

INSPECTION REPORT

BIRCHWOOD CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL

Warrington

LEA area: Warrington

Unique reference number: 111304

Headteacher: Mrs E Williams

Lead inspector: Mr F Carruthers

Dates of inspection: 13th – 15th June 2005

Inspection number: 274548

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Primary
School category: Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils: 3 – 11
Gender of pupils: Mixed
Number on roll: 257

School address: The Mount
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Warrington
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Appropriate authority: Governing body
Name of chair of governors: Mrs M Smith

Date of previous inspection: 26th April 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This is a larger than average sized primary school with a falling roll in recent years and an equal balance of boys and girls. There are above average levels of social and economic deprivation in the local community, which suffers from vandalism and problems of anti-social behaviour. Very few pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds. At the time of the inspection, very few pupils were at the early stages of learning English as an additional language and one of these left during the week to return to his home country. The attainment of children on entry to the Nursery is well below average. There is an above average proportion of pupils with special educational needs (33 per cent) and two pupils have statements of special educational need. These pupils have a range of need, mostly for moderate learning difficulties, emotional and behavioural problems and speech and language difficulties. Pupil mobility¹ is above the average of primary schools nationally. There have been two changes of headteacher since the last inspection. High turnover of teachers and prolonged periods of teacher absence have been a feature in recent years. At the time of the inspection, three class teachers were employed on temporary contracts and two were on a daily supply rate. A part-time associate headteacher had been supporting the leadership of the school since March 2005 during the absence of the headteacher, who returned to school prior to the start of the inspection, and the deputy headteacher. The building includes the local centre for worship and the village hall. The school has developed links with the associated high school and is involved in programmes to promote the skills of parents. The school gained a School Achievement Award in 2002. Collective worship and religious education are the subject of a separate inspection.

¹ Pupil mobility refers to the number of pupils who join the school at times other than at the start of the Reception year or leave at times other than the end of Year 6.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
21285	Mr F Carruthers	Lead inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Art and design Design and technology English as an additional language
13786	Mrs S Walsh	Lay inspector	
4350	Mr C Whittington	Team inspector	English Geography History Music Special educational needs
17288	Mrs M Warner	Team inspector	The Foundation Stage Science Physical education Personal, social and health education and citizenship
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

The effectiveness of the school is **unsatisfactory**. Standards are too low and pupils are not achieving as well as they should because of past and present disruption to teaching and learning. The leadership and management of the school have not halted sufficiently well the decline in standards since the time of the last inspection. The school is not providing an adequate education for all pupils and its value for money is **unsatisfactory**.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Standards in Year 6 in English and mathematics are well below average and in science they are below average. Too many pupils have not mastered basic skills of literacy and numeracy sufficiently well;
- Attendance rates are poor and punctuality to school of a significant minority of pupils is unsatisfactory. The school is not monitoring attendance closely enough;
- The leadership, management and governance of the school are unsatisfactory because improvements have been slow and ineffective;
- The quality of teaching has been inconsistent over time and not raised standards sufficiently well. However, teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage² are very good and in the current Years 2 and 6 they are good; and pupils with special educational needs are taught well;
- Many pupils have good attitudes to school and this helps their learning;
- A significant minority of parents lack confidence in the school because of protracted absences of senior staff and class teachers;
- Improvements to provision in information and communication technology (ICT) have been good;
- Links with the high school are very good.

Since the last inspection in 1999, standards and pupils' achievement have declined and the school has been a cause for concern to the local education authority since September 2002. There have been changes at senior management level and long periods of disruption to teaching and learning through absence of senior staff and class teachers. The key issue, to raise standards and provision in ICT, has been addressed well and the Foundation Stage has improved significantly. There are signs that recent initiatives are helping to lift standards but overall improvement has been unsatisfactory.

In accordance with section 13 (7) of the School Inspections Act 1996 I am of the opinion, and HMCI agrees, that special measures are required in relation to this school.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

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

Pupils' achievement is unsatisfactory. Standards in English, mathematics and science are too low as illustrated in the table above, in which the asterisk next to a grade indicates the school's results in the national tests were in the lowest five per cent of all primary schools. Standards in the current Year 6 are well below average in English and mathematics and below average in science. Through past disruption to learning, many pupils have not fully mastered the basic skills required to

² The Foundation Stage in this school consists of the Nursery and the Reception class.

read and write, and to calculate in mathematics. Few pupils are reaching the higher level in National Curriculum tests. Boys in particular are not achieving well enough. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards the targets in their individual education plans, though very few reach the nationally expected levels for pupils in Year 6. Standards in the current Year 2 are below average in reading, writing and mathematics. This is an improvement on standards in recent years but there is still a measure of underachievement among pupils because very few pupils reach the higher levels. Children in the Foundation Stage make very good progress because of the very good teaching. The large majority of children in the Reception class are on course to achieve the national goals in all areas of learning.

Most pupils have good attitudes to learning and their behaviour is satisfactory. The behaviour of a small minority of pupils is unsatisfactory. **The pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is satisfactory.** Rates of attendance are well below average and have an adverse impact on standards of attainment. Punctuality to school of a significant minority of pupils is unsatisfactory.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education, including teaching and learning, is unsatisfactory. The quality of pupils' learning across different age groups has been adversely affected by staff absences in recent years and is still very variable. There are signs of improvement, especially in year groups where staffing has been stable, but many pupils are not acquiring basic skills sufficiently well to cope with the demands of the curriculum. The curriculum provided by the school is satisfactory overall, with a satisfactory range of activities outside lessons. All aspects to ensure pupils' welfare, health and safety are satisfactory. Partnership with parents is unsatisfactory overall and the school does not have the confidence of a significant minority of parents. A large minority of parents do not do enough to ensure their children attend school regularly. Links with the community are satisfactory and those with the high school are very good.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management of the school are unsatisfactory. Because of high staff turnover and absence, the effectiveness of measures to improve the quality of provision and halt the decline in standards has been unsatisfactory. Though there are signs of improvement, especially since the appointment of the current headteacher, there is little clear evidence that the decline has been reversed. The headteacher and governors are committed and hard working but have not ensured the improvements necessary to raise standards. Governors have not met statutory requirements to ensure the good attendance of pupils.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents' views of the school are unsatisfactory. A significant minority of them have concerns about disruption to learning caused by high teacher turnover and absence and by the poor behaviour of a minority of pupils. Some feel communication by the school with them is unsatisfactory. Inspectors agree with these concerns. Pupils say they like school and most enjoy lessons. However, some express concern about behaviour in school and about half of pupils consider other pupils do not behave well enough.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Improve the achievement of pupils and raise standards in English, mathematics and science;
- Improve levels of attendance;
- Address key weaknesses of leadership, management and governance of the school;

and, to meet statutory requirements:

- Ensure rigorous monitoring of attendance and attend to omissions in the school prospectus and governors' report to parents.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Standards overall are well below average in Year 6 and pupils' achievement is unsatisfactory. Standards in Year 2 are below average overall and some pupils are underachieving in reading, writing and mathematics. Children make very good progress in the Foundation Stage so that most are on course to achieve the national goals for learning at the end of the Reception year.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in English, mathematics and science are too low and pupils are not achieving well enough because too many lack the full range of basic skills.
- Boys in particular are not achieving well enough.
- Achievement is too variable in Years 3 and 4.
- Because of improvements in provision in the Foundation Stage, children get off to a very good start in their education.
- Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because there are good systems in place to help them.

Commentary

1. Standards have declined since the time of the last inspection and the reversal of this decline has not been quick enough. Standards in Year 6 were at their lowest in 2003 and this was a period of very significant disruption to teaching, especially in Years 3 to 6. The school's results in the 2004 National Curriculum tests improved but remained well below the national average and were in the lowest five per cent of similar schools in mathematics. Too few pupils reached the higher level in subjects. Comparing the school to schools with similar levels of attainment in Year 2 shows the value the school added between Years 2 and 6 was well below average. Disruption to teaching and learning has meant that too many pupils have not mastered well enough the basic skills of knowing letter sounds to help with reading and spelling and recalling number facts and multiplication tables. These are key weaknesses in pupils' learning in current classes, which are cause for concern to parents and contribute to the fact that the pupils' achievement in Year 6 is unsatisfactory.
2. Targets for pupils in Year 6 were not met last year and were too ambitious. Targets for this year are more realistic but the proportion of pupils likely to reach the expected level in English and mathematics is well below average and there are only a few pupils likely to reach the higher level. Higher attaining and talented pupils are not doing well enough. In science, standards are below average and some aspects of pupils' work are well below average, for example drawing conclusions from investigations. Above average levels of pupil mobility and the above average proportion of pupils with special educational needs in Year 6 are two factors that influence low standards but do not fully account for them. It is the legacy of disruption and underachievement that is the biggest barrier to learning. Pupils are making better progress in Years 5 and 6 thanks to the quality of pupils' learning during the current year but disruption in the past has undermined their achievement. Pupils' achievement in Years 3 and 4 is too variable, ranging from satisfactory to unsatisfactory. This is because the quality of pupils' learning either is not good enough to help pupils make better progress or is being disrupted by staffing difficulties. Past underachievement hinders current progress. Because of timetabling restrictions it was not possible to confirm standards in ICT. Other subjects were only sampled.
3. Generally both boys and girls' performance in National Curriculum tests is well below that of boys and girls nationally. Boys are not achieving as well as girls in English, which is similar to

the picture nationally, and worse than girls in science, which is different from the national picture. In mathematics, their performance is broadly similar to one another. Overall, boys should be doing much better than they are. This has been recognised by the school and recent initiatives to motivate boys have been introduced and are beginning to have a positive effect. There are a few pupils in public care and their achievement is similar to their peers.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	25.6 (24.1)	26.9 (26.8)
Mathematics	23.5 (22.4)	27.0 (26.8)
Science	26.0 (24.7)	28.6 (28.6)

There were 29 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

- Standards in Year 2 in reading, writing, mathematics and science are below average. In recent years, they have been well below average. Standards are showing signs of improvement because of the good teaching in the Year 2 class but there have been too few pupils reaching the higher level compared with all schools and similar schools, and this remains the case in the current year group. Better teaching across Years 1 and 2 is required to overcome past underachievement. Standards in ICT have improved since the last inspection and are average overall. This is the result of a concerted effort by staff to improve provision in the light of the key issue arising from the inspection.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	14.1(13.7)	15.8 (15.7)
writing	13.4 (14.3)	14.6 (14.6)
mathematics	14.4 (14.0)	16.2 (16.3)

There were 39 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

- Pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards the goals in their individual education plans, because the help given to them is effective and the work is suitably matched for their abilities. The very few pupils learning English as an additional language have made good progress since they came to the school, because of good support from school staff and visiting specialists.
- Children in the Foundation Stage are achieving very well thanks to significant improvement in provision and this gives them a very good start. Children make very good progress from well below average on entry, to average by the end of the Reception year. The large majority of children in the Reception class are on course to achieve the national goals in all areas of learning.

Pupils’ attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Attendance rates are poor and punctuality is unsatisfactory. The attitudes to school of the majority of pupils are generally good and behaviour is satisfactory but the number of exclusions is high. Pupils’ personal development, including their spiritual, moral social and cultural development, is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The monitoring of attendance is unsatisfactory and has not been effective in improving attendance rates.
- When lessons are interesting and exciting, pupils have good attitudes.
- Disruption to teaching and learning has adversely affected behaviour and how well it is managed, and parents are concerned about cases of bullying that have not been properly resolved.
- Assemblies are of good quality and promote spiritual development well.
- Relationships among pupils are generally good, though there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to learn about cultural diversity.

Commentary

7. Attendance rates are well below the national average and although they improved slightly last year, the rates declined between the autumn and spring terms. Attendance in Year 6 was very low in the spring term. A large minority of parents do not do enough to ensure their children attend school regularly. Attendance is not monitored closely enough by the school and computer records are not analysed rigorously. Records of attendance do not meet statutory requirements as the school does not produce or retain paper records. This results in patterns of erratic attendance not being analysed. Although there is effective support from the education welfare officer for those pupils whose attendance rates are very low, many pupils whose attendance is unsatisfactory are not identified and encouraged to attend school more regularly. Rates of unauthorised absence have been higher than the national average but have improved as a result of early contact with parents of absent children. However, the high rates of authorised absence have not been tackled. Punctuality is unsatisfactory and a significant minority of pupils are regularly late to school, which gives them a poor start to the day.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (92.7%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	6.6	School data	0.7
National data	5.1	National data	0.4

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

8. Many pupils have good attitudes to learning and three quarters of them reported that they like school, in the questionnaires they completed before the inspection. When teaching is good, pupils are highly motivated. In the Nursery and the Reception class, there is a very positive learning environment, teaching is enthusiastic and there are high expectations for standards of behaviour. The children learn to work independently and in groups and they are able to concentrate well. In Years 1 and 2, pupils are well motivated and there are very good relationships between teachers and pupils, which support the development of high self-esteem. Older pupils try hard with their lessons. Pupils with special educational needs and the few learning English as an additional language have good attitudes to their work. There are occasions, though, when lessons do not move on quickly enough and pupils grow restless.
9. Behaviour is satisfactory overall. Behaviour in the playground is boisterous and in the classroom it is usually satisfactory and often good. Many teachers have good behaviour management skills and many permanent members of staff consistently and successfully apply the school's behaviour policy. However, there are some very challenging pupils and this is reflected in the high number of exclusions, which the school uses as a last resort for violent or abusive behaviour. At the time of the inspection, two pupils were excluded for fixed periods for violent or unruly behaviour. A significant minority of parents expressed concern about the

adverse effect of unsatisfactory behaviour on the learning of other children. They felt that standards of behaviour have been affected badly by disruptions to teaching. The school has adopted the local education authority's anti-bullying policy but a significant minority of parents do not have enough faith in the school's approach to resolving bullying. Some parents report that either issues have gone unresolved or their children have eventually sorted out problems themselves. Inspectors agree that behaviour and consistency of approach in managing it have been adversely affected by disruptions caused by teacher turnover and absence at senior management level.

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	262	8	1
White – any other White background	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	4	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	3	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	1	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	1	0	0
Chinese	1	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	1	0	0

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

10. Assemblies have a strong Christian element with a good opportunity to reflect on the wonders of nature and God's world. Pupils are encouraged to consider their beliefs and the beliefs of others through religious education lessons. In the Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2, there is a significant amount of work to raise pupils' self-esteem to ensure they have self-worth and know that they are special, each with special gifts.
11. Most pupils are developing moral understanding satisfactorily. They generally know the difference between right and wrong. Although there are a small number of pupils who are willing to challenge authority, social development is satisfactory. Pupils have the opportunity to exercise responsibility and by the time they reach Year 6 most are sensible and responsible. Older pupils take part in a residential visit that concentrates on outdoor education and gives good opportunities to develop social skills.
12. Cultural development is satisfactory overall. There are strong links with the very popular local Rugby League side that reflect local pupils' interests. Recently musical opportunities have improved; for example, there has been a visit from the Tapestry of Music group. Pupils look at the work of significant artists in art lessons. However, there are few opportunities for pupils to learn about cultural diversity and there are few trips out of school. Overall, the good standards of behaviour and personal development found at the last inspection have not been maintained.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education, including teaching and learning, is unsatisfactory. The curriculum is satisfactory, as is provision for the welfare, health and safety of pupils. Partnership with parents is unsatisfactory; it is satisfactory with the community and very good with the high school.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are unsatisfactory. Satisfactory procedures to assess pupils' progress have been introduced but most are not yet embedded fully in the teaching and learning.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching and learning has been inconsistent over time and not good enough to raise standards and achievement sufficiently.
- Teachers' expectations and the challenge in pupils' work are too variable across classes.
- Teaching is very good in the Foundation Stage and good in the current Years 2 and 6. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is also good.
- The teaching of ICT has improved since the last inspection.
- Satisfactory procedures to assess pupils' progress have only recently been developed and it is too early to assess how well the information is being used.
- Homework is inconsistent across year groups.

Commentary

13. The quality of teaching and learning is unsatisfactory overall. There has been a decline in the quality since the last inspection. Pupils' learning across age groups is too variable and pupils are not achieving well enough. The table below of lessons seen during the inspection is not a true reflection of the quality of teaching and learning in the school, which has been disrupted by staff absences during this school year as in others recently. While children in the Reception class and Years 1 and 2 have generally had continuity of provision by temporary staff, pupils in the mixed Years 3 and 4 class have had several changes of teacher. Very little teaching was observed in the mixed Years 1 and 2 class and in Year 5. This was because the temporary teachers were new to the school and were taking the classes for the first time. They had had little or no contact with the classes prior to the start of the inspection, because of sudden illness to staff or last-minute changes to plans. So a detailed analysis of pupils' work during the school year was used by inspectors to help to assess the quality of pupils' learning.
14. The best teaching is found in the Foundation Stage and Years 2 and 6, where most lessons were observed, thus distorting the summary below. In the Foundation Stage, teaching is very good. Strengths are in planning, organisation and procedures to assess the children's progress. There is a good balance of direct teaching and structured activities and the staff in the Foundation Stage make a strong team, providing a secure and supportive environment for the children.
15. The good quality here provides a solid platform for the future. However, teaching and learning in a number of other year groups are not good enough to build on this platform because achievement has been disrupted in previous years and is still very variable across year groups. In the Year 4 class, for instance, learning and achievement are unsatisfactory. Some teachers' expectations for what pupils can achieve are too low and their planning does not take sufficient account of the different levels of attainment in classes. As a result, pupils have to regain lost ground by Year 6 and they leave the school with a limited grasp of basic skills in English, mathematics and science.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 33 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
1 (3%)	11 (33%)	14 (42%)	6 (18%)	1(3%)	0	0

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

16. The teaching of ICT has improved since the last inspection and pupils' achievement is benefiting from the better learning opportunities, especially those in the computer suite. The expertise of teachers and their assistants has developed well and staff make good use of available resources. The school responded well to the key issue at the last inspection.
17. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good. Pupils are helped to succeed through appropriately set work. Teaching assistants contribute well to the pupils' learning. The pupils' individual education plans are detailed and specific, with clear, achievable targets for improvement. Where possible, these have been agreed by parents or carers and pupils too are involved. Pupils' progress is assessed carefully and this is used to set further relevant targets.
18. Prior to the current school year, there had been little depth and consistency in procedures to assess how well pupils of all abilities were doing. This lack of relevant information contributed to the failure to halt falling standards and underachievement. The appointment of a new co-ordinator has moved the school's procedures on, especially in English, mathematics and science. However, best use of these assessments is not yet established fully in teaching and learning, so that the level of challenge for pupils of different abilities is not always well catered for in lessons. An effective initiative for part of this year was to operate grouping according to levels of attainment in English and mathematics in Years 5 and 6.
19. Homework is not making a good enough contribution to pupils' learning, especially their mastery of basic skills such as spelling and mathematical tables. Parents consider the pupils' experience of homework does not prepare them well enough at the high school and this is the view of inspectors.

The curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is satisfactory overall. The Nursery and Reception class teachers provide a challenging curriculum that meets the needs of the children well. The curriculum in Years 1 to 6 is satisfactory and is enhanced by a satisfactory range of extra-curricular activities and visitors to the school. The accommodation is good and there is a satisfactory range of resources.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum in the Foundation Stage is good.
- Provision for pupils who have special educational needs and for the few learning English as an additional language is good.
- The promotion of writing skills through subjects other than English is underdeveloped.
- A major investment has been in the quality of resources for ICT.
- Strengths in staffing are in the Foundation Stage, physical education and French. Weaknesses are in the match of staff overall to the curriculum.
- The accommodation is good and well cleaned and maintained.

Commentary

20. Since the last inspection, good progress has been made in enriching the curriculum for the Foundation Stage, which was reported then as a minor weakness. The local education authority has supported developments well. The planning is of very good quality and brings about a good balance of direct teaching and structured play activities. Role-play is encouraged so that pupils have plenty of opportunities to develop their imagination and skills of speaking and listening. The outside environment is used well to promote the pupils' learning.
21. Very experienced and well-trained nursery nurses support the curriculum very well. However, because of the high level of teacher turnover and absence, the match of teachers to the

curriculum is unsatisfactory. In year groups where staffing has been stable, the match is much better. The curriculum is enhanced by the teaching of French and physical education in Year 6 by teachers from the local secondary school. Pupils' learning is clearly benefiting from this curricular provision.

22. Progress since last inspection in Years 1 to 6 is satisfactory overall and this reflects a balance of strengths and weaknesses. Provision and resources for ICT have been improved well. At the last inspection, improvement in planning how pupils progressively gain skills in different subjects was a key issue. This has been achieved in ICT but not developed sufficiently in science, where teachers are not clear about which scientific skills should be taught and built upon in each year group. Because design and technology was only sampled, there was insufficient evidence to judge the planning for mastering skills in this subject. Sex and relationships education and drugs education are taught through personal, social, health and citizenship in Year 6, and the school promotes healthy living in health education lessons. The school has sensibly allocated extra time each week to develop the pupils' skills at writing. Nonetheless, the use of writing in other subjects is underdeveloped because there are no clear links between planning in literacy and other subjects. An intensive support programme in mathematics to raise achievement in problem solving has been introduced but it is too early to assess its impact on standards.
23. Provision for pupils who have learning difficulties is good. Pupils receive effective support throughout the school, enabling all to achieve well. This is not the case for those who have special gifts or talents. Although there are some activities planned for their needs, overall they are not achieving as well as they might. Provision for the pupils who are learning English as an additional language is good, with specialist staff from the local education authority assisting the pupils regularly.
24. Accommodation is generally good and provides a positive learning environment. The school has easy access to the church and the community can use the building for meetings and events.

Care, guidance and support

Procedures to ensure pupils' care, health and safety are satisfactory. Satisfactory support, advice and guidance are provided. There is satisfactory involvement of pupils in the school's work.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Health and safety procedures are not formal enough.
- Most pupils are happy at school.
- Personal support is good in classes where staff know pupils well.
- Pupils' involvement in the Green Council has improved provision for outdoor play.

Commentary

25. The school provides a generally cheerful and pleasant environment where children feel safe and secure but there has been a decline in the high standards of care evident at the last inspection. This is largely the result of disruption and discontinuity of provision because of changes and absences by senior managers and class teachers. Child protection procedures are satisfactory. In the recent absence of both named persons a well-briefed senior member of staff was able to provide continuity of care. Health and safety procedures are satisfactory. The school provides a generally safe environment and the school quickly responded to any comments made about health and safety during the inspection. The steps the school has taken to ensure health and safety are not always properly recorded, health and safety audits are not formalised enough and governors are not fully involved in monitoring health and safety.

26. The monitoring of the pupils' academic progress has recently improved and is satisfactory overall. The school employs a satisfactory range of national strategies to support pupils who are not doing as well as they should be, with mixed success. There are good supportive relationships between many members of staff and the pupils. Permanent members of staff provide good personal support but frequent staff absences result in pupils being often taught by supply staff who do not know the pupils well.
27. Most pupils report that they are happy at the school, especially when they have had continuity of teachers. Pupils in Year 2 feel particularly valued where very warm relationships together with very well organised lessons of personal, social and health education give pupils a good opportunity to express themselves. Pupils' views are not sought formally but are generally respected and acted upon. The Green Council, which is promoting a healthy learning environment in school, has been actively involved in selecting large outdoor play equipment and smaller toys that can make playtimes more fun.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents' views of the school are unsatisfactory. A significant minority of parents lack confidence in the school because of protracted absences of senior managers and other teachers.
- The school has not acted on the concerns of parents sufficiently well.
- Annual progress reports for children in the Foundation Stage are of good quality.
- The links with the associated high school are very good.
- The school makes limited use of the community to make learning more exciting.

Commentary

28. A significant minority of parents lack confidence in the school. Parents recognise that when their children have access to good quality and consistent teaching, their children make rapid progress. However, a significant number rightly feel that frequent changes of teachers have resulted in their children failing to make adequate progress in developing important basic skills such as reading and writing. Some parents report that stability of staffing has improved and observe that their children are making good progress after a previous difficult year. Others are very unhappy because their children continue to be adversely affected by frequent changes of teacher. Parents are concerned about how staff absence is managed and feel that communication with them about such matters is not good enough. Some feel their concerns about these matters are not dealt with well enough. The setting of homework is also seen to be inconsistent. Some parents are worried about a decline in standards of behaviour and cases of bullying that have not been resolved. Inspectors agree with these concerns. Parents appreciate the links with the church and feel that their children are helped to become more mature. The school's own questionnaire identified many of these worries, but the response to parents' concerns has been unsatisfactory and disaffection has not been allayed. The Friends Group has ceased to operate and the school has struggled to restart it. A local college provides good educational activities, such as workshops and opportunities to find out more about helping their children to learn, for a small number of parents.
29. Information for parents is satisfactory. The prospectus contains much useful information but parents are not informed of their rights to withdraw their children from acts of collective worship, religious education and sex education. The governors' report to parents lacks full financial information and clear information about attendance. There are regular newsletters, which adequately inform parents about the life of the school. Annual reports on children's

progress are of good quality in the Foundation Stage and provide clear targets for improvement. Reports for older pupils are satisfactory but do not provide the same clarity for improvement. These reports are generated by computer and have a slightly impersonal feel. It is sometimes hard for parents to know if their children are doing as well as can be expected. Although there is a term's gap between parents' evenings, which are organised in the autumn and summer terms, parents report they can easily speak to class teachers if there are problems.

30. The vicar of the attached church provides very good support for the school by leading interesting assemblies and teaching a significant part of the school's religious education curriculum. The links with the on-site Church of England organisation are less developed, although the premises are used for church services. Local groups use the village room and the school has been involved in a successful community fair. However, limited use is made of local resources to make lessons more interesting and relevant and there are few trips and visits to broaden the curriculum.
31. There are very good links with the high school. Very good curricular links enhance pupils' learning in a wide range of subjects including mathematics, 'Thinking Skills' and French. The high school also offers the school good support in other areas such as helping senior managers, improving administration and seeking best value.
32. The quality of partnerships with parents and community has declined since the previous inspection when support from parents was reported as good. Links with parents are now unsatisfactory. Community links have also declined from good to satisfactory.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership, management and governance are unsatisfactory overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The leadership of the school has not halted the decline in standards and provision quickly enough.
- Though governors are committed to the school, they are failing to ensure the improvements necessary to raise standards.
- There is a lack of confidence in the senior management of the school by a significant minority of parents and a minority of governors.
- School self-evaluation is not accurate enough.
- Progress in improving provision and standards in key subjects has been slow, so standards remain too low.
- Arrangements for the induction and the continued professional development of permanent staff are effective.

Commentary

33. Overall, leadership and management are unsatisfactory. Standards of attainment are too low and improvements have been too slow. A significant minority of parents and a minority of governors lack confidence in the senior management of the school to continue the necessary developments. Since September 2002, the school has been causing concern to the local education authority and steps to improve the leadership of the school, during a time of considerable disruption to teaching and low staff morale, culminated in the appointment of the current headteacher from January 2004. However, disruption and discontinuity have continued and these have adversely affected the senior management of the school and class teaching. For example, the school has been without the headteacher and deputy headteacher for large periods of the current school year and an associate headteacher has been assisting in running the school since March 2005. These problems have frustrated continued developments in

school. Overall, school improvement since the last inspection has been unsatisfactory. There are signs of improvement, especially since the appointment of the new headteacher. For example, the senior management team has been extended by the appointment of two new members of staff a year ago, and there have been improvements in staff morale and pupils' attitudes to learning. Nevertheless, leadership and management by senior staff have not had sufficient impact. It is only recently that programmes to halt the failure of a significant number of pupils to make the necessary progress have been introduced. The school's self-evaluation is inaccurate in some of its key judgements, for example the rating of leadership and management as 'very good' and the school's relationships with parents as 'good'.

34. Governance is unsatisfactory. Governors are committed to the school and its continued development. They have shown significant commitment and supported the school very well during difficult times, for example in the frequency of their visits and expertise in aspects such as finance and special educational needs. Nevertheless, there are weaknesses. They have not, for instance, fulfilled their responsibility to ensure good attendance through the effective monitoring of attendance. Nor have they succeeded in providing the level of challenge to senior staff necessary to halt the school's failure to provide a satisfactory education for many of its pupils. There are a few omissions in documentation. A minority of governors believe they are not kept sufficiently informed about the school's problems and any progress made towards resolving these.
35. The quality of subject leadership and management is too variable. Leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are very good but the expected workload of the English subject leader is too great to ensure effectiveness in all of her responsibilities. Partly as a result of this, provision in English is unsatisfactory and the pupils are making insufficient progress in basic skills of reading and writing. There has been slow development in some subjects, such as mathematics, so standards remain too low. However, leadership and management of ICT have been good and subject leaders are beginning to work more effectively in developing their subjects.
36. Arrangements for the induction and the continued professional development of permanent staff are effective and are linked well to school and personal and professional needs. Checking the performance of teachers is being broadened well to include support staff. Finances are managed well and the balance carried forward is earmarked for proposed alterations to the building. The overall quality of education and standards achieved indicate that the school is not effective, however, and the school provides unsatisfactory value for money.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	862,505	Balance from previous year	21,944
Total expenditure	854,485	Balance carried forward to the next	29,964
Expenditure per pupil	2,977		

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The children make very good progress in both classes.
- The quality of teaching is very good, both by teachers and by experienced nursery nurses, and they all have high expectations for the children.
- The Foundation Stage is led and managed very well.
- Staff have established a very positive ethos for learning, and children are happy in their work.
- Teachers keep very good records of the progress that children make, which are shared with parents.

Commentary

37. Very good improvement has been made since the last inspection when there were weaknesses in the Foundation Stage curriculum, teaching was satisfactory, and children made satisfactory or good progress in different areas of learning. The Nursery and Reception class provide a challenging curriculum which meets the needs of the children well. Teaching is very good. Children make very good progress from well below average on entry and the majority in the Reception class are on course to achieve the national goals in all areas of learning. There has been considerable support of good quality from the specialist in the local education authority, and the Foundation Stage has been very well led by the co-ordinator, who has helped her colleague very effectively. There is a clearly planned curriculum which promotes learning progressively. Strengths are in planning, organisation and recording in both classes. Very good profiles are kept on the children and used well to inform parents about how well their children are progressing. Relationships with parents are particularly good in the Nursery.
38. Both teachers have experience of teaching older children, and bring to the Foundation Stage high expectations. Support staff are well qualified and bring experience and expertise to the Foundation Stage and make a strong team, providing a secure and supportive environment for the children who, as a result, work happily at their different activities. Improvements have recently been made to the accommodation, which enhance the children's learning and provide well for their personal development. For example, the Reception class has been enlarged and can be used in a variety of ways, the two classes have their own playgrounds with relevant markings on them, numbered pictures have been painted on the Nursery playground walls and children have helped make a garden outside the Nursery. The Foundation Stage is well resourced.
39. Three aspects of the children's development were sampled during the inspection. In all three, standards have improved since the last inspection, with children achieving well. Children's **knowledge and understanding of the world** are promoted very well through role-play, such as, in the Nursery, when the children look at a world map and post cards and decide where they are going to 'fly' to in their aeroplane. Nursery children have planted seeds and watched them grow, learned about different materials when studying their senses and experienced marbling. They know about the days of the week, and day and night. They have been on a local walk and looked at buildings. In the classroom some can use a mouse and click and drag an icon on the computer. Reception-aged children have sorted living from non-living things, labelled different parts of an animal and know that some objects are electrical. They know about the life cycle of a frog and have investigated heating and freezing. They can log on to a computer without help and, with help, change the size of letters. A weakness is that the

programs used and the keyboards are not at the level most suited to Foundation Stage children.

40. Children come to school with standards in **physical development** higher than in other areas of learning. They make good progress and standards are average at the end of the Reception year. Teaching is very good in both classes, with very good support from nursery nurses. By the end of the Reception year, children move with a good degree of confidence and are well coordinated. In the Nursery, the use of bicycles and scooters and other outdoor equipment promotes children's physical development well. Children also learn to catch a small ball, paint with thick and thin brushes and use malleable materials safely.
41. Children's **creative development** is promoted very well through role-play in both classes. Adults in the Nursery demonstrate play before children work in a new role-play area. As a result, during the inspection children were playing very well in an area set up as an airport and aeroplane. The regular intervention by adults continues to promote language, knowledge and understanding about the world, and imaginative play very well indeed. Nursery children enjoy painting, such as pictures of what they can see from their bedroom window. Reception-aged children designed a puppet carefully before making it. Music is taught very well in the Reception class with, for example, children composing a rhythm and playing this rhythm on untuned instruments in a small group, one after the other.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Adults value the children's comments and ideas.
- The Nursery and Reception classes provide a calm and very supportive environment.
- Role-play promotes the children's social development very well.
- Nursery nurses work in both classes and this arrangement provides continuity for the children and supports their emotional development well.

Commentary

42. Almost all the children come into the Nursery at levels well below those expected of children of their age. The Foundation Stage classes provide them with a secure, calm and purposeful learning environment in which they gain confidence and flourish. Very good teaching and very effective support from nursery nurses ensure that the children are happy and make very good progress in their personal, social and emotional development. By the end of the year, almost all the children in the Nursery dress themselves after physical education lessons and manage their own personal hygiene. There is a good balance of direct teaching and structured activities and children choose activities with confidence and play together well when given choice. The children are polite and take turns with the outside activities and play together well on shared equipment. In both classes, relationships are very good and children enjoy learning. Standards are similar to those found at the last inspection and the children are on course to achieve the early learning goals in this aspect of their development.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The majority of children make very good progress and are on course to achieve the national goals in reading and writing by the end of the Reception year.

- The speech of a significant proportion of the children with special educational needs is well below average at the end of Reception year.
- The quality of teaching is very good overall but a narrow range of teaching styles is used to develop children's writing in the Reception class.

Commentary

43. The majority of children begin school with standards well below average in communication, language and literacy. They achieve very well in reading and writing and the majority are on course to achieve the national goals for learning by the time they leave the Reception class. Teaching is very good and children are beginning to sound out simple words such as 'tap' and 'can'. They look for words they need on displays around the room. Children enjoy sharing books with the teacher, predicting what might happen and making detailed pictures to show the main events. They work very well independently and together. They enjoy listening to story tapes and, when working with the nursery nurse who guides their reading, enjoy the challenge of finding familiar words on different pages of a book and making up their own endings to a story.
44. Children's writing develops very well in the Nursery, where they are supported well and learn to write alongside an adult, but this technique of writing is not further developed in the Reception class. However, some children are able to write independently and others write under an adult's writing. Children are shown how to form their letters correctly as new letters are introduced, but are not always corrected when they hold their pencil or form letters incorrectly. These bad habits were seen to continue throughout the school.
45. A well-organised start to sessions in the Nursery encourages children to recognise their own name, enjoy books and develop their speaking and listening skills. In the Reception class, a child with English as an additional language conversed well because of the good opportunities for speaking. In both classes, adults constantly talk to the children, asking them questions and sharing ideas with them. Role-play is developed well in both classes. Children are encouraged to talk to each other and to the class. However, the speech of a significant minority of children is well below average when they leave the Reception class. A significant minority of children have been recommended for speech therapy, but not all who need this help are at present having it. Planning to improve children's speech receives too little attention. There has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection in this area of learning.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve very well in their mathematical development.
- Teachers plan very well for children at different levels of attainment.

Commentary

46. Standards in numeracy are similar to literacy, and the majority of children are on course to reach the national goals in this area by the end of the Reception year. Teaching is very good in the Nursery and good in the Reception class. Relationships are very good. In the Nursery, children guess how many children are present at the start of the session and then count beads to find the correct answer. The teacher uses children's own knowledge well to teach number and the children enjoy singing number songs. In the Reception class, children count forward and back to 20, needing help with counting backwards but placing a numeral correctly on the number line. Number recognition to 20 is good. In the lesson observed children knew the meaning of 'first' and 'second' and were learning about higher ordinal numbers. Work, such as

board games and worksheets, is set well for children at different levels of attainment. Children work well at the sheets but do not all work independently once they have finished. There has been satisfactory improvement in this area of learning since the last inspection.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Overall, standards are too low and most pupils' achievement is unsatisfactory.
- The use of assessment is only recently being used to highlight the low standards and there is not yet sufficient urgency in the school to raise these.
- Although the quality of teaching and learning was good during the inspection, pupils' progress across time shows that this is not generally the case.
- Most pupils have positive attitudes to learning.
- There is a clear emphasis on developing speaking and listening skills but not enough planning for writing across subjects of the curriculum.
- Good provision is made for pupils with special educational needs.
- Subject leadership and management are unsatisfactory.

Commentary

47. Pupils enter Year 1 with standards that in the past have been below average but with improvements in the Foundation Stage are now broadly average. Achievement is unsatisfactory overall. Standards for pupils in Year 2 are below the national average and are well below for pupils in Year 6. Both the 2004 tests and indications from this year show that standards in Year 6 are well below average in reading and writing. There are not enough pupils achieving the expected or the higher level. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good and pupils are given work that is appropriate to their abilities and are assisted very ably by both teachers and teaching assistants. Few of these pupils achieve the expected level in Year 6, however. Girls achieve better than boys over time, which is similar to the national picture.
48. Most pupils enter Year 1 with speaking and listening skills that are below average for their age. Priority is given to improving this area in all subjects and skills are promoted well. By the time pupils leave the school higher attaining pupils are more confident and articulate, though overall standards are still below average. The standard of reading is below average for pupils in Year 2 and well below for those in Year 6. Pupils are encouraged to take books home and read to an adult, and many do this regularly, particularly in Years 1 and 2. The general standard of writing is well below average in Years 3 to 6, including handwriting and spelling. These are urgent aspects for improvement.
49. Because a very significant number of pupils have made too little progress in reading or writing over time, the overall quality of teaching is unsatisfactory. Although this is partly due to the high number of temporary teachers, this alone is not the reason. The test results over the past few years have shown standards in reading at the end of Year 2 and English generally at the end of Year 6 to be well below average. Pupils' basic skills are not firm enough. The school now recognises that this area is a priority, but there is not enough urgency in tackling the underachievement, so that too little has been done to improve these standards.
50. Much of the teaching seen during the inspection was good, with some very good lessons observed. These were judged on the specific skills covered during the lessons and do not alter the above judgement. Many of these lessons were lively and imaginative, with pupils

interested and keen to contribute. The teachers' questioning skills and their use of praise and encouragement were particularly effective in motivating the pupils. This is why the pupils have improved in their attitudes to learning. Procedures to assess pupils' progress are improving, but the information gained is not embedded in lesson planning sufficiently to ensure the pupils' progress over time. Assessment is unsatisfactory overall. Targets for improvement are beginning to be set, but require refinement. Day-to-day marking is satisfactory, with areas indicated to help pupils to improve but it is evident that pupils do not always read the comments made by their teachers and no time is allowed in lessons for them to do this. The use of homework is inconsistent between classes and does not have a sufficient impact on raising standards.

51. Unsatisfactory provision is compounded by the unsatisfactory leadership and management of this subject, because the subject leader also has responsibility for the Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2 and has too little time to develop English. Progress since the last inspection has been unsatisfactory. The overall quality of resources is satisfactory. An exception to this is the library, which is in the process of development, and in which there is a sound range of fiction but insufficient non-fiction.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

52. There are numerous opportunities in all subjects to develop speaking and listening. Pupils write in most other subjects, such as geography, history and science, but planning so that what is taught in English is used in these subjects is underdeveloped. Pupils' lack of writing skills hampers their achievement so that standards of writing in subjects are too low.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards that pupils reach by Year 6 are rising but are not yet high enough.
- The achievement of pupils is too variable across the school.
- Standards in Year 2 are showing improvement, though too few pupils are reaching the higher level.
- Recent initiatives, such as those that promote better skills of problem solving, are helping to lift standards.
- The use of homework is inconsistent.

Commentary

53. Standards in test results in Year 6 have declined since the time of the last inspection, when they were average, and the reversal of this decline has been slow. Standards have been well below average for the last two years and this remains the case in the current Year 6. Nevertheless, there are signs of improvement with more pupils likely to reach the expected level than previously. This is because of good provision in Year 6. The pupils, however, have not mastered many basic skills in previous years through disruption and discontinuity to their education and they are having to recover ground very quickly. Pupils show good attitudes to the subject and have made good progress over the year. This is not the case in all classes from Years 3 to 5, however, and progress is too variable, ranging from good to unsatisfactory. A lack of continuity and low expectations of some staff account for the low standards and underachievement.
54. Standards in Year 2 have recovered from their lowest point in 2003 and are below average overall in the current age group. This is because of good teaching in Year 2 making up for any discontinuity in the pupils' previous experiences. Nevertheless, too few pupils are reaching the

higher level, so there is still a measure of underachievement. There is no significant difference between the performance of boys and girls and both have been performing well below the average of pupils nationally in recent years. Pupils with special educational needs are given good levels of assistance by classroom assistants and teachers. Many of their individual education plans include a target in mathematics and this good practice means that these pupils make good progress but few reach the nationally expected levels in Year 6.

55. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall but this judgement reflects a balance of some strengths and some key weaknesses, which must be overcome if standards are to continue to rise. Strengths are teachers' planning and the effective use that teachers make of time in lessons. Teaching assistants are used well, especially in Years 1 and 2, and recent innovations, such as the emphasis on improving pupils' skills of solving problems, are concentrating attention where need is greatest. It is too early, however, to judge their impact on pupils' attainment. The level of challenge in some of the work, particularly in Year 4, is not good enough and the wide variations from year to year in pupils' learning of skills and knowledge of the subject are unacceptable. The best teaching, such as was observed in Years 2 and 6, is underpinned by high expectations of what pupils can achieve and leads to better learning. Grouping pupils according to their level of attainment in Years 5 and 6 for part of this year has been effective in improving the level of challenge in pupils' work. In most lessons, pupils worked well in groups or individually, but in others, some pupils had poor levels of concentration and needed much support from teachers and their assistants in order to get on with their work. Marking of pupils' work is conscientiously carried out and almost always includes a useful comment but there is inconsistent practice across age groups in setting homework. When homework has been sporadic, little benefit has been gained in areas such as the learning of basic number facts and multiplication tables. These are two weak aspects in pupils' skills generally.
56. Leadership and management are satisfactory. As a result of checking teachers' planning and pupils' work and observing lessons, the subject leader has developed a satisfactory understanding of where weaknesses in provision are. She has received good support from the local education authority to promote target setting and pupils' problem-solving skills and these are helping standards to rise. Procedures to assess pupils' progress have been introduced in the current school year and provide a better picture of overall progress. It is too early to assess their impact on how teachers respond to their findings. Since the last inspection, standards have fallen and the quality of provision has suffered from disruption in school leadership and in class teaching. Nevertheless, recent improvements in the quality of teaching and learning and the work of the subject leader are beginning to raise the quality of provision back to what it was then.

Mathematics across the curriculum

57. Overall this aspect is satisfactory but requires improvement if standards are to continue to rise. There are satisfactory planned opportunities to use skills of measuring and calculating in investigative work in science and designing and building in design and technology. There are not enough examples in science of pupils recording data in graphs and interpreting them. Lessons using mathematical skills in ICT in the computer suite are good and make direct links between the two subjects. Standards of pupils' mathematical skills evident in subjects, however, vary considerably because of the low levels of basic skills of calculation of many pupils.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There has been a decline in standards in Years 2 and 6 since the last inspection.

- The standard of pupils' recorded work is below their knowledge and understanding of the subject, although the pupils present their work well.
- Achievement by Year 6 is unsatisfactory.
- Teachers' expectations are variable and, overall, are too low.
- Key words are not regularly displayed to promote a widening of vocabulary and ensure correct spelling.

Commentary

58. Standards in Year 6 are below the national average, which is lower than at the last inspection when standards were judged to be broadly average and a minority of pupils were working at the higher level. Averaged over three years, boys have been doing less well than girls and this is against the picture nationally. Although the school expects standards in the school's results in the 2005 National Curriculum tests to be average, the work seen does not reflect this level. Standards in the current Year 6 are below average in lessons and well below average in the work seen. Pupils' work is very well presented in all classes and pupils are making good progress at present in Year 6, but the work in their books reflects low standards. For example, pupils do not practise enough the important skills of predicting the results of investigations, drawing conclusions from them, or suggesting improvements to their work with reasons. They also record their work in a limited number of ways. For example, there is little evidence of pupils plotting points to form simple graphs or interpreting patterns in their data. Pupils' low numeracy and literacy skills adversely affect the standards pupils reach in science and expectations are too low. Pupils' achievement is unsatisfactory.
59. Standards in Years 1 and 2 are below average in pupils' knowledge and understanding of the subject but standards of their recorded work are adversely affected by their limited literacy skills, oral and written. Pupils' achievement in Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory overall. Standards at the time of the last inspection were average, so improvement has been unsatisfactory. The results of the teachers' assessment in 2004 show that investigative work is better than other areas of the subject. The inspection judgement concurs. By Year 2, pupils make charts, for instance showing different habitats of animals, carry out investigations, and write explanations of activities such as how to make a bulb light up.
60. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall but this judgement reflects a balance of strengths and some key weaknesses, which adversely affect standards. Teaching in Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory overall, and was good in the lesson observed. Barriers to learning are pupils' lack of previous knowledge on which to build and their restricted vocabulary, which affects their ability to talk or write about what they learn. Key words are not regularly displayed and discussed at the start of lessons, which affects the pupils' ability to remember and spell new words correctly. Some pupils have not learned to hold their pencils correctly and this adversely affects their ability to write with ease. Sometimes tiredness and noise from other classrooms affect their learning and the progress they make.
61. The quality of teaching in Years 3 to 6 is satisfactory overall but in Year 4 higher-attaining pupils reach similar standards to higher-attaining pupils in Year 3 and are underachieving. Middle-attaining pupils in Year 4 are not sufficiently challenged, making good progress in the tasks set but given activities that do not sufficiently further their learning. Marking is not always followed up in the books of lower-attaining pupils, which in part prevents them from making the progress that they could. There is little evidence of activities being matched to the needs of pupils of different levels of attainment. In the lessons seen in Years 3 and 6, teaching was good. In two lessons, key words were displayed and introduced well; pupils were highly motivated by a clear and interesting introduction, and confident teaching about forces promoted learning well. Teachers used questioning well, which encouraged pupils to develop their answers, and a variety of resources, such as video recordings and an interactive whiteboard, were used successfully. Work was generally well matched to the needs of pupils. When teaching assistants are present, pupils with special educational needs are helped well,

but without that support, time is sometimes wasted. Teaching and learning in the Year 6 lesson were good and pupils achieved well. The lesson had some very good features. Pupils were very keen to answer questions and almost all contributed very well. Pupils' lack of literacy skills, however, restricted the standards reached in their written work. Although pupils write up investigations, the subject is not used sufficiently in Years 3 to 6 to promote literacy skills.

62. The subject leader was absent at the time of the inspection and no judgement can be given about the quality of leadership and management. The subject leader has observed all teachers teach and the headteacher has observed the subject leader teach. Monitoring in the summer term of 2004 found investigative work was still a weakness, five years after it had been highlighted as such in the last report. This has now been corrected and pupils' books show that investigations have formed the basis for the teaching in all classes since September 2003. Pupils' work is assessed at the end of each unit of work and assessments are recorded termly. However, the use made of these assessments is unsatisfactory and this is evident in the low expectations of some teachers.
63. Improvement since the last inspection has been unsatisfactory. Satisfactory progress has been made in teaching through investigative methods and in pupils learning about making a test fair, which were noted as weaknesses in the last report. Investigations are written up very neatly but often lack scientific vocabulary, predictions and conclusions. Expectations are often at a level well below that expected nationally of the age group. Standards have been low or well below average for the last two years and are still below those nationally expected, whereas they were average at the time of the last inspection. Little progress has been made in writing a scheme of work highlighting the progressive development of skills across the school, which was a key issue at the last inspection.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers' expertise and confidence to teach the subject have improved and were good in lessons seen in Years 1 and 2.
- Resources are good and used well, pupils experience a good range of applications and this is much better than at the time of the last inspection.
- Recording and saving of pupils' work are inconsistent from class to class and this does not help pupils to assess how much progress they are making and how they might improve.
- Procedures to assess how well pupils are doing are inadequate.

Commentary

64. Provision has improved well since the time of the last inspection when the subject was the first key issue for improvement. Standards in Year 2 are average overall and the pupils have experience of the full range of skills in their work. It was not possible to confirm standards in Year 6 because no lessons were observed but the National Curriculum is covered well in teachers' planning and discussions with pupils indicate they enjoy the subject and are confident in what they do. The pupils have good awareness of applications and at the time of the inspection were producing multi-media presentations. Because not all classes save examples of pupils' work in Years 3 to 6, it is not possible to make a full judgement on progress and achievement. Work seen in the Year 3 class was satisfactory but in one Year 4 lesson, the expectations of the teacher for what the higher attaining pupils could achieve were too low, and the teaching of more complex word-processing skills was not used to extend their learning.

65. The quality of teaching in Years 1 and 2 is good. No overall judgement is possible in Years 3 to 6. Strengths of the teaching are the good use made of resources, especially the computer suite. Each class has more than one lesson per week in the suite and these lessons are used well to promote subject-specific skills and skills of other subjects such as English and mathematics. Teachers' expertise is generally good and teaching and support staff consult one another well if they are experiencing difficulties or are unsure of a procedure. Software resources are also good. Teachers and classroom assistants organise the teaching well in the computer suite and motivate the pupils to do their best. However, there are no uniform methods for storing pupils' work nor any clear procedures to assess how well pupils are doing. As a result, pupils lack opportunities to assess how well they are doing.
66. The subject leader was absent during the inspection. Nevertheless, improvement has been well led and managed. A confident temporary teacher is covering the role and has devised a very useful short-term action plan to take the quality of provision further.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

67. The use of ICT in other subjects is generally good, mainly because classes have regular access to the computer suite, so that the teachers can teach literacy, numeracy and other subjects using the computers as a resource. Lessons involving mathematics and English were seen and pupils are also given opportunities to use the Internet and CD-ROMs to research topics in geography, history and science. Though pupils are often slow typing on a keyboard, they nevertheless produce satisfactory pieces of work, which are displayed imaginatively.

HUMANITIES

68. **Geography** and **history** were not a focus for this inspection. It is not possible, therefore, to comment on provision, standards or the quality of teaching and learning. Displays around the school, however, indicate that **geography** is covered both effectively and imaginatively. For their **history** lesson during the inspection, the Year 2 class teacher dressed in a Victorian bathing dress. A number of adults and pupils dressed in Tudor costumes for a lesson in Year 4. This is an indication of the good relationships within the school and the desire to encourage the pupils by making lessons enjoyable.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

69. **Art and design** and **music** were not a focus for this inspection. No teaching was observed and it is not possible to comment on provision, standards or the quality of teaching and learning.
70. **Design and technology** was a key issue for improvement following the last inspection. Although it was only possible to sample the subject during this inspection, evidence from teachers' planning, pupils' work on display and discussion with some pupils indicates that improvement has been at least satisfactory. There is satisfactory coverage of the National Curriculum, cross-curricular links are established and pupils enjoy the subject.
71. **Physical education** was sampled during the inspection. Two lessons were observed, both in Year 6. Standards varied, as did the quality of teaching. When taught very well by a visiting secondary specialist teacher, standards of throwing and catching were above average, but in an unsatisfactory lesson taught in place of a swimming lesson, standards were below average, as expectations, when working on large apparatus, were too low for pupils of this age. All pupils in Years 3 to 6 go swimming and 55 per cent of pupils in Year 6 swim 25 metres. The school has good links with the secondary school and provides a limited range of extra-curricular activities. As part of the school's aim to broaden the curriculum pupils have taken part in skipping and soccer days. An assessment of physical education, made by the school, shows that pupils do not generally show a commitment to the subject, although some are involved in community football teams. There is a wide range of ability and response in

lessons but pupils are not sufficiently shown how to improve their work. Pupils understand the importance of physical education to a healthy lifestyle.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

72. Personal, social, health and citizenship education was sampled during the inspection. No judgement can be made about teaching, learning or standards in Years 3 to 6. Two lessons were observed. The policy has been updated and the subject leader, after attending training, has adapted the local education authority's guidelines to provide the school with an appropriate scheme of work. The subject is timetabled in every class. Pupils' personal development is also promoted satisfactorily through assemblies. Sex and relationships education and drugs education are taught in Year 6. Drugs education is also taught in other year groups when pupils are studying health and well-being. In both lessons observed, teaching and learning were very good, which resulted in pupils achieving very well. In an enjoyable lesson in Year 1, pupils made very good progress in learning the importance of making decisions of their own, rather than just following a friend. The teacher challenged the pupils' decisions very well. In Year 2, where standards are as expected for pupils of this age, the lesson was well planned and the teacher's good management skills promoted pupils' personal skills effectively. The pupils were keen to contribute their ideas, although their speaking skills are below average. However, they gained confidence by talking with a partner before speaking to the class. Pupils' self-esteem has also been promoted in this class through a visual display about what they can do. Pupils on the Green Council, which looks at ways to improve the environment, gain a further understanding of citizenship through this activity.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	5
How inclusive the school is	4
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	5
Value for money provided by the school	5
Overall standards achieved	5
Pupils' achievement	5
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities (ethos)	3
Attendance	6
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	4
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	4
The quality of education provided by the school	5
The quality of teaching	5
How well pupils learn	5
The quality of assessment	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	4
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	4
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	4
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	4
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	5
The quality of the school's links with the community	4
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3
The leadership and management of the school	5
The governance of the school	5
The leadership of the headteacher	5
The leadership of other key staff	5
The effectiveness of management	5

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