

INSPECTION REPORT

WOLLASTON PRIMARY SCHOOL

Wollaston, Wellingborough

LEA area: Northamptonshire

Unique reference number: 121874

Headteacher: Mrs Daphne Whiteoak

Lead inspector: Mrs Margaret Hulme

Dates of inspection: 23rd - 26th May 2005

Inspection number: 268287

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Primary
School category: Community
Age range of pupils: 4 - 11
Gender of pupils: Mixed
Number on roll: 283

School address: College Street
Wollaston
Wellingborough
Northamptonshire
Postcode: NN29 7SF

Telephone number: (01933) 664 291
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Appropriate authority: The governing body
Name of chair of Mrs K Mingay
governors:

Date of previous 8th February 1999
inspection:

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This is a popular primary school, which serves a predominantly rural community but takes a significant proportion of children from outside the catchment area from the towns of Wellingborough and Rushden. There is a good social mix of families and the proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is much lower than other schools. Pupils are mainly white British with a few from minority ethnic groups. There are no pupils in public care. There are 283 pupils registered, including 48 Foundation Stage children in the Reception classes with a high percentage of girls. When children start school their knowledge, understanding and skills are generally as expected for their age. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is lower than other schools nationally but includes a high percentage with dyslexia and other difficulties include: moderate learning, social, emotional and behavioural, speech and physical. The school has also begun to identify pupils who are gifted and talented. The school has similar challenges as other primary schools and has no particular barriers to achievement apart from some recruitment problems, which have led to some classes having several changes of staff. Since the last inspection there have been several changes of staff and prolonged periods of acting headship. A new headteacher is in post and she has planned developments to bring about improvement. There have been some improvements to the premises and the most recent building work has included changes to the area for the Foundation Stage and the accommodation for children to have a packed lunch.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
3609	Mrs M Hulme	Lead inspector	Foundation Stage curriculum Information and communication technology Music
9327	Mr S Vincent	Lay inspector	
29995	Mrs M Walker	Team inspector	English Science Art and design Design and technology Special educational needs
21858	Revd D J Pryor	Team inspector	Mathematics Religious education Geography History Physical education

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

The effectiveness of the school is **satisfactory** and improving despite the difficulties it has experienced. The good leadership of the headteacher provides effective direction for the school's work but provision for English and mathematics needs more work to make standards as good as science. Teaching is good and most children achieve well. Pupils are happy and feel valued, they form very good relationships and their personal development is well provided for. The school offers satisfactory value for money.

The main strengths and weaknesses

- Provision for English and mathematics is not yet as good as that for science but standards in information and communication technology (ICT) have improved.
- Teaching is good and significant contributions from teaching assistants impact well on learning.
- The purposeful leadership of the headteacher provides rigorous monitoring and evaluation but the systems for checking teaching do not include subject leaders in monitoring it first hand.
- Pupils are happy at school, have very good attitudes to learning and behave very well.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good.
- Higher achievers are not challenged enough and there are inconsistencies in handwriting, presentation and marking in English.
- Governors are supportive but lack a more robust approach to questioning and challenging as part of the school's evaluation of its development.
- Support for new teachers is inconsistently applied.

How the effectiveness of the school has changed since the previous inspection

The school has made **satisfactory** improvement since the last inspection in 1999 under the difficult circumstances of a changing leadership situation and several periods of acting headship and changes of staff. All issues have been tackled well but one aspect of management, that of involving subject leaders in monitoring their subjects, still needs more attention. Expectations are clearer and improved assessment systems have benefited the teaching. Behaviour has improved. Provision for ICT has been extended considerably and resulted in better standards. Staff are more accessible to parents and teamwork is much better. Provision for those with special educational needs has improved. The school recognises that it is not as far along the road of improvement as wished to be and is taking action to do better, now that the substantive headteacher is back in school.

Standards achieved

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

*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, pupils' achievement is **good** because of strong teaching. The table shows that standards in national tests are at least satisfactory by the time pupils leave school. Nevertheless the results show a big difference in pupils' performance in science compared with English and mathematics. Fewer pupils reached the higher level than other schools nationally but this was much better in science. The Year 2 results were below the level expected in reading and writing and much below those expected for mathematics. Results had dipped on the previous year, particularly in writing but changes in teacher affected some of the younger ones adversely. Inspection findings show that children in the Foundation Stage achieve well and will reach the goals they are expected to reach by the end of the Reception Year. Standards in English and mathematics are satisfactory overall but not as good as science. Handwriting and presentation in written work is unsatisfactory in English and the use of literacy skills is inconsistently applied in other subjects. The work for higher achievers is not always as challenging as it might be. The improved facilities for ICT have contributed to better standards. Standards in religious education meet the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus and are satisfactory for the age of the pupils. Pupils with special educational need progress well because provision is good. There is no distinction between standards or achievement of boys and girls or between that of pupils from minority ethnic groups with others.

Pupils' personal qualities are good and supported by their **good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development**. The school is an orderly and harmonious community. Pupils' attitudes to their work and behaviour are very good. The very good relationships motivate pupils to try hard. Attendance is good and there have been no exclusions since 2003.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is good. Overall, the teaching is **good**. The very effective relationships and interesting lessons result in good learning. There is a good curriculum that provides effectively for all groups of children but some resources such as the library are unsatisfactory. The very good care and welfare and effective support contribute to good achievement and children benefit from the good partnership with parents.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF THE SCHOOL

The leadership and management of the school is **satisfactory** overall with some good features. The good leadership of the headteacher is providing firm direction for the school's work.

Plans to involve subject leaders in monitoring teaching and learning to make them more effective are in place. The school is governed satisfactorily. Governors are a supportive group who comply with statutory requirements but lack the knowledge and rigour in their role to evaluate school development as well as they might.

Parents' and pupils' views of the school

Most parents have good views of the school and are satisfied with the quality of education it provides. A few parents had concerns, particularly about the information they received about their children's progress but inspectors could not substantiate their views. Pupils have very good views of the school because they have trusting relationships with staff, enjoy lessons and take part in decisions about the school through the school council.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The most important things the school needs to do now are:

- Improve provision for English and mathematics including standards, Year 2 results of teachers' assessments, challenge for higher achievers and inconsistencies in handwriting, presentation and marking.
- Improve leadership and management to include the management role of subject leaders, governors approach to questioning and challenging as part of the school's evaluation of its development and ensuring that support for all new teachers is consistently applied.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Pupils' achievement is mainly **good**. Overall, pupils reach satisfactory standards in English and mathematics but they are better in science.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- In national tests most Year 6 pupils capable of reaching the expected standards for their age do so but too few reach a higher level.
- Standards in English and mathematics are not as good as in science.
- The improved facilities for ICT have contributed to better standards.
- Pupils with special educational needs are well provided for and progress well.
- Handwriting and presentation in written work is unsatisfactory in English and the use of literacy skills is inconsistently applied in other subjects.

Commentary

1. When children start school their knowledge, understanding and skills are wide-ranging but overall most have the knowledge, understanding and skills expected for their age. As at the last inspection, children make good progress. This year they are working at expected levels and most children will reach the goals¹ they are expected to reach in the areas of learning, by the end of the Reception Year. A few will do better and start National Curriculum work. Those with special education needs in the Foundation Stage progress at the same rate as others because they have the individual support they need from experienced teaching assistants. Teachers plan well for them taking into consideration the targets in their individual education plans so that the activities provided meet their specific needs.
2. There is some variation in national test results from year to year, depending on the number with special educational needs. In addition, the challenge of a significant turnover of pupils makes it difficult to secure children's success in learning the basic skills before they tackle the national tests. This is a barrier to achievement. Records show that the percentage of pupils who did not join the school in their first year in Years 3 to 6 is higher than in other schools nationally; for example, in Year 5 there are 38 per cent compared with the 20 per cent nationally and in Year 6 only 72 per cent had been in school from Year 1 onwards.
3. In addition the school has experienced considerable changes in staff, particularly for the younger pupils. Although the situation is now stable the changes experienced by Year 2 children and now Year 3 have made it more difficult for them to have the consistent approach they need to make good progress and do well in tests.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	15.1 (15.9)	15.8 (15.7)
writing	13.9 (15.6)	14.6 (14.6)

¹ Goals refer to personal, social and emotional; communication, language and literacy; mathematical; knowledge and understanding of the world; and physical development areas of learning.

mathematics	14.5 (16.8)	16.2 (16.3)
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There were 49 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

4. Some parents expressed concerns that last year their children did not seem to be achieving well and their views reflect the results in national tests as seen in the previous table.
5. In 2004 in comparison with all other schools the National Curriculum test results showed that standards in reading, writing and mathematics for Year 2 were below the level expected in reading and writing and much below those expected for mathematics. These results were worse than those of schools in similar social contexts. Results had dipped on the previous year, particularly in writing and were also worse than at the previous inspection when standards had been better than expected for age. There were fewer children who reached the higher level than in other schools nationally. The school aims to have more Year 2 pupils reaching the higher level so assessment for learning has been introduced and all pupils have targets for improvement. When compared with all other schools the Year 6 pupils reached expected standards for their age in English and mathematics but did better in science, reaching higher standards in the national tests. This was the same when compared with similar schools based on prior attainment and shows satisfactory progress for English and mathematics and very good progress for science. Unlike the Year 2 children, the Year 6 pupils had experienced stability and a consistent approach to learning. Nevertheless the results showed a big difference in pupils' performance in science compared with English and mathematics. Fewer pupils reached the higher level than in other schools nationally but this was much better in science with 60 per cent reaching the higher level.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	27.0 (27.0)	26.9 (26.8)
mathematics	27.2 (27.9)	27.0 (26.8)
science	30.0 (28.3)	28.6 (28.6)

There were 30 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

6. The average point scores show English was maintained; there was a dip in mathematics and science improved on the previous year. The trend of improvement is below the national trend.
7. Inspection findings from lessons and samples of written work reflect the 2004 national tests and show standards in English and mathematics are satisfactory overall but in science they are better, particularly in Years 3 to 6. This is not as good as at the last inspection when standards were better than expected for age in all three subjects.
8. However, in English lessons, although standards are satisfactory overall the weaker element is writing because pupils are not given enough time to write. The analysis of written work in Years 3 to 6 shows standards of presentation are better in some classes than others. For example, in Year 4 handwriting is erratic with a mixture of pen, pencil, and sometimes joined, sometimes print and very untidy presentation. In Year 6 it is better but some pupils work is careless and rushed and joined writing lapses to print. Handwriting in Year 2 shows letters are formed correctly but lack uniformity of style with capital letters the same size as others. There was no evidence of joined writing until the last term. There were few examples of narrative or factual writing in the samples of written work in Years 1 and 2 but in Year 6 there is good evidence of writing for different purposes and in different styles. There is limited evidence to show that pupils in Years 3 to 5 have sufficient opportunities to develop independent writing and that it is in Year 6 where this is tackled well.

9. In mathematics, samples of written work show good evidence of progress in understanding and in the quantity of work, particularly for slower learners. Marking is very good, particularly in Year 2 and children follow it up to improve their work. Presentation is good and encouraged effectively, not as an end in itself, but as a support for learning. By Year 6 work is well presented and shows a good range of activities with work suitably matched to the pupils' stage of learning. There are helpful marking comments that influence target setting but there was little evidence of challenging work for higher attainers. The teacher agreed that this was an area needing further development.
10. In science, the Year 1 pupils use a lot of worksheets but there is more evidence of independent work by Year 2 and opportunities to extend learning. In both year groups children have lots of first hand practical experiences but higher attainers lack challenge. In the junior classes marking is generally satisfactory but better in Year 6 and one of the Year 3 classes. Presentation is variable but it is better in Year 6, particularly for higher attainers because other pupils take less care with handwriting. Factual information is taught accurately and scientific information used in context but a great strength is the way that practical activities dominate learning.
11. Standards in ICT are as expected for the pupils' age by Year 2 and in Year 6. This is an improvement to the last inspection because now resources are very good and this is having a positive affect on pupils' progress and achievement.
12. Standards in religious education meet the requirements of the Northamptonshire Agreed Syllabus and in Year 2 and Year 6 are satisfactory for the age of the pupils. This is similar to the time of the last inspection. In samples of work there was evidence that some pupils reached higher standards, particularly in Year 6.
13. Overall, achievement for pupils with special educational needs is good. These pupils progress at the same rate as others because they have the individual support they need from experienced teaching assistants. There is regular monitoring of their learning and teachers plan well for them taking into consideration the targets in their individual education plans and the activities provided meet their specific needs. Those pupils identified as gifted and talented progress at the same rate as others as do the children from minority ethnic groups.
14. Few lessons were observed in other subjects but where there was sufficient evidence standards were satisfactory and pupils' achievement was good. There were some indications that the standards in music and physical education are better than expected for age. There is no significant difference between the attainment and achievement of boys and girls.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are **very good**. Pupils' personal development is good, supported well by the good provision for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Their attendance is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- This is an inclusive school in which the successes of all pupils are celebrated.

- Relationships are very good and pupils respond with very good attitudes to their work and behave very well.
- The provision for pupils' understanding of cultures other than their own is less well managed than that for spiritual and moral development.
- Pupils come willingly to school and attendance is good.

Commentary

15. Pupils come happily to school, work hard and enjoy their studies. The suggestion from some pupils' questionnaires that some older pupils were becoming disenchanted with school was not borne out by the evidence from the inspection; rather the opposite; the older pupils spoke with considerable approval of what was offered to them. Throughout the school the pupils relate very well to one another and to staff. They are cooperative and sensitive to others' needs, which leads to the school being a harmonious community which welcomes newcomers and where pupils feel secure and happy. They are particularly welcoming to visitors and look out for their welfare. Older pupils appreciate this feature of school life. It is particularly noticeable in the sensitive way in which they relate to pupils with special educational needs whom they include very effectively in both work and play. Most pupils with special educational needs have good attitudes to their work as the tasks they are set are challenging to them but within their reach. Growing in confidence, they are interested in their work and try hard because of the well-organised help they are given in lessons.
16. Good quality work undertaken in the Foundation Stage for the children's personal, social and emotional development provides a sound basis for the subsequent development of the very positive attitudes, very good behaviour, self-respect and very positive relationships which are a feature of the school. Pupils grow up without fear of bullying and other forms of harassment. They know that if something unpleasant should occur there is someone to deal with it quickly and effectively because they have trusting relationships with staff. The creation of a school council has provided pupils with another means by which they can seek help and a way of letting staff know about things that concern them. The systems by which good behaviour is encouraged are very effective. The rewards for good work and good behaviour are eagerly sought by the pupils and provide a positive incentive to them to do well. They welcome the way in which good work and good deeds are recognised in assemblies. Their good behaviour and the close attention they pay to work in lessons supports their good achievement and enjoyment of activities.
17. The school emphasises the value of individuals, effectively developing the pupils' self-awareness and self-assurance, while the carefully planned and managed acts of worship provide them with opportunities for religious spiritual development. A sense of wonder is developed through various subjects such as science, art and music. They are encouraged to be sensitive to the feelings and beliefs of others. Pupils have a clear understanding of what is right and wrong as a result of direct teaching. Moral issues are discussed in class in subjects such as literacy and history in stories about people's lives as well as in geography when pupils discuss such matters as the best use of natural resources. Through the use of the school council they understand some aspects of citizenship and this is well supported by direct teaching in personal, social and health education sessions. The use of recorded music at the start and end of worship, and music, art and literacy lessons make pupils familiar with aspects of their heritage. Some festivals from other faiths and cultures found in contemporary Britain are celebrated at the appropriate time in assemblies. Some of the work in

religious education broadens their experience of cultures other than their own but the school recognises that not enough is done in this area of its work to provide an introduction to the cultural complexity of the world.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	4.1	School data	0.2
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.

18. Parents know their children achieve best if they do not miss school. Attendance and punctuality are both good and the systems for recording this are now sound and improved since the previous inspection. In the light of the good results there are no significant measures to make attendance even better. There have been no exclusions since 2003.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is **good**, reflecting strengths in the quality of teaching, which has a positive impact on pupils’ learning and achievement. The good range of learning opportunities is relevant to pupils’ needs and the high level of care and good guidance and support makes a positive contribution to their progress. The effective partnership with parents extends and reinforces learning.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching is **good** overall. Teachers’ assessments of children’s work are **satisfactory** overall and in the Foundation Stage they are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The good leadership from the headteacher provides purposeful direction for staff.
- The very good relationships motivate most pupils to make good efforts and work hard.
- The number of inexperienced teachers and staff turnover has made progress in some aspects of teaching, such as assessment, slower than planned but there is a good response to innovation.
- The teaching of pupils with special educational needs ensures all are included in curricular opportunities and assistants are well deployed to support and improve their work.
- There is not enough challenge for higher achievers in some lessons and work is too easy.
- There are not enough opportunities planned in literacy lessons for children to extend their writing skills, particularly in Years 3 and 4, which impacts on standards and achievement.

COMMENTARY

19. The quality of teaching is good overall, as it was at the last inspection. Although the quality of teaching has been maintained this is a significant achievement because there have been many changes of staff and leadership within a period of six years. The school’s considerable difficulties related to the budget resulted in a higher number of inexperienced and part-time teachers than is usual in schools of this size and since the last inspection there have been three periods of acting headship and two headteachers who have had long absences from school, although for very different

reasons. Teachers have worked hard to improve their teaching, which is reflected in the table below.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 38 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0 (0%)	6 (16%)	21 (55%)	11 (29%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

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

20. Teachers have lacked purposeful direction in the past. However, the headteacher, who has had less than two terms working in school, has put in place a programme of lesson observations that has provided feedback to staff emphasising strengths but indicating too where further development is needed. Constructive feedback and dialogue following lesson observations is improving teaching. It was evident that most teachers had responded well. Consistently good teaching in the Foundation Stage is providing a good start for the children and they are well prepared for the next stage of education. Good teaching of basic skills at the Foundation Stage is now built on successfully in Years 1 and 2. In Years 1 and 2 teaching ranged from satisfactory to good and although two staff are inexperienced they knew their children well and had received satisfactory support and guidance from mentors that enabled them to teach well. The unsatisfactory teaching of ICT reported in the last inspection has now been remedied and is good. In Years 3 to 6 there have been changes of staff with some year groups having several changes of teacher, which has concerned some parents who considered their children were not always achieving as well as they could. The acting headteacher had to leave her class and run the school during periods when past and present headteachers were absent and some children disliked change. Under the substantive headteacher's leadership the lesson planning has improved. Consistency in planning is leading to coherent lessons and better outcomes. All staff now understand the need to be clear about what children are to learn. These objectives are shared with pupils so they understand what they are to learn and what teachers expect by the end of the lesson.
21. The headteacher's direction is helping staff have a consistent approach to the way that lessons are taught and the way that children are treated. Teachers are very concerned about all children being treated fairly and, in their responses to inspection questionnaires, 87 per cent of parents thought that this was the case. Children too, in discussions with inspectors agreed with this view.
22. Teachers have very good relationships with the pupils. There is an atmosphere of mutual respect. This has provided a firm foundation for children's learning and gives them the motivation to try hard. Most children pay attention, are eager to answer questions and try hard. Some lessons were very good because teachers have a good knowledge of the subjects or areas of learning they teach and are good at explaining new ideas in ways that make sense to children and answer questions accurately. Children's learning is extended because they are offered first hand experience in practical tasks, a wider range of knowledge or see links with other subjects.
23. The system of assessment that ensures an appropriate response to the needs of individuals is thorough and has been improved since the last inspection. The headteacher is providing appropriate support and guidance because the many changes of staff have led to some inconsistencies of approach and this has needed to be remedied. The school evaluates assessment as satisfactory and inspectors agree. Its strongest aspects are the focus on

assessment for learning, which involves pupils in understanding learning objectives and what makes them successful, more effective marking involving consistent use of the '2 Stars and a wish system', and the introduction of target setting in English and mathematics so pupils assess their own learning. In the Foundation Stage assessment is good. Staff regularly collect and record information on experiences and achievement. Records cover the six areas of learning and indicate the next steps. In Years 1 to 6, assessment is used well to track achievement of all pupils in core subjects and is sufficient in other subjects to indicate broadly what they have achieved. Legal requirements are met. Work is marked regularly and pupils have a good understanding of how well they have done. Pupil self- evaluation is developing so there are planned opportunities for pupils to assess their own work and that of others against success criteria. Children told inspectors that they were taught new things in lessons and most knew how to get help if they were stuck.

24. Teachers ensure that all pupils with special educational needs are included in all curricular opportunities and teaching assistants are effective in supporting them to improve their work and achieve success. However, planning challenging activities for those identified as gifted and talented is at an early stage of development.
25. There are two weaknesses that reflect results in last year's national tests. There is insufficient challenge for higher achievers in some lessons and pupils found the work was too easy. In English lessons, pupils did not have enough time to use their writing skills, particularly in Years 3 and 4. The current Year 3 are the year group whose results in writing dipped considerably in the 2004 national tests and they need more, rather than less time, to practise this skill. However, the teachers of Years 5 and 6 are clearly working hard to improve pupils' performance in writing before they leave school.

The curriculum

The breadth of curricular opportunities is **good**. The opportunities for enrichment are **good**. The accommodation and resources are **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- All pupils are equally valued within the caring community of the school.
- Pupils' personal development is effectively encouraged and reflects their very good attitudes to their work and to school life.
- An evolving curriculum offers pupils' many and varied opportunities that are both relevant to their learning and also widen and enrich their experiences.
- Pupils with special educational needs and those in the Foundation Stage achieve well because of the carefully considered provision made for them.
- Although the school accommodation is improving, the library is inadequate and is little used.

Commentary

26. The school provides a good quality inclusive primary curriculum, one that meets all the statutory requirements and is improving. Parents rightly feel that all pupils are treated

fairly and that the school's promotion of equality between different groups is good. All subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education are planned appropriately particularly where classes contain more than one age group so that there is continuity in learning. The curriculum takes full account of national strategies and the key principles of the Primary Strategy are reflected in teachers' planning. Links made between subjects are successful because skills acquired are given added significance as their importance is seen to engage learning in other subjects. In geography, for example, Year 6 pupils learn about rivers and by exploring the newspaper reports of local flooding in their literacy lessons, not only do they understand more about journalism and media interviews but also the river's effect on people's lives. A greater awareness of the different ways children learn, and how learning in lessons is successfully achieved, are strongly influencing the good quality of teaching.

27. Good provision is made for pupils' personal, social and health education (PSHE). This is not only through the planned teaching programme but also through the ethos of care for individuals that permeates the life of the school and contributes to the very good behaviour in lessons and around the school and the positive response to learning. A healthy lifestyle is strongly promoted not only through science lessons and the fruit initiative for younger children but also by the active contributions of several professional services. Older pupils for example take part in the "*Kicking Smoking into Touch*" campaign involving professional sportsmen.
28. Enhancing pupils' experiences is central to the curricular provision. There are good opportunities for pupils to take part in sporting activities, pursue the arts through music or attend a wide range of clubs. Visitors share their expertise in sports or dance, or their lifetime experiences with pupils. Working with personnel from the St John's Ambulance Brigade in Years 4 to 6 all pupils learn important lifelong skills. Theatre groups inspire science or workshops bring history to life. Educational visits for all age groups add great interest to learning in many subjects. Orienteering and outdoor activities are enjoyed on the residential visit.
29. The curriculum provides well for those pupils with special educational needs. Improvements have been made in identifying needs and setting appropriate learning goals. The clear and precise targets of the individual education plans are reviewed each term and are at the heart of regular additional help. Good achievement in many lessons results from suitably challenging, yet achievable planned tasks, and the good quality focused support given by both teachers and skilled teaching assistants. As a result of the good provision for educational inclusion no pupils are disapplied from any part of the National Curriculum.
30. Provision for the Foundation Stage curriculum is good. It includes all areas of learning and is based on the recommended early learning goals, which prepares children well for the National Curriculum. The covered outside play area is almost complete and will enable children to have better provision for physical development. Pupils with learning difficulties are identified and receive good quality support. There is a relaxed atmosphere where children feel secure and happy so make good efforts to complete tasks.
31. The accommodation provided by the two Victorian buildings is satisfactory and recent changes in several areas have improved the facilities with further improvements imminent. Despite the many physical limitations of the building, staff work hard to maintain a high level of cleanliness and teachers create surroundings that are

welcoming, informative and celebrate pupils' work through attractive displays. Resources are sufficient for teaching most subjects with the exception of science. Those for ICT are very good and make a significant impact on the progress pupils make in the subject. However, the library is unsatisfactory and fails to provide a place for personal study or where library skills can be taught.

CARE, GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT

There is **very good** provision to ensure pupils' care, welfare, health and safety. The advice, support and guidance that pupils receive are **good**. The school is **good** at seeking, valuing and acting on the pupils' views.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very effective arrangements for health, safety and welfare, ensure children work and play in a safe environment.
- The school checks pupils' progress and personal development well and gives them good support when they need it.
- The school seeks pupils' views about how they are learning and enjoying school and does its best to respond to them.

Commentary

32. The care, welfare and wellbeing of pupils have improved since the last inspection. Child protection procedures are now well organised and led by the headteacher. Staff understand the importance of reporting their concerns and confidential procedures are followed and records maintained. Further training of all staff is planned, for the beginning of next term, to ensure that awareness and understanding is maintained. Procedures for health, safety and welfare are very well planned and directed by the school's business manager. There are regular site inspections and results are reported to the governing body. Risk assessments are well organised and cover activities in school as well as outside educational visits. Electrical equipment, playground and physical education equipment are all properly checked and the planning of all lessons must include a check on safety issues. The very good management of health and safety ensures that both pupils and staff work in a safe and secure environment.
33. The school gives pupils good support to help them develop, learn and do their best. There are sensitive arrangements to help pupils settle in when they start school. Teachers keep track of how well individuals are doing, particularly as they progress through their first year. Where necessary, pupils receive additional adult support in lessons or have extra lessons and 'booster classes' at critical points through to Year 6. Pupils' attendance is monitored and those having difficulties are supported by Education Welfare Officers. The school sets up links with home to jointly improve situations when pupils have behavioural difficulties. Children with particular medical conditions or disabilities are all supported well by outside services, such as the school nurse, educational psychologists or speech and language therapists. The well-considered level of care that pupils with specific educational needs receive from all those who work so effectively to support them individually or during lessons makes a significant contribution to their good achievement. Adults know pupils' needs very well. When a statement of special educational need is awarded, the school ensures that the provision is fully implemented and at the annual review, the children's views are sought so they can be taken into account during the meeting. Targets in more "child friendly" wording are improving every pupil's understanding of their own goals and progress. The school values the advice and expertise of the many professional agencies with whom it works.

34. The school has many ways to find out what pupils think and to understand whether they are enjoying school. Increasingly, at the end of a lesson, pupils and teachers will discuss how successfully they have achieved their learning objectives. Pupils have individual targets in literacy and numeracy and share these with their parents. In 'circle time' sessions, when pupils sit in a circle for discussions, all have an opportunity to express their views and feelings without interruption and to express their personal point of view. The school council has already become an important feature of school life. Councillors are elected by their classmates to represent them and even the youngest children take this responsibility seriously. They choose the issues they want to debate and are free to put forward their ideas for consideration. The chair of the school council has the right to talk directly to the headteacher at regular intervals, so that they can work together to ensure pupils' ideas are properly discussed and acted on whenever possible.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The links with parents are **good**. The partnership with the community and other schools is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The good range of information and communication ensures parents have a good understanding of school life and their children's progress.
- Parents have positive views about what the school does for their children.
- Parents support their children's education in school and at home.
- Links with the local community and other schools is underdeveloped.

Commentary

35. The school provides parents with a good range of information about the school and about their child's progress. This begins when children start school and their parents are given the prospectus, talk to teachers about school routines and have a visit at home. Thereafter, all parents have a formal consultation each term with their child's class teacher to discuss progress and forthcoming targets. At the end of the year, all parents receive a good quality, informative report explaining progress in all subjects of the curriculum, as well as social development. It shows clearly how progress has been made and what needs to be done to continue this. Apart from planned meetings, the school encourages parents to contact the school if they have concerns. Younger children have a reading diary, which they take home each day; as they become older they have a homework diary; and there are regular newsletters about a host of school matters. To help parents understand the key subjects of literacy and numeracy, the school has run a number of workshops explaining such matters as, guided reading, methods of calculation, and how literacy and numeracy are taught. Since the last inspection a new procedure to deal with parents' concerns and complaints has been introduced. Parents are kept well informed and involved and inspectors found no evidence to support the concerns of a few parents about a lack of information.
36. The partnership with parents and carers of pupils with special educational needs is good as all are kept fully informed of their children's individual education plans and concerns are shared. All parents are regularly invited to a termly meeting to specifically review each child's progress and to discuss future goals and how they can best give support at home. Although very many accept and appreciate the opportunity for discussion, not all take full advantage of the school efforts to work more closely with them. Increasing their involvement is a priority for the special educational needs co-ordinator.

37. The responses to inspection questionnaires show positive views of the school. Most parents indicated that they were happy with most aspects of what the school does. They were most happy with the induction procedures, that their children were expected to work hard and become mature, and with the quality of their education. They confirmed that children enjoyed school. A few parents had some concerns about behaviour in the playground, homework and the leadership and management of the school. The inspection confirms the many positive views expressed by parents, but cannot substantiate any of the concerns.
38. Parents are interested in their children's education and most are keen to support them at home. They support the use of homework and encourage their children, particularly as they move into Years 5 and 6 and begin to prepare them for moving to secondary school. There is a good response when the school offers parents a chance to understand more about the curriculum and the reading session between parents and their children, 'Walk in Wednesday' is immensely popular and attracts over 60 parents each week. Parents help with educational visits and a small group organise 'FOWPS', the friends of school, to plan social and fund-raising events. These are very popular and well supported and the substantial funds raised are spent directly for the benefit of pupils.
39. Overall, the school's links with the local community and other schools are satisfactory. Although there are good links with local playgroups and the churches, those with other primary schools are just starting to establish projects of common interest. Links with the local secondary school are good to ensure pupils make the transition easily, and secondary teachers have been involved in physical education and dance lessons to improve primary teacher's skills and pupils' enjoyment. The school has already identified plans to extend its work in the wider community and with other schools.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are **satisfactory** overall, with some good features. The school is governed satisfactorily.

MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- The good leadership of the headteacher is providing firm direction for the school's work and now setting a clear agenda for improvement.
- The periods of acting headship enabled the school to continue and function satisfactorily.
- The rigorous monitoring and evaluation is a key feature of leadership.
- The management roles of subject leaders are less effective than they need to be.
- Governors are supportive but lack a sufficiently robust approach to monitoring and evaluating the school's proposed development.
- Support for new teachers is inconsistently applied.

Commentary

40. The school has gone through a difficult period of leadership since the last inspection. Both the present and previous headteachers have been absent for extended periods, although for very different reasons, and this has necessitated several periods of acting headship, sometimes without an acting deputy. During much of this period there were serious concerns about the budget because the last headteacher left the school with a deficit, which brought with it staff reductions and the acting headteacher faced

redundancy procedures which were unpopular and caused ill feeling. When the substantive headteacher had to take compassionate leave, the acting headteacher had to deal with difficulties such as capability proceedings but had little staff co-operation. Considerable changes to staff resulted in temporary appointments and inexperienced teachers. In some classes pupils found it difficult to relate to the different styles and ways of working, due to inconsistencies of approach. The acting headteacher worked hard to keep the school functioning satisfactorily, supported by the leadership team. Given these circumstances, it is inevitable that there has been a period of some uncertainty.

41. However, the headteacher has now returned to post. She has a clear vision and strong sense of purpose, a systematic approach to school development and insistence on high standards. She has set out a clear view of how the leadership team needs to be re-established and how the school needs to move forward into the future. This has been set out in a short-term school improvement plan for the remainder of the present school year, after which a new cycle of planning will begin. It is being promoted with drive and determination and the headteacher is strongly committed to an agenda for school improvement.
42. Despite the difficulties there has been good monitoring of key aspects of the school's work and the information has been put to good use. The monitoring and evaluation has become more rigorous. It identifies school and individual strengths as well as areas for development. The commitment to developing staff skills to improve teaching and learning has resulted in a programme of professional support and development, including courses, team teaching, paired observations and visits to observe good practice in schools. Teachers were not used to observations of their teaching until the current headteacher took up her post, but now all staff have been observed and considerable efforts have been made to improve teaching and remedying the weaknesses found through monitoring. Results have been positive and during the inspection teaching was good overall with no unsatisfactory lessons. Pupils' work is now monitored to gain a wider view of standards across the school resulting in action outlined in the school improvement plan. The leadership team have established good procedures to analyse pupils' results in national tests and effective tracking systems keeps progress under review. Comparisons with other schools give a local and national perspective, which has resulted in strategies for improvement.
43. The governing body too, has gone through a difficult time since the last inspection. Unavoidably, their focus has been very much on creating a workable budget. In the last few months the governing body has had a new chair of governors and several new members. The headteacher knows what is required to move the school forward and since her return is making strong efforts to enable the governing body to understand the school strengths and weaknesses because many are new to the role. Since other governors are due to retire soon it is recognised that when they are replaced the governing body will be relatively inexperienced. Given the absence of the headteacher and her quite recent return, the close working relationship between the headteacher and chair of governors, necessary for success, is still developing but both have the same aspirations for the pupils. The governing body is a supportive group but they have a more limited understanding of their role in challenging the leadership team, because as yet they lack knowledge to challenge or question professional matters but they are eager to learn. Recognising this, a plan has been included within the general school improvement plan to recruit and train governors, allocate them to work on committees and give them subject liaison responsibilities. All

of this will be incorporated into a Code of Conduct, to ensure all governors share the same understanding of their role. The governors are looking forward to a period of stability, where they can work together with a restructured leadership team, with a shared commitment to school improvement.

44. Few subject leaders have received training in the management aspects of their roles and consequently a few do it well, but others need more help. Few subject leaders have observed teaching and learning in other classes and cannot identify where performance management can be linked to subject improvement. For example, the management of English, mathematics and ICT is good but religious education is not good. Some subjects such as geography, history and art have no identified leader because there are a number of newly qualified teachers who are not allowed to lead a subject in their first year. If the school is to raise standards and maintain its good teaching the subjects must be managed well and it is identified as a priority to improve the management of performance.
45. During the headteacher's absence there have clearly been some problems relating to supporting new teachers. Apart from the three newly qualified staff there are temporary staff new to the school and there will be further new staff due to retirement and promotion as the school moves into a new year. Therefore it is important that the school procedures for inducting new staff are in place and applied consistently. The induction year has not been a successful experience for all and one of them has had a particularly difficult time. Two staff received specific help to ensure they consolidated their skills and became confident teachers but the other teacher was overburdened with demands that made her job more difficult and this was unsatisfactory. The problems have now been remedied with a very good mentor in the deputy headteacher who is using her skills and expertise effectively to provide the support needed.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	612,448	Balance from previous year	41,820
Total expenditure	627,204	Balance carried forward to the next year	27,064
Expenditure per pupil	2,224		

46. There is a good administration team to support the headteacher, including a bursar who is using her expertise well in financial matters and monitors the budget rigorously. The school's approaches to financial management are helping it achieve its educational priorities. Funds are used sensibly but sometimes governors have to make difficult decisions. The headteacher and governors made it clear that correcting the budget deficit would lead to difficult decision making, such as reductions in staff hours. Additional funding has now stabilised the budget but managers know it will need careful monitoring for sometime to come and costs are already low. The balance carried forward is just four per cent. Governors now have a better understanding about getting the best value for the pupils, so they can achieve as well as possible. A good example is the improved facilities for ICT, which have improved standards since the last inspection.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Provision for the Foundation Stage is **good** overall. The Foundation Stage children were attending fulltime in the reception classes during the inspection. Building work to improve the provision outdoors was almost complete but children from one class, who had been working in the library during this disruption, had only just moved back to their normal classroom. However, despite those difficulties, the good and sometimes very good teaching enables the children to make good progress, they achieve well and reach standards in personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy, mathematical and physical development areas of learning that are expected for their age. In the knowledge and understanding of the world area they achieve very well and many, but not all, reach better standards than expected for their age. Most children will reach the goals they are expected to reach by the end of the Reception Year in all areas of learning and some will do better and begin the early stages of National Curriculum. All children achieve well and there is no significant difference in achievement between boys and girls. Children are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- Children achieve well because the teaching is good.
- The very good and trusting relationships make children feel secure and happy.
- Children with special educational needs receive the support they need from both adults and other children which adds significantly to their personal development.

Commentary

47. When children start school they are welcomed and helped to settle. Teachers make home visits and get to know them well. Most children are familiar with routines and understand what is acceptable behaviour. The children settle quickly to tasks, most behave sensibly and have good attitudes to their work because they enjoy the range of practical activities provided. Because the teachers encourage co-operation and perseverance, most children have a calm approach to their work. Those with special educational needs are well supported by teaching assistants who ensure they join in all activities and achieve success. All adults give lots of encouragement because they want children to feel confident to try new things; in this they are successful. The children with special educational needs show determination to overcome difficulties because the adults have established very good relationships with them. Other children respond well and show some understanding of the difficulties experienced. This was particularly evident in a dance session when one child, who had problems moving with confidence, was able to take a full part because of the good efforts and support she received from adults and other children. The adults are trusted and the children are eager to please. Many tasks are planned to promote co-operation, which encourages them to help one another, work in pairs and play together. Children are taught to take responsibility, tidy up and change their clothes for physical activities. They do this well.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The well-planned programme of work extends children's language.
- The effective teaching of basic skills helps children with reading and spelling.
- Teaching assistants support children's learning effectively.

Commentary

48. The children look forward to every lesson and find the work interesting because the teachers are skilled and have a good understanding of what children need to learn and how to teach it. There is a good balance between the teaching of basic skills and purposeful play to reinforce those skills. Children listen to one another and are tolerant of one another's differences because teachers emphasise mutual respect. Children are encouraged to express themselves and the teachers listen to what they say, giving feedback in a positive manner. The presentation of written work is good showing due attention is given to handwriting skills. By the end of the first term children made good progress in writing their name and were trying to write familiar words but letter formation was not always accurate. Slower learners took longer to recognise their name and needed help to find letters and put them in order to spell their name. They were still at the stage of making marks and lacked the skill of forming letters. Children began to learn letter sounds during their first term in school and this helped them to read and write words. By the second term, most learners heard initial sounds in many words but their unaided writing shows they were still trying to form letters and needed support. Within a month, this skill improved and they wrote a simple sentence about a picture. However, faster learners put spaces between words and were beginning to write a sentence unaided. Slower learners were still trying to write their name but were gaining in dexterity and trying hard to form letters accurately. Now the average writers are using familiar words from their reading books, identifying letter sounds and finding words for each letter as they read. Faster writers are writing sentences unaided, sometimes using full stops and learning to use a capital letter at the start of a sentence.
49. The relaxed atmosphere and adults who talk positively to children result in children knowing it is safe to make mistakes. Adults assisting the teacher are well directed and use their expertise effectively to reinforce and support children's learning. They are skilled at helping children develop ideas, persevere with tasks and extend talk and thinking.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children experience a wide range of practical activities to support their learning.
- Teachers are good at planning work that builds on what children have learned.

Commentary

50. Lessons are lively and well organised because teachers plan activities that children find enjoyable and explain carefully what they have to do. Short, brisk oral sessions include lots of counting activities and they soon become familiar with the order and can say which number is missing when they look at a line of numbers with an obvious blank space. Most children count accurately to ten and form numbers correctly when writing them down. Because teachers use many opportunities to reinforce counting skills in everyday situations, children's mathematical understanding is extended. Fun activities such as squirting water at numbers on squares of plastic and drawing number shapes in the foam created by soapflakes assist number recognition. Children love opportunities to imitate teachers and did so when using a computer program to match numbers. Teachers encourage children to use correct mathematical vocabulary and often they learn how to do this by familiarity with a story such as *'The Three Bears'*. They use terms such as *'big'*, *'little'* and *'middle sized'* and have learned that *'medium'* can replace *'middle'* when describing size. When learning about two-dimensional shapes the use of everyday language to describe them helps children to learn their attributes. They create and copy simple patterns and put pictures in the right sequence. They learn how to measure long and short objects and are beginning to learn about personal time as they talk about what they do at the beginning of the day and what happens during the school day. Displays of work show that when painting ladybirds as part of a mini beast topic the children explored early addition by adding the ladybird's spots and then making a simple recording. Teachers' comments help children to improve skills. Written comments are used too but these are read to children and mainly used in discussion with parents about their children's progress. Good use is made of time and there are no dead moments during lessons because they are well organised. The teachers build securely on what children have learned in previous lessons.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Provision for knowledge and understanding of the world is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A very wide range of imaginative activities are planned to extend learning.
- The effective teamwork is enabling children to make particularly good gains in knowledge and skills needed for science and ICT.
- The very good teaching ensures that children understand what and how well they have learnt.

Commentary

51. Most children are achieving very well. Although they will reach the expected goals by the end of the reception year there are many starting to go beyond this in scientific and technological experiences. A very wide range of activities is planned to extend children's knowledge, understanding and skills of the world around them. The challenging, gripping and related activities are focused on providing children with experiences linked to all areas of learning. For example, a group experimenting with snail slime explored texture and colour and discussions about spiders, snails and worms was effective in extending speaking and listening skills. One child said, "For such a little snail my pet has far too much grass for his jar". Children spoke knowledgeably about mini-beasts using a wide range of vocabulary. They use magnifiers with confidence when examining a wormery and use observation skills well when making judgements about whether worms like wet or dry soil. Children enjoy

working co-operatively in a group to make a model and a small group designed a model on paper to show to an adult. The very good co-operation and infectious enthusiasm of adults are significant factors in children being eager to take part in the activities. Every day there are opportunities to find out about and identify the uses of everyday technology using computers to support their learning in class. By working in pairs children worked through a colour-matching program, which they controlled using a mouse and keyboard skills. A group using the interactive whiteboard were trusted to use the equipment carefully and they did so as they imitated the teacher. At the end of lessons children are asked what they have learned that day and are well able to explain, for example a child from a minority ethnic group wanted to draw a woodlouse and told others how she had searched through books to find a picture.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **satisfactory** overall reflecting the good teaching, but improvements to the outdoor area are unfinished.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good and activities are well planned for children to extend their physical skills.
- Although the outdoor area has been improved it still lacks appropriate physical challenges.

Commentary

52. Children are achieving well because the good teaching makes the best use of resources in extending the skills children need for physical development. However, although recent building work will improve provision, it still lacks some equipment outdoors for physical challenge. There is effective use of some resources used outdoors. A vigorous activity using wheeled toys resulted in exploration of space and control of a vehicle. The hall is used well by both classes in raising an awareness of space and developing control and co-ordination in movement. The hall equipment is not appropriate for this age and children would be better served by equipment for climbing and balancing outdoors to help them refine their existing skills. Indoors the situation is better. Manipulative skills are improving and children extend their control of pencils, scissors and paintbrushes and learn to manipulate materials and objects. When making ladybird iced biscuits children used a good level of skill to control the icing and arrange chocolate dots on them. A group painting snail shapes were very dexterous in handling brushes.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

53. Few activities were seen in this area of learning to make an overall judgement about provision, standards or teaching and learning. Teachers plan a range of interesting activities to extend learning, for example, children explore colour, shape and texture and their efforts are displayed. Children experiment with musical instruments as they explore sounds. All love singing, memorise songs and actions and are learning to use percussion. Children are often inspired by stories, and opportunities for role-play in the imaginative area are used well because children find it attractive and choose to play there. Teachers used the theme of mini-beasts very effectively to provide creative activities and in the session seen teaching was very good. Teachers and assistants work well as a team and because adults are involved in the activities more talking and listening takes place and language skills are extended. Children loved the

imaginative mini-beast den and used their knowledge well in using role-play to behave like a caterpillar or snail. They painted snail shapes in bold colours, using paint with good control or used foam to draw as they experimented with texture. These activities often necessitate co-operation, which extends social skills and contributes well to children's personal development.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision for English is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching ensures that most pupils, including those with special educational needs, make secure progress in lessons and achieve well.
- There are too few opportunities for pupils to produce longer pieces of writing.
- Although teachers' marking is good and pupils know their own targets, standards in handwriting and presentation are not good enough.
- Many resources for reading are good but the library is unsatisfactory.
- Strong subject leadership influences the quality of teaching and learning.

COMMENTARY

54. In the 2004 tests for Year 6 most pupils achieve standards that are typical for their age, although fewer reach the higher level than in other schools. In reading they are more successful than in writing reflecting the findings of the inspection. Standards in Year 2 in both reading and writing fell below those expected for their age for the first time with fewer pupils also reaching the higher levels than in other schools. A contributory factor to this fall is considered to be the many staff changes experienced by the pupils throughout that year. At both ages this is a decline in standards from the last inspection when they were above average. Inspection findings show that standards in lessons and in recent work are satisfactory. The elements of vocabulary, understanding of grammar and punctuation are thoroughly taught, and reading develops well through the understanding of different texts. In most lessons, pupils write about their work confidently when it reflects the focus of their learning, such as in Year 1 where tongue twisters fire the imagination and pupils are full of ideas when recording their own sentences. However, there is not enough time for pupils to use all their skills to complete longer pieces of writing. Nevertheless in Year 6, the focus on writing in different styles and for a range of purposes is central to the year's work and the opportunities for sustained writing are much increased. In discussions with the headteacher, the pupils in Years 2 and 6 echoed this by wishing for "more story writing".
55. Teaching is good throughout the school reflecting the good progress. Only in Year 3 is teaching satisfactory and because these lessons are not as well organised, do not maintain the same pace of learning or lack sufficient interest for pupils, progress is sound. Although groups of pupils do enjoy the computer activities related to their work, it does mean that for some the chance to write is missing in the lesson. Most lessons however are very carefully planned, taking into account the different ways pupils learn, and include all aspects of literacy such as the many opportunities for pupils to talk with partners to exchange ideas and make decisions before sharing them with the class. Thus speaking and listening are good. In Year 6, when media interviews were the prime consideration, pupils read and discussed newspaper reports fluently before scanning for key facts about how the information was acquired before writing their dialogues. As the teaching was thorough and pupils well prepared for this style of writing, they achieved well. In Year 2 pupils enjoy writing riddles for others to solve; and skilful teaching helps them to make decisions about their choice of words as an author or poet may do.

56. Most pupils work hard and want to learn because of well-established classroom routines and close working relationships. Teachers and learning assistants work very effectively together to include everyone in lessons and the suitably challenging tasks and well-considered support enable all groups to succeed. Pupils with learning difficulties are particularly well supported in lessons by the teaching assistants' quiet and sensitive prompting, and through searching questioning in discussions, so they too achieve well. Pupils know what they will learn and understand the steps they must take to achieve success because teachers share these as the lesson begins and give time at the end of the lesson for pupils to judge how well they have done. Reflected in teachers' effective marking, the school practice of recording comments as "Two stars and a wish" helps pupils to really understand their achievements and what else could improve their work. Literacy targets are also beginning to help pupils assess their own progress. Neither routine however has an effect on the variable presentation of written work or the inconsistent, often careless styles of handwriting that spoil many pupils' work.
57. English is well managed and good leadership is helping to raise standards. Because of her regular observation of teaching and tracking of pupils' progress in reading, writing and spelling, the subject leader has a keen understanding of the needs of the subject and how to improve it further. She has instigated change to bring about improvements, for example in guided reading, and provides training for both staff and parents. The provision for all groups of children ensures that there is good involvement and progress for some of the more vulnerable children such as those with difficulties and for those from minority ethnic groups. The popular "Walk in Wednesday" when parents share their child's reading is not only enjoyable but also an important time to concentrate on individual reading skills. For information books to support topics in other subjects the school relies heavily on the loan service, as the library is unable to provide opportunities for personal research or for the development of library skills. The school recognises the serious shortcomings of the library and its improvement is a priority.

LANGUAGE AND LITERACY ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

58. Many pupils use reading and writing skills satisfactorily in other subjects. In science, for example, they report on their investigations, list comparisons and use labelling or record instructions. In many lessons, pupils listen attentively to others and share ideas, using their good speaking and listening skills effectively. Links are made with subjects such as geography, history or PSHE when teaching time for the subject is combined to extend an aspect of literacy. When developing ICT skills, literacy skills support this process, for example, when word-processing final writing, or sending electronic mail.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- Teaching is good and pupils achieve well.
- Not all the pupils capable of doing very well indeed are challenged enough.
- Flexible planning for the subject enables teachers to meet the needs of most children.
- There is some inconsistency of approach between teaching assistants and volunteers which pupils find confusing.
- The subject is energetically, capably and effectively led.

COMMENTARY

59. In the 2004 tests for Year 6 most pupils achieve standards that are typical for their age, although fewer reach the higher level than in other schools. Standards in Year 2 fell below those expected for their age for the first time with fewer pupils also reaching the higher levels than in other schools. A contributory factor to this big dip on the previous year is considered to be the many staff changes experienced by the pupils throughout that year. At both ages this is a decline in standards from the last inspection when they were better than expected for their age.
60. Inspection findings show that standards by pupils in all classes are as expected for their age. This is true of all aspects of the subject. Year 2 pupils showed a much better than expected ability to think mathematically when handling difficult practical problems. Year 6 pupils used their mathematical skills to present information they had gathered about their skills in physical education in a variety of ways, involving the use of ICT which they handled readily. Although there are variations between the results of boys and girls they are the result of individual differences. Pupils with special educational needs are provided with good quality support and achieve well, as do those from minority ethnic groups. However, those pupils with the potential to do very well indeed do not always have enough challenging work to enable them to do so.
61. The range of work, the quality of its planning and the amount of work expected of the pupils are all good, and as a result their achievement is good. In almost all classes they make steady progress through the year, but in some cases unlooked-for changes in staffing have interrupted that progress. Pupils in all classes have at least a sound understanding of number work appropriate for their age. For instance, Year 4 change fractions into the equivalent decimal fraction with ease and Year 6 create graphs of various types that show information clearly. They understand about shapes, and measure to an accuracy in line with what is expected for their age.
62. The quality of teaching overall is good. When the teaching is good or very good the lessons are marked by the very good relationships between staff and pupils. This leads to orderly classes taught at a good pace so that plenty of quality work is accomplished in each lesson. The tasks given to the pupils are set at levels that enable them to succeed while demanding thought and effort on their part. Although those pupils with the highest potential for mathematics are not always fully challenged, on the occasions when they are, they succeed very well.
63. A significant feature of the very good teaching is the way in which pupils are challenged to think mathematically when faced with a practical problem where specific rules must be followed for a solution. This stems from the teachers' good level of understanding of the subject. The planning is generally good, especially where the nationally recommended planning is adapted specifically for a particular class, or when the teacher realises that it needs altering because the wrong assumptions have been made for a particular class. Where that need for flexibility is not realised or encouraged the lessons are duller and less effective. In most cases the teaching assistants and teachers work together well. However, in one or two cases the support offered by volunteers, though well meaning did not follow the teacher's planning and distorted the intention of the lesson.
64. Mathematics is well led and managed. The subject leader has used the observation of lessons and scrutiny of work to broaden the range of teaching techniques, share

good methods between teachers and to demonstrate good teaching practices effectively. Improvements in marking are used consistently. As a result they plan work more effectively to meet the needs of particular pupils.

Mathematics across the curriculum

65. Pupils' learning is enhanced by the very positive attitude the pupils have to the work they are given. They particularly enjoy the way they use skills learned in one subject to find out more in others; in discussion they said how much they enjoyed using of mathematics to handle the data they had gathered about their abilities in physical education. Numeracy skills are used to good effect in other subjects such as science, geography, art, history or whenever there is a need to measure and calculate.

SCIENCE

Provision for science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The good teaching results in better standards than expected for the pupils' age by Year 6.
- Pupils thoroughly enjoy science because of the practical nature of lessons.
- Throughout the school enquiry skills are well promoted so pupils know how to investigate questions scientifically, often using skills learnt in other subjects.
- Insufficient resources make teaching of some aspects of science more difficult especially in large classes.
- The subject leader has not seen at first hand how the subject is taught.

Commentary

66. In the national tests in 2004, almost two thirds of the pupils in Year 6 reached the higher level, well exceeding the comparative results of other schools. This was a considerable improvement from the low point of the previous year. In the current Years 5 and 6 teachers expect a lot from their pupils and make learning challenging. Factual information with secure understanding is taught thoroughly, scientific vocabulary is clearly defined and used accurately and builds upon investigative skills well developed throughout the school. All these factors contribute to the inspection findings of good standards seen in lessons and in pupils' work. In Year 2, lessons and work samples indicate that standards are typical for their age but with fewer planned opportunities for the faster learners to really extend their scientific learning beyond that normally expected.
67. Teaching overall is good and because of this most pupils make good progress and achieve well. Pupils with special educational needs do well because of carefully planned lessons, the very good relationships between adults and pupils and often very skilled support which they receive especially when this makes it easier for them to focus on science rather than literacy skills. Good teaching encourages pupils to be

active and questioning, looking for reasons and really wanting to find out more about their work. Discussion and co-operation are central to lessons. In Year 5 this involves everyone, even within a cramped classroom space, working intently to devise an investigation to find out if there is a link between shoe size and pupil height. Because teachers have secure subject knowledge they plan thoughtfully, explain information clearly, so that pupils know what is expected of them and how they can recognise the success of their learning. The best teachers' marking expands upon this and shows pupils how to improve their scientific understanding. Resources are unsatisfactory, with many needing updating and increasing in quantity and range. In larger classes, where there are too few pieces of equipment, the organisation of some activities is made more complex. Teachers make effective use of visitors to enrich the curriculum especially in older pupils' work on understanding about healthy bodies and lifestyles. The outside environment is used well too because it offers interesting and varied habitats, especially the wild garden. Space outdoors to undertake energetic activities made it easier for Year 6 to investigate the effects of exercise on pulse rate, using the results to provide data for recording and interpreting the information in a later numeracy lesson. Numeracy skills are used to good effect in science for taking accurate measurements, recording findings using graphs or drawing conclusions and reconsidering predictions. ICT skills are not so well explored.

68. The subject leader provides adequate leadership but lacks the necessary management skills to do this as well as she would like although she has an action plan. Sampling pupils' work in Years 1 and 2 has provided a clearer picture of their learning but an inability to see how pupils in Years 3 to 6 are taught reduces the impact that can be made on their learning.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

Provision for ICT is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards have improved.
- Teaching is good and support staff make a significant contribution to pupils' learning so pupils achieve well.
- The improved facilities have had a positive impact on teaching and learning.
- Good use is made of ICT as a tool for teaching and learning.

Commentary

69. At the last inspection standards across the school were unsatisfactory. Although pupils made good progress in some lessons there was variable experience of using computers and pupils tended to rely too much on teachers doing tasks for them. The situation is very different now because there has been good improvement since the last inspection. Pupils' competence in ICT has improved and is now satisfactory because most pupils achieve well and reach standards that are at least satisfactory for their age. In some aspects of the work, such as multimedia presentations, the Year 6 pupils' work is better than expected and in other year groups too there are examples of pupils producing better quality work than is usually seen for their age. The majority of pupils are now making good progress in lessons. Their experience of using computers is better and no longer dependent on the skills and confidence of individual teachers as it was at the last inspection.

70. The teaching of this subject is good overall, an improvement since the last inspection. Teachers now feel more secure teaching this subject and intend to have further training particularly in the use of interactive whiteboards. Lessons are well planned. Learning objectives are clear and children know what they are expected to learn by the end of the lesson. Teachers provide sufficient work and tasks are completed by the end of the lesson. Support staff contribute significantly to pupils' learning, especially slower learners who achieve success because they are encouraged and given appropriate guidance in tasks. Teachers have the support of a skilled ICT assistant who contributes significantly to pupils' learning when she works with the class teacher and is equally competent when working alone with a smaller group. Teachers have great confidence in working with her because if anything goes wrong with the equipment during a lesson it is quickly remedied and the lesson can continue as planned. However, she is not timetabled to work with every class and when incidents occur that need her expertise she is unable to assist until after the lesson has finished, which occasionally hampers pupils' progress. Pupils' attitudes to ICT are good and responses to teaching are mainly enthusiastic. Tasks are challenging and as a result pupils make good progress. Teaching makes a significant contribution to good progress and high standards.
71. The leadership of the subject is good. There is effective teamwork between the subject leader and ICT assistant, which has contributed well to the improved provision. Both adults provide equally well in supporting other colleagues and providing appropriate advice. Opportunities to monitor teaching across the school have been limited but the headteacher plans to give teachers the training and guidance they need to do this well. The better facilities have resulted in ICT provision and access being much improved and teachers' training has made them more secure and confident in teaching the skills pupils need. Now all pupils have access to this curriculum and a wide range of information.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

72. The use of ICT in other subjects as a tool for learning is good. There were many examples of work displayed around the school that clearly illustrated the effectiveness of its use. Particularly good examples were seen linked to geography work about the floods in Cumbria and to art in using digital cameras to create and prepare images for use in a mixed media collage. It is used effectively in music for composing and widely in all subjects where word processing skills or research skills are needed such as literacy, geography and history.

HUMANITIES

Too few lessons were seen in geography and history to make a judgement about the overall provision, standards or teaching and learning in either subject. These subjects were only sampled but there is a full commentary about religious education.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The very good relationships encourage openness in discussions.
- Younger pupils try hard to do their best and do more written work than juniors.
- Less written work is planned and there is not enough demanding work for older pupils.
- Planning for religious education and PSHE lacks rationalisation in junior classes.
- More time is needed for studying religions other than Christianity.

COMMENTARY

73. The standards pupils reach in religious education are generally as expected for their age and in line with the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. Their achievement is satisfactory and there is no difference between boys and girls. Those pupils with special educational needs are provided with the support they require and they achieve as well as others. Younger pupils show an understanding of difficult ideas such as “*justice*” and “*mercy*” which is good for their age. The recent emphasis the school has placed on the skills of speaking and listening in literacy has given them the ability to express themselves well on this and other topics. They have a sound knowledge of stories from the Bible. The older pupils also express moral ideas clearly in lessons although proportionately less written work is done and much of that on undemanding worksheets.
74. The teaching observed in lessons was satisfactory overall. Because teachers have established very good relationships with pupils and there is mutual respect and trust, the discussion sessions are good, contributing positively to personal development. However, assessment of the subject is not coordinated and its quality varies from class to class. Because there is too little recorded work among the older pupils it is more difficult to know just how well pupils are doing overall. However, in lessons pupils deal with the subject well and like it. Religious education is combined with personal, social and health education, particularly for the older pupils. As a result the specific religious dimension of their education is reduced to a degree that pupils notice and regret the change. In a Year 6 lesson combining both religious education and PSHE and based on the topic of peer pressure, a significant number of pupils produced deep and thoughtful ideas because the teacher had introduced it well. He extended their understanding of the manner and language involved in peer pressure. A well planned task involving pupils in working in pairs with one being the tempter and the other the tempted went well but another adult working in the class changed the emphasis of one group by emphasising the literacy element of the use of persuasive language and pupils did not achieve as well as they had done earlier. The planning of work, especially for the older pupils lacks breadth and challenge. Some teaching about religions other than Christianity is provided but it is not undertaken in the same depth as that concerned with moral questions or with Christianity. Consequently, artefacts for religions other than Christianity are less well used than they might be.
75. Religious education makes a satisfactory contribution to the pupils’ spiritual development and the personal, social and health education element supports their moral development well. However, the subject contributes less than it might to their understanding of cultures other than their own.
76. The enthusiastic subject leader is part time with no extra time provided for the task and overall provides leadership that is just satisfactory.
77. In **geography**, the subject is taught in blocks of time and pupils clearly enjoy it because they expressed regret that it was not taught every week. Older pupils use ordnance survey maps well and match features to photographs, understand how rivers occur and develop, and study land use in the locality. The younger pupils are familiar with their own locality, and inspired by the story of *Katie Morag and the Island of Struay*, study island life extending their understanding of the differences between that and where they live. Very good use is made of ICT to use the Internet for information and then create a PowerPoint presentation, for instance, about flooding. Discussions about rival uses for land contribute well to pupils’ moral development and social understanding. In the one lesson seen teaching was good with appropriate pace and challenge. Pupils demonstrated well their ability to use an ordnance survey map and shared ideas as they successfully contrasted the use of land in urban and

rural areas. Currently there is no subject leader in post but it has not affected the subject adversely.

78. In **history**, pupils enjoy the subject and welcome the practical nature of the visits and visitors that are a feature of the subject. Teachers make effective use of those with specialist knowledge, such as an elderly ex-pupil of the school with memories of World War II, or visits to such places as Sulgrave Manor to bring the Tudor period alive for pupils. The subject is taught in blocks of time and pupils passionately regretted that it was not taught every week because they enjoyed it so much. There is some development of historical skills, such as a sense of time past among the younger pupils, and the use of sources of information to make lists of the possessions of historical characters, to investigate how people used to live. However, too much work is on separate worksheets, often more geared to skills in literacy than developing historical understanding. In the lesson sampled teaching was good which stimulated a desire in pupils to work hard and use their imagination and previous knowledge. History plays a significant part in the pupils' cultural and moral development as they discuss the consequences of actions for individuals and look at the art, music and literature of periods such as the Tudors. Currently there is no subject leader for history but staff have ensured that the policy and planning are up to date, and have put an action plan for development in place to improve standards and progress.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Few lessons were seen in art and design, music or physical education and none were seen in design and technology so no overall judgement about provision, standards or teaching and learning can be made.

79. Work in **art and design** contributes well to pupils' creative experiences as they learn about the work of different artists and use a range of materials and techniques that successfully complement and strengthen learning in other subjects. In ICT, pupils use art programs to good effect to apply their understanding of both colour and pattern, and to investigate the styles of other artists. The bold colours inspired by Australian Aboriginal artists and Mondrian's clear lines and patterns are both reflected in the graphic artwork of pupils in Years 1 and 2. In Year 6 they use the digital camera to record images and their self-portraits in chalks show the shade and realism of the original. In the one lesson seen, teaching was good and the teacher used her knowledge of Picasso's life and work so effectively in the introduction to the lesson that pupils in Years 5 and 6 were inspired to create imaginative pastel drawings and really enjoyed transforming his abstract ideas into their own, often dramatic, facial images. When discussing and comparing Picasso's work with that of Hockney, pupils expressed well-reasoned preferences for either artist showing a good understanding of their differing styles. The recent lack of a regular subject leader has not diminished pupils' art experiences but areas for improvement have yet to be identified.
80. In **design and technology**, displays and recent photographic records indicate that pupils' follow a full designing and making process whenever they create the range of well-finished products that are evident throughout the school. Work builds well on the wide range of experiences and skills that reception children have acquired. Influenced by different starting points, pupils regularly practise the skills they will need to successfully complete their tasks. In Years 3 and 4 this meant learning stitch work to join and decorate their purses and wallets. Older pupils learnt how to build and

strengthen wooden frames, to construct buggies and race them under different conditions to judge their performance. Good links are made with other subjects for example in Years 1 and 2, pupils investigated their favourite playground activities and recorded their findings as a simple graph before making their chosen equipment. The subject leader has better knowledge now of teachers' planning for the subject but lacks the training needed to manage the subject well.

81. In **music**, pupils enjoy a wide range of experiences and there are indications that the school values this subject and provides well for it. In the lessons seen teaching was good because teachers inspired and challenged pupils, which maintained their interest and resulted in good efforts. The well-planned lessons had clear learning objectives and pupils understood what the teacher wished to achieve by the end of the lesson. A specialist who has taken an audit and made some good improvements since the last inspection leads the subject well. A plan for the subject now ensures all elements are taught and a policy provides appropriate guidance for staff. Because the subject leader has implemented a scheme of work, those teachers who are not musicians feel more secure about teaching music. An audit of resources resulted in the purchase of instruments, which are now adequate to teach the subject but funding is too tight to do more as yet. At Years 3 and 4 when pupils are introduced to graphic scores in ICT the use is extended to composing using software with which teachers are familiar. There is tuition for woodwind, violin, cello and guitar from Year 3 but parents do have to pay. Those pupils unable to pay do not stop lessons but school finds ways to produce the funding needed. Pupils have opportunities to play together as an orchestra. A teaching assistant runs the recorder groups in Years 1 and 2 and the subject leader runs choir for those who enjoy singing. The music at the beginning and end of assemblies extends pupils' appreciation of music. All pupils take part in performances at Christmas and in the summer term, which are well attended by parents.
82. **Physical education** is popular with both boys and girls of all ages. Games are taught well and coaching is provided after school as well as in lessons for pupils of all ages. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported by staff and pupils. The school takes part in matches and tournaments in the local group of schools and there is particularly good cooperation with the local secondary school. The school council is planning to raise funds to have a running track marked out on the field. The school hall is used effectively for gymnastics and dance. Swimming is provided for pupils from Year 1 onwards building on the confidence that reception children have in the water. In Years 5 and 6, formal tuition is given in the local pool so that almost every child can swim at least the required 25 metres before they leave school. In the lessons seen younger pupils displayed skills with small racquets and balls that were as expected for their age although a significant number did better, which was the result of very good teaching. Pupils behaved well because work was interesting and planned within their capabilities so they succeeded at the tasks set and enjoyed the lessons. Physical education is linked well with other subjects such as science, in the study of healthy living. The subject supports pupils' personal development well encouraging their self-assurance, promoting teamwork and their understanding of national and international games. An energetic and knowledgeable subject leader provides good support and training for the staff, especially in dance. She has encouraged teaching assistants to support games and many physical activities in addition to improving the quality of games at playtimes.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Few lessons were seen to make an overall judgement about provision, standards or teaching and learning although the subject features well in the curriculum.

Commentary

83. The school plans well for this aspect. Provision for personal development is an important part of the school's work and is securely established by teachers' high expectations of good behaviour, mutual respect and the formation of trusting and secure relationships. Because pupils trust teachers they talk openly about their concerns and successes. They feel confident to take part in discussions, ask questions about what they have not fully understood and give an opinion when requested. A good teaching programme is in place and activities include sex and relationships education, the need for a healthy lifestyle, the misuse of drugs and what to do to keep safe. In Circle Time² activities there is an emphasis on the need to listen carefully to one another and respect all views. Teaching in other subjects, such as religious education, English, science and ICT support this aspect well.

² Circle Time sessions relate to the whole class sitting in a circle to discuss feelings, values and beliefs.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Inspection judgement

Grade

The overall effectiveness of the school	4
How inclusive the school is	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	4
Value for money provided by the school	4

Overall standards achieved	3
Pupils' achievement	3

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities (ethos)	2
Attendance	3
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

The quality of education provided by the school	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	4
The school's links with other schools and colleges	4

The leadership and management of the school	4
The governance of the school	4
The leadership of the headteacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	4
The effectiveness of management	4

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