

INSPECTION REPORT

BRIDPORT PRIMARY SCHOOL

Bridport

LEA area: Dorset

Unique reference number: 113660

Headteacher: Ruth Clench

Lead inspector: Rob Crompton

Dates of inspection: October 13th – 16th 2003

Inspection number: 260490

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and junior
School category: Community school
Age range of children: 4 to 11 years
Gender of children: Mixed
Number on roll: 405

School address: St Andrew's Road
Bridport
Dorset
DT6 3BJ

Telephone number: (01308) 422846
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Appropriate authority: The governing body
Name of chair of governors: Roger Davies

Date of previous inspection: 27th September 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The school occupies a modern building and serves the town of Bridport. There are 405 children, including 60 who attend the reception classes on a part-time basis. As they enter the school, children's language and mathematical development is below average. The vast majority of children are white and all speak English as their first language. The proportion of children who are known to be eligible for free school meals is below average, although the school serves a broadly average socio-economic area. Seventy-four children (18 per cent) have special educational needs, including moderate learning difficulties and emotional, social and behavioural problems. One have a statement of special educational need. Both figures are broadly average. The level of pupil turnover is above average.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
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24528	Peter Buckley	Team inspector	Mathematics Geography History Religious education Special educational needs
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

The school is providing a good level of education. Results in English are below those of similar schools but the quality of teaching and learning is now good and children are achieving well. This is the result of a determined drive by the headteacher, governors and staff to raise standards. The school is led and managed very well. It provides good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Good teaching and learning is leading to better progress and achievement
- Children achieve well in mathematics, science and information and communication technology (ICT) and reach above average standards
- Progress in English, particularly in writing, has been too slow which has led to below average standards; achievement is improving.
- Good provision in the reception classes gives children a good start
- Good provision for personal development means children develop positive attitudes and behave well
- Under the very good leadership of the headteacher, all staff are striving to improve standards
- Governors have a very good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and carry out their responsibilities very well
- Key staff lead their subjects well, providing clear guidelines and good support for colleagues
- Parents receive good information which enables them to contribute to their children's learning
- Children are supported and guided very well through the very good programme for personal, social and health education
- The use of assessment information to tackle and improve children's progress is too varied
- Attendance is below average

The school has made good progress since the last inspection. Strengths have been sustained and weaknesses have been overcome. Weaknesses in teaching in year 1 have been eradicated and teaching is now consistently very good in both years 1 and 2. Children's skills in investigative science are much better. Curriculum guidelines now provide detailed information about the skills children are to learn from year to year and assessment procedures are now good. The outdoor provision for children in the reception classes has improved significantly.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
English	B	D	D	E
mathematics	C	D	B	B
science	B	C	C	D

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.

Overall achievement is good.

As they start school, children's early language and number skills and their general knowledge are lower than is usually found at this age. Although most achieve well in all areas of learning in the reception classes, overall standards are below those expected by the end of the year.

In Years 1 and 2, children achieve well overall. Although standards are below average in reading and writing, most children are achieving well because of the very good teaching. Standards in

mathematics have risen significantly and children are now working at above average levels. Children also achieve well in science and information and communication technology (ICT) and are reaching average standards.

Achievement in mathematics, science and ICT is good in years 3 to 6 and current standards are above average. Although children are now achieving well in English lessons, progress has been too slow over recent years and standards have remained below average. Sustained efforts of teachers, supported by good leadership and management are leading to gradually improving standards.

Good provision for children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development results in good relationships. Children have good attitudes to school and behave well due to the very good provision for moral and social development. Attendance is unsatisfactory and more could be done to promote good attendance amongst children and parents

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is **good**. The quality of teaching is **good**. Children in the reception classes benefit from good teaching and achieve well. Their learning is supported by many practical activities both indoors and outside. In years 1 and 2, teaching and learning are very good. Teachers' imaginative approaches sustain children's interest. Children rise to the high expectations for behaviour and work hard. Much of the work is practical which appeals to children and reinforces their learning. Good teaching in years 3 to 6 is leading to higher standards. Children are keen to learn because teachers are very good at encouraging them. Provision for children with special educational needs is good. Teachers make sure that they are set work at the right level and classroom assistants provide good support but could sometimes be used more effectively.

The quality of the curriculum is good. Very good opportunities for enrichment help to make learning lively and exciting. The quality and quantity of resources including staffing are very good and the accommodation is excellent. Children are well cared for, supported and guided and their views are taken into account. There are good links with parents and the community

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are very good. The headteacher has a clear sense of purpose and provides very good leadership. Key staff provide good leadership. All share the same determination to provide children with a high quality education. Very good arrangements for performance management mean that staff are well trained and work successfully in pursuit of the school's priorities. Good financial management helps the school to achieve its educational priorities. Governors have a very good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and support the school very well.

PARENTS' AND CHILDREN'S VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents hold the school in high regard. They are very happy with the way the school is led and the way they are welcomed into the school. Children have very positive views and enjoy all that the school offers.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- raise standards in English, particularly in writing
- continue the drive to make assessment information more manageable so that subject leaders and teachers can set more precise achievement targets
- raise levels of attendance

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY CHILDREN

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

1. As a result of good teaching, children are **achieving well** in lessons and standards are improving. Children's progress over time has been constrained by their below average attainment in English. Children achieve very well and reach above average standards in mathematics and ICT. They make good progress to reach average standards in science. Many children enter the school with low levels of literacy, numeracy and general knowledge so the fact that they reach average or better standards in most subjects reflects good overall progress. Children with special needs are achieving well, due to the sustained support they are receiving.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve well in the reception classes which provides a good foundation for subsequent work
- Children achieve well in lessons and this is raising standards
- Standards in English are below average but improving due to consistently good teaching
- Children achieve well in mathematics, science and ICT and reach good standards

Commentary

2. When children start school in the reception classes, their knowledge, skills and understanding are wide ranging. For the last few years, the overall profile has been below average, with children having particular difficulties in literacy and numeracy. The proportion reaching the expected standards in all areas of learning by the end of reception has been below that expected. Children are currently achieving well, particularly in personal, social and emotional development and physical and creative development. Many are well set to reach the levels expected in all areas of learning, except communication, language and literacy where there is much ground to cover.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 – average point scores in 2003

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	14.7 (14.3)	15.9 (15.8)
writing	14.2 (12.1)	14.8 (14.4)
mathematics	16.2 (16.2)	16.4 (16.5)

There were 60 children in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

3. As the table shows, results in reading and writing were well below those of other schools in 2003. However, there was significant improvement in writing on the previous year. When results over the past three years are averaged out, they indicate that standards were higher than those reached nationally. These advances are due to the significant improvements in teaching driven by very effective leadership and management. Although standards in reading and writing seen during the inspection were below average, the good rate of achievement in lessons suggests that this pattern of improvement will continue. The picture is different in mathematics, where children are achieving well from a rather low base and are reaching above average standards. They are making good progress in science and ICT and reaching average standards. What the table does not indicate is the notable difference in the performance of boys and girls in English, with girls doing better overall. This was evident in some classes and it was clear that higher attaining boys and girls both do well, but that more boys than girls have difficulties with reading and writing. The school is tackling this effectively by ensuring that the work planned will interest boys as well as girls.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 – average point scores in 2003

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	25.6 (26.0)	27.0 (27.0)
mathematics	27.9 (26.4)	27.0 (26.7)
science	28.1 (28.3)	28.8 (28.3)

There were 60 children in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

4. In 2003, results in English were well below the national average, with scores in mathematics and science broadly matching the national picture. When the previous three years are averaged out, English was about half a point above the national average, maths very close and science almost a whole point above. This indicates better standards than shown by the 2003 results. In contrast to the picture at the end of year 2, boys have out-performed girls in the last few years. The school has investigated this anomaly and found that differences are due to the characteristics of each year group. Two years ago, for example, the situation was reversed, with girls out-performing boys by a considerable margin.
5. The school has made every effort to improve standards in English and its success in doing so is clear from the good levels of achievement seen in lessons. The inspection found that, although standards are still below average, children are making good progress. There is much to do to catch up but children are responding positively to teachers' efforts to improve their rate of progress.
6. The impact of improvements in teaching and assessment is more obvious in mathematics and science, where children are achieving well and reaching above average standards. Similarly, children are making rapid progress in ICT and attaining good standards in most aspects of the subject.

Children's attitudes, values and other personal qualities

7. Children's attitudes, behaviour and personal development are **good**. The school's provision for their social and moral development is **very good**. Punctuality is satisfactory, but attendance is below the national figure.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good provision for personal development and extra-curricular activities help children to become confident and socially aware
- Strong teaching leads to positive attitudes in class
- Excellent outdoor accommodation contributes to good behaviour in the playground
- Attendance has dropped noticeably over the last year.

Commentary

8. The school has very successfully linked its carefully structured programme for personal, social and health education¹ with its strategies for behaviour management. This means that children are actively taught social skills and moral choices and are motivated to see the rewards for their efforts. Very good opportunities to participate in residential trips and outdoor education help children to become independent and self-reliant.

¹ Key features of this programme are summarised on page 27

9. In class, children are open and receptive; they are especially willing to have a go and do their best when teachers capture their interest and activities stimulate their imagination. This is consistently the case in the reception and infant classes. Outside, children have a very good range of activities and lots of space to play in and these help to channel their energy constructively. Boys and girls get on well together and children from minority ethnic backgrounds are effectively integrated. Children with special educational needs are fully integrated into school life. They work well with their teaching assistants and are included in all school and class activities.
10. Up until the last school year, attendance had been consistently in line with national figures for several years. However, during 2002/3 the level of attendance dropped by almost 1.5%, due to widespread illness and a few habitually poor attenders. The school works hard to chase up absences, but more could be done to promote good attendance amongst children and parents.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

11. This school provides a **good** quality of education. Good teaching is supported by a well-planned curriculum, which includes very good opportunities for enrichment. Very good use is made of the excellent accommodation. Children are very well cared for, guided and supported. A strong partnership with parents contributes to children's progress.

Teaching and learning

12. Teaching and learning are **good**. Teaching in years 1 and 2 has improved significantly since the last inspection and is now very good. The good quality teaching in reception and in years 3 to 6 has been sustained. Consequently, children learn effectively.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children respond well to teachers' high expectations of good behaviour and the brisk pace of most lessons
- Good support from classroom assistants helps children to progress, although their time could be used more effectively during some lessons
- Reception classes are very well organised and children benefit from very good relationships with staff
- Children with special educational needs are supported well
- Children's progress is assessed thoroughly but the information is not used consistently by all teachers to set individual targets.
- In many lessons, good questioning challenges children
- Homework is used well to support learning

Commentary

Reception year

13. Staff work together very well as a team. Children soon settle in to school life because staff establish warm relationships and provide stimulating activities for them. Teachers and support staff have a good understanding of how young children learn and this means that all the teaching is well thought through and based mostly on practical experience. The spacious indoor and outdoor areas are used very well to provide a good range of activities which appeal to children's sense of fun. As a result, children enjoy learning and achieve well. Most take part enthusiastically and are keen to contribute their ideas.

Years 1 and 2

14. Most of the lessons observed in years 1 and 2 were very good or excellent. Children respond well to this consistently effective teaching; they are achieving well and standards are improving. They rise to the good level of challenge in lessons and to the high expectations for behaviour. Teachers are skilled at motivating children to do their best and are particularly successful in helping children with special educational needs to take a full part in lessons. Children's attention is sustained because the pace of lessons is brisk and the work is interesting. Teachers are good at explaining things in different ways and their use of questioning draws on children's existing knowledge and extends it. Resources are used very well to help children's understanding in subjects such as science, history and religious education.

Years 3 to 6

15. Teachers in years 3 to 6 are very good at managing children's behaviour. Most lesson time is spent on teaching and learning rather than gaining children's attention or sorting out problems. Children rise to the high expectations and, for the most part, concentrate, work hard and achieve well. Lessons are planned carefully to ensure all children are sufficiently challenged. This means that most children benefit, including the more able and those with special educational needs. Teachers' good background knowledge in subjects such as mathematics and science enables them to respond to children's questions and extend their thinking. The strong emphasis on teaching skills and on raising the level of challenge from lesson to lesson results in good achievement. Homework is used well to support class work. It is set regularly and most children tackle it conscientiously.

All year groups

16. Teaching assistants provide good support, particularly during group work where they explain tasks clearly and help children to concentrate. They are well briefed in supporting children with special educational needs, working in close partnership with class teachers. However, during lesson introductions and summaries, their contributions can be counter-productive. For example, when they repeat the teacher's words for the children they are supporting, this can disturb the rest of the class. They are particularly effective when teachers ask them to note children's contributions in order to assess children's level of understanding.
17. Teachers gain a good understanding of how children are getting on through informal assessments, marking work and structured tests. Most are using this information to set individual targets, often involving children in deciding priorities. This is effective, particularly in mathematics, in helping children understand what they need to do to improve, but the system not used consistently across the school. For example, assessment information suggests that the targets set in English for the oldest children are a little low.
18. Although most lessons move at a brisk pace, occasionally too much time is spent on introductions, leaving little time for independent work. Sometimes the level of challenge is too low so children mark time rather than improve. Overall however, teaching is effective as the table below shows.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 44 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
2 (5%)	17 (39%)	20 (45%)	4 (9%)	1 (2%)	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

19. The quality of curriculum opportunities provided by the school is **good** with very good opportunities for enrichment. The quality and quantity of resources including staffing are very good overall and the quality of the accommodation is excellent.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Curriculum innovations promote improvements in achievement.
- The provision for children's personal social and health education is very good
- Learning opportunities are enriched through a wide range of visits and visitors
- Opportunities for participation in sport and the arts are very good
- Provision for children with special educational needs is good
- The number, expertise and experience of teachers and support staff is very good

Commentary

20. The curriculum provides a rich learning experience that prepares children well for the next stage of their education. A complete review of the school's curriculum has resulted in a number of innovative changes including:

- The extensive use of drama to encourage and improve children's speaking and writing skills
- Extra time devoted to developing extended writing skills
- Reading workshops held outside of the literacy hour
- Extra time devoted to children's personal development through target setting
- Children placed in ability sets for mathematics
- The development of children's writing through work in other subjects

21. These innovations have been put in place specifically to raise achievement especially in literacy and to continue the improvements in children's behaviour, attitudes and other personal qualities. They are already meeting with success.

22. The programme for personal, social and health education is enriched by visitors with special expertise such as staff from the Life Education Centre. Health education is also promoted successfully through subjects such as science and physical education and through the 'Healthy Schools' project. A promising new initiative encourages children to set their own targets for personal development.

23. The curriculum is enhanced by a very good range of visits, including residential visits for older children. Musicians, performers and other visitors contribute to children's knowledge, understanding and appreciation of the arts. Lunchtime and after-school clubs are all designed to encourage and promote children's interest and participation in sport, music and other activities. Children in year 5 and 6 enjoy a weekly French lesson, which gives them a useful taster of secondary education.

24. The provision for children with special educational needs is well planned. Their individual education plans have clear targets that all understand. Children with learning difficulties are largely taught with their peers, but receive some teaching in small withdrawn groups and this is effective. The co-ordinator's good management ensures that, where necessary, the children receive specific support from outside agencies.

25. Children benefit from the good level of staffing. Each teacher is supported by a classroom assistant and this helps to ensure that children receive prompt help in lessons. The spacious and well-designed accommodation facilitates all subjects. For example, there is plenty of space for practical activities, small rooms for group work and a well-equipped ICT suite. The school hall, with its dual-purpose stage and music/drama studio, is used very effectively. The school grounds are outstanding. Hard play areas are extensive. In addition to providing very good surfaces for games, they enable children to engage in different play activities at breaktimes

without disturbing one another. A sheltered 'outdoor classroom' is under construction, to enable teachers to take full advantage of the wealth of outdoor resources, such as the conservation area, the pond, the 'willow tunnel' and the wide range of trees, shrubs and plants. Indoors, there are ample resources for each subject. The very good quality facilities have a strong influence on the quality of teaching and learning and contribute to children's achievement, particularly in the reception classes, physical education and science.

Care, guidance and support

26. Care and welfare are **good**; support and guidance are very good. Consultation and involvement of children are very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are many very effective support systems for children throughout the school.
 - Children's views on matters which concern them are regularly sought
 - More could be done by way of academic support for children who join the school after reception.
27. Pastoral support for children is extensive and very carefully targeted at their needs. Staff work together closely to ensure that this happens consistently. Children with special educational needs are very well known to staff, are closely monitored and receive good support and guidance.
28. Class teachers help children to set targets for their personal development. Lunch clubs are organised for those who find the playground difficult, and the teacher responsible for child protection offers counselling sessions. Holding this all together is the school's very well thought-out programme for personal, social and health education, providing time for children to discuss issues and reward them for their efforts. As a result, children feel settled and secure. This is particularly important given the fact that so many children come and go during their school career. The next step is for the school to ensure a consistent approach to academic monitoring and assessment of children who join the school after the reception class.
29. The school is always very ready to listen to children's views and incorporate them into its improvement and development. Circle times offer informal occasions for this, while the school council provides more formal structures for children to contribute ideas. Families have been consulted through surveys, which give parents and children the chance to talk about school together.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

30. The school has **good** links with parents and the community. Educational programmes for the community are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents benefit from some very good quality written information
- Face to face contact is friendly and helpful
- Courses for parents help them to support their children's learning
- The school takes full advantage of local facilities.

Commentary

31. Documentation for parents provides them with good information about the work their children will be covering. The website in particular is excellent, full of up to date details about school policies, activities and routines. Reports to parents on their children's progress are good. They give parents a clear picture of how well their children are doing and what they need to do next to improve.

32. Parents have many good opportunities to talk to staff about their children and about the school. The headteacher and staff are readily accessible to parents. At the end of the day, parents of children in all year groups are happy to come in and chat to their children's teachers about homework and other concerns. Home/school books offer a useful channel of communication, and curriculum meetings provide helpful advice on how parents can support children at home. The new monthly reception meetings are a very good example of how the school is helping parents help their children get off to a flying start.
33. The school has made some good inroads into family learning, in conjunction with the neighbouring adult education centre. Successful sessions on family numeracy last year are to be followed by family literacy this year, to intensify the school's focus on this area of the curriculum. Information and communication technology sessions for parents also help them support their children.
34. The school makes good use of its location between countryside and seaside to promote children's outdoor and environmental education, helping to give them a sense of their own resilience and of the natural world around them. It also makes the best of the amenities which the town has to offer, such as the excellent swimming facilities at the leisure centre.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

35. Management and leadership are **very good** overall. The quality of leadership by the headteacher is very good. The governance of the school is very good. The overall leadership of key staff is good. The effectiveness of management is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher is a very good leader and manager and has created a successful team
- The headteacher's and governors' vision and sense of purpose mean that strategic planning focuses on improving achievement
- Good leadership and management of subjects has a positive impact on teaching and learning
- The performance management of all staff is efficiently managed and closely matched to school improvement
- The use of information to track and improve children's performance is underdeveloped
- Provision for children with special educational needs is well managed

Commentary

36. The headteacher has excellent relationships with, and is highly respected by, the school community. She knows every child in the school and makes relentless efforts to ensure that all children do as well as they possibly can. She works very closely with governors and staff to achieve carefully planned and ambitious long-term goals. The governing body has a very good knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and directs its attention to very well planned strategic development. Governors have given very good support to the headteacher over recent times in her sustained and effective efforts to improve both the quality of teaching and children's achievement.
37. The headteacher and other leaders have created teams that work very effectively. The senior management team, year group teams, lower and upper school teams are all sure about their responsibilities and share a commitment to succeed. All staff, including support staff, feel valued and are confident to bring forward ideas for improvement.
38. The school improvement group² works well, constantly seeking ways to improve performance. Initiatives for improvement come from all sources within the school including individuals, teams and leaders. All of these ideas are evaluated at different levels before priorities are agreed.

² A group of governors and teachers which focuses on raising standards.

Performance management is very effective. Performance targets are derived from school improvement plans and this helps to ensure that the priorities are addressed from many angles.

39. Subject managers do a good job. Some are new to the responsibility but all are enthusiastic and provide good guidance to colleagues. The monitoring of performance in different subjects is variable and some further development, including a more efficient use of information about children's progress is needed. Some of the systems used are cumbersome and make it difficult for leaders and teachers to track progress carefully in order to set appropriately challenging targets for individual children and year groups.
40. The management of special educational needs is good, showing that the considerable investment in keeping a co-ordinator without direct classroom responsibilities has been effective. Although in post only a short time, she has established effective procedures for the early identification of children who need support and an effective system for day-to-day communication. Support staff are effectively deployed and their performance justifies the high spending that their numbers demand.
41. The money carried forward to the year 2003-4 is partly to fund the development of an outdoor classroom.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	825795
Total expenditure	726341
Expenditure per child	1772

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	48663
Balance carried forward to the next	99454

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

42. The good provision for children in the reception classes has been sustained since the last inspection. Children enter reception in the September before they are five and, at the time of the inspection were only attending in the mornings. The majority of children have attended some form of pre-school provision. Children achieve well because the teaching is good in all areas of learning, and the curriculum is appropriately planned to provide a wide range of interesting and relevant activities. Teachers and support staff work very well together as a team, carefully monitoring children's progress. The very good ratio of adults to children helps to ensure that the needs of all are well met. Adults set excellent role models for the children and manage them well.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Staff establish warm relationships with children
- The very positive atmosphere supports children's self-esteem
- Very well organised routines help children to settle in to school life

Commentary

44. Although some children are confident when they start school, levels of personal, social and emotional development are generally below those usually found as children enter reception. This is the focus of teachers' work during the first few weeks. All adults work hard to ensure that children enjoy coming to school. Children are always greeted warmly and every effort is made to provide activities that appeal to individual children. Just a few weeks after the beginning of term, most children had settled in well. They were conforming to the conventions of school life and behaving well.

45. The day is structured carefully to provide opportunities for children to develop social skills. During 'fruit time', children are encouraged successfully to take part in conversations and discussion, with adults playing a leading role in prompting responses. Children's self-esteem is boosted as their work is celebrated. The outdoor area is used effectively to promote social development. Activities are set up which require children to share equipment and co-operate. Children are successfully encouraged to express their feelings. For example, during a sensitively handled class discussion, they offered suggestions about 'when I want my Mum'.

46. Children are encouraged successfully to collect and replace resources, to tidy up after themselves and to take care of the classroom. Learning is very good in the role-play area, where children dress up and act out various situations. Adults often play alongside the children, providing very good models for behaviour and language. Small tasks provide good opportunities for children to develop a sense of responsibility.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Daily activities successfully encourage children to talk and extend their vocabulary
- A systematic programme helps children to learn about letter sounds

- Practical activities help children to develop an understanding that writing conveys meaning

Commentary

46. As they enter the school, many children have poor language skills. Although a few speak confidently, many communicate with single words and gestures. The proportion of children who recognise the initial sounds of words is low. Most achieve well and make good progress but, despite good teaching, standards are below those expected by the end of reception.
47. From the moment that children enter the classroom, adults engage them in conversations, drawing on their existing vocabulary and suggesting alternative ways of saying things. They consistently insist that children listen to the contributions of others. Very good relationships mean that children have the confidence to talk and all adults are genuinely interested in what the children have to say. The role play area, dressing up clothes and puppets are used to good effect to stimulate speech. Adults read to children expressively, generating a keen interest in stories. Early in the term, children were achieving well; they recognised the initial sounds of words and could suggest more words with the same sound such as ball, book and balloon. Early word-building skills are encouraged as children use the letters in their names to make new words.
48. Each classroom has an area set up to encourage writing. These are used frequently and children are keen to 'write' letters and lists. Pretend writing was promoted successfully in the outdoor area which had been set up as a 'travel agency'. Some children used a few recognisable letters while others were still at a much earlier stage. Handwriting is taught well.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve well because teachers make frequent reference to numbers and mathematical ideas
- Lots of practical work helps children to learn

Commentary

49. Most children can recite numbers as they start school but many have little understanding of what they mean. Adults refer to numbers at every opportunity, for example, when children 'help' them count the number present during registration. Children are taught that numbers can be used for counting through activities such as counting the candles on a birthday cake or the windows in a house. Adults use a variety of number rhymes and songs effectively to help children count. Children's work from last year shows that they make good progress, with the most able children understanding numbers to ten.
50. Early ideas of shape and size are developed well through practical activities. Following a whole class session which introduced the words long and short, children enjoyed a wide range of activities. Some drew long lines with chalk on the playground; others co-operated well as they made long 'snakes' with plastic chain links. One child proudly showed his long lorry, which had taken up almost all the available plastic bricks. Such practical activities prepare the way well for future learning. By the end of reception, although most have made good progress, standards in mathematical development are generally below those expected.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A range of interesting activities is planned to promote learning in this area
- The extensive school grounds are used well to teach children about the natural world
- Staff use questioning very effectively to enhance the children's knowledge and understanding of the world about them
- Regular access to computers helps children to develop good ICT skills

Commentary

51. Although many enter the school with little experience outside the home, a good variety of interesting activities stimulates children's curiosity and enhances their understanding of the world outside their immediate environment. Children achieve well and by the end of reception, standards in this area of learning are in line with those expected.
52. The school grounds offer a wealth of opportunities for children to explore natural things first hand. During a very well planned lesson, children were taken on a tour of the school grounds. Specific places were visited because they were the habitats of spiders, woodlice, birds and even badgers. The three adults engaged children in conversations at each location, encouraging close observation and asking questions which extended children's knowledge and understanding. Most children showed a good degree of curiosity, indicating that they were at an appropriate stage in this area of learning.
53. The five computers located near the reception area are used well to develop children's ICT skills. Children soon learn how to operate them and confidently use the mouse to select and move objects around the screen as they work with early literacy and numeracy programs. Listening centres in the classroom provide further opportunities for children to interact with technical devices.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **very good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The hall and outdoor areas are used very well to promote children's physical development
- Practical activities in the classroom support children's manipulative skills well

Commentary

54. As children start school their physical development is as expected at this age. As a result of the very good provision, most achieve well and reach standards in line with or better than those expected by the end of reception. Good teaching was evident during a lesson in the hall. Music was used effectively to stimulate movement and engaged all the children. They moved well following the adults' lead. Children responded very well to the teacher's 'freeze!' command, indicating a good level of control and balance. Good questioning by the teacher extended children's understanding of how exercise affects heart beat and breathing.
55. Children use the outdoor area everyday, taking full advantage of the range of equipment. They are developing good physical skills as they pedal and steer the tricycles, and climb, swing and balance on the apparatus. Skipping skills are less secure, with about half the children managing to do so confidently. The hard surface is spacious enough to allow running and chasing games and the grassed areas provide a good surface for rough and tumble play.

56. Indoors, drawing, cutting and sticking are an integral part of each day. Construction kits provide further opportunities for children to develop their manipulative skills. Children concentrated well as they drew rainbow shapes and cut out paper to make patterns and made initial attempts to write using pencils and felt markers.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Drama is used very well to support children's creative development
- A good range of art activities stimulates children's creative development successfully

Commentary

57. Children respond well to the good range of creative activities which stimulates creativity, originality and expressiveness. During a very effective session in the drama studio, the teacher's lively pace and her stimulating use of voice had all children totally absorbed. They moved very well as snakes, rabbits and cats and were very good at using facial expressions to convey different moods. They then made a 'journey on a magic carpet'. Excellent role playing by the teacher and the classroom assistant prompted imaginative responses. Children were fully engaged and eager to contribute suggestions about how to 'get around the dragon' and 'escape from the cave' - "I've got a torch"... "I can see a volcano"... "Hello, we're here!"

58. Displays in and around the classrooms contain many examples of children's painting and pattern making. During a choosing session, children made snake puppets from socks and painted at easels, approaching these activities with confidence and using colours well. Assessment records show that children usually make good progress in this area of learning, with most achieving the expected level by the end of reception.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision for English is **good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in reading and writing are below average
- Barriers to raising achievement have been dealt with effectively
- Good teaching is leading to better progress
- Curriculum innovations promote good achievement
- Subject leadership is good
- Systems for tracking progress in order to set targets are not fully developed

Commentary

59. A number of changes to the curriculum and timetabling are specifically focussed upon raising attainment in all aspects of English. Many children enter the school with below average communication skills. This hampers their achievement in reading and writing. However, an increased emphasis on the use of drama and role-play is having an impressive effect on children's achievement. Writing produced by Year 6 children during the inspection following role-play activities showed significant improvement on their previous attainment. Year 2 children were also observed making good progress. Specific activities designed to improve children's speaking skills are proving to be very effective. Some teachers miss opportunities during

lessons other than English to challenge children to improve their speaking and listening skills but by the time they reach year 6, children's skills in this are close to national expectations.

60. Children's achievement in the recent past has been unsatisfactory particularly in writing. However, inconsistencies in the quality of teaching have been recognised and dealt with. The one unsatisfactory lesson observed during inspection was an exception to the overall quality of lessons that was at least good, with a number being judged very good or excellent. Children's achievement is now at least satisfactory and often, as in the case of children with special educational needs, good.
61. Beneficial changes to the curriculum include:
- an increase in the amount of time dedicated to improving skills in extended writing
 - establishing 'reading workshops' outside of the literacy hour when both group and individual reading skills are taught
 - providing opportunities for writing in other subjects
 - establishing a new target setting system to show children the next steps they have to make to improve their writing
 - focused attention to grammar, spelling and handwriting
 - a consistent approach to the teaching of phonics (letter sounds) throughout the school.
62. The new subject leader, with very good support from her colleagues, has had a significant influence upon these improvements. However, as many of these changes are new, monitoring arrangements are not fully in place. Information about children's previous attainments is collected and used to help teachers identify the next steps and to help children be aware of their own progress. However the system for collecting and passing on the information is not refined enough to make the data easily accessible. This hampers the effectiveness of the process of setting challenging targets at the appropriate level and making sure that children know how to improve.

Language and literary across the curriculum

63. Teachers are improving children's attitudes to writing by taking advantage of writing opportunities in other subjects especially history. However there is insufficient emphasis upon children's literacy targets when this happens. Children are successfully encouraged to use their library and research skills in subjects such as geography and religious education.

MATHEMATICS

The provision for mathematics is **very good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average and have shown an upward trend since the last inspection
- Teaching and learning are good, which means that children achieve well
- Careful tracking of children's progress enables teachers to set tasks at the right level of challenge

Commentary

64. Children in years 1 and 2 have a secure grounding in number calculations, and this is systematically built on in later years. By year 6, most children are confident in using multiplication and division facts to 10 x 10 and this enables them to achieve well. Good standards were also seen in a Year 4 lesson where children classified two-dimensional shapes into regular and non-regular polygons, most identifying confidently lines of symmetry to help them. Good teaching focused well on children's use of correct mathematical language.

65. Teachers plan effectively. Lessons start with a brisk mental arithmetic session, which children enjoy. The use of individual whiteboards and markers keeps all children actively involved and enables teachers to assess their level of knowledge and understanding at a glance. Classes are well managed. During the main mathematical activities, classroom assistants support groups of children well, especially those with special educational needs, helping them to make good progress. However, during the whole class teaching sessions they could be used more effectively by, for example, monitoring the response of particular groups of children. Good use is made of the summary session at the end of lessons. Teachers review progress and indicate what is to be covered in the next lesson. This helps children to understand what they need to do to improve. Planning generally supports learning well, but in some lessons opportunities are missed for more able children to extend their understanding by creating their own problems. Teachers use ICT effectively in mathematics lessons. The five computers located near each year group are in constant use as children practise and consolidate their numeracy skills.
66. The subject is very well monitored and evaluation is securely embedded in the management of mathematics. Assessment information is used very well to set targets and to group children in sets within each year group. As a result, children's achievement is good and they are reaching above average standards.

Mathematics across the curriculum

67. Children use their knowledge of mathematics well to support work in other subjects by, for example, recording results in charts in science, and measuring in design and technology. In a year 3 lesson, children used their knowledge of co-ordinates to describe the location of places on map in preparation for a local geographical study.

SCIENCE

Provision for science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Detailed guidelines enable teachers to ensure that children are set increasingly challenging work and to achieve well
 - The school's emphasis on a practical approach has helped to raise achievement, particularly for those children with low levels of literacy skills
 - ICT is used well to support science although children do not yet have the opportunity to use this more extensively during practical investigations
68. Very good leadership and management have driven improvements. Teachers are clear about what children need to do to sustain levels of achievement because this is made very clear in the detailed guidelines. Teachers develop scientific themes in a systematic way, ensuring progression. Consequently, achievement is good and children are attaining above average standards. Their skills are being progressively developed and links to other subjects are creating greater opportunities for them to further practise and develop these skills. For example, the year 2 planning for a topic on machines is taught as a progression of skills from pushes and pulls to speed and direction, friction and gradient. This step-by step approach is contributing to the good level of achievement. Children pick up teachers' enthusiasm and participate well in lessons. They discuss science using appropriate vocabulary and develop a good awareness of the importance of fair testing. Resources are good and support teaching and learning well.
69. Children are engaged and enjoy taking part in science lessons because most lessons involve a practical or investigative element. Investigation skills are developed well through very good questioning by teachers, which challenges children to justify their answers. In a year 4 lesson on separating sand from water, children were asked to justify their methods. Very good questioning led the children to explore, in depth, the likely outcomes of their chosen method and the properties of the materials they planned to use. The increase in practical work has also helped to develop very good cooperative skills and good opportunities for speaking and listening. The

co-ordinator has introduced an effective system of writing-up investigations, which is helping children, especially those with weak writing skills, to record their findings systematically.

70. Teachers are making good use of ICT both to support learning and to aid recording of results. For instance, children used a spreadsheet to record the findings of a temperature change investigation. Information and communication technology could be used more effectively to gather data using sensors, for instance, to track changes in temperature and sound overnight. This would give children a broader range of data on which to generate their scientific ideas.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

The provision for ICT is **good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve well because detailed plans enable teachers to build on their existing skills and sustain a good level of challenge
- Children develop high levels of ICT skills because they are taught systematically from year to year
- Good use is made of ICT in other subjects, particularly in English and mathematics
- Children have not yet had sufficient opportunities to use computers to monitor changes in temperature, light and sound.

Commentary

71. Very good leadership and management support teachers well in planning opportunities for children's learning. Teachers track children's achievements carefully to plan the next step in learning which helps to ensure that they progress well from lesson to lesson. As a result, children achieve well and attain good standards. Standards have improved since the last inspection and this is largely due to the good teaching and strong leadership and management.
72. The broader and more varied use of ICT has created greater opportunities for children to practise and develop their skills. For instance, children in year 6 use a paint program very confidently to digitally modify pictures; they produce animated presentations that include text and pictures. They are confident in their use of ICT and demonstrate very good levels of competence in logging onto the network and navigating file systems. Children work co-operatively, taking turns and guiding each other through processes and problems.
73. Children use ICT to support their learning in a range of subjects and this has produced significant improvements in achievement. Teachers make very good use of small ICT suites situated in each year group area to support literacy and numeracy work. Groups of children are targeted to use these computers during most literacy and numeracy sessions and this provides good consolidation of both ICT skills and literacy/numeracy.
74. The school has only recently acquired sensors to record changes in temperature, light and sound. This means that the children in years 5 and 6 have not yet been able to learn how to use them to monitor changes and to log changes over time. This has constrained achievement in this aspect of the subject.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

75. The use of ICT across the curriculum is very good. As a matter of course, teachers integrate ICT when teaching other subjects and this helps children to appreciate that ICT is a powerful tool for learning. Good examples of this were seen in art, history, science, literacy and numeracy. For example, in a history lesson children used the Internet to research information on a famous explorer, copied and pasted the information into a poster and then used word processing skills to format the posters. They demonstrated high levels of ICT skills while developing their knowledge and understanding of an important period in history.

HUMANITIES

76. Religious education was inspected individually and is reported in full below. Inspectors sampled lessons in history. No lessons were seen in geography but planning indicated full coverage of the curriculum and a good range of field visits.

Religious education

The provision for religious education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching enables children to reach the expected levels
- Religious education plays an important part in children's understanding of other cultures
- The school is particularly well resourced with artefacts to support teaching about world faiths
- Monitoring and assessment systems are not fully established

Commentary

77. Children have a secure knowledge of Christianity and of a number of other faiths. Teachers have a clear understanding of the subject and use the wide range of resources effectively. As a result, children achieve well and, as at the time of the last inspection, they attain the expected levels. Children's understanding of the importance of the church in Christianity and in the community is enhanced by the close links that the school has established with two local churches.

78. Work effectively centres on learning about and from religious and human experiences. The principle focus is the teaching of Christianity, but some other faiths are studied in appropriate depth. Children are taught to identify similarities and differences between their own beliefs and that of others. There is an expectation that children will respect the opinions and beliefs of others and this is evident in their everyday behaviour. Their work in religious education plays an important part in children's understanding of different cultures. This was evident when a year 6 child of the Hindu faith explained in detail some of the precious articles from the family shrine at home. In a year 2 lesson, the teacher introduced artefacts related to a Christian wedding, skilfully questioning children about their significance.

79. The subject is well led and managed. Teachers are supported by detailed guidelines which include references to where children's literacy skills can be developed through their work in religious education. A useful portfolio of photographs records visits and visitors to the school.

History

The provision for history is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum is enhanced by the good use of visits and visitors
- Children's learning is supported by their use of ICT for research
- Monitoring and assessment systems are being developed, but have had insufficient time to impact on the inconsistent presentation and marking

Commentary

80. Work is well supported by visits, particularly residential visits, and visitors to the school. These bring the subject to life and, together with good teaching, enable children to achieve well. As a result, standards have been sustained in line with expectations since the last inspection. Very good use of visitors was evident in a Year 6 lesson when children shared with each other the notes they had taken during the previous lesson, when six people from diverse occupations

during World War II, talked to small groups about their experiences. Children in year 4 used the Internet well to research famous explorers, copying and pasting text and pictures into a document. A three-day residential visit contributed very well to their study of the Tudor period.

81. The subject is well led and managed. Clear guidance for teachers enables children's knowledge and understanding to be built up year-on-year. A good collection of resources supports their learning well. Inconsistencies in the presentation of children's work and in teacher's marking have been identified by the co-ordinator and plans have been made to review work more regularly in order to identify inconsistencies and assess progress.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

82. Five lessons were observed in physical education. Two lessons in music were observed and some evidence of children's musical abilities was gathered from their singing in assemblies and hymn practice. Although one lesson was seen in both art and design and design and technology, no judgement about provision could be made. The subject leaders of all four subjects were interviewed and discussions were held with children. Planning and samples of children's work were examined. No unsatisfactory lessons were observed in this area of the curriculum. Subject leaders are highly respected for their expertise; they have a strong influence on the content of the curriculum and provide very good support for teachers.

83. The quality of teaching in **physical education** in years 1 and 2 is good and sometimes very good. Children's games skills in these lessons are developing well. A very good lesson was observed in year 6 where children were making very good efforts and reaching the expected standards in gymnastic skills. They also responded very positively during a very well organised swimming session. The co-ordinator has introduced a list of essential skills to ensure that more challenging work is introduced as children move through the school. This is having a positive effect on progress. She has also used a consultant, plus her own expertise, to improve teachers' skills in teaching dance.

84. Children talked enthusiastically about **art and design** and about their **design and technology** projects. They use sketchbooks effectively, collecting and exploring ideas for creative work and using a variety of starting points as stimuli. The art co-ordinator has devised a good programme of work which successfully sustains children's interest. She supports teachers well, providing examples of work for them to use as a resource. A highlight of the year is the arts week when the normal curriculum is suspended and all children become involved in creative work, often with the help of visiting artists.

85. The two lessons observed in **music** were taken at a brisk pace which sustained children's interest and enthusiasm. During a good lesson in year 1, children rose to the challenge of working in two groups. As one group recited a poem, the other accompanied them on percussion instruments. This performance indicated standards in line with those expected at this age. A particular feature of this lesson was the way the teacher, with considerable skill, ensured that children with emotional and behavioural difficulties were included and achieved well. This level of support for children with special educational needs was also evident in a very good lesson in year 5 because the mixed-ability grouping was thought out carefully. All children rose to the challenge of working together to compose their own short melodies and devise accompaniments using pitched instruments. They made good attempts at writing down their compositions, some using standard musical notation. As a result of the highly effective teaching, children achieved very well and were reaching good standards. Singing in assemblies and hymn practices was reasonably tuneful and expressive, indicating standards broadly in line with those expected.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

86. Provision for personal, social and health education and citizenship is **very good**

Main strengths and weaknesses (a summary of the points made earlier in the report)

- The school has very successfully linked its carefully structured programme for personal, social and health education with its strategies for behaviour management
- The programme is enriched by visitors
- Health education is promoted successfully through subjects such as science and physical education and through the 'Healthy Schools' project
- A promising new initiative encourages children to set their own targets for personal development
- Lunch clubs are organised for those who find the playground difficult
- The teacher responsible for child protection offers counselling sessions
- The programme provides time for children to discuss their issues and rewards them for their efforts
- As a result of the very good provision for personal development, children feel settled and secure. This is particularly important given the fact that so many children come and go during their school career

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	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	3
Overall standards achieved	4
Children's achievement	3
Children's attitudes, values and other personal qualities	3
Attendance	5
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The quality of education provided by the school	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well children learn	3
The quality of assessment	3
How well the curriculum meets children's needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	2
Children's care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for children	2
How well the school seeks and acts on children's views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	4
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	3
The effectiveness of management	3

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