

INSPECTION REPORT

The Littletons C of E First School

Evesham

LEA area: Worcestershire

Unique reference number: 116829

Headteacher: Mrs Helen Brambani

Lead inspector: Mr Robert Robinson

Dates of inspection: 9th - 11th May 2005

Inspection number: 274586

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	First school
School category:	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils:	5 – 10 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	144
School address:	Farm Lane South Littleton Evesham Worcestershire
Postcode:	WR11 8TL
Telephone number:	01386 830695
Fax number:	01386 830695
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	The Reverend Richard Evans
Date of previous inspection:	March 2000

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This is a smaller than average primary school for children aged 4 to 10. Pupils are of white ethnic background. No pupils are learning English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is about three per cent, which is below average; however, a local education authority meals service is unavailable at the school, so most pupils bring a packed lunch from home. The school serves a socially and economically average area. Children's attainment on entry is about average. A very small proportion of pupils are from local travellers' sites. Twenty-two pupils are on the list of special educational needs, which is about average. One pupil has a statement of special educational needs. Most of the pupils receiving additional help have moderate learning difficulties, social, emotional and behavioural difficulties, speech difficulties or autism. The number of pupils joining or leaving the school other than at the usual times is about average. The school gained the School Improvement Award in 2000. The headteacher joined the school in September 2002.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
21024	Robert Robinson	Lead inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Geography History Religious education
8941	John Fletcher	Lay inspector	
18344	David Earley	Team inspector	English Science
32747	Kathy Faulkner	Team inspector	Foundation Stage Art and design Design and technology Music Physical education

The inspection contractor was:

Penta International
Upperton House
Eastbourne
East Sussex BN21 3Y

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a good and improving school. The climate for learning is established well. Standards of the present Year 2 and Year 5 are above average. Pupils' achievement is good. The quality of teaching is good. The school is led and managed well. The school provides good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are as follows:

- The leadership of the headteacher is good.
- Standards are above average by the end of Year 5 in English, mathematics, science, information and communication technology and religious education.
- Pupils achieve well because of good teaching.
- Attendance rates are unsatisfactory and the governors' procedures for the approval of applications for holidays during term time are unsatisfactory.
- Pupils' confidence and self esteem result from good and trusting relationships between staff and pupils.
- The curriculum is good; it is broad and balanced and enriched very well with extra-curricular activities and other learning opportunities.
- The school cares for its pupils very well.

Improvement is good since the last inspection in March 2000. Pupils' achievement remains good. Standards improved then dipped significantly after the last inspection but have begun to rise during the past two years since the appointment of the headteacher. The issues identified at the last inspection have been addressed well. Procedures for checking pupils' progress are now good. Standards in information and communication technology have improved to above national expectations.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average

Similar schools are those with similar percentages of pupils eligible for free school meals

Achievement is good, including that of pupils with special educational needs. Children in the reception class are likely to exceed the expected national targets by the time they start Year 1 in personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy, mathematical development and physical development. Standards of the present group of pupils in Year 2 are average in reading and above average in speaking and listening, writing, information and communication technology, mathematics, religious education and science. Standards of the present group of pupils in Year 5 are above average in English, history, information and communication technology, mathematics, religious education and science. No judgements on standards could be made in other subjects or areas of learning.

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good. Their attitudes and behaviour are good. Attendance is below average and procedures for granting permission for extended holidays in term time are not rigorous enough.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is good and leads to pupils' good achievement.

The quality of teaching and learning is good throughout the school. The quality of teaching and pupils' learning is good in English, history, information and communication technology, mathematics, religious education and science. No judgements were made on the quality of teaching in other subjects. Literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology skills are developed and used well across the curriculum. The quality of teaching and learning was very good in Years 2 and 4. The assessment and recording of pupils' progress are good. The curriculum is good and enriched very well. The accommodation and resources are satisfactory, on balance; however, the library provision is unsatisfactory. Arrangements for ensuring pupils' care, welfare, health and safety are very good. The school provides pupils with good support, advice and guidance and involves them well in its work and development. The partnership with parents is good and there are good links with the community and other local schools.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good. The leadership of the headteacher is good and she is assisted well by subject co-ordinators. Management is good. The governance of the school is satisfactory. All statutory requirements are met.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are well satisfied with the education the school provides for their children. Pupils are positive about the school. Neither parents nor pupils have any significant concerns.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Increase parents' awareness of the importance of good attendance and improve governors' procedures for granting extended holidays during term time.
- Disseminate the best practice so as to optimise the quality of teaching and learning.
- Improve the library facilities to raise standards further.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

The achievement of pupils is good throughout the school. Standards are above average in Years 2 and 5.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children in reception class achieve well and exceed expected standards by the end of the reception year.
- Pupils achieve well and standards, by the end of Year 2, are above average.
- Significant improvements in standards have been made recently and boys are now achieving as well as girls.
- In Years 3 to 5, pupils' achievement is good and standards are above average in English, mathematics, history, information and communication technology, science and religious education.
- Pupils are on course to exceed the school's targets by the end of Years 2 and 5.

Commentary

1. Children's attainment on entry to the reception is average. The children achieve well and by the end of the reception year their standards are above average in personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy, mathematical development and physical development. Too few lessons were seen to make secure judgements on standards in knowledge and understanding of the world and in creative development.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	15.5 (14.8)	15.8 (15.7)
Writing	15.3 (15.4)	14.6 (14.6)
Mathematics	16.2 (14.9)	16.2 (16.3)

There were 26 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

2. In the 2004 national tests at the end of Year 2, standards in reading were below both the national average and the average of pupils in similar schools, although standards were average in writing, and above average in mathematics. A particular improvement in the school's results in 2004, compared to the previous year, were standards in mathematics as a result of the successful increased focus on the subject by the school.

3. Standards in Year 2 continue to rise. Standards of the current group of pupils in Year 2 are in line with the national average in reading, and standards in the skills of speaking and listening, writing, mathematics, information and communication technology and science are above average. No judgements were made in other subjects. The reason for the improvement compared to previous years can be attributed to the headteacher's drive to improve standards since her appointment and the changes in teaching in Year 2, which is now very good.

4. A major area of concern for the school was the poorer performance of boys than girls in reading and writing. The leadership has focussed on raising boys' achievement through the well-considered choice of reading resources and a variety of teaching initiatives. Analysis of the progress of the present group of boys and girls in Year 2 shows both groups make similar progress in

comparison to their attainment at the end of reception; however, boys' performance is still lower than that of girls because of lower starting points and the significantly higher proportion of boys on the list of special educational needs.

5. Standards of the current groups of pupils in Year 5 are above average in English, mathematics, history, information and communication technology, science and religious education. Improvements in standards since the last inspection are good. No judgements were made on standards in other subjects. No differences were apparent in boys' achievement compared to that of girls. Most pupils with special educational needs make good progress during lessons and over time but generally attain at levels lower than would be expected for their ages.

6. Standards have been maintained at the end of Year 5, compared to those reported at the last inspection in English, mathematics and science, though they have improved in other subjects inspected. The targets set at both the end of Year 2 and Year 5 to be achieved, which are based on pupils' prior attainments are likely to be exceeded by the end of this academic year. This is because of good teaching and pupils' good attitudes to work as well as the good leadership and management of the headteacher and subject co-ordinators.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning are good. Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is also good. Pupils' attendance is unsatisfactory

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' behaviour is good and they respond well in lessons.
- Pupils' attitudes are positive and their interest in improving school life and taking responsibility are good.
- Relationships between pupils and adults are very good.
- High levels of holiday absence affect standards adversely.
- The school's efforts to minimise holidays in term time lack rigour and there is a casual tolerance amongst governors and parents towards extended holiday leave.

Commentary

7. Pupils have good attitudes to school and this has a positive influence on their achievement in lessons. They listen attentively, quickly settle to their work and are keen to answer questions and do their best. This good behaviour allows staff to focus their energies on providing interesting and stimulating lessons to enable pupils to achieve well. The youngest children settle happily into school and make good progress towards achieving the expected standards in personal, social and emotional development by the time they leave the reception class. As pupils move through the school, their views are taken into account through actions, such as a pupils' questionnaire and the school council.

8. A varied range of opportunities is provided for pupils to take responsibility and as a result they acquire good personal and social skills. The representatives on the school council diligently carry out their duties and make a real difference to improving the quality of school life for their peers. At regular meetings, they not only discuss ideas but also follow them through with energy and enthusiasm. One such successful idea is that of encouraging good eating habits by selling healthy snacks in school. The funds raised are then used to buy equipment for outside use and result in pupils having more active, happy and purposeful break times. The school council has also written to parents to give advice on healthy contents for lunchboxes. The letter written to the local Member of Parliament to ask for government funds to provide fruit for the older pupils is another example of the pupils developing a good sense of citizenship. Other pupils carry out responsible tasks for their teachers, such as being playground buddies, delivering fruit to classrooms, preparing the music for

assembly and collecting apparatus at the end of break times. This helps the whole school to be a calm and happy place to learn and play.

9. Adults in the school are very good role models for the pupils and, as a result, the pupils respond very well to staff and are confident to talk to them in class or at break times. Pupils readily turn to adults for help and support when they need to but also are kind and considerate and help each other in lessons and in the outside environment. Older pupils happily play with younger pupils at lunch times, willingly sharing the space and equipment. In lessons, adults encourage responses from pupils, including those with special educational needs. Successes, however small, are praised and this gives the pupils confidence especially when learning new skills.

10. The school provides good experiences to promote the pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural understanding. The daily act of collective worship encourages the pupils to have a greater understanding of the world around them. Members of staff ensure that pupils have time to reflect and think about issues; a good example is an assembly where the visitor raised the pupils' awareness of childhood poverty by comparing school life in India with that in England.

11. The school plans events, such as a multicultural week; through focussed events, the pupils understand that individuals of different cultures are diverse in the way that they follow their beliefs. The learning from these experiences is represented in displays, such as the African masks and the Indonesian batik patterns, illustrating pupils' understanding of the ways of life in other cultures. Pupils' social and moral development is good. The pupils have a good understanding of right and wrong because of the high expectations set by the adults. The rules and reward system acknowledge and celebrate pupils' efforts in all areas of school life: academic and personal. As a result of these, pupils are motivated to work harder and achieve even more. The self-esteem and confidence of pupils with special educational needs are well developed because relationships are very good and members of staff know pupils very well. Efforts of pupils of all abilities are valued and celebrated so that most pupils are well motivated and enthusiastic in their work.

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	6.0%	School data	0.1%
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.

12. Overall attendance, whilst having improved slightly in the current year, is still below the average level achieved in similar schools across the country. The school monitors absence closely, has good systems for ensuring that reasons for absence are known and issues awards for full and improved attendance in an effort to reduce the level of absence. Records show that holidays during term time account for a disproportionately high percentage of absence. Almost a third of all absence is term time holiday and more than half of the pupils in the school are involved. There are some mitigating circumstances in that those parents working in the seasonal market gardening industry cannot take holidays during the summer and, equally, not all the parents employed at the local prison can take leave at the same time. The very high level of holiday absence is significantly reducing access to the taught curriculum and is severely restricting the learning opportunities for many pupils.

13. Over time, the practice of taking holiday during term time has become accepted by parents and, to some extent, by the school. The result is that insufficient effort is being made to emphasise to parents the potential damage that missed time will cause to their children's ultimate levels of achievement. Examination of the records reveals the unsatisfactory situation that around one in twelve pupils are taking more holiday leave than the legal maximum of ten days.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is good. The quality of teaching and learning is good. A good broad and balanced curriculum is enriched very well. Standards of care, welfare and health and safety are very good. Pupils' views are sought and acted upon well. Partnership with parents and the community are good and links with other schools are well established.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is good. The assessment of pupils' work is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching and learning is good, overall, with particular strengths in Years 2 and 4.
- The teaching meets the needs of all pupils well, including the teaching of pupils with special educational needs.
- Skills in literacy, information and communication technology and numeracy are used and applied well in other subjects.
- The monitoring of pupils' progress is good.

Commentary

14. As can be seen from the following table, the quality of teaching was good and included a reasonable proportion of better teaching. The proportion of very good teaching has increased since the last inspection. Most of the very good teaching and learning was in the Years 2 and 4, though some very good teaching was also seen in Year 3. The quality of teaching and learning seen in Years 1 and 5 was a mixture of satisfactory and good, and teaching was good in the reception class.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 31 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	9 (29%)	15 (48%)	7 (23%)	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.

15. Overall, teachers have good subject knowledge which benefits pupils' learning well. The planning of lessons is good and it is matched well to pupils' needs. Pupils at all levels of attainment work hard and make good progress in their learning. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' work and behaviour and pupils respond well. Pupils' good attitudes to work assist their learning. Pupils work well together and relationships between pupils and staff are very good. Teaching assistants are used very well to support pupils in reaching their targets.

16. Where teaching is satisfactory, there is a mixture of strengths and weaknesses; for example, in a mathematics lesson, plenty of opportunities were provided for pupils to practise new learning in groups and to work with partners on tasks appropriate to their level of attainment; however, questioning in whole class situations was not linked sufficiently to pupils' abilities. The pace of the lesson faltered because of organisational difficulties and the time taken by the teacher to write out mathematical problems. In an information and communication technology lesson in Year 1, pupils were keen to learn and behaved very well; however, the slow pace of the lesson and equipment problems slowed learning down.

17. Pupils with learning difficulties are aware of the targets set in their individual education plans and usually have a clear understanding of what they need to do in order to improve. Teachers,

support staff and the co-ordinator for special educational needs work very closely together in planning and reviewing progress. Work is carefully suited to pupils' abilities so that they are appropriately challenged. Teaching assistants play a significant role in the progress these pupils make because they are well trained and provide very good support.

18. The teaching and learning of English, mathematics, history, information and communication technology and science is good. The planning of opportunities to use literacy, information and communication technology and numeracy skills enhances learning; for example, in a history lesson in Year 5, pupils investigated the Aztec number system. They searched for information on the internet from a variety of sources, including from the British Museum web site, to further their knowledge of the Aztec civilisation. They recorded the information well and the presentation of their written work was of a good standard.

19. The procedures and use of assessment information are good. The planning of lessons takes account of pupils' previous learning. The marking of work is good and provides pupils with a clear understanding of how well they are doing and how they can improve. In Year 2, the teacher marks particularly well; it is evaluative and encouraging, though challenging. The progress of pupils with special educational needs is assessed well. Teaching assistants make comprehensive records of these pupils' progress which is shared with class teachers. Throughout the school, the use of a very good assessment booklet which shows pupils' progress and sets targets for improvement in English, mathematics and personal development helps pupils gain a good understanding of how well they are doing and what they must do to improve.

The curriculum

The school provides a broad and well-balanced curriculum with very good opportunities for enrichment. Accommodation and resources are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum is rich and varied and it is enhanced by very good extra curricular provision.
- The school makes good use of staff expertise so that all pupils have equal access to the curriculum.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good.
- Library provision does not sufficiently help to develop independent learning skills.

Commentary

20. The school has successfully reorganised its allocation of time during the morning sessions in order to extend learning opportunities beyond the literacy and numeracy hours. This is helping to raise standards. It has also addressed a criticism from the previous inspection and now ensures continuity in the teaching and learning of skills because all subjects are taught regularly rather than in isolated blocks of time. The school has in place good systems for the transfer of pupils to their next stage of education and this ensures that for most pupils the transition is a smooth one.

21. The school ensures that pupils have a wide range of opportunities to enrich their learning. All pupils learn French and swimming is provided from Year 1 onwards. The school has good links with nearby groups, such as the allotment society, parish church, local businesses and a pottery in order to extend learning. In a similar way, the school welcomes a range of visitors in order to widen learning opportunities. These include history and theatre workshops, representatives of Irish, African and Indian cultural traditions, dramatists, storytellers and conservationists. This is complemented by the opportunities the school provides for pupils to make educational visits to such places as Weston Super Mare, museums, a mosque and canals in Birmingham. Pupils have opportunities to take part in a residential visit to Malvern where they participate in outdoor activities and learn to extend their social and teamwork skills. During the year, the curriculum is further enriched by such events as arts and physical education afternoons and multicultural weeks. The very wide range of extra curricular

opportunities enables pupils to participate in a very interesting range of activities, including sports, chess, country dancing, cookery, computer use, pottery, choir and street dancing. This is enhanced by specialist coaching from local clubs and colleges which gives pupils access to a wide range of sports.

22. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. Pupils have clearly-written and manageable individual education plans. Class teachers are fully involved in the production of individual education plans and have a clear understanding of pupils' needs. Individual education plans are reviewed at regular intervals and are shared with pupils and parents. Teachers and support staff work closely together so that continuity of education is ensured. All pupils have equal access to the curriculum and the ethos of the school ensures that all pupils are highly regarded and valued and that their efforts are recognised and celebrated, whatever their abilities.

23. The school is aware of the need to improve the quantity and quality of books in its central library in order to extend opportunities for independent learning. It has plans to relocate the library in order to make it more easily accessible. The school is also aware that internal access to classrooms is impeded at times and physical education lessons and assemblies may be interrupted because access is through the main hall. It makes good use of its generous outdoor provision in order to extend teaching and learning opportunities. The school has a wild and wooded area, a pond, an outdoor classroom and role-play buildings. A vegetable plot, outdoor musical instruments and climbing and balancing apparatus enhance the grounds. The school has improved its provision for information and communication technology since the previous inspection and now has a well-appointed computer suite and computers in each classroom. A few classrooms have interactive whiteboards, which enhance curriculum access in these classes. There is a good match of teachers and teaching assistants to the curriculum. Teaching assistants are well trained and the school makes good use of specialist teachers in such areas as information communication technology, music, French and sporting activities. This helps to raise standards.

Care, guidance and support

Procedures to ensure pupils' care, welfare, health and safety are very good. Good quality support and advice help pupils to make progress. Pupils' views and opinions are valued and are increasingly being sought.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- The school looks after pupils effectively.
- Pupils enjoy very good and trusting relationships with adults which positively influence the progress they make.
- Members of staff provide good quality guidance and support to secure pupils' ongoing achievement and development.
- Pupils' involvement in the life and development of the school is good and positively influences their attitudes.

Commentary

24. Very good arrangements for child protection and health and safety are in place and the school is both vigilant and sensitive in exercising its responsibilities. All members of staff show high levels of care for pupils and very good procedures ensure that the school is a safe and orderly environment conducive to learning and development. In lessons, at breaks and on arrival and departure, appropriate supervision ensures the safety of pupils. Very effective systems ensure that identified hazards and safety concerns are quickly eliminated. Equipment is regularly tested, frequent evacuation practices take place and clear procedures covering medicines and appropriate rules relating to access of the Internet are in place and are closely followed.

25. All pupils are valued at Littletons and members of staff interact with pupils in a consistently supportive and positive manner. In this climate, pupils readily adapt to the daily routines, lose any inhibitions and quickly become secure. The strong and trusting relationships that develop with adults ensure that pupils gain confidence and readily seek help or support if they do not understand or if they have any concerns. The questionnaire and discussions with pupils indicate that pupils know who to approach with problems and agree that members of staff help them to enjoy their experiences at the school. The very good relationships with staff are a strength of the school and positively influence pupils' attitudes, achievement and development.

26. Systematic assessment procedures effectively enable teachers to establish a base line position in academic achievement and personal development within the first term at the school. Good recording and monitoring systems ensure that progress and achievements are routinely noted and there are good procedures for setting and reviewing improvement targets, at least, termly as children move through the school. Teachers use the records effectively to personalise the support and guidance provided to individual children. The reward and sanction records, along with the close day-to-day observations of staff, ensure that any child experiencing problems is rapidly identified and that tailored and targeted improvement programmes are quickly implemented.

27. Good and increasing opportunities exist for pupils to express their views and to become involved in their own development and in the day-to-day life of the school. In some lessons, pupils are asked to assess their own work and achievement. Older pupils are always involved in negotiating, agreeing and reviewing their development targets. Pupils enthusiastically accept responsibility for jobs around the school and the school council is an established forum through which pupils suggest improvements to school routines and facilities. Pupils value the council, are proud to be elected representatives and are keen to talk about changes that have been influenced by the pupil voice. The provision of fruit as a healthy eating option at break times came from a school council suggestion.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school enjoys a good and supportive partnership with parents. There are good, productive links with the wider community. Links with other schools are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Good communication and consultation with parents ensure parents' involvement in the life of the school and in the education of their children.
- The school draws effectively from the local community to broaden and enhance pupils' learning and development experiences.
- Good links with the middle school and with pre-school providers ensure a smooth transition for pupils entering and leaving Littletons.

Commentary

28. In the last few years, the school has worked hard to improve the links with homes. The vast majority of parents confirm the school is open and welcoming and express widespread pleasure at the involvement they now have in their children's education and the value that is placed on their own views and opinions. There is a high level of satisfaction with the quality both of education and support provided, and high levels of confidence in and admiration for the staff exist. Most parents confirm that their children like school and feel that the school is helping them to be better prepared for later life. Parents are complimentary, particularly about the quality of leadership, teaching, the expectation of hard work and the fact that all pupils are treated and valued equally.

29. Parents are kept well informed about school life and about their children's achievement and development. Effective communication is maintained through letters, newsletters, telephone calls, the reading record, review evenings, the friends' association, weekly assemblies and a variety of

social events and performances. The annual report on academic achievement gives a good overview of what pupils know, understand and can do, and includes good advice on how to improve. Events at the school are well attended and a good number of parents are regular helpers in school. The school ensures that parents have good, advance information on topics of study and guidance is provided to help parents support homework and independent study at home. The dialogue with parents is supplemented with regular requests for their views and opinions and there is good evidence showing that comments are valued and suggestions taken seriously.

30. Adults, at the school, are outward looking and have established good links within the local community which enhance pupils' learning and development opportunities. The site hosts a pre-school nursery, and holiday clubs ensure the facilities are used well during the holidays. Community support organisations, such as the police and the fire service, are regular visitors, as are artists, musicians, sports coaches and members of charity organisations. Good use is made of the local community for outings and visits which support the curriculum. There are frequent visits to local shops, the church, a local mosque, the library, the swimming pool, historical sites and landmarks, and pupils are currently involved in carrying out a traffic survey for the villages.

31. The school works increasingly effectively with the local middle school over the transfer of pupils. There is timely and effective information transfer and the physical transfer is supportively and sensitively handled. The links with pre-school providers, particularly the on-site nursery, are very good and the induction arrangements for new pupils are closely and very effectively managed. There is growing interaction with other cluster group schools which is helping curriculum development and also enabling pupils from the different schools to experience and participate in arts festivals and sporting competitions.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The governance of the school is satisfactory. The headteacher's leadership is good and the senior staff work well together. Management is good and the school runs effectively.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher has high aspirations for the school, shows a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses and is a very good role model and motivator for staff and pupils.
- Subject co-ordinators support development priorities and are showing good management skills as they take ownership of their areas of responsibility.
- The governing body provides satisfactory stewardship of the school and is starting to offer more direct support and challenge for leaders and managers.
- Finances are well administered and are used effectively to support the school's priorities.

Commentary

32. The headteacher provides good leadership based on the clear principle of ensuring a high quality provision for all young people in the school and a determined focus on raising the levels of achievement. Following appointment, she quickly identified the school's main strengths and weaknesses and has effectively used her good leadership skills to manage some major changes in style and expectation; for example, the issue of relatively poor results in mathematics has been effectively addressed through a focussed programme involving external advice and support. The headteacher is a very good role model and has succeeded in assembling a highly motivated and committed management team whose members are increasingly taking ownership of their areas. The school is a happy place in which staff as a whole respect each other and work effectively together with a common purpose. Members of staff feel valued and all play their part in the organisation and smooth running of the school.

33. Management staff have clearly defined roles and responsibilities and are expected to take control of the review, assessment and planning within their areas. They contribute to the

determination of the whole school improvement agenda through their annual development plans which are determined after assessing their monitoring data. The practice of monitoring and review is good and is starting to become embedded. Most middle managers are beginning to take effective control of development within their areas of responsibility. Performance management is well embedded in the school, is taken seriously by all staff and is effective in bringing about change and improvement. The school is committed to staff development and effectively ensures that training undertaken matches the needs of individuals as well as the school. The school has good induction arrangements for new staff and is providing much appreciated support and guidance to student teachers.

34. The governing body has ensured that the key issues from the last inspection have been addressed and continues to make sure that the school fulfils its statutory duties. There is, however, a worry over governors' apparent acceptance of the very high level of holiday absence and extended holidays beyond the ten-day legal limit are being approved by the governing body. Members of the governing body provide very good support and guidance on health and safety issues. Minutes show that governors are kept well informed and there is evidence to show constructive input and challenge in the assembly of the school development plan. Although the governing body is under-strength, there is an appropriate committee structure. The newly formed curriculum committee is starting to play a more hands-on role, with individual governors working alongside subject leaders. This valued initiative brings governors into school more frequently and provides good opportunities to increase their contact with staff and pupils. To date, only a few governors have been able to observe lessons but it is planned to expand the activity.

35. Day-to-day administration is efficient and financial procedures are followed correctly. Financial control is good and includes meticulously kept expenditure records. Regular, detailed summaries of expenditure are available for the headteacher and the finance committee. Every effort is made to ensure that purchases are cost effective, and procedures for obtaining competitive tenders are in place. Review procedures are in place for significant purchases to ensure that benefits and improvements are being delivered as anticipated. Against the background of falling pupil numbers and relatively low funding, the school is managing well to finance the identified development priorities without running a deficit. Reserves are kept at a sensible level.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	366,153	Balance from previous year	23,087
Total expenditure	363,036	Balance carried forward to the next	26,204
Expenditure per pupil	2,298		

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good and lessons are well planned to meet the needs of the range of children in the class.
- The curriculum is rich and stimulating and learning is based on first hand experiences.
- Assessment is used well to ensure that children make good progress.
- All adults work as an effective team to ensure that the children are safe, cared-for and happy.
- Many opportunities are planned for the children to develop good speaking and listening skills and children make good progress in reading and writing.
- The curriculum does not provide enough opportunities for self-initiated activities.

Commentary

36. Good provision has been maintained since the last inspection. The school has implemented the statutory changes to the Foundation Stage curriculum and assessment very well. The accommodation has also been improved very well with the addition of an outdoor classroom. Careful and thorough assessment of the children's skills carried out when they first start school shows they are average, though, within the group of children, there is a wide range of ability and maturity. The children start school in the year in which they are five and so benefit from three full terms in the reception class. The good induction programme begins well before the children start school and includes home visits. The reception teacher is available at the end of every day to chat to parents about any concerns or worries, helping the children to settle into school happily and with confidence.

37. The good teaching and provision help most of the children to exceed expected standards by the end of the reception year in personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy, mathematical development and physical development. The few children who do not attain the expected standards by the end of the reception year make good progress based on the assessments carried out when they start school. All lessons are planned thoughtfully with a focus on engaging the children's curiosity and sense of wonder through the use of well-prepared and exciting resources. The children respond with good levels of involvement and concentration in whole class teaching sessions. Teachers, teaching assistants and a number of parent volunteers work as a committed team to support the learning and personal and social development of the children. All adults are effectively deployed and have clear guidance as to their role in each session. As a result the children achieve and behave well and have positive attitudes and confidence when working on new tasks. As the children become more independent and work in small groups, they are made to feel safe and secure and know that their efforts and responses will be noticed and valued. This makes a strong contribution to the emotional well being and personal development of the children.

38. The Foundation Stage manager is an experienced, dedicated, enthusiastic, committed professional. She leads the team effectively and, though the teaching of the class is shared, the careful planning makes certain that good learning provision and outcomes are continued, whichever teacher is taking responsibility for the class. The staff team meets regularly to discuss and evaluate the children's progress. Assessments and observations of the children's progress are used to match teaching and learning plans to the individual needs of the children. The facilities and resources are flexibly organised to give all of the children full and equal access to the new outdoor classroom.

Activities are mainly adult led and the curriculum for the children would be further improved by planning more self-initiated learning tasks.

39. In **personal and social development**, the provision is good. The reception class is a very happy place to learn. This is because members of staff provide a good range of exciting and stimulating activities for the children. Each morning begins with small group work linked to literacy learning and an adult, including parent helpers, supports each group. In this session, as well as reading books, each child is valued as an individual through talking and sharing experiences with a friend or adult. The benefits are seen through the growing confidence and maturity as the children learn new skills in a range of activities. The adults are good role models and set high expectations encouraging good behaviour through the learning. Children learn to take turns when selecting a box to make a bed for their teddy bear. Personal hygiene and health and safety skills are taught as the children make sandwiches and use kitchen tools for the teddy bears' picnic. Children are helped to be responsible when tidying the classroom and they are motivated to 'beat the sand timer' at the end of sessions. A small number of children are still immature and work alongside their friend rather than collaboratively. By the end of the reception year, most children exceed the expected standards in personal, social and emotional education.

40. In **communication, language and literacy**, the children are encouraged to speak and listen at every opportunity throughout the day in whole class teaching and independent learning. They respond well because of the carefully prepared activities. The teacher uses 'Billy', the puppet, effectively to interest the children when teaching initial sounds and blends. Good questions are focussed on individual pupils and they respond positively to the puppet. By the end of the session, most of the children recognise diagraphs and phonemes in a list of new words. The teacher uses assessment well to adjust the teaching to the differing abilities of the children in the class and as a result, all children, including those with special needs, make good progress. The activities for independent learning give the children further opportunities to practise and consolidate the new learning. Reading is promoted well through the variety and range of books in the classroom. The book corner is colourful and welcoming and a special display on books about bears helps the children to enjoy looking at and reading books for enjoyment. Writing skills are developed through giving the children purposeful reasons to write, such as designing an invitation to come to the teddy bears' picnic. The achievement of the children is good and most children exceed the expected standards in communication, language and literacy by the end of the reception year.

41. In **mathematical development**, the teaching is good and most of the children are achieving well. The teaching is planned to inspire curiosity and the children show good concentration. In a lesson observed, a sense of expectation and excitement was created as the children heard the tune of Happy Birthday being played. Dramatically, a birthday cake, with lighted candles, and a bag of birthday presents for the puppet 'Flossy' emerged and were shared with the children. The presents had labels with a mathematical counting problem written on them. The children read the problems, such as 'I am ten years older than you'. The children were challenged to find the answer and arrange the numbers in the correct order. By the end of the reception year, most of the children recognise numbers up to ten and sequence them in the correct order. The more able pupils are able to count accurately in twos and add and subtract number to twenty. The children use non-standard units to measure the length of their teddy bear and record their answers on a chart.

42. In **knowledge and understanding of the world** it was not possible to see sufficient activities to make judgements on standards and the quality of teaching; however, through discussion with staff and children and observations in the classroom and school environment, it is clear that the children's experiences are appropriate. The role-play area has a good range of dressing-up clothes for imaginative play. The children have regular use of the information and communication technology suite and they are beginning to develop word processing skills for their writing. Good use is made of the extensive school grounds. The children explore the environment and respond with enthusiasm to solve the problem posed by the teacher to make a shelter for their teddy bear. Co-operatively, they gathered twigs, bark and grass and used tree trunks and stumps to successfully achieve the challenge. The children showed good concentration and demonstrated

good problem solving skills. The children further develop knowledge and skills in this area of learning by using the new outdoor classroom well.

43. In **physical development**, children achieve well and most will exceed expected standards by the end of reception. Fine motor skills are developed through experimenting with paint, cutting, sticking, drawing, writing and using a range of tools. Activities in the outside classroom are supervised well by the staff and children are guided to learn co-operatively, share and take turns. When children are using scissors or sharp utensils, such as knives and cheese graters, they are taught to use them safely. Physical education lessons are closely linked to children's learning in other areas. There were joyful responses from the children as they took part in teddy bear races, being required to following instructions and work as part of a team. The children were able to explain why their heart was beating faster after running a race and they understand the need to exercise to stay fit and healthy.

44. In **creative development**, the children have a range of planned activities to help them make good progress. Children were observed being thoroughly engrossed in designing and making a bed for their teddy bear, selecting materials and size of box to match their teddy. Other children were observed to select from limited choices when more closely directed in their learning, such as making sandwiches for their teddy bears' picnic. At these times an adult supports the learning and ensures all the children achieve well. The children use different paint techniques and materials to create an 'under the sea' frieze and the classroom displays show how creativity is used to make learning meaningful; for instance, the children use felt pens, crayons and pencils to design a quilt for their teddy bear. Insufficient evidence was collected to make a secure judgment on the provision in this area of learning but displays in the classroom show the value placed on the children's achievements by the staff.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average by the end of Year 2 and Year 5.
- The quality of teaching is good and this leads to good achievement.
- Assessment is used well in order to set targets for improvement.
- The subject is well led and managed.
- There are insufficient opportunities to extend independent learning skills through the use of the library.

Commentary

45. By the end of Year 2, standards in speaking and listening and writing are above average. Standards in reading are average. By the end of Year 5, standards in speaking and listening, reading and writing are above average. Standards, overall, have been maintained since the previous inspection and are part of an improving trend; however, since the last inspection there has been a dip in standards, particularly in the attainment of boys and in reading generally. The strategies the school has put in place have been effective in improving reading and writing standards for both boys and girls.

46. The school has made good use of its monitoring and assessment systems in order to identify weaknesses and adopt strategies for improvement. It has reorganised the school day so that time is provided for individual reading sessions in order to complement group reading. Parents have been encouraged successfully to help pupils with their reading homework and pupils receive incentives for consistent reading at home. The school has purchased a wider selection of books so that pupils' reading experience is broadened and books have been provided which appeal to boys' interests. A significant factor in the improving reading standards is the 'Better Reading' project. Teaching assistants, parents and volunteers provide highly focused individual tuition for pupils, particularly boys, who need extra help to maintain the momentum of their improvement. Teachers provide very clear targets for pupils to improve their writing. This helps to give pupils ownership of their learning, increases the focus on areas to be improved and helps to improve motivation. These strategies, together with the good and often very good quality of teaching, are important features in the improving standards.

47. The school recently recognised the need to improve speaking and listening skills and placed particular emphasis on raising standards. This is a significant factor in the above average standards and good achievement in this aspect of their work. It also impacts positively on the quality of reading and writing. Teachers provide many opportunities for pupils to use their skills. In the very good teaching in Year 3, for example, pupils listened very attentively to the teacher's questions about the use of dialogue in texts and then discussed this clearly and confidently with the teacher and with 'talking partners.' This helped to deepen their understanding of text and to extend their speaking and listening skills. Because there was a brisk pace to the lesson, learning was focused and rigorous. In the very lively and stimulating lesson in Year 4, the teacher and teaching assistant acted out a role-play situation in order to illustrate persuasive language. Pupils then used 'brainstorming' techniques in the identification of features used in advertising. This increased their speaking and listening skills and deepened their understanding of persuasive writing. Work is further enhanced by the many opportunities pupils have to listen, speak and write occasioned by the many visits they make out of school and by the visitors who are welcomed into school.

48. Because teachers have a good understanding of how to teach basic skills, most pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in their reading. Throughout

the school, most pupils have well-established strategies which they use confidently when meeting new or unfamiliar words. Teachers make reading exciting so that pupils want to read more. In the very lively teaching in Year 2 the teacher made very good use of the interactive whiteboard in order to stimulate comparisons between different texts by the same author. As they move through the school, most pupils increase their understanding of how to use the library for research and how to access information in books. However, the school is aware of the need to increase the quantity and quality of reference books and to relocate the library in order to extend independent research skills. Because the school has increased the opportunities for pupils to read and teachers keep careful records which help them to advise pupils how to improve, most pupils make good progress and achieve well. Higher attaining pupils in Year 2 read fluently and expressively and use deductive and inferential skills in order to 'read between the lines.' Older pupils discuss their reading preferences and refer to text to justify their views. Higher attaining pupils explain confidently the approaches of different authors. Because the school has created a positive approach to reading, most boys and girls enjoy reading and this helps to improve their performance. In the words of a pupil in Year 3: 'It's really exciting and I can't wait until the next bit happens.'

49. A significant feature of the above average standards in writing throughout the school is the use of assessment to track progress and to set targets for improvement. The marking of pupils' work is very helpful. In their comments, teachers recognise aspects of work where pupils have achieved well, and set clear, detailed and manageable targets for improvement. In this way, pupils know very clearly what needs to be done in order to improve. Teachers set tasks which are suited to different ability levels so that pupils are challenged to progress at their own rate. Teachers are supported well by teaching assistants, particularly in the work of pupils with special educational needs, so that all pupils achieve well.

50. Leadership and management of the subject are good. The co-ordinator has a good understanding of the subject. She carefully monitors teaching and learning in order to make positive improvements in pupils' learning. She provides good support for colleagues and has a clear understanding of the way ahead in order to raise standards.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

51. Language and literacy skills are used well in the other subjects of the curriculum. Year 3 pupils used their literacy and information communication technology skills in their geographical research work on India. Year 5 pupils took detailed notes in historical work on the Aztecs. Pupils use appropriate language in mathematics and physical education. In science, pupils in Year 2 produced clearly written accounts of the effects of exercise on the body and used their speaking and listening skills effectively in order to deepen their understanding of Judaism through role-play.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' achievement is good because the quality of teaching is good overall, with particular strengths in the teaching in Years 2 and 4.
- The leadership of the subject is very good.
- Mathematical skills are developed well in other subjects.

Commentary

52. Standards in Year 5 are above average. The quality of teaching in Years 3 to 5 is good, on balance, with very good teaching in Year 4; for example, in a series of lessons in Year 4 to develop pupils' understanding of co-ordinates, pupils made very good progress because of detailed lesson planning, very good use of the teaching assistant to help pupils with learning difficulties and the

teacher's very good subject knowledge and relationships with the pupils. The pupils were both very interested in their work and keen to learn. Higher attaining pupils followed instructions independently to make different shapes using co-ordinates and calculated the perimeter of the shapes. They then went on to doubling the size of the shapes and identifying the co-ordinates as well as observing the changes in the perimeter. Lower attaining pupils used an effective computer program to consolidate and extend their learning about co-ordinates. The program gave pupils feedback as to how well they had done.

53. Recent improvements in standards at the end of Year 2 are the effect of the very good leadership of the subject and very good teaching in Year 2. The declining standards in the subject over time have been reversed and pupils' performance at the end of Year 2 is above average. The teaching in Year 2 is characterised by a fast pace, the very good use of the teaching assistant, the teacher's very good knowledge and understanding of the subject and very effective teaching methods using information and communication technology to improve pupils' learning. This was seen in a very good lesson when the teaching skilfully developed pupils' understanding of problem solving following an initial session of combining numbers in different ways to make 20. Higher attaining pupils could divide accurately by two and knew that if four times five was twenty then five times four was also twenty. The pace of the lesson was brisk because of the teacher's quick-fire questioning and very good use of the interactive whiteboard. The teaching assistant worked very well alongside pupils with learning difficulties and enabled them to take a full part in the lesson. The teaching moved seamlessly into 'word problems' as these were brought up immediately on the interactive whiteboard. Important words were highlighted and the teaching encouraged pupils to draw, on small whiteboards, pictures to assist their calculations. Challenging problems involving more than one mathematical operation were set for higher attainers; for example, 'Two rows of chairs were put out in the hall with ten chairs in each row. The headteacher then put out three more rows. How many chairs were used?'

Mathematics across the curriculum

54. Mathematical skills are used and developed well in other subjects. Opportunities are identified in the planning within other subjects and used to support pupils' learning; for example, in science in Year 3, the teacher discussed effectively the data collected and how it could be presented in the form of a bar chart. In Year 1, pupils used pie charts well to display results of a traffic survey in geography.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average by the ends of Year 2 and Year 5.
- The quality of teaching is good so that pupils achieve well.
- Leadership and management are good.
- Most pupils have a good understanding of how to conduct investigations.

Commentary

55. The school made good use of its monitoring systems to identify the need for further emphasis on methods of scientific enquiry in order to raise standards. As a result of this, provision now ensures that most pupils, including those with special educational needs, develop a good understanding of how to conduct investigations. Resources and their use are well organised and pupils are provided with clear structures for scientific investigation. This has proved to be effective and pupils' understanding has considerably improved; for example, in Year 2, pupils used their knowledge of fair testing in their investigations into the rate of melting of ice cubes and included predictions and considerations of their results. By Year 5, pupils showed a good understanding of

the whole process when they devised and organised their own investigations to determine if increases in temperature increase the speed of drying.

56. Teachers usually present work in interesting ways so that pupils enjoy their work and sustain their concentration. In the very stimulating teaching in Year 2, the teacher used a quiz and the very well organised equipment to extend skills in the construction of electrical circuits. Because she had high expectations and made very good use of the interactive whiteboard to illustrate the work, most pupils made very good progress in making predictions about circuits. Because teachers usually use time well and organise pupils and equipment efficiently, pupils work rigorously and achieve highly; in Year 4, for example, the teacher conducted the lesson at a very brisk pace and pupils used ramps and stopwatches enthusiastically so that they made the link between speed and friction. Higher attaining pupils produced particularly clear predictions because the teacher's expectations were high and they were challenged to extend their understanding. Where the pace is less brisk, as in a lesson on pollination and seed distribution with older pupils, opportunities are often missed to extend understanding. Teachers manage pupils well so that they behave well, use equipment sensibly and collaborate effectively with other pupils; in Year 3, for example, pupils worked efficiently in pairs to plan and carry out investigations to compare the strengths of a range of magnets. They then collaborated in loading their results into the computer and in producing graphs to record their results.

57. The school makes good use of teaching assistants during science lessons, particularly with lower attaining pupils, so that any difficulties with language or numeracy skills do not impede their understanding of scientific ideas and processes. Consequently they achieve well. Teachers mark work regularly and provide supportive comments and useful advice to help pupils know how they might improve. This is complemented by the recently introduced termly assessment system where clear targets for improvement are provided. This is helping to raise standards. The school makes increasing use of its extensive grounds in the teaching of science. These include wild and woodland areas, a pond and a vegetable garden. Pupils take part in pond dipping and in Year 2 they measured and investigated the varied growth patterns of sunflowers in the school garden. Activities of this nature are enhanced by visits to such places as an arboretum and a local woodland trust. In this way, motivation is increased, scientific experiences are extended and standards are raised.

58. Leadership and management are good. Improvements since the last inspection are good. The co-ordinator monitors teaching and learning well. He has a good understanding of the subject and provides effective support for staff.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well because the quality of teaching is good.
- The subject is led and managed well.
- Information and communication technology is used well to assist learning in other subjects.

Commentary

59. Pupils' achievement is good. Standards in Year 5 and in Year 2 are above average as a result of good teaching throughout the school. Improvement since the last inspection is good. The improvements in the teaching and the curriculum, since the last inspection, have resulted in pupils now reaching above average standards; for example, in Year 5, pupils gained a better understanding of using computer programs to control events. The teaching was well planned and challenged pupils at different levels of attainment to link inputs to outcomes using appropriate programs. Lower attaining pupils, with effective help from a teaching assistant, enjoyed devising simple instructions to make the brake light of a simulated motorbike illuminate when the brake pedal

was depressed and to sound the horn when the horn control was pressed. Higher attaining pupils worked hard to set up a series of controls to activate heaters, lights, computers and television in a virtual bedroom. The teaching extended the learning through effective questioning to solve difficulties encountered, such as joining an input to two or more outputs.

60. The leadership has encouraged the good development of the provision for the subject. The action plan for the subject provides a clear strategic view for the subject and includes detailed plans to develop practice further. The recent strong emphasis on staff development has improved teachers' skills and confidence in using information and communication technology to support learning in other subjects. The management is effective; however, tracking of pupils' progress over time is at an early stage of development.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

61. Throughout the school, the planning of work in information and communication technology lessons provides good opportunities to use the subject to assist learning in other areas of the curriculum; for example, in Year 2, the teacher used the interactive whiteboard very well to help pupils to edit text during a literacy lesson. The work built well on previous learning and pupils recognised immediately errors in the text because spellings were underlined with red lines and grammatical mistakes were underlined in green by the computer word processing program. Pupils worked with the teacher to correct the text and the teacher's understanding of pupils' literacy skills ensured that questions suited pupils' attainment levels. The pace of learning was brisk and pupils, including those with special educational needs were able to use the keyboard of the computer efficiently to delete and to add text in appropriate places. Pupils knew technical language, such as 'cursor', and were skilled at opening and closing computer programs.

HUMANITIES

62. Geography was sampled. Statutory requirements are met.

63. In **geography**, one lesson was seen. This lesson and pupils' work indicate that the school is providing pupils with a good range of experiences and that literacy and numeracy skills are developed well in the subject. In the lesson seen in Year 3, pupils looked at the similarities of and differences between their environment and an area in India. Good features of the teaching were the clarity of explanations and high expectations of work and behaviour. The pace of learning was brisk and pupils worked hard with interest building well on their prior attainment.

History

Provision in history is **good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' achievement is good and they reach standards above those normally expected by the end of Year 5.
- The subject co-ordinator shows a very good role model in the quality of her teaching.
- Literacy, information and communication technology and numeracy skills are used and applied well in the subject.

Commentary

64. Improvements since the last inspection are good. Standards are now above expectations by the end of Year 5 and pupils' achievement is good. The quality of teaching in Years 3 to 5 was good. It was not possible to see any teaching of the subject in Years 1 and 2; however, examination of pupils' work indicates that a good range of topics has been studied. The marking in Year 2 was detailed and challenging. The subject is led and managed well.

65. The quality of teaching and learning is good. The teaching of the subject co-ordinator in Year 4 was of a high standard. In the lesson seen, a very wide range of pictures of Tudor houses enhanced pupils' learning. The questioning of pupils was very good, highlighting differences between rich and poor people's homes, because of the co-ordinator's very good subject knowledge. The teaching assistant helped pupils with learning difficulties very well as she clarified questions and encouraged them to answer. The teaching developed speaking and listening skills very well in order to deepen and extend pupils' knowledge and understanding. Pupils were engrossed in their work and made very good progress in developing their use of historical skills of enquiry.

66. Lesson observations and examination of pupils' work show that English, information and communication technology and mathematical skills are practised and used well to support learning in the subject.

Religious Education

Provision in religious education is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above those normally expected at the ends of Year 2 and Year 5.
- Pupils achieve well because the quality of teaching and learning is good.
- The subject contributes well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Commentary

67. Standards are above average at the ends of Year 2 and Year 5 because thorough planning, based on the locally agreed syllabus of religious education, ensures that pupils have good opportunities to learn about and from religion. This is enhanced by the good quality of teaching which helps most pupils, including those with special educational needs, to achieve well. Improvement since the last inspection is good. The subject is led and managed well.

68. Lessons are planned well and taught effectively so that pupils work with enthusiasm to develop their learning; for example, in Year 2, pupils gained a better understanding of the Jewish festival of Passover because the teacher used a multimedia presentation to capture pupils' interest followed by good use of resources to help children to understand the symbolism of the foods eaten at the Passover meal. The learning built well on pupils' previous learning about Moses.

69. Examination of pupils' work shows pupils gain a better understanding of major world faiths, particularly Christianity, Islam and Judaism. Pupils develop a good understanding of similarities of and differences between these different religions; for example, in Year 5, pupils realised that Christians, Muslims and Jews worship only one god. They gained an insight into Muslims' customs of charitable giving and, after studying and discussing the Christian story of 'The Good Samaritan' in the Bible, suggested how they could help others. In Year 3, pupils studied a psalm and reflected on the meaning and the feelings expressed.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

70. Art and design, design and technology, music and physical education were sampled. Statutory requirements are met.

71. In **art and design**, a joint Year 1 and Year 2 lesson was seen. Strengths were the lesson planning that carefully matched the learning to the pupils' needs and built on pupils' previous experiences. Teachers' planning shows that the outside environment is used well to promote the subject and the school has special themed weeks to add interesting experiences and enrich learning for the pupils. In the woodland area, the pupils have created an exhibition of enlarged

sculptured insects, such as caterpillars and ladybirds which demonstrate the pupils' skills in using a range of materials and techniques to make the imaginative and colourful arrangement of woodland creatures. Pupils are also developing skills in using other media, such as clay. Using the expertise of a local potter, the pupils used the potter's wheel to make clay pots and decorated them in an Egyptian style linked to their history studies. These are proudly displayed in the entrance hall. A weakness is the long-term plan is that it does not make clear the differences in expectations between each year group.

72. No lessons were seen in **design and technology**. Evidence from teachers' planning and displays indicate that the pupils are developing satisfactory skills in planning, designing and evaluating; for example, puppet making in Year 2, where pupils discussed the purpose and process, made a prototype from paper, refined the design and selected suitable materials and tools to make their own individual puppet. Older pupils develop more complex skills by using a range of joining techniques to make human skeletons from card and paper.

73. In the **music** lesson observed in Year 5, the learning was effective because the teacher recapped on the previous lesson, had good subject knowledge and praised the pupils' achievements. In turn, the pupils responded well, sang tunefully with clear diction and, after practising, improved their performance. The pupils with special educational needs were supported well by the student teacher and were able to follow the lyrics and join in the singing. Music enriches the curriculum and there are a school choir and a recorder club run by the staff as after school clubs. All pupils in Year 2 learn to play the recorder as part of the curriculum and visiting musicians come into the school to teach pupils to play a range of instruments.

74. No teaching was seen in **physical education**. The school plans a good range of sporting opportunities for the pupils. All pupils, from Year 1 onwards, attend weekly swimming lessons, Year 5 pupils take part in outdoor pursuits on a residential visit and the students from the local high school coach the pupils in games lessons. Members of staff run popular after school clubs in football, hockey, cricket, gymnastics and street dancing. Other visiting specialists are used to enable the pupils to experience sports, such as golf. The pupils take part in galas and tournaments with other local schools, in rugby, football, swimming and cross-country. Pupils' achievements in physical education are celebrated in assemblies, contributing to pupils' self esteem.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

75. This area of the curriculum was sampled. Statutory requirements are met in regard to the school's provision for sex education and drug education.

76. In the one lesson seen in Year 5, pupils gained a better understanding of the differences between assertiveness, aggression and passive behaviour. The teaching was well planned and pupils' interest and enthusiasm was good.

77. The school has a caring ethos and this helps to support personal and social development. During personal, social, health and citizenship education lessons, pupils have well-organised opportunities to discuss issues and learn to listen to others' opinions; in Year 2, for example, pupils potted plants and considered how the environment might be improved. Pupils help to deepen their understanding of democracy through the work of class councils and the school council. The school council has its own budget and effectively addresses issues in the life and work of the school, such as the provision of playground equipment. Provision for pupils to learn about the uses and abuses of drugs is good. This occurs during personal, social, health and citizenship education lessons, when the life education caravan visits school and as part of the science curriculum. Sex education is taught as part of the science curriculum and, in particular, in Year 5 with the help of the school nurse.

78. Class and school councils provide good opportunities for pupils to influence the life and work of the school and pupils contribute to a wide range of charities to help those less fortunate than themselves. Visitors to the school, such as the community policeman, help pupils to reflect on

issues of their own safety and the rule of law. The school provides pupils with well-considered opportunities to address conservation issues. Pupils help to organise the healthy snack bar and help with the day to day running of the school. They have many opportunities to learn how to collaborate with each other during their residential visits and in such activities as talking partnerships in English lessons and in conducting investigations in science.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	3
How inclusive the school is	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	3
Overall standards achieved	3
Pupils' achievement	3
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities (ethos)	3
Attendance	5
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
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	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	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	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3
The leadership and management of the school	3
The governance of the school	4
The leadership of the headteacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	3

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