

INSPECTION REPORT

BEDLINGTON THE STATION FIRST SCHOOL

Bedlington, Northumberland

LEA area: Northumberland

Unique reference number: 122177

Headteacher: Mrs P Mulholland

Lead inspector: Mrs L Murphy

Dates of inspection: 7th – 9th March 2005

Inspection number: 266396

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	First school
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 – 9
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	195
School address:	School Road Bedlington Northumberland
Postcode:	NE22 7JQ
Telephone number:	01670 822326
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr I Ellison
Date of previous inspection:	25 th January 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The school is about the same size as other primary schools and serves the local area of Bedlington. Almost a third of the pupils are entitled to free school meals, which is above the national average and reflects low family incomes. Twelve per cent of the pupils have been identified as having special educational needs; two pupils have a Statement of Special Educational Need. The special educational needs are in the range of moderate social, emotional, behavioural, speech, communication and physical needs. The pupils are of white British heritage. There are no pupils who speak English as an additional language. There is a very small proportion of Travellers and a very small minority of pupils who are in public care. The children's attainment when they start school is usually well below average although, exceptionally, the attainment level on starting school of pupils in the present Year 4 was higher than this. Since the last inspection there has been a significant change in staffing including the appointment of a new headteacher and deputy headteacher.

The school has achieved:

- The Basic Skills Quality Mark in 2003;
- a Schools Achievement Award in 2002 and 2003;
- and is part of an Excellence Cluster.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
16173	Mrs L Murphy	Lead inspector	Mathematics, art and design, design and technology, citizenship and English as an additional language.
8922	Mrs B McIntosh	Lay inspector	
25376	Mrs L Alvy	Team inspector	Science, music, religious education, Foundation Stage and special educational needs.
4350	Mr C Whittington	Team inspector	English, information and communication technology, geography, history, physical education.

The inspection contractor was:

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a good school with some very good features. The leadership and management are good. The quality of teaching and learning is good and as a result the pupils achieve well. Standards are above those typically expected at Year 4. The school provides very good value for money.

A particular barrier to achievement is the difficulty found in the recruitment of experienced staff. The school overcomes this by very good induction, mentoring and professional development of staff.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- pupils achieve well because of the effective teaching, very good assessment and high standard of care;
- very good leadership by the headteacher sets high expectations and brings about effective teamwork;
- a very exciting curriculum is exceedingly well enriched;
- provision for the pupils' personal development is very good and as a result the pupils behave very well and have very good attitudes to learning;
- parents have every confidence in the school and there are very good links with parents and the community. Even so the rate of the pupils' attendance is below average;
- the satisfactory provision in the Foundation Stage does not match the higher quality of provision throughout the rest of the school.

Since the last inspection the school has made good progress. Key issues identified in 1999 have been addressed well and standards have risen overall. In addition, the school has improved its effectiveness in the following areas: the pupils' attitudes to learning and their personal development; the curriculum; the care provided; links with parents and the community; and the leadership and management.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2002	2003	2004	2004
Reading	D	A	D	C
Writing	D	A	D	B
Mathematics	E	B	D	C

*Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average
Similar schools are those with similar percentages of pupils eligible for free school meals*

Achievement is good. It is good in Year 1 to Year 4 and satisfactory in the nursery and reception classes. The trend in the school's results in the national tests for reading, writing and mathematics at Year 2 was above the national trend over recent years.

Standards are on course to be well below the goals children are expected to reach by the end of reception in communication, language and literacy, mathematical development and knowledge and understanding of the world. In personal development standards are likely to be below the expected level. No judgement was made in physical and creative development. Standards are below average in reading, writing and mathematics at Year 2 and above the level typically expected at Year 4 in English and mathematics. In science they are at the level typically expected at Year 4.

The pupils' attainment is above the expected level at Year 4 in art and design, design and technology, information and communication technology, music, and physical education. In science, geography and religious education, standards are typical for the pupils' ages at Year 4. No judgement was made on standards in history.

The pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are very good. As a result the pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good; however, attendance is below average.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The school provides a good quality of education because **the quality of teaching and learning is good** overall and very well supported through the assessment of the pupils' learning. These aspects are satisfactory in the nursery and reception classes.

Significantly the very good curriculum, care, guidance, support, links with parents and links with the community have a strong effect on the pupils' achievement at Year 1 to Year 4. The curriculum in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory with strengths in the focused teaching and weaknesses in the provision that runs alongside the taught groups.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Overall leadership and management are good. Management, governance and the work of key staff are effective and statutory requirements are met. The headteacher's leadership is very good.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are very happy with the school because it provides a good education for their children. They feel very well informed about the progress their children are making and find staff very approachable if they have matters they wish to discuss. The pupils have a very high regard for their school.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- develop the satisfactory practice in the Foundation Stage so that it matches the good quality of education provided in Year 1 to Year 4; and
- improve the rate of the pupils' attendance.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

The achievement of the pupils is good overall although satisfactory in the Foundation Stage. Standards at Year 2 are below average. At Year 4 standards are above those typically expected for the pupils' ages.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well so that at Year 4 they attain above the level typically expected for pupils of their age in:
 - English, mathematics and information and communication technology;
 - art and design, design and technology, music, and physical education;
- in the nursery and reception classes pupils' achievement is good in personal development and satisfactory in communication, language, literacy, mathematical development and knowledge and understanding of the world;
- the pupils who have special educational needs and higher attainers achieve well.

Commentary

1. When children start at the nursery their attainment is well below average. The children make good gains in their personal development because this is a priority of the school and in the reception class independence is encouraged well. By the end of the reception year, standards are on course to be below average in personal development. Children achieve satisfactorily in communication, language, literacy, mathematical development and knowledge and understanding of the world. The satisfactory gains are linked to sound teaching and learning. The planning, particularly in the nursery for child-initiated experiences and direct teaching, is not sufficiently well balanced. The planning does not make clear the role of the adult in order to extend and support children's learning and thus ensure more rapid progress in each area of learning. Satisfactory provision means that the pupils attain soundly in the nursery and reception classes but do not achieve as well as others in the school where the quality of teaching and the curriculum is much more dynamic and better meets the needs of the pupils. Standards in communication, language, literacy, mathematical development and knowledge and understanding of the world are on course to be well below the early learning goals set for children at the end of the reception year. No judgements were made on physical and creative development because they were not a focus of the inspection.
2. In Year 1 and Year 2 the pupils make good gains and standards rise from well below average to below average. This is confirmed by inspection judgements and by the school's results in the national tests for pupils in Year 2 which were below average in 2004 in reading, writing and mathematics. A number of factors account for the good achievement. The teaching and learning are of good quality and effectively draw on very good assessment of the pupils' learning. The curriculum adds sparkle and great interest to the lessons and parental support to homework encourages a seamless transition of learning. When the school's results in the national tests in 2004 are compared to schools with similar percentages of pupils eligible for free school meals the results that Bedlington The Station First School attains are above average in writing and average in reading and mathematics.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	15.3 (17.0)	15.8 (15.7)
Writing	14.3 (17.1)	14.6 (14.6)
Mathematics	15.8 (17.0)	16.2 (16.3)

There were 49 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

3. The school's results in the national tests vary in line with the proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and also the proportion of pupils who join and leave the school at times other than Year 1. For example, the present Year 4 pupils attained highly in their national tests at Year 2 but since then 13 per cent of the year group has changed. The school's records show that the pupils joining the year group were at a much lower level in ability than others in this year group which was a particularly academic group of pupils overall.
4. In 1999 the school had to improve a range of provision to raise standards. This has been achieved well. The school attained a Schools Achievement Award in 2002 and 2003 from the Department for Education and Skills which recognised the improved achievement. Work toward the Basic Skills Quality Mark which was attained in 2003 has had a good effect on the pupils' progress in basic skills. It means that the pupils achieve well in literacy and numeracy because they are well taught and very well assessed.
5. There are very good opportunities created for using literacy, and good opportunities for using numeracy and information and communication technology through a good range of other subjects. This means that the skills the pupils have in these aspects are regularly practised and improved. The very good curriculum has a very positive effective on standards achieved in many subjects. A weekly cycle of teaching by specialists or teachers with good interest in subjects has raised standards in physical education at Year 4. It has also maintained standards in music even though the subject is now taught by the staff of the school rather than by visiting teachers.
6. Good progress has been made in addressing the key issue from the last inspection in relation to science. Standards In science at Year 4 have improved from below average to a broadly typical level for the pupils' ages. The pupils achieve well because of good teaching and a practical curriculum.
7. Standards in the subjects listed in the bullet points above are above the level typically expected for the pupils' ages at Year 4 because of rigorous leadership and management, effective teamwork and improved teaching. Standards in design and technology have benefited from the arts project work. The standards in religious education are typical for the pupils' ages at Year 4 because in this subject leadership and management are satisfactory rather than good. Similar standards in geography are upheld through teamwork because there is no subject leader in the short term. This causes extra work for the senior leadership team.
8. The school takes an inclusive approach to all pupils so that those who have special educational needs achieve as well as others. They are fully included in the life of the school. The pupils' individual education plans are clearly focused on identified needs. Parents, carers and pupils make a contribution, ensuring that everyone is working together to support the pupils' progress. Pupils who are higher attainers or who have particular gifts or talents achieve as well as others. The Travellers were not in school during the inspection but records show that they achieve in line with other pupils in their class during the periods that they attend the school.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities (ethos)

Pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to school are very good. Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are also very good. These aspects of the pupils' development have improved since the last inspection. Attendance is unsatisfactory overall but punctuality is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils enjoy school and are very well motivated to learn;
- staff have high expectations of pupils' conduct throughout the school day;
- pupils work and play together amicably;
- staff foster helpfulness and thoughtfulness very effectively;
- levels of attendance are showing signs of improvement but still remain unsatisfactory.

Commentary

9. The pupils' very good attitudes and values are central to their good academic achievements. The staff, many of whom are new to the school since the last inspection, have successfully maintained a very positive climate for learning and have strengthened pupils' personal development. There is a happy, welcoming environment; pupils clearly like coming to school and are very keen to learn and take part in all the activities provided for them. This warmth is strikingly apparent from the very start of the school day when cheery staff greet pupils individually as they enter the building. This puts them at their ease and in the right frame of mind for learning.
10. Pupils are very well motivated and respond positively to the challenges set for them and concentrate well on their tasks. Those pupils who have special educational needs have equally positive attitudes to learning and take a full and active part in lessons and in all the experiences that the school offers. Staff in the reception year nurture children's personal and social development well, enabling them to form trusting relationships and to begin to learn to cooperate, share and take turns. Many of the children are immature for their age and find it difficult to listen and concentrate and need lots of encouragement from the staff.
11. The school gives a high priority to pupils' personal development. The teachers set high expectations and successfully promote confidence and very good standards of behaviour through praise and encouragement. Pupils have a very clear understanding of the difference between right and wrong. The system of rewards has a positive effect on pupils' behaviour and motivates them to do well. Bullying is not perceived to be a problem by pupils or parents but they feel that if any form of harassment does occur, it is taken most seriously and dealt with very effectively by staff. The Buddies, a large group of pupils in Year 4 who are trained to help others, are always on hand to help pupils in the playground to help sort out minor conflicts that sometimes arise during playtimes. There have been no exclusions during the last year. This is a success and an indication of the school's strong commitment to including all in the education it provides.
12. Relationships are very good throughout the school. Pupils get on very well together and collaborate effectively in play and work. They are polite and welcoming to visitors. The school involves pupils in various initiatives which boost their self-esteem and confidence. Pupils are given increasing opportunities to take more responsibility for the running of the school and contributing to its development. The Buddy system operates very well and helps pupils understand and fulfil their responsibilities of living in a community very effectively.
13. Since the last inspection, the school has made very good improvements to developing pupils' spiritual and cultural awareness. Spiritual development is an integral part of the curriculum and assemblies and is planned around themes that are exceedingly relevant to the pupils. This helps pupils to reflect upon their personal feelings, values and beliefs. The school's very

positive ethos gives pupils a sense of purpose and pride in their achievements. Staff celebrate and reward pupils' thoughtfulness in special assemblies that spur the pupils on to be responsive to the needs of others. Pupils' creativity is nurtured well through art and design. There is a strong sense of spirituality in terms of their appreciation of the work of others and taking a pride in their own efforts. In an art and design lesson in a mixed Year 1 and Year 2 class, there were intakes of breath as pupils were amazed by the mystery of marbling and wax resists and the colour patterns produced. Class discussions give good opportunities for pupils to listen to varied opinions that may not match their own and they show respect for the differing views of others.

14. Pupils have a very good understanding of their own cultural traditions and the diversity and richness of other cultures. They are taught to appreciate and respect others' beliefs, ideas and culture and they show a good level of fairness and tolerance. The Mission Art Project is very successful in raising pupils' awareness of other cultures and prepares them very well for the diverse nature of British society.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year 93.2% (2003/04)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	6.1	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.

15. During the current year the recently appointed inclusion mentor has helped to improve the systems for monitoring and promoting good attendance. As a result, the level of attendance has shown a significant increase so far but remains below the national figures. The school works very closely with the educational welfare officer to try to improve the attendance of a small number of pupils whose parents do not always ensure they attend well enough. The school contacts parents on the first day where no explanation of absence is received and this has helped to improve the overall attendance of some pupils and reduce the number of unauthorised absences. The inclusion mentor has introduced a lunchtime 'fun club' which encourages pupils to come to school and improves their attitudes to learning. Punctuality is satisfactory overall but there are a few persistent latecomers each day.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides a good quality of education that includes good teaching and learning. The assessment of pupils' work is very good overall. The very good curriculum is exceedingly well enriched. Very good provision is made for the care and welfare of the pupils and for their support and guidance. Partnership with parents and the community is very good. Partnership with other schools is good. Pupils' views are taken into account very well.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is good. It is good at Year 1 to Year 4 and satisfactory in the Foundation Stage. The assessment of the pupils' learning is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The methods teachers use enable the pupils to succeed;
- the teaching of basic skills in literacy and numeracy is good;
- assessment is very good in Year 1 to Year 4 and the pupils are involved in assessing their own work;
- teaching assistants are deployed very well to promote the pupils' learning;
- there is much less good or better teaching in the Foundation Stage than in Year 1 to Year 4;

- a common weakness in the otherwise satisfactory teaching at Year 1 to Year 4 is the use of time within lessons.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 41 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
1 (2%)	8 (20%)	21(51%)	11 (27%)	0	0	0

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

- The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. There was no unsatisfactory teaching which represents a big improvement since the last inspection when 11 per cent of lessons were unsatisfactory. The proportion of good or better teaching is broadly at the level found in schools nationally although it is much lower in the nursery and reception classes. The rate of the pupils' learning reflects the quality of teaching.
- The teaching of English and mathematics, including literacy and numeracy, is good. Basic skills are taught within an effective structure so that each lesson builds upon the last. Each part of the teaching and learning is clearly planned and the learning objectives are shared with the pupils so that they know what is expected of them. Science is well taught overall through a practical approach so that the pupils make good gains in their knowledge and understanding of the subject. The pupils are mostly grouped appropriately so that tasks can be really well matched to their needs or they work in groups of mixed ability to promote collaborative skills. In science, however, the grouping by ability on occasions provides insufficient challenge for the higher attaining pupils. When this happens the pupils do more of the same rather extend their thinking with more challenging tasks.
- The headteacher has led development in teaching styles, resulting in teaching methods that inspire the pupils to give of their best. The strategies are varied and reflective and enable the pupils to take much enjoyment and interest in their learning. Practical activities meet the pupils' needs and help to develop their creativity and skills of thinking logically and imaginatively. The work of teaching assistants is very well organised. They know exactly what is expected of them and many have good knowledge of the subjects taught which enables them to question the pupils well and move on their thinking. This was the case, for example, in a lesson in information and communication technology in a mixed Year 1 and Year 2 class. The pupils' understanding of giving change from 20 pence moved on at a pace because of the use of computers and individual teaching from the teaching assistant. Classrooms are very conducive to learning and resources are set out to encourage the pupils' independence. The pupils are acquiring good work habits. Expectations are high in terms of the pupils' behaviour, the amount of work produced and the content of the learning.
- In the good and better teaching the very effective planning is interpreted well and means that the pace of teaching and learning is brisk and challenging. Where teaching was satisfactory in Year 1 to Year 4 the pace was mostly pedestrian and lacked the lustre of the better teaching. When the pupils were kept seated for long periods the balance of time to different parts of the lesson was skewed, leaving too little time for practical and independent work, or too little time to properly conclude the lesson.
- Pupils who have special educational needs are included effectively in lessons because the teacher or other adult provides additional support. The incorporation of pupils' individual targets into teachers' planning is embryonic, however. Teamwork between teachers and support assistants is a strength and plays a big part in ensuring the pupils learn well.

21. In the Foundation Stage the quality of teaching is satisfactory. Planning is carefully considered but activities in the nursery are not always matched closely enough to the children's needs. The children have too little opportunity to learn by exploring their own ideas. Systems to check and monitor children's progress are satisfactory and are built securely on information gained from initial assessments when children start in the nursery.
22. At Year 1 to Year 4 the pupils are assessed regularly and the information from assessments is plotted so that teachers can see if their pupils are making the progress they should. Teachers make very good use of this information. A mark of the good and better teaching was the way in which the pupils were expected to assess their own learning and give an indication to the teacher of how well they think they had done.

The curriculum

The curriculum is very good and very well enriched. In the Foundation Stage the curriculum is satisfactory. The range and quality of resources and accommodation are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is very good breadth within the curriculum and a high priority is placed on curricular innovation and enrichment;
- provision for pupils' personal, health and social education is very good;
- a wide range of extra-curricular opportunities is provided for all pupils from Year 2;
- there are weaknesses in the curriculum for children in the nursery and reception classes.

Commentary

23. The curriculum is very broad and balanced and has improved well since the last inspection. It is based largely on nationally recommended schemes, which are being adapted very effectively to meet the needs of the pupils and very much in line with national developments. This makes the topics that pupils study exciting and of great interest to them and ensures that the curriculum for literacy and numeracy meets the pupils' needs.
24. Literacy and numeracy are well planned and opportunities to develop cross-curricular links are a growing strength within the school. This helps the pupils to understand how their learning in a range of subjects connects and also provides very good opportunities for the skills learnt in one subject to be transferred to their learning in another. Once a week the pupils enjoy a rotation of lessons when they are taught by specialists or by teachers with great interest in particular subjects. In Year 1 and Year 2, parents help teachers to provide a fuller range of activities than would usually be expected in one lesson. This arrangement is just one example of the high priority placed on learning through enjoyment. A very good range of visits and visitors enhances the pupils' learning. Project work, as in the recent multi-cultural arts project, makes a very positive contribution to the pupils' personal development.
25. Curricular provision for pupils who have special educational needs is good, as similarly reported at the last inspection. The school is fully committed to including pupils in all aspects of the curriculum.
26. The curriculum is very well enriched by a wide range of sporting, arts and other activities provided for the pupils. Extra-curricular activities include music, football, cricket, indoor games and French. These are well attended and much appreciated by the pupils and parents. This aspect has developed well since the last inspection when it was highlighted as an area for improvement.
27. There are shortcomings in the curriculum for children in the nursery and reception classes, which means that these children do not achieve as well as pupils in Year 1 to Year 4. The

curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory overall with some good quality experiences provided by visits and visitors to the school. Common weaknesses include insufficient structure to planning for adult interaction in a significant proportion of aspects including outdoor play. Provision for children in the Foundation Stage who have special educational needs is good and additional skilled support from the inclusion mentor ensures they are included well.

28. The very good provision for the pupils' personal, social and health education stems from the school's very caring community within which everyone feels included. The curriculum is properly planned and ensures a clear focus on the importance of healthy minds and bodies. The pupils are taught about relationships and sex education and drugs awareness from the teachers and through a range of visitors to the school.

Care, guidance and support

The school makes very good provision for pupils' care, welfare, health and safety, which is an improvement since the last inspection. It provides pupils with very good support and guidance. The arrangements to involve pupils in the school's work and development are very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Staff and governors work hard to ensure that pupils are happy, safe and settled in school;
- very good academic guidance helps pupil to achieve well although pupils do not have short-term individual targets set to guide them further in their learning;
- the Buddy system enables pupils to make a good contribution to the life of the school.

Commentary

29. Pupils quickly develop very good and trusting relationships with staff and are confident to ask for help if they need it. A notable feature of the school is the positive atmosphere in which all pupils are valued as individuals. The good-natured, friendly approach of staff is instrumental in ensuring that pupils feel safe and happy and want to learn. Arrangements for health and safety are very good. Regular inspections of premises are undertaken and records are meticulously maintained. Provision for first aid is very good. Parents rightly feel that the school provides their children with a high standard of care and that individual pupils receive very good support when it is needed.
30. The support for pupils and their families begins early with a good programme for induction into the nursery. As a result, children settle into the nursery and begin to adapt to the routines. Generally daily routines are well planned and pupils are very carefully supervised when at work or at play. The Buddies have a key role in helping and looking after other pupils. Pupils find their teachers kind and helpful and feel that they are looked after very well. As a result, they are happy in their learning. The concern for pupils' welfare extends to the promotion of healthy lifestyles and keeping safe, for example raising awareness of how to keep fit through exercise in physical education lessons and learning about road safety through the local community policeman.
31. The school acknowledges pupils' successes well by celebrating and rewarding those who have made good gains in their academic and personal progress. The information about pupils' achievements is used to set targets for academic and personal development in the twice-yearly reports to parents. The regular setting of targets is for groups rather than individuals. Pupils have a good awareness of how well they are doing and their involvement in assessing and evaluating their learning is good. They are not so sure about the next steps in their learning because this aspect of the school's work does not include individual targets for pupils. Pupils who have special educational needs or may require additional support are quickly identified and given the extra help and guidance they need.

32. The work of the inclusion mentor is already having a good effect on pupils' development. A range of initiatives has been introduced to help specific children with personal, social, behavioural or emotional concerns that may be hindering their education. As a result the children are helped to overcome their problems so they are happier in their learning. Pupils in public care are looked after very well.
33. The school has developed a unique buddy system which includes the majority of pupils in Year 4. Pupils are actively encouraged to contribute towards improving the school such as by improving playtimes and by helping others. They make a very good contribution to the day-to-day running of the school. Their views influence school policies through weekly meetings with the headteacher. This work has a very positive effect on their personal development.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The partnership with parents and the community is very good and contributes effectively to pupils' learning and personal development. Links with other schools and colleges are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents are generally very supportive of the school and their children's learning but a small number do not ensure that their children attend often enough;
- very good communication keeps parents well informed about the school, the curriculum and their children's progress;
- visits in the locality provide many first-hand experiences for the pupils;
- pupils in Year 4 have opportunity to work alongside university students;
- the school has made a good start on developing links with the middle school to which most pupils transfer.

Commentary

34. Parents make a very good contribution to pupils' learning and to the life of the school. They accompany school visits, support concerts and are very supportive of fund-raising activities. A small number of parents and volunteers help regularly in class. Parents are very pleased with the school's provision for their children and readily become partners in their education. Despite parents' positive involvement with the school, the rate of the pupils' attendance is unsatisfactory overall because a small number of families do not always ensure that their children attend well enough.
35. Parents are kept fully informed about school events and issues. They have ample opportunities to meet with staff, formally at consultation sessions, and informally at the beginning and end of each day. The school provides very good, detailed information about what is taught and how parents can help. Parents spoke very positively about the coffee mornings and workshops where they are provided with curricular information for the term. These meetings are very well attended because parents are keen to find out what their children are learning. Since the last inspection, the school has introduced other initiatives for involving parents directly in their children's learning which have helped to improve the partnership between home and school. These include the whole school challenges that are aimed at raising standards. The reading challenge attracted a great deal of parental involvement with parents attending sessions each day to work alongside their children.
36. The annual reports are of very good quality and give a clear picture of how well the pupils are doing and include targets for future learning. Parents find that the school and staff are approachable and accessible at any time for formal or informal discussions. Parents of pupils who have special educational needs are kept well informed about their children's progress.

There are frequent meetings with parents to discuss achievements, any problems and guidance on the next steps in learning.

37. Educational visits bring learning alive for the pupils. Enrichment activities around the facilities in the community such as local shops, nursery garden, library and churches are planned very well. The recent arts project involved a whole range of visitors with specific expertise which made the whole learning experience a great success for the pupils. Links with other schools in the local partnership are good and have enabled the school to network and access the skills and expertise of others. The school has made a good start in establishing a partnership with the middle school to which pupils transfer. Parents value this new liaison between the two schools. The school is involved in a very innovative project whereby Year 4 pupils and their parents are invited to spend a day at a local university working alongside students. This gives pupils and parents an insight into university life and helps them think about this as a possibility for their own future.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The quality of leadership and management is good. Leadership by the headteacher is very good. Management and governance are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher has a very clear vision, sense of purpose and high aspirations for the school;
- the governing body is effective;
- the school places a high priority on self-evaluation and the senior leadership team and governors are fully committed to continuing improvement;
- all staff are very good role models and work very well as members of a team;
- finances are managed very efficiently and resources are deployed for the benefit of the majority of the pupils in the school;
- there is no designated leader for the Foundation Stage. Geography, history and design and technology are temporarily without leaders.

Commentary

38. Leadership and management have improved since the last inspection. The very purposeful and clear-sighted leadership by the headteacher is perceptive and caring and shows a strong commitment to raising standards in all areas of the school's work. The leadership of key personnel provides effective support at Year 1 to Year 4. Due to recruitment difficulties there is no leader for the Foundation Stage, and development in the nursery and reception provision has not kept pace with the rest of the school. Overall management is good and the staff work and plan together in highly supportive teams, which also ensures that new staff feel valued and included. All are very good role models
39. Continued professional development of staff has a high priority and this is linked to the school development plan and the management of the staff's performance. Induction and development of staff are very good and the mentoring of newly qualified staff is of high calibre although it ultimately places a heavy duty on the headteacher given the large number of newly and recently qualified staff that the school employs.
40. The school is highly self-evaluative. Efficient systems exist for identifying areas for development and these cover all areas of the curriculum. The school development plan is an effective working document and very accurately reflects the needs of the school. The result of this has been good improvement in the school's effectiveness since the last inspection. At times, however, the lack of deployment of trained support staff to the reception class adversely affects the children's achievement.

41. Governance is good because the governors are well informed and well led and they play an active role in the life of the school. They are critical and questioning of the school's work and provide a good level of support. They are involved appropriately in setting the school's yearly objectives and because finances are managed very well resources are mostly deployed for the benefit of all pupils with a clear view to raising standards. Statutory requirements are met, including the provision of a race equality policy that is regularly monitored.
42. Because of the difficulties of recruiting experienced staff and employing a significant number of newly and very recently qualified teachers, a minority of subjects are without a subject leader. The strong teamwork in Year 1 to Year 4, however, ensures that these subjects are not neglected and that work in the subject is maintained. An established cycle of subject review helps to keep all subjects up to date. However, this places a large workload on the headteacher and senior leaders to direct these particular subjects. The Foundation Stage lacks a leader and, in part because of this, the provision for the children in the nursery and reception classes although satisfactory is not as good as the quality of education provided in Year 1 to Year 4.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	539,564	Balance from previous year	62,208
Total expenditure	546,422	Balance carried forward to the next	55,350
Expenditure per pupil	2,719		

43. The budget carried forward appears generous when in fact very prudent management of finances means that the school has planned well ahead to cover increased staffing costs in relation to a decision to have smaller classes. Smaller classes linked with the good quality teaching help pupils to achieve well – a good improvement all round since the last inspection. The cost of providing a good quality education, when compared nationally, is low and as a result the school gives very good value for money.

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

The provision in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory which is broadly as it was in 1999. Since the last inspection there have been improvements in the staffing arrangements in the reception class. This increased additional adult support, whilst a bonus, is neither full time nor always sufficiently skilled to fully support the children's needs. Children's attainment on entry to the nursery is well below what is typically expected for their age. A significantly large proportion of children have impoverished communication and language skills. Although the nursery and reception classes teachers liaise there is no one designated to be overall responsible for the Foundation Stage. The adverse effect of this is that many of the improvements seen at Year 1 and Year 2 are not reflected well enough at the Foundation Stage to bring about good achievement.

Physical and creative development were not inspected in depth. In **physical development** outdoor activity is satisfactorily planned overall. The nursery and the reception classes share the same outdoor area and careful planning of themes, such as 'growth' for example, provide some good opportunities for joint activities. This is planned to maximise the use of the time when the reception class has additional adult support and includes opportunities to develop imagination and creativity through a range of activities. At other times nursery children use the wheeled toys with gusto and skill as they steer around each other and follow the road marked on the yard. More mature children learn to co-operate with others by taking turns in riding and pushing on a large chariot. The lack of structured planning for adult intervention during this type of activity reduces its impact for the development of communication and language for thinking, however. The children benefit from using the hall for physical development.

In **creative development** planning for interesting and lively activities provides opportunities for children to take part in a wide range of experiences. This was the case, for example, when learning about dance with specialist visitors, making musical instruments or taking part in an afternoon of music, song and fun to celebrate occasions such as Chinese New Year. Opportunities to paint, cut and stick are easily accessible in the nursery and the reception classes but adult intervention is not readily available to take forward the children's skills in handling a range of tools and developing the children's imagination. Children's work remains very immature on entry to the reception class and current staffing levels do not provide the continuous skilled adult support and guidance that are needed and this slows their progress.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents are encouraged to take part with their children at the start of the school day, which helps children to settle well to learning;
- children are given much encouragement and support to enable them to follow the rules and routines although sometimes the children's independence is insufficiently encouraged in the nursery.

Commentary

44. Children achieve well overall. Achievement is sound in the nursery and good in the reception year but because of their low starting point the children are on course to attain below the goals set for them by the end of the reception year. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory in the nursery, good in the reception class and good overall. Staff in the reception and nursery classes have a good understanding of the importance of giving children a calm and secure start to school life. Nursery sessions, for instance, begin calmly enough because

the teacher welcomes parents and carers and with much support and encouragement most children settle sensibly to a range of prepared tasks. Children in the nursery are beginning to respond to rules and routines and for the most part are willing to try and listen to stories and rhymes or paint a pattern, for instance. Planning for independent and small group tasks is detailed but does not identify the role of the adult sufficiently. This means that the adult support is not always best deployed to intervene in a timely manner to encourage perseverance and success in learning. In the reception class relationships are good and the children are encouraged to use the 'challenge' board to guide their self-initiated tasks. This encourages their independence and allows the teacher to concentrate on teaching groups of children. The lack of skilled adult support on some occasions means that there are missed opportunities to challenge children and to take their thinking forward when they work independently.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Practical tasks encourage children to develop interest in speaking, listening, reading and writing;
- planning is detailed but tasks are not always matched well enough to children's ability;
- parents are encouraged to support their children's early reading skills.

Commentary

45. The overall quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory and although children achieve soundly they are on course to attain well below the standards typically expected by the end of the reception year. Many of the children have very immature speech patterns and little conversation when they start school. Planning for the development of more formal skills of reading and writing is clearly linked to specific learning objectives so that in the nursery, for instance, the children make satisfactory gains in story telling. An effective introduction to the story *Hi Harry* by M Wardell engaged children's interest but the less mature in the group soon lost concentration. Progress is slowed because teaching and planning do not take into account specifically enough the children's differing needs and abilities, for example a precise role for the adult with smaller groups of children in order to develop interest and enjoyment in books or to consolidate work on activities linked to the development of literacy skills through play with sand, water, paint or dough. In the reception class relationships are good and the children make sound progress in learning new letter shapes and sounds. In writing, a few higher attaining children concentrate well and with the teacher's help persevere in writing simple invitations based on a shared story. Once a week the teachers model reading a diary of adventures of a tiger and then the children take home a diary which provides good opportunities for the children to gain confidence in communicating to the class about their news. Books are taken home regularly in the nursery and the reception classes. Parents are encouraged to support their children's early reading by writing comments in a home and school diary.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children respond well when activities are planned to focus on purposeful mathematical development;

- the role of the adult, in provision which is not a direct focus of teaching, is insufficiently planned.

Commentary

46. Children enter the nursery at a well below average level and with little mathematical language. They need many reminders to look and listen carefully in practical tasks. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall and the children achieve soundly. They are on course to attain well below the goals set for their learning by the end of the reception year. In the nursery and the reception classes the teaching of daily lessons in mathematics includes clear learning objectives for oral and mental work. When the children in the nursery worked in small target groups the youngest children benefited considerably from the calm support of the classroom assistant when a planned focus task helped them to concentrate and count as they pegged clothes on the washing line. The teacher used a puppet effectively to help older children order and recognise numbers to five. The quality of teaching in this instance was good and the children increased their application and concentration. The opportunities for children to talk 'mathematically' with and alongside a skilled adult in other areas of provision, such as sand, water or in outdoor activities, are not sufficiently well structured. At times the reception class is under-resourced in terms of trained additional adults.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Provision in knowledge and understanding of the world is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Interesting and lively themes enhance this area of learning;
- children enjoy using computers;
- planning for children's purposeful interactions with adults is not always rigorous enough.

Commentary

47. Children achieve satisfactorily in relation to their prior attainment. They are on course to attain well below the standards typically expected by the end of the reception year. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. The choice of themes and topics is planned carefully to increase children's knowledge, skills and understanding in this area of learning. Learning is enjoyable and fun and provides children with a range of experiences that they might not otherwise encounter. For instance, in a topic on 'growth', children experienced digging and planting. As part of a topic on journeys children visited a farm. Planning does not always identify the role of the adult clearly enough, however, and so a small group of nursery children observing snails missed opportunities to benefit from adult support and guidance in developing their language for thinking. Continuous assessment of progress, clear instructions and skilful intervention helped reception children to work productively on the computer. They made rapid progress in controlling computer icons to access painting tools as a result.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum has a clear emphasis on developing the skills of speaking and listening across all subjects although the pupils are not confident at speaking to a large audience;
- the quality of teaching and learning is good and at times very good;
- the pupils, including those who have special education needs, achieve well and have very positive attitudes to learning;
- the quality of assessment generally is very good;
- subject leadership is very good.

Commentary

48. The school's national test results in 2004 showed pupils at Year 2 to be below the national average in reading and writing, although when compared to schools with a similar proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals reading was average and writing was above average. Pupils enter Year 1 with standards which are well below average. They achieve well, and standards rise to below average by Year 2. By the time pupils are in Year 4, standards are above those typically expected for pupils of this age. When this group of pupils were in Year 2 they had high results in the national tests although a significant proportion of the group were not working consistently at the higher level attained in the test. Achievement is good because the pupils have not only fully consolidated their levels of attainment but have broadened their English, making a good springboard for them as they move onto more difficult tasks.
49. Achievement is good across the school. Provision for those pupils throughout the school who have special educational needs is good and they are given work which is appropriate to their abilities, helping them to make good progress. The girls and boys mostly perform similarly in reading and writing at Year 2. The school uses a range of teaching material from additional national strategies to promote the skills of all the pupils. The lively and engaging curriculum is well suited to promote the achievement of boys and girls alike.
50. Most pupils enter Year 1 with speaking and listening skills which are well below average for their age. A high priority is given to developing this area and skills are promoted very well in all classes and in all subjects, so that by the time pupils reach Year 4, pupils are generally confident and articulate. A comparative weakness is their success in speaking clearly to a large audience because pupils do not project their voice sufficiently well. For example, in a whole school assembly it was quite difficult to hear what the pupils were saying because they were insufficiently aware of their audience. The developing opportunities for pupils to discuss work with a friend or partner are particularly effective in making sure that all contribute to lessons.
51. The standard of reading at Year 2 is below average, and is above average at Year 4. Purposeful teaching and learning means that the pupils are guided well in their reading and very clear record keeping means that pupils are given just the right level of challenge. On occasion, however, pupils have to share books in their group reading which means that not all concentrate as well as they could. Good use is made of the school library to further the pupils' attainment and interest in reading. Pupils are encouraged to take books home and read to an adult, and most do this regularly. There are useful home-school reading records, where a parent or carer is encouraged to write a comment. Sometimes pupils too write comments, illustrating their interest.

52. The standard of writing at Year 2 is below average, and is above average in Year 4. There are strengths in the range of writing used in many subjects and good links with information and communication technology which in particular engages the interest and promotes the learning of the boys.
53. The quality of teaching and learning is good, with some lessons containing very good, and on occasion excellent, features. Relationships are very good and generally the teachers' enthusiasm is infectious. Most teaching is lively and imaginative, with pupils interested and keen to contribute. The teachers' questioning skills and their use of praise and encouragement are particularly effective in motivating the pupils to do their best and are the reason why the pupils have such very positive attitudes to learning.
54. Assessment is generally very good, with the information gained used to ensure that the work set is appropriate for pupils with different levels of attainment. Group targets are set for writing, although some of these are not sufficiently short term. Day-to-day marking is good.
55. Leadership and management are good overall. Leadership is very good and the subject leader is very effective at developing teams where teachers plan closely together. Much professional discussion takes place about the teaching and learning and together this ensures that all pupils in each year group have an equal opportunity to do well. Parents have been pleased to attend workshops on literacy to help them understand how they can best help their child. Focused observations are made of lessons and pupils' work, and links are growing with the middle school to which most pupils transfer. Good improvement has been made since the last inspection.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

56. Pupils' language and literacy skills are good and are used very well across the curriculum. There are many opportunities in all subjects for the pupils to speak and listen and this helps to improve their confidence and vocabulary. The quality of questioning by adults is good and the pupils know that they may well be expected to expand on their first contribution so that meaning is clear and they have to think hard. Pupils develop and apply their reading and writing through a good range of subjects.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils attain well in handling data because it is taught well and used in a range of subjects;
- pupils are grouped by their level of attainment which helps the teachers to ensure challenging learning is ready for the pupils;
- information and communication technology provides good support to pupils' learning in mathematics;
- pupils' skills at applying their learning to solve problems are underdeveloped.

Commentary

57. Although in the national tests for pupils at Year 2 in 2004 the school's results were below the national average, this represented good progress from Year 1. Inspection findings are that standards are below average in Year 2. In Year 4 standards are above the level typically expected for the pupils' ages. The school has worked hard to maintain this level from when the pupils were in Year 2, given the significant turnover of pupils in this year group. A teacher on secondment from the school to the local education authority has returned at intervals to

provide advice and training and to support the good day-to-day leadership and management of the subject. As a result of this and professional development on how to improve the quality of teaching, the school's teaching and learning in mathematics are good. The pupils acquire confidence, skills and knowledge at a good rate. On occasions when teaching is satisfactory rather than good it is because the pace is slower. When this occurs the challenge for the higher attainers diminishes. Standards have improved well since 1999 in Year 4. All groups of pupils including those who have special educational needs and the higher attaining pupils achieve well. Boys and girls achieve equally well.

58. Assessment is used very well to group pupils of similar attainment for teaching. These groups are then sub-divided into smaller groups so that teachers can match the learning to the pupils' needs very well indeed. The pupils respond very well and are very keen to improve. Work is presented neatly but insufficient use is made of the squared paper in their books to keep figures in straight lines to aid accuracy in computation.
59. The pupils' strengths in handling a range of data come about because this skill is taught well throughout the school. As a result the pupils have a quick recall of how to use a good range of tables and graphs and very much enjoy the challenge of new learning. In a lesson in a mixed Year 3 and Year 4 class the pupils quickly got to grips with interpreting a frequency table because the effective teaching was challenging and based upon a very good use of assessment of the pupils' learning needs. The pupils drew well on their numeracy skills to make quick calculations using a range of methods.
60. Information and communication technology is used well in mathematics as a tool to further the pupils' understanding of number and practical mathematics, such as working with measures. Adults working with the pupils are well informed and at ease with interactive technology and a range of software well chosen to help the pupils to learn. Teaching assistants are deployed well in this.
61. The pupils' skills at applying their learning to solve problems are not as well developed as their good skills at numeracy. The school is developing this aspect through carefully set problems that make the pupils think hard about identifying the essential information in word problems. In a mixed Year 3 and Year 4 class the teacher used questioning and modelled responses to help the pupils work logically through a given problem. Nonetheless the pupils found it difficult to discern the key elements to solving the problem. Once the crucial information has been teased out the average attainers are not always sure of the numeracy methods needed to find the answer.

Mathematics across the curriculum

62. Pupils' mathematical skills are good and are used well in other subjects such as science and geography. This is because the curriculum is very well planned to take account of natural links between the subjects and topics taught. Teachers take many opportunities to develop the subject. For example, when pupils in Year 1 and Year 2 crossed the playground from their classroom to the dining hall they estimated and then measured how long it would take to complete the short journey. The pupils over-estimated the time and the teacher used this assessment to plan further practice in the estimation of time.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- An interesting and practical curriculum is making science fun as well as making effective links between subjects;
- improvement since the last inspection is good;
- the good quality of teaching is helping to raise standards but the use of target setting to track pupils' progress is underdeveloped.

Commentary

63. Standards have risen since the last inspection when reported attainment at Year 4 was below the level typically expected for the pupils' ages. Standards in science have risen steadily overall since that time because a comprehensive programme of improvement to address the issues has been led and implemented effectively.
64. Currently standards by the end of Year 2 are below the level expected although careful assessment of pupils' attainment suggests standards by the end of the year are likely to be close to last year's average results. Pupils achieve well, particularly so in relation to their starting points, because of good teaching. The rigorous analysis of data since the last inspection shows that the gap between pupils' achievement at Year 2 and Year 4 is steadily closing. Pupils, including those who have special educational needs, are achieving well in relation to the standards at the end of Year 2. Currently standards at Year 4 are well within the level typical for the pupils' ages and better than reported at the last inspection.
65. Recent effective changes in the quality of the curriculum have placed a strong emphasis on practical and innovative investigative tasks so that pupils are well motivated, behave very well and work to the best of their ability. The quality of teaching and learning is good. In a good lesson Year 1 and 2, pupils were intrigued by the teacher's practical demonstration as a precursor to testing the power of magnets. Very good relationships and skilled adult support meant that lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs confidently made their predictions. A good range of resources using magnets of varying sizes engaged pupils' interest and curiosity very well and, coupled with the teacher's clear explanations and confident subject knowledge, this helped pupils to record their predictions and carry out a test sensibly. Pupils achieved well in this lesson, particularly in relation to their prior learning although the higher attainers were not fully challenged during their independent work. In a good Year 3 and 4 lesson pupils were excited by a letter from a dentist asking them to test the effect of sugar on teeth. Good introductions with clear learning objectives and effective questions kept pupils well motivated and gave them good opportunities to ask and answer questions prior to devising their own test.
66. Developing pupils' literacy and numeracy skills is a priority, and planning within units of work reflects this although the use of information and communication technology is not as strong. Teachers and classroom assistants work effectively together to improve pupils' communication of scientific thinking and their ability to record experiments accurately. Although teachers' marking is supportive and often shows what pupils have achieved, it does not consistently give targets for progress to the next level. Teachers, however, assess the impact of topics together and change teaching as a result. Improvements in planning have given pupils exciting opportunities to see science brought to life. Science is planned well and taught within interesting themes, such as 'the fairground' or 'toys', for example. Effective links are made with other subjects, such as history, when pupils investigate old and new toys, and in art and design observing and drawing patterns in nature, for instance. Activities such as these enrich the science curriculum and make the subject more vivid to children.
67. The subject is well led and managed. Since the last inspection many staff changes have occurred. The rigorous improvements made in planning and the whole school analysis of progression of knowledge, skills and understanding in each aspect of science undertaken after

the last inspection are again the subject of review. Science quite rightly remains a focus of school improvement. Science, quite rightly, remains a focus of school improvement and the use of individual targets for pupils and the inclusion of the Foundation Stage staff in monitoring planning have rightly been identified as areas for improvement.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching and learning is good;
- pupils' attitudes to the subject are very positive;
- the management is well supported during the secondment of the subject leader;
- very good use is made of resources;
- the school has individual records for the pupils' achievement but the pupils do not use them in every lesson.

Commentary

68. Standards are in line with the national expectations at Year 2 and are above the level typically expected of the pupils' ages at Year 4. At the time of the last inspection, standards were satisfactory and, as the subject has kept pace with the changes in curriculum requirements over the past few years, the overall quality of the subject has improved and all pupils, including those who have special educational needs, achieve well.
69. The quality of teaching and learning is good and effective support is provided by teaching assistants. Instructions are clear and the judicious use of questions to reinforce what the pupils have already learned is very effective. All are enthusiastic and the pupils' attitudes are very positive. They take great pleasure in their independent use of computers and are not afraid to make a mistake and learn from it. The pupils behave very well and are very responsible with the expensive equipment. They are readily learning to use interactive technology with confidence. They are trusted to get on with their learning, allowing the adults to provide brief individual teaching to move the pupils' learning on. Individual targets are set through a simple record of achievement but the pupils do not always know what they must do next to improve because the records are not always at hand to aid the pupils' understanding of their progress.
70. The computer suite makes a positive contribution to the way in which the subject is taught and other computers are used effectively in the classrooms. Very good use is made of resources generally. Although the subject leader has a leave of absence this year, the subject is managed effectively by another member of staff in his absence. This ensures that the subject continues to develop.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

71. Pupils' skills in information and communication technology are good and are applied well in other subjects across the curriculum, particularly in literacy. Examples include the effective use of digital cameras in many subjects, data handling and charts in mathematics, an animated presentation in geography, a slide presentation in religious education and the composition of pictures and patterns in art and design. These cross-curricular teaching and learning are helping the pupils to use their increasing computer skills with purpose and enjoyment. However, information and communication technology is not used as well in science as in some other subjects.

HUMANITIES

History was not a focus of this inspection because insufficient lessons were timetabled to make a judgement on the provision.

Geography

Provision in geography is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum is imaginative, relevant, broad and balanced;
- the quality of teaching and learning is good and pupils' attitudes to the subject are very positive;
- the subject is enhanced through a very wide range of visits and visitors;
- there is no subject leader in the short term.

Commentary

72. Standards in geography are in line with national expectations for pupils at Year 2 and are typical for the pupils' ages at Year 4 with all pupils achieving well. The curriculum is imaginative, relevant, broad and balanced and the subject makes a very positive contribution to the pupils' cultural understanding. A teacher who has taken leave of absence maintains very good links with the school and, as the pupils follow his journey around the world, they study the countries visited in a broad cross-curricular initiative. The outcome of this is that the pupils at Year 4 have been able to build soundly on their knowledge and understanding of the local area and extend their studies meaningfully to encompass the use of geographical enquiry and extend their knowledge and understanding of localities beyond this country.
73. The subject is well planned, lessons are interesting and the overall quality of teaching and learning is good, with some very good features. These include the carefully targeted questions which ensure that all pupils are involved. Very good quality and up-to-date resources help the pupils to make good gains in their learning about real places. A relative weakness in the teaching is when the pace slows because the teacher lacks confidence in subject knowledge and has to refer to planning. As a result the pupils take some time to settle to their task. Relationships are very good and all pupils are always encouraged to do their best. Overall this results in very positive attitudes to geography. The pupils benefit from an extensive number of visits and visitors, which are used very effectively to widen the pupils' experience and extend their interest and knowledge.
74. The lack of a leader and manager means that day-to-day tasks fall to senior leaders although the school has a clear cycle of review for each subject.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **good**.

- The curriculum is well planned to help pupils to study major world religions;
- pupils are very well behaved in lessons and respectful when listening to the teacher or to each other;
- teaching is often imaginative and pupils are beginning to develop reflective thinking well although there are sometimes missed opportunities to develop skills in English.

Commentary

75. Pupils' attainment by the end of Year 4 is typical for the pupils' ages and similar to that reported at the last inspection. Standards at Year 2 are at the expected level. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall and with additional support in lessons from teachers and classroom assistants pupils, including those who have special educational needs, achieve well. Pupils are clearly interested in the subject and show much respect for the beliefs and practices of others.
76. Religious education is taught in a systematic way and is carefully linked to the locally agreed syllabus. Careful planning supports the progression of knowledge, skills and understanding year on year. In Years 1 and 2 it is taught as part of a carousel of subjects so that different groups of children receive good quality lessons that ensure a depth of study. In the lesson focused on the story of Easter, pupils in Year 1 and Year 2 developed their ideas and understanding. The lesson was planned well with clear learning objectives, very clear explanations, and time for pupils to recall what they already knew about the life of Jesus, as well as opportunity to ask and answer questions. Pupils' behaviour was very good because they were interested in the practical task of piecing together jigsaw pictures of events such as The Last Supper before viewing them on interactive electronic boards. The teacher's good use of questions challenged the pupils' reflective thinking and led to the suggestion from the pupils that Judas was surprised when Jesus said it was his last meal with his disciples.
77. In Year 3 and Year 4 the pupils' behaviour is also very good because effectively planned lessons with clear learning objectives and success criteria mean pupils are confident to co-operate and share ideas. Higher attaining pupils contributed some insightful comments when asked to consider why people might be for or against the crucifixion of Jesus. Pupils who have special educational needs were also fully involved owing to the sensitive support and effective teamwork between teachers and teaching assistants. On occasions there were missed opportunities for pupils to develop literacy skills further through reading out their own ideas or through the teacher's extension of pupils' subject vocabulary.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Art and design

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Project work is very well planned and includes teaching by visiting artists;
- the pupils' knowledge of other artists is not as well developed as their other artistic skills;
- spirituality is very well promoted through art and design.

Commentary

78. Standards are above the level typically expected for pupils' ages at Year 4 and the pupils achieve well. In Year 2 standards are at the expected level and the pupils' achievement is good. This is because the quality of teaching and learning is good and the subject is well led and managed.
79. A whole-school project on art and design from different countries was very successfully planned to be meaningful and of great interest to the pupils. It incorporated a wealth of opportunities for the pupils to work alongside visiting artists and develop skills in such aspects as woodcarving, willow weaving and painting stained glass windows. The finished artefacts are of very good quality and pupils achieved high standards in this work. Pupils rapidly learnt

new skills and had a host of opportunities to work collaboratively. They responded very well. Their attitudes to the subject overall are very good; they enjoy drawing in particular and are very proud of the outcomes. A relative shortcoming in the teaching is that the tasks are not always sufficiently well matched to the needs of the lower attainers.

80. The pupils' knowledge of other artists is not as well developed as their other artistic skills. Teachers make good use of the work of other artists to teach particular skills. For example, pupils in Year 3 and Year 4 used Carlo Crivelli's *The Anniversary with St Emidius* to better understand about foreground and perspective. However, they found it difficult to recall the artist's name or describe the work. Pupils at Year 4 had difficulty recalling famous artists or their work but once reminded could explain about particular skills and techniques to make a particular affect.
81. Spirituality is very well promoted through the teaching and learning and this is overall a very good improvement since the last inspection. The pupils' creativity is nurtured well and they are helped to appreciate the beauty and mystery of the world about them. Hard work and a sense of well-being permeate the teaching and learning in art and design.

Design and technology

There was insufficient evidence to make a judgment about provision in **design and technology**.

82. Pupils' previous work indicates that standards are above the level typically expected for pupils' ages at Year 4 and the pupils very much enjoy the process of designing and making a range of items. They are skilled at reviewing their work and identifying strengths and areas for improvement. The planning for design and technology is closely linked to other subjects through a topic approach which means that the learning has much relevance for the pupils. For example, when designing a fairground and experimenting with winding mechanisms the pupils also learnt about moods and emotions through art and design, about forces in science and in history they compared times past with the present. The subject is temporarily without a leader and manager and so teams of staff in Year 1 and Year 2 and in Year 3 and Year 4 are making sure that the subject meets requirements and that it is part of the school's cross-curricular approach.

Music

Provision in music is **very good**.

- Music plays an important part in the life of the school;
- pupils have good attitudes, behave very well and enjoy their learning;
- pupils sometimes have difficulty using subject terminology.

Commentary

83. Standards are above the level typically expected for their ages by the time the pupils leave the school at Year 4. The pupils achieve very well. Satisfactory improvement has maintained standards since the last inspection. Although standards are similar to those reported in the last inspection, the introduction of a new commercial scheme is proving effective in supporting more very good quality non-specialist teaching in the school.
84. The pupils' very good achievement indicates that over time the quality of teaching is very good. A significant feature of the teaching is the weekly teaching of music to mixed age groups. In this the pupils benefit from very well-planned lessons and very good quality teaching. As a result they enjoy challenging lessons led by enthusiastic teachers and make substantial gains in their learning.

85. In a very effective Year 1 and Year 2 lesson, characterised by high expectations of behaviour and a very good pace, the pupils tried very hard to depict stormy weather by the expressive use of voice and instruments. Similarly, in a combined Year 3 and Year 4 lesson, a lively and well-structured introduction challenged pupils to build on prior learning so extending the pupils' use of precise musical terms to structure a written composition creating mood and emotion. Very good support from the teacher and teaching assistant helped lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs to join in confidently. Surprisingly, during the selection of instruments, pupils found difficulty in naming some of them correctly and had to be prompted by the teacher. The assessment of each group's progress during the lesson led pupils to think more clearly about the type of instruments to select in order to acquire the correct pitch of sound. Very good opportunities at the end of the lesson to perform together and to evaluate each other's performance led pupils to increase their ability to sensitively and respectfully suggest improvements to each other's work. Pupils achieved very well as a result.
86. Younger and older pupils talk enthusiastically about the subject and enjoy learning new songs from around the world, although they need prompts to use subject terminology. In addition to work in lessons, pupils have good opportunities to sing in assemblies, in performances for parents and in extra-curricular music clubs. Provision is enhanced by the school's involvement in arts programmes that include dance and music from other cultures. These also add much to the school's provision to nurture the pupils' spiritual and moral development. The strategies take a whole-school approach, led well by the subject leader and very well by the headteacher.

Physical education

Provision in physical education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above the national expectations;
- the quality of teaching and learning is good and pupils' attitudes to the subject are very positive;
- pupils' achievement is enhanced through a wide range of extra-curricular activities;
- the subject is effectively led and managed;
- the school hall is small and the lack of space is limiting for the older pupils.

Commentary

87. Standards in physical education are in line with the national expectations for pupils at Year 2 and above the level typically expected for the pupils' ages at Year 4. A broad, lively curriculum is based on a published scheme and recently very effectively adapted to take account of the need for excellence and enjoyment. Pupils achieve well and this is a good improvement since the time of the last inspection.
88. The quality of teaching and learning is good and at times very good. This is also a good improvement since the last inspection. Some very good teaching was part of a series of activities, where pupils drawn from a group of classes were set highly imaginative tasks to develop their skills in co-operation. They worked together in groups to achieve the various assignments, contributing and listening carefully to the ideas of others. Pupils are very enthusiastic and all have very positive attitudes to learning. The lunchtime staff make a positive contribution through their involvement in a number of activities available in the playground to promote the pupils' fitness and physical development. These, together with extra-curricular opportunities, team sports and swimming, impact well on the pupils' achievement.

89. The subject is led and managed effectively, which ensures its continued development. The school hall is small and this means that pupils do not always have the space they need. The school does what it can to compensate for this; for example, most of the teaching of games takes place outside.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

The subject is not reported in depth. Judgements are based on discussion with staff and pupils and scrutiny of documentation.

90. The school promotes the pupils' personal, social and health education and citizenship very well and the parents agree very strongly that the pupils' personal development is nurtured very well. As a result the pupils flourish in confidence and in their approach to the school community. The school promotes value and respect for the individual and great thoughtfulness for others very well. At the same time it does not lose sight of the high expectations which are set out clearly and shared with all. As a result relationships are very good and the pupils have a very positive attitude to their work and play.
91. The school draws very well on visitors including local people to develop the pupils' understanding of citizenship and how communities thrive. The close links with parents further help the pupils to understand their responsibilities. Pupils are very responsible and sensible and know that the staff hold high expectations of their contribution to school life. Requirements are met to teach sex and relationships education and drugs awareness.
92. The school is trialling the provision of lessons in philosophy. This provides very good opportunities for developing speaking and listening through collaborative tasks. Importantly it develops the pupils' moral and ethical thinking over a well-chosen range of topics. The pupils are keen to share their thoughts and feelings because they know they will be taken seriously by the adults and other pupils.

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	2
Overall standards achieved	3
Pupils' achievement	3
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities (ethos)	2
Attendance	5
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The quality of education provided by the school	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	2
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	2
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	2
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3
The leadership and management of the school	3
The governance of the school	3
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).