tuneful. Pupils are introduced to a good range of music as they assemble and move off to their classes to a song.
72. Teaching and learning are good although occasionally a lesson may lack pace because too long is spent on explanations rather than in musical activity. Lessons are planned thoroughly and supported by the subject leader so that the varied musical skills of the staff are shared effectively. The scheme of work is based on good models and linked to the topics around which most of the curriculum is gathered. For example, lessons on African music and musical instruments are linked to the topic based on the book "Handa's Surprise". Music plays an important role in the provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The pupils develop a large repertoire of songs that they know by heart and they enjoy singing them. The music resources are good in quality and sufficient in quantity to meet the needs of the curriculum. However, insufficient use is made of ICT to support the teaching of music.
73. The subject is well led and managed. Teaching and learning are monitored effectively; an effective assessment policy ensures that standards in the subject are maintained consistently at a good level as they have been since the previous inspection.

Physical education

Provision in physical education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in swimming, taught in the school's own pool, are very high
 - The teaching is good
 - The school's good musical tradition supports dance effectively
 - Generous and carefully managed parental help supports the swimming programme very well
74. The standards in swimming are very high. Before they leave the school practically all pupils successfully swim a length of the pool. Most of the pupils in the current Year 2 do so already. Standards in dance are very good; the pupils use their musical knowledge and understanding to add to the quality of their movement which is well controlled. Their skills in country dancing are better than expected, they move with accuracy and precision. In dance, they successfully link movement to produce attractive sequences. They work well together with partners. Ball skills, demonstrated during a football training session in a club held after school, are also good. No other gymnastics or games sessions were available to be observed.
75. Pupils enjoy physical education; they understand about the need for warming up before physical activity and also for cooling down appropriately afterwards. This is part of a healthy lifestyle approach which is fostered effectively in the school. Pupils with special educational needs are supported very well and as a result their achievements are good. The teaching of swimming and dance are good and this leads to very good levels of achievement. The swimming is very well organised so that every pupil has a swimming lesson every week throughout the year. The teaching is intensive and of a good quality. The pupils' changing is supervised by teams of mothers associated with each class and contributes well to the efficiency of lessons. Dance lessons are linked to the current topics in each class. This increases the relevance of the dance sessions to the whole curriculum. Pupils behave well in lessons so that little time is used in maintaining order. The resources for physical education are good and used well.
76. The scheme of work for physical education ensures that each aspect of the subject is covered. The subject is well managed. There is an effective system of assessment so that standards and individual achievements can be monitored, though some of the records are less complete than those in other, core, subjects. Standards in physical education have been maintained since the previous inspection.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

77. The school has made good improvement to its provision for **personal, social and health education** since the previous inspection and has been involved in several initiatives. The provision is successfully linked to several other subjects including science and religious education and contributes effectively to pupils' self awareness and esteem. Pupils make good gains in their personal, social and emotional development because of good teaching and an interesting curriculum. The school has received a Silver Award for its achievements in this area of learning and inspection evidence indicates that it is entirely warranted.
78. The staff see personal, social and health education as an integral part of its work. The policy and practice link well with the Healthy Schools Initiative and the school's commitment to providing a wide range of physical activities, including swimming, to promote a healthy lifestyle. Staff have been trained effectively in developing pupils' self awareness and appreciation of others. Circle times, when classes share their feelings

and views, are used to encourage pupils to express their ideas. Sensitive questioning by the teacher and appreciation of the contribution of individuals underpin these lessons which contribute effectively to pupils' self esteem. There is a suitable programme of education about the beneficial and harmful effects of drugs and medicines and appropriate teaching about growth and relationships through the science curriculum. Pupils in the Foundation Stage also benefit from the school's programme and study topics about themselves and their families which help them to understand their own bodies and the need for hygiene. The school's imaginative development of the outdoor areas also contributes to the provision. Pupils explore a range of environments and learn to appreciate the wonders of the natural world and their responsibilities for it. The school council represent the pupils' views and meet regularly with staff to raise issues and make suggestions. The staff listen and respond to these ideas very positively and many of the pupils' ideas have been adopted as school policy.

79. The provision is led and managed very effectively and the subject leader has taken the lead in sharing the school's success with other schools and in raising the profile of personal, social and health education among her colleagues. The subject is used very well to make assessments of the pupils' progress in their personal development and guides staff on providing additional support for individuals if it is needed.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	3
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	2
Value for money provided by the school	3
Overall standards achieved	2
Pupils' achievement	3
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	2
Attendance	2
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The quality of education provided by the school	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	3
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	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	3
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	2
The leadership of other key staff	2
The effectiveness of management	2

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