

INSPECTION REPORT

BARLEY CROFT PRIMARY SCHOOL

Leicester

LEA area: Leicester City

Unique reference number: 120050

Headteacher: Mr Tim Foster

Lead inspector: Mr Alan Blank

Dates of inspection: 1 - 3 December 2003

Inspection number: 255426

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:	232
School address:	Malham Close Beaumont Leys Leicester
Postcode:	LE4 0UT
Telephone number:	0116 2359008
Fax number:	0116 2359008
Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Barrie Byford
Date of previous inspection:	23 February 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Barley Croft Primary school is situated in the Beaumont Leys area of Leicester. It is an area of significant disadvantage. There are 239 pupils on roll, which is about average for primary schools nationally, aged between 4 and 11 years. Pupils come from a range of ethnic backgrounds including 33 pupils from families of refugees and asylum seekers. 25 pupils are at an early stage of learning English and there are 18 different languages spoken in families who use the school. A high number of pupils have special educational needs (38 per cent), including 19 who have formal statements of need. This figure is very high and the school has a unit for pupils who require special support for speech and language. The free school meal figure is very high at 65 per cent and pupil mobility is also very high. Over half the pupils in Year 6 did not start their primary education at the school. During the last academic year 93 pupils (39%) either arrived or left within the year.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
8358	Mr Alan Blank	Lead inspector	Science Geography History
9520	Mr John Leigh	Lay inspector	
13118	Mr George Loizou	Team inspector	Mathematics Physical education Religious education
30724	Ms Delia Hiscock	Team inspector	English Art and design Music Areas of learning in the Foundation stage
19897	Mr Arthur Evans	Team inspector	Information and communication technology Design and technology Special educational needs English as an additional language

The inspection contractor was:

Nord Anglia School Inspection Services
Anglia House
Clarendon Court
Carrs Road
Cheadle
SK8 2LA

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

The effectiveness and value for money provided by the school are currently **satisfactory** as a result of very recent improvements. Pupils' achievement is **sound**, but standards are very low. The attainment of pupils on entry is very low and pupil mobility is very high. Though teaching is satisfactory overall, it needs to improve in order to raise pupils' achievement and hence standards. The new headteacher has made a very good start in leading the school towards becoming more effective.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The new leadership team is very clear about how to improve pupils' achievement and standards and the school is currently very well managed.
- Provision for pupils who have special educational needs is good in the main school and very good in the speech and language unit.
- Links with parents and the local community are very good. Parents and pupils hold the school in high esteem.
- The care and guidance provided for pupils are very good with some excellent features.
- Information communication technology is used well across the curriculum.
- Standards are very low and have not improved since the last inspection.
- Provision for science and religious education is unsatisfactory
- Attendance rates are poor and punctuality is unsatisfactory.

Despite improvements in teaching and the behaviour of pupils, standards have not improved since the last inspection, and they remain very low. The school has not kept pace with the improvement in standards in schools nationally, though results in 2003 were better than in the previous year. Many of the key issues raised by the last inspection were procedural and organisational. Generally, progress in these areas has been good. However, it is the judgement of the inspection team that several of the improvements are recent.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

*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.*

Achievement overall is satisfactory

Children enter school and leave the reception class with very low attainment and limited formal pre-school experiences. The standards attained by seven-year-old pupils in reading, writing and mathematics are generally very low and in the lowest five per cent of schools nationally. Similarly the standards attained by pupils, aged 11 are in the lowest five per cent of schools nationally. However, the progress of pupils between 7 and 11 is average. Results in national tests for 11 year olds were much better in 2003 than in the previous year. For standards to rise, pupils' achievement and progress will have to exceed current average levels. Over half the pupils in Year 6 did not join the school at the normal time, aged about 5 years. Pupil mobility (pupils coming and going throughout the year) is very high and this lowers standards.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall.

Pupils' moral and social development is very good and results in their good attitudes to school and good behaviour. The care and support of the most vulnerable pupils are very good with some excellent features. This ensures that they do not become isolated and excluded from the learning process. Despite the school's rigorous efforts, attendance rates are poor and the punctuality of some families is unsatisfactory.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The school provides a satisfactory quality of education in an area that has significant social disadvantage. Taken overall, teaching throughout the school is **satisfactory**, except in the speech and language unit where it is very good. Though half the teaching observed during the inspection was good or better, and pupils learned well in these lessons, pupils' achievement over time is only satisfactory. Sometimes teaching, though sound, lacks challenge for all pupils; is not dynamic enough, and does not stimulate pupils sufficiently. Teaching also suffers from poor use of time within the school day and sometimes pupils are expected to sit and listen passively for too long. The care and support of pupils and the links with their families are very good. Provision in science is unsatisfactory and provision in religious education does not meet statutory requirements. The overall quality of the curriculum is unsatisfactory because of the above shortcomings and the fact that time is not used well throughout the school day.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The new headteacher has made a **very good** start and the current leadership team is **very effective**. The school is currently **very well** managed. The current leadership team has a clear view of the school's current strengths and weaknesses and how to improve the school, focusing on teaching and learning to improve achievement and standards. Governors perform most of their tasks adequately, however they **do not meet statutory requirements** in regard to provision in religious education.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents think highly of the school and are becoming increasingly involved in its life, in response to the school's efforts to involve them more. Pupils are very positive about the school. They respond well to the guidance and care provided for them and the opportunities for sport outside the school day.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The most important things the school should do to improve are to raise pupils' achievement and standards by:

- Providing lessons that are more interesting and dynamic;
- Developing basic skills more systematically, especially in literacy;
- Making better use of time throughout the school day;
- Improving provision in science,

and, to meet statutory requirements:

- Improve provision in religious education.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

The achievement of the majority of pupils is **satisfactory**. Pupils' attainment on entry is **very low** and the standards they attain when aged 7 and 11 are **very low** compared to other schools. The very high mobility of pupils has an important impact on the standards they attain.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards throughout the school are still very low in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science and have not improved since the last inspection in 1999.
- The proportion of pupils aged 11 attaining the expected levels in English, mathematics and science was much higher in 2003 than in the previous year.
- Children's social development in the reception class is very good.
- Pupils in the speech and language unit make very good progress and achieve very well.

Commentary

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	10.0 (10.4)	15.7 (15.8)
Writing	8.9 (9.5)	14.6 (14.4)
Mathematics	11.6 (11.6)	16.3 (16.5)

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

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	21.7 (20.7)	26.8(27.0)
Mathematics	22.9 (22.2)	26.8(26.7)
Science	25.2 (21.9)	28.6(28.3)

There were 25 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

1. Children's attainment is very low when they join the reception class and most have very limited formal, pre-school experiences. A nursery is about to be opened adjacent to the school, as part of the national 'Sure Start' scheme. However, the attainment of current pupils, measured by the baseline assessment, is one of the lowest for any school in the city of Leicester. Children make very good progress in their social development and sound progress in other areas of learning. Even so children's attainment is well below average when they move into Year 1.

Years 1 and 2

2. By the end of Year 2, standards in reading were lower in 2003 than at the time of the last inspection in 1999; they were higher in that year than at any time since. Standards in writing and mathematics were similar in 2003 to those found in 1999 and they have been at that level fairly consistently in the intervening years. Standards in these key areas have been, and

continue to be, very low. Results in national tests are frequently in the lowest five per cent of all schools and in the lowest five per cent of schools that have over 50 per cent of their pupils eligible for free school meals, like Barley Croft. Pupils' achievement during these two years is average, but because of their very low attainment on entry, standards remain very low.

3. To raise standards, pupils' achievement and progress must improve; satisfactory progress is just not enough. The difference in attainment between boys and girls is not significantly different from the pattern found nationally. In design technology, art and design and physical education, pupils attain average standards and their achievement is good, because of good provision and teaching. In history and geography standards are very low because pupils' literacy skills are poor, but they make satisfactory progress in their knowledge in both areas. In science and religious education standards are very low and pupils' progress is unsatisfactory, because the provision in both subjects is unsatisfactory. In information and communication technology (ICT), pupils' attainment is below average, but progress is good and pupils use ICT extensively in several subject areas.

Years 3 to 6

4. By the end of Year 6, standards in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science are the same as they were at the time of the last inspection in 1999. Compared to other schools, standards are very low and results in 2003 were in the lowest five per cent of schools nationally. However the proportion of pupils reaching the expected level in the three subjects in total was much higher in 2003 than in 2002. Published results show that out of a possible score of 300 Barley Croft scored 95 in 2002 and 140 in 2003. When results in 2003 are compared to those of schools that are similar, they were well below average in English, below average in mathematics and average in science. Standards are lowered by a very high turnover of pupils. Over half the pupils in Years 3 to 6 did not join the school in the reception year. In the academic year 2002/3, 93 pupils arrived or left the school during the year. Pupils who stay at Barley Croft for the full four years almost always make at least the progress that is expected of children nationally. The school did not meet its targets for 2003, but these too were affected by pupil mobility.
5. Records that track pupils' progress indicate that some pupils who have English as an additional language, many of whom are members of families who are refugees or asylum seekers, begin to make better than average, and sometimes very good progress, once they have become confident in English. Pupils in the main school who have special educational needs make the same progress as other pupils. They are well supported and the school has several special programmes that use intensive methods to improve the literacy skills of these pupils. Pupils in the speech and language unit all have statements of special need. The pupils range from 5 to 9 years of age. They make very good progress and are integrated very successfully into the main school for some lessons.
6. The last inspection was optimistic about the school's capacity to improve standards. This optimism has not been justified in the years since 1999. The current headteacher, and senior staff, are not complacent about current standards. Using a model based on existing attainment and good and very good progress, the school has set very challenging targets for 2004 and 2005. The senior management team have also produced a specific plan to raise attainment and accelerate progress. Clearly, the school and those closely involved with it need to monitor the effectiveness of this plan very carefully. In the view of the inspection team the school is well placed to improve achievement and to meet targets that take account of pupils' mobility.

7. Standards and progress in other subjects reflect those found in Years 1 and 2. In design technology, art and design and physical education, standards are average and progress is satisfactory. In history and geography poor language and literacy skills lead to standards that are well below average though progress is satisfactory. In science and religious education standards are well below average. Pupils' progress and provision generally is unsatisfactory. In science this is largely because pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to experiment and investigate so as to develop the practical skills associated with science. In religious education the school is not meeting the statutory requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. In ICT standards are below average, but progress is good and pupils make good use of ICT across the curriculum. Some gifted and talented pupils display very good skills in some aspects of ICT.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Children's attitudes, values and behaviour are **good** because of **very good** provision for social and moral development. This is an improvement on the previous inspection. Attendance is **poor** and punctuality is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The inclusion of all pupils is very good.
- The school's efforts to encourage better attendance are very thorough.
- The very high expectations for conduct and behaviour are very high.
- The relationships throughout the school and respect for racial and ethnic differences are very good.

Commentary

8. Most pupils are enthusiastic about school. Despite the school's efforts and a recently improving trend, attendance is well below the national average. Some pupils often arrive late. Parents are very well aware of the importance of good attendance, but not all absences are explained. Unauthorised absences are well above national average.
9. Pupils like and feel secure in school. They are polite, helpful and considerate. When lessons are stimulating, pupils show interest in their work and immerse themselves fully in what the school provides. For example, a Year 2 class enthusiastically followed instructions to make Christmas cards, using quite detailed paper spring devices, and wrote instructions for a cake recipe using computers.
10. Because of clear expectations, most children behave well. Inappropriate behaviour is always challenged and dealt with. Most pupils are calm, display self-control and behave well even when they are not under direct supervision. A few pupils can be disruptive, but they are not allowed to have an impact on the learning of the majority. Very good relationships are evident. Break times and mealtimes are well supervised and pupils are happy and safe.
11. Pupils develop confidence and self esteem. Children, who are new to the school, sometimes from other countries, become self-assured. For example, in Years 3 and 4 pupils confidently acted out a play speaking parts in English, which for many was not their first language. Skilful questioning by teachers ensures that children are encouraged to speak in front of their friends.
12. Adults consistently praise children to build their self-esteem. In assemblies and 'circle times', they reflect on their feelings. For example, what makes them happy and sad. Older pupils wearing orange hats act as 'special friends' and support younger children at playtimes. Pupils use their initiative and value the opportunity to learn from mistakes. They carry out the responsibilities given to them with pride. For example, they complete the dinner registers at lunchtime.

13. A feature of the school is the impressive extent to which all pupils are included in the improving climate for learning.
14. Pupils develop a very good understanding and respect for other people's feelings, values and beliefs. The school is satisfactory in fostering self-knowledge and spiritual awareness. Because of the school's efforts, pupils develop a very good sense of right and wrong and what is acceptable. For example, they sit quietly and calmly, listen carefully in lessons and assemblies and move about the school sensibly. Pupils are introduced to cultural diversity. The school introduces pupils to a broad range of cultures. For example, it celebrates festivals and traditions of other cultures such as Diwali, Ramadan, extending their awareness and familiarity with other cultures and religions.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence	
School data	4.3
National data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	
School data	5.3
National data	0.4

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

Exclusions

Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
White – Irish
White – any other White background
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean
Mixed – White and Asian
Asian or Asian British – Indian
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background
Black or Black British – Caribbean
Black or Black British – African
Any other ethnic group

Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
143	3	1
1	0	0
13	0	0
13	2	0
5	0	0
5	0	0
1	0	0
1	0	0
9	0	0
27	0	0
21	0	0

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides a **satisfactory** quality of education for its pupils overall. The provision for pupils who have special educational needs is **good** in the main school and **very good** in the speech and language unit.

Teaching and learning

Overall, teaching and learning are **satisfactory** throughout the school. However, teaching in the speech and language unit is **very precise and well informed**. The teaching of small groups of pupils who have special educational needs or are gifted and talented is **good**. The provision for children's social development in the reception class is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching in the speech and language unit is very good and sometimes excellent
- Pupils with special educational needs are taught well in small groups and supported well in larger classes.
- Teachers manage behaviour very well.
- Teachers involve and integrate pupils very well, providing equal opportunity for all.
- Some teaching does not challenge pupils sufficiently for pupils' achievement to be good.
- Some lessons are dull, have pupils listening for too long and suffer from poor timetabling.
- Provision in science and religious education is unsatisfactory.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 52 lessons

(Please note grades subject to confirmation upon receipt of evidence base)

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1 (2 %)	5 (10 %)	23 (44 %)	23 (44 %)	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.

15. During the inspection 52 lessons were observed throughout the school. In 6 of these the teaching was very good and in one lesson it was excellent. The majority of very good teaching was seen in the speech and language unit, where teachers and support staff are very well informed about how to develop pupils' ability to listen, speak, read and write. Teaching here is often very precise and uses techniques that take pupils' learning on in very small steps.
16. Throughout the rest of the school the quality of teaching is consistent, with no significant difference in quality between year groups or key stages. Overall the quality of teaching is satisfactory and this is reflected in pupils' learning and the progress they make. The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection. Very good teaching then accounted for only 7 per cent, whilst 14 per cent of teaching was unsatisfactory. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed during this inspection.
17. The behaviour of pupils has improved since the last inspection and this has much to do with the effective way in which the teachers and senior managers have established and maintained behavioural standards. Teachers are calm and consistent; they provide clear guidelines for pupils on what is expected and what is not acceptable. Senior managers support teachers well. They make regular visits to classes throughout the day and often reinforce good behaviour, correct bad behaviour and ask pupils to discuss what they are learning. As a result pupils know that they need to concentrate and be alert. The school has several strategies to help pupils who may be upset or finding it hard to stay on task. Sometimes at the start of the day, or within lessons, pupils receive individual counselling to enable them to learn.
18. Teachers make good use of learning-support assistants. These assistants often work alongside pupils who have special educational needs or are at an early stage of learning English. They are prepared well so that they can work independently, supporting individuals in whole-class sessions, and groups when classes divide to carry out written tasks. Assistants

often help groups of pupils to use computers in a range of lessons. For instance, in a literacy lesson in Year 1 a small group of pupils used computers to read words and phrases from a reading scheme. The use of computers generally is good and teachers are adept at finding relevant tasks that simultaneously develop pupils' knowledge and their computer skills.

19. Though sound overall, teaching has not improved standards since the last inspection. For pupils' achievement to improve, the quality of teaching must improve to become good and very good more often. Lessons often lack spark and then pupils are passive in their learning. There is insufficient challenge for some pupils to achieve well and very well. In some sessions teachers spend too long giving instructions and do not allow enough time for pupils to work and learn for themselves.
20. Some lessons suffer from poor timetabling. On one morning, pupils in Years 3 and 4 began with handwriting practice. After 15 minutes they went to literacy groups for spelling, for another fifteen minutes or so, the formal literacy session. There was too much movement and too little time for most pupils to finish the set tasks. As a result pupils were frustrated and did not gain the satisfaction of knowing they had done well. It was ineffective use of time and the activities were too similar. In other sessions pupils return from assembly, where they have been sitting and listening for 20 minutes or so, to find that they are expected to sit for another 20 minutes or more during the introduction of a lesson. The expectation of pupils' concentration is too high and progress to actual learning activities is too slow. Some sessions are too long making it difficult for teachers to maintain pupils' interest.
21. The teaching in science is unsatisfactory because teachers do not provide enough opportunities for pupils to experiment or carry out practical investigations. As a result the development of pupils' skills in observing, measuring and planning activities, and in recording and analysing results is poor. Often topics are not taught in sufficient depth.
22. In religious education the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus are not being met and teachers need to give this subject greater attention.
23. Teachers' marking of pupils' work varies in quality. At times, marking provides pupils with encouragement and ideas for improvement. At other times, quite large swathes of work go by, receiving ticks but with no evidence of interaction between teacher and pupil to help to move learning on. Teachers do make good use of targets for pupils' learning, especially in English and mathematics. Teachers often begin lessons by sharing objectives for pupils' learning. Most subjects have elements of assessment associated with them that enable teachers to know what pupils have learned and understood. Good use is made of assessment in English and mathematics to track pupils' progress and to set targets for results in national tests. Assessment in ICT is underdeveloped.
24. The teaching and learning of pupils with SEN in mainstream classes are good. The teachers match work well to the needs of these pupils and they deploy teaching assistants effectively to provide the necessary support. Certain pupils are occasionally withdrawn to the speech and language unit, where they receive very good teaching in developing their communication skills. Care is taken to ensure that these pupils do not miss the same lesson each week.
25. Teaching in small groups, aimed at pupils who have special educational needs, is good. Several staff have very specific skills and knowledge that enable them to develop pupils' literacy skills. There was also very good teaching when a group of mixed age pupils from Year 1 to Year 6, identified as gifted and talented, produced multi-media presentations on computers. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 worked on a topic to do with healthy eating, and other pupils do with geography. The session was very successful. It provided pupils with opportunities to work imaginatively and independently whilst younger pupils in particular achieved very high standards. Pupils who have English as an additional language are well supported and make good progress in becoming confident in English.

26. The school's new plan for raising achievement and standards has a strong focus on teaching and learning. It recognises the need to raise the overall standard of teaching and has clear ideas on how this can be achieved. A systematic process of monitoring and evaluation of learning has been introduced this term. There is a clear plan to develop teaching through modelling of good practice and the introduction of strategies to accelerate learning. The new headteacher has high expectations of teaching and learning that are reflected in his work with pupils in classes and assemblies.

The curriculum

The curriculum does not meet pupils' needs in full and has is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good.
- Match of support staff to the curriculum is good.
- There is good provision for extra-curricular activities.
- The religious education curriculum does not meet statutory requirements.
- The curriculum lacks breadth and balance in science.
- Time is not used as effectively as it could be.

Commentary

27. Provision in subjects of the National Curriculum meets statutory requirements except for religious education. The locally agreed syllabus for religious education is not fully implemented and the subject is inadequately covered. Provision in science is unsatisfactory, with insufficient emphasis on developing pupils' skills in the subject.
28. The curriculum is not as broad or balanced as it should be. The national strategies for numeracy and literacy are used satisfactorily. Emphasis is rightly placed on developing basic skills in literacy and numeracy. However, time is not always used as effectively or as efficiently as it could be. Some mathematics lessons are too long, and some shorter sessions aimed at developing literacy skills lead to fragmented provision in which pupils do not achieve well. The use of time throughout the morning sessions sometimes leads to loss of concentration and motivation. Too little time is allocated to some other subjects such as religious education and sometimes science. In science, too few opportunities are given to pupils to design their own investigations to plan how to carry out experiments. The emphasis on improving pupils' knowledge in science did lead to a significant improvement in results in national tests in 2003. The use of literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum is not planned sufficiently and as a result opportunities to develop knowledge and apply skills in other curriculum areas are not always exploited.
29. The curriculum sometimes focuses too strongly on the knowledge content of work and not enough attention is given systematic development of specific subject skills, such as mapping in geography and scientific enquiry in science. The provision for teaching personal, social and health education is satisfactory.
30. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. It is good in mainstream classes. Pupils who are having difficulties with aspects of their work or behaviour are identified early and teachers construct good individual education plans for them. These plans include short term, achievable targets for the pupils to work towards, together with suggested teaching and learning strategies. Pupils with SEN have equal access to the curriculum and to extra-curricular activities. Access to the Years 5 / 6 teaching base upstairs is difficult for pupils with severe mobility problems.

31. Classroom assistants provide good support for different groups of pupils and work closely with teachers. This is reflected in consistent approaches to learning and behaviour that exploit very good relationships. Pupils who have English as an additional language follow the same curriculum as other pupils, but are supported so that they understand new vocabulary. There are many languages spoken by pupils other than English. The school makes general provision using good principles of support and takes specific advice from specialist support agencies within the local education authority.
32. There is good provision for extra-curricular activities that promote inclusion and are available to older pupils. Many clubs take place at lunchtimes and after school and are well attended by the pupils from Year 2 to Year 6. The range of clubs is wide and gives pupils time to develop their interests in sports and ICT. Pupils' experiences are broadened through visits to Rutland Water, and an outdoor centre, which is located at the heart of the National Forest. Opportunities for competitive sport are good. All these activities and educational visits make a significant contribution to pupils' social, physical and creative development.

Speech and Language Unit

For pupils with special educational needs the quality of provision in the speech and language unit is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching and learning is very good and sometimes excellent.
- The quality of support staff is very good.
- Very good use is made of resources, including information and communication technology (ICT), to enhance learning.
- Leadership and management are very good.

Commentary

33. Pupils in the speech and language unit do not often attain average standards in literacy and numeracy. However very good and sometimes excellent teaching is enabling them to make very good progress towards their individual learning targets. The achievement of these pupils, in relation to their prior attainment, is good. Teachers plan their lessons very well and make use of a variety of strategies to help the pupils learn. As a warm-up activity in one lesson, the teacher made very effective use of a 'passing the action' game, which helped the pupils to develop their memory, and concentration, and their ability to make eye contact. In another lesson, the teacher made very good use of a 'blink murder' game to achieve the same results.
34. Very good use was observed of other strategies. Makaton signing, colourful semantics, and cued articulation are techniques that are especially useful in helping pupils with significant speech and language problems. The use of language in a social context helps pupils to develop their spoken language skills and extends their vocabulary. The teachers make learning as practical as possible. In a language lesson, teaching and support staff engaged in role-play, getting pupils to recognise emotions expressed facially.
35. Relationships are excellent and this motivates pupils to try hard. A warm, family atmosphere is created in the unit. The pupils are very keen to attend. They are eager to learn and this helps them to make good progress. Teachers show remarkable patience and value the smallest of contributions offered by pupils. They organise group work well. Teaching assistants provide very effective support in groups or in one-to-one situations. The staff make very effective use of resources, including practical apparatus and ICT, to enhance learning.

36. Very good teaching in physical education lessons helps pupils to develop their listening skills and their gymnastic skills. Routines are developed well, such as the correct handling of apparatus and equipment. Pupils' social and cultural awareness is developed very well in the short session which follows morning playtime every day. Here, the pupils have their milk and fruit whilst listening quietly to various types of music, including classical music. Pupils' progress in lessons is carefully monitored and the teachers use assessment well to inform their future teaching. Inclusion of some of these pupils in mainstream classes in the afternoons is very good.
37. Leadership and management of the unit are both very good and have created a very effective team to provide for the needs of the pupils. The unit manager maintains close contact with the mainstream special educational needs coordinator, visiting speech therapists, relevant outside agencies and feeder schools. She involves parents well in their children's education. The unit is well resourced.

Care, guidance and support

Care, guidance and support for pupils are **very good**. This is an improvement on the previous inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The support for those pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties is very good.
- The protection care welfare and protection of all children are very good.
- The school has detailed knowledge of pupils as individuals.
- The trusting relationships that pupils have with adults are excellent.

Commentary

38. Child protection has a very high profile. It is handled sensitively, most effectively and promptly. Staff are well aware of what to do if they suspect, or have disclosed to them, any concern that an individual child may be at risk. Child protection procedures are very thorough. Coordinated arrangements involving the school, parents and other agencies ensure children's welfare.
39. The school ensures that pupils work in a healthy and safe environment. All reasonable steps are taken to keep children safe and protect them from injury or ill health. Safety is supported by effective risk assessment. For example, risk assessments are carried out before off-site visits are made to a local climbing wall or environmental centre.
40. The school provides a secure and caring environment where pupils feel safe and happy. A mentoring facility that provides pupils with an adult to talk to is excellent. Pupils experiencing emotional or social problems are supported before school or in class so that they are able to continue learning. There is an impressive ethos of trust in the school. The provision to include all pupils is very good.
41. The school now has very good procedures to monitor attendance and personal development. Attendance rates have begun to improve since the start of the school year. The importance of punctuality is consistently reinforced.
42. Information on the academic progress of pupils is satisfactory. Good use is now being made of the information to generate learning targets for pupils. Information from the tracking of pupils' progress in core subjects has been used to establish challenging targets for attainment and performance in national tests in 2004 and 2005.

Example of outstanding practice

There is outstanding monitoring and support of behaviour. The school has identified a group of pupils, known as *Positive People*, who meet with the talented Family Learning Co-ordinator at the start of every day, and at other times when support is provided in classes. They discuss how they have met their personal targets such as forgiveness, dealing with anger and co-operating with others. They are helped to understand the value of kindness and giving a compliment. They are very well directed, engaged and supported in exploring their feelings and in improving their self-esteem and confidence, through targeted, focussed conversation and an innovative range of interesting activities. Every pupil has exceptionally detailed tracking records and very good progress is made, particularly in their behaviour in class. These opportunities are making a marked improvement in decreasing disruption in classes and the practice is commendable.

43. Good behaviour and attitudes to work are recognised and rewarded. No instances of oppressive behaviour were seen during the inspection. Pupils understand the consequences of anti-social behaviour and develop very good relationships. They become increasingly independent, self confident and knowledgeable about themselves and healthy and safe living. The school equips pupils well with the skills necessary to become good citizens.
44. Good induction arrangements for inducting pupils into school include pupils who have English as an additional language. The families of refugees and asylum seekers are particularly well received and helped to settle. This ensures a good start is made to pupils' learning and is much appreciated by parents.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Links with parents are very good. Links with the community are **very good**. Links with other schools are **good**. This is an improvement on the previous inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school's Involvement with the community is very good.
- The support provided to families is very good.
- Parents hold the school in high regard.
- The school deals well with concerns and complaints.

Commentary

45. Parents are kept well informed through regular newsletters. The prospectus is well written and illustrated. They have several opportunities to receive information on their child's progress throughout the year. Information for parents whose children have special educational needs is very good. The annual report to parents on their child's progress includes targets for improvement, for example to use capital letters and full stops and to handle data reliably.
46. Parental views are positive and they are very pleased with what the school provides. Those, who have come from different countries, sometimes as refugees, are particularly pleased with the school. The school encourages a strong sense of partnership based on mutual trust and confidence. Parents feel their views are taken seriously. If they are concerned about anything they are confident to approach the school for resolution. An informal group of parents raise funds, which are used to support school trips and provide Christmas presents for children. Parents are very appreciative that their children receive the help and support they need. There are very good relationships between parents and staff. Staff are very approachable.
47. The school is very involved in initiatives aimed at improving the local community and in turn the aspirations of pupils. Examples are the 'Alchemy' regeneration project, the Youth Inclusion project and the local community forum. Many visitors from the local community contribute significantly to the achievement of pupils, for example sports coaches, right-to-read volunteers, a steel band tutor and a classical Asian dancer.

48. The school has made great strides in supporting and encouraging families to be able to help their children's learning through an extensive programme of events organised for families. These include family days out and a family activity club, where staff and families participate in activities such as nature walks, pond dipping, climbing, swimming, juggling and team- building activities. These have been much appreciated by parents and the school is clearly reaping the benefits in better relationships. There is a significant impact on children's attitudes.
49. Links with the secondary schools to which children transfer are good. Transfer is made smooth by the passing on of appropriate information, visits, staff liaison and linking work in the core subjects. This ensures a smooth transition. The school uses its partnership with its local school group effectively.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The current leadership of the school is **very good**. The new headteacher has made an impressive start. He has a clear vision of how to bring about higher standards and has already established ambitious goals as part of the strategic planning. The new headteacher and deputy have evaluated current school effectiveness thoroughly and taken immediate action to improve behaviour and the learning environment. **The school is very well managed**. Governors demonstrate a **sound** understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They fulfil most of their statutory duties and actively promote an inclusive ethos. However governors **do not meet statutory requirements** in monitoring provision in religious education.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The vision, expertise and high aspirations of the new headteacher are impressive. His commitment to inclusion is outstanding.
- The senior managers are very effective in monitoring school performance.
- The quality of strategic planning to bring about change is very good.
- The leadership and management of the speech and language unit are very good
- The governors' monitoring of the curriculum is unsatisfactory.

Commentary

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	975,624	Balance from previous year	136,132
Total expenditure	946,876	Balance carried forward to the next	28,748
Expenditure per pupil	3,628		

50. At the time of the last inspection the school was well led and managed. The inspection team left the school with several key issues, many of which were procedural. The school has made good progress in implementing systems for monitoring and improving weaknesses identified by the team. However, these changes have not led to the improvement in standards that was envisaged by the inspection team. There have been two headteachers between 1999 and the arrival of the current headteacher in September 2003.
51. The newly appointed headteacher has made a very good start. His familiarity with schools in inner city areas that experience high levels of social deprivation, has stood him in good stead. Using his previous experience, he has set about a thorough evaluation of the school's effectiveness and performance. He has been ably supported by the deputy headteacher, and together they have forged a very strong leadership team. Regular formal and informal monitoring of teaching and, more importantly, of learning has provided managers with information on the strengths and weaknesses in the school's provision.

52. The headteacher has quickly established himself as a leader with both credibility and very good communication skills. These have enabled him to establish very good relationships with parents, pupils, staff and the local community. The senior managers have set rigorous standards for pupils' behaviour and led the way to establishing the stable and purposeful learning environment. It is too early for this very good leadership to have had an impact on current academic standards.
53. The school development plan is very well conceived and sets out future development coherently. However, just as importantly, the senior managers and governors have written a specific plan to raise attainment and accelerate progress in the core subjects. The plan sets out a programme for monitoring pupils' learning that has already begun. Careful tracking of their progress has been used to construct challenging targets for all classes and pupils. Radical changes to teaching and learning in classes are planned to challenge all pupils more often and to plan in more detail for classes that have mixed ages within them.
54. The leaders of infant and junior stages are members of the new senior management team. They are new to post, but have begun to play a part in evaluating work in their respective phases of the school. Subject coordinators vary in the impact they have in their subjects. Some are very effective, they clearly have a good understanding of provision in their subjects and provide good leadership for other staff. In other subjects, coordinators have yet to take enough responsibility for provision throughout the school.
55. The management of provision for pupils who have special educational needs is good in the main school and very good in the speech and language unit. The school is very successful in promoting an inclusive atmosphere. Pupils from the speech and language unit receive lessons in classes in the main school, and occasionally pupils from the main school are taught by staff from the unit. Other pupils with special educational needs are supported well so that they can take part in lessons and make the same progress as other pupils.
56. The coordinator for SEN in the main school liaises closely with class teachers and with staff in the speech and language unit in helping to draw up individual education plans for pupils with SEN. She maintains close contact with relevant outside agencies. There is good liaison with SEN staff of the secondary schools to which the pupils transfer. Together with class teachers, the coordinator ensures effective inclusion of some pupils from the speech and language unit in mainstream classes during the afternoons. There are plenty of resources to support the learning of pupils with SEN. There is no member of staff with specific responsibility for pupils who have English as an additional language. However the provision for these pupils is managed well by senior staff and families of these pupils are involved and included generally in school life, assemblies and activities outside school hours.
57. Governors display a satisfactory knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses and are better informed than at the time of the last inspection. They are aware of the significant challenges that the school faces. However, they do not meet statutory requirements regarding the provision of religious education. To develop further, the governors need to find out more about the part they can play in supporting the headteacher and his staff in moving the school on. They need to monitor more closely provision in some subjects and become proactive in raising the school's profile in the community and more determined in providing rigorous views of school performance and effectiveness.
58. The school is run very efficiently on a day-to-day basis. The secretary provides a professional and efficient service to visitors and manages financial aspects of the school budget well.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

The provision for children in the reception class is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Provision for personal and social development has improved significantly and is very good.
- The school provides good quality experiences for role-play.
- There are good links with parents and carers each day.
- Some of the independent learning opportunities for children are not very interesting.
- Opportunities for children to write independently are limited.

59. When children start in reception their attainment is very low. Their knowledge and use of language and their understanding of number and simple mathematical terms are among the lowest in the city. During this first year in school they achieve well. Although attainment is well below that of most children nationally when they start Year 1, the high priority given to the area of personal and social skills fosters the development of each child very well. As a result, they trust adults around them; know what is expected of them, and are happy at school. The quality of teaching is particularly good in this area. Children are familiar with daily routines. There is a good balance between activities that are led by adults and those where children choose for themselves. Some experiences are challenging and some are quite ordinary. This unevenness leads to a moderate pace of learning in some activities.

60. The coordinator for early years was on maternity leave during the inspection. Staff work very well together as a team to organise and plan. They have worked hard to deal with factors that hinder children's chances to achieve, but still more needs to be done to improve children's progress in basic skills. It was only possible to judge the quality of teaching in three areas of learning. In personal, social and emotional development teaching is very good, in communication language and literacy and mathematical development teaching is satisfactory.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a high level of care and support.
- Children grow in confidence and develop independence.
- Adults build a secure and purposeful environment in which children learn to do their best.
- Parents and carers are encouraged to share a daily activity with their children.
- Very effective teaching promotes very good progress.

Commentary

61. The emphasis on social development has improved the provision significantly since the time of the last inspection. Experienced classroom assistants make a significant contribution to the quality of teaching and learning by providing strong foundations for learning and care for children through times of substantial changes in staff. This encouraging climate helps children to feel secure and able to make best use of the resources around them.

62. The children are well versed in the routines and are happy to move purposefully from one activity to another. They spend time absorbed in their play because adults give clear instructions that help them to explore simple activities and resources for themselves. Adults work hard to establish good behaviour and manage children successfully. Children become confident and increasingly independent in the knowledge that adults are there to help them. They leave reception with positive attitudes to school.
63. Priority is given to this area at the start of the day, when children share a choice of activities with family, carers or staff. These shared times are special to children and many of them take the opportunity to show what they can do. In one example a child was pleased to lead his dad around the room and play in the sand before they shared a book together. This practice boosts confidence and links home and school. One child with additional learning needs grasped the chance to use earphones to listen to a story for a sustained period of time. Children learn to co-operate and collaborate well. Additional help by adults from the community eases the children into school in the first school term and helps them to settle, so that they can deal with new ideas alongside people they know and grow to trust.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are lots of good opportunities for talking and listening.
- Resources and activities for role-play are good.
- Children enjoy stories.

Commentary

64. By the time they transfer to year 1, children enjoy the books they share with adults. Some children are beginning to use single-letter sounds to build unfamiliar words. About half the children are familiar with words they recognise in the books they read. Well planned role-play opportunities provide vital ingredients for learning; these enrich children's speaking skills and broaden their experience of the world. Everyday resources are used skilfully to trigger the connections between what children know and new experiences. For example, in the "Opticians" shop, children are invited to sample the range of glasses on offer, and to take the opportunity to be a customer or play the role of the optician. They learn new words and use them as they play for a considerable period of time with the able and sensitive guidance of an adult.
65. Children can copy simple three-letter words and sentences, but have few opportunities to engage in writing notes and messages for themselves. They enjoy writing as a means to improve their control and handwriting skills. However, materials for writing are ordinary and activities are not planned well enough to link with the other areas of learning. There are limited opportunities for children to write as a means of communication. Although they make sound progress, this could be better.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Adults introduce the children to an interesting range of activities, songs and number rhymes.
- Too few activities are planned to enrich mathematical exploration.

Commentary

66. Children understand and deal with numbers to 3 and some children can count on to 5. Many of them have limited mathematical vocabulary and awareness of pattern. Adults use a range of interesting activities to develop mathematical understanding and enable children to make sound progress. For example, in one session children made sand castles and counted flags up to 5, to consolidate their understanding of the numbers. Another group of children developed their understanding of number through the use of rhymes such as 'Five Little Ducks'. Classroom assistants give regular support and encourage children to talk about the shapes they use as they draw and build. There are not enough activities for children to develop a breadth of mathematical ideas beyond those of number.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children gain confidence and skill in their use of computers and earphones.
- Planned links with other areas of learning are minimal.

Commentary

67. Some links are planned across the areas of learning include elements of science and technology. Opportunities for exploring new ideas help children to understand some features of the world. For example, children observe and record the weather each day. Children make good use of the bank of computers and the listening station, where they love to listen to stories. They control the cursor and mouse on the computer with the skill expected of most four year olds. Good access to computers helps to fine-tune their mouse control and consolidate learning. In one example, two boys compared their progress on screen and offered tips to each other. Children make good use of these technological resources and are achieving well. There are plenty of opportunities to explore their environment.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

No judgement was made about the provision for this area of learning.

Main strengths and weaknesses

None identified.

Commentary

68. Lunchtime supervision provides children with the opportunity to develop their mobility and stamina on tricycles and trolleys outdoors. No direct teaching was observed. In lessons indoors, children used small tools and equipment well. Many of them are not as skilful as most four years olds, but are making rapid progress as a result of the opportunities to manipulate different tools and materials such as play-dough, card, scissors and glue. There is a good balance between children exploring these for themselves and activities directed and supported by adults.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Creative use of ordinary resources by adults in role-play.
69. With support from adults, some of the children's paintings and drawings represent people and objects and are typical of four-year olds learning to coordinate their ideas and skills. Overall their work is well below that typically seen of four years olds. Children paint and explore the media around them both with and without adult support. Over time, the children improve their skills in drawing and painting and in using materials in different ways. The work on display shows that children learn different techniques such as paint mixing and collage. Children have good opportunities to express themselves imaginatively in role-play and they cooperate purposefully with others for sustained periods of time. Staff provide stimulation and ideas to sustain children's play. A limited amount of singing was seen during the inspection.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The subject is well led and managed.
- Test results are used well to set targets for individual pupils, classes and year groups.
- Teachers and classroom assistants manage behaviour well.
- Provision for pupils with SEN is good.
- The teaching of the basic skills of reading and writing is not always as effective as it could be.
- Standards are very low. Pupils' handwriting and presentation of their work are weak in Years 3 to 6.

Commentary

70. Standards in English are very low in both Year 2 and Year 6 compared to schools nationally. Results in tests taken by pupils in Year 6 were well below average in 2003 compared to similar schools. Classroom support assistants share in the planning process and support pupils and well, both individually and in groups. These groups include pupils with additional learning needs and those with statements of special educational needs. Very good assessment of pupils' needs underpins this process. It helps teachers and other staff to respond rapidly and enables pupils to make sound progress. All pupils have a book with their own targets in English, which are shared with them and reviewed in detail. This is a relatively new process for pupils and only a few can confidently explain their targets. Teachers expect pupils to work hard and apply themselves. However in some lessons the level of challenge is not always high enough to ensure good or very good progress or to encourage some pupils to learn at a better rate.
71. A key factor in the school's success in ensuring that pupils maintain an average rate of progress in English lies in the strong management of the subject. There are factors that limit attainment in English and hinder pupils' progress. Many pupils leave or come to the school at times other than the start of school years. The school population is unstable. Those pupils who stay at Barley Croft for significant periods of time make sound progress. The co-ordinator

and headteacher ensure that there is careful analysis of how well pupils are learning, and use the information to develop challenging targets. This has led to a realistic but challenging plan to improve the progress that pupils make in reading and writing as they move from Year 2 to Year 6.

72. Throughout the school there is an emphasis on the development of the basic skills of reading and writing. Unfortunately, the impact of school training to implement the methods used in the National Literacy Strategy over the last few years has been lost as staff have moved on.
73. In Years 1 and 2 steady, systematic teaching of words develops reading skills. However, many children do not have the skills to work out unfamiliar words confidently when they read and write. In addition, the high rate of pupils joining and leaving the school in different year groups makes the range of learning needs wide and complicates the teaching process. The school manages this well by organizing groups to ensure that all pupils benefit from an appropriate level of support. Evidence in lessons indicates that attainment is likely to improve in this academic year. Skills are improving and pupils are conscientious. It is evident from discussions with pupils, particularly boys, that they consider that writing is boring and, although they do not baulk at hard work, they do not enjoy many lessons. Teachers need to devise lessons which motivate pupils to write. Group and individual reading sessions are used to develop and extend pupils' skills. Evidence from hearing pupils read and a scrutiny of their work shows that their knowledge about books is narrow. There are too few opportunities for pupils to write for a range of purposes in both key stages. The school has recognized this recently and taken swift action to compensate and enrich the quality of resources for writing. Pupils who are gifted and talented did use literacy skills well to write and design multi-media presentations in one session. Pupils with English as an additional language make good progress when they have developed confidence in using English. For pupils experiencing emotional difficulties, the school has developed an outstanding method of intervention to enable pupils to stay in class and continue learning.
74. The handwriting and presentation of work of the oldest pupils reflect the low standards that prevail throughout the school. Some pupils produce neat, well presented work in a clear style in their handwriting lessons, but this does not always appear in other books.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

Teachers provide pupils with some opportunities to practise their speaking and listening skills and their reading in other subjects, but these are not planned well enough in each year group to raise attainment. The school has plans in place to develop speaking skills. In many of the lessons seen during the inspection, pupils were expected to talk about what they had learned but speaking skills were not always developed systematically. Other subjects such as history, geography, religious education and science are not always exploited fully to enhance literacy skills.

MATHEMATICS

- Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Procedures for monitoring provision and standards in mathematics have improved since the last inspection.
- The use of ICT has improved and contributes well to pupils' understanding of mathematics.
- Standards are very low throughout the school and have not improved since the last inspection. There is insufficient emphasis on problem solving.

Commentary

75. Standards in mathematics in both Year 2 and Year 6 are very low. In national tests in 2003, only half of pupils in both year groups reached the expected levels, and only a very small number, attained higher levels. Standards have not risen since the last inspection and the school was unable to meet its targets for 2003. Compared with similar schools, standards are below average. The achievement of pupils who spend significant periods of time at Barley Croft is satisfactory.
76. The school has recently improved the way it monitors provision and standards in mathematics. It is more rigorous and focuses on analysing results, setting targets and tracking the performance and progress of individual pupils. Pupils identified in Years 2 and 5 as underachieving are given individual action plans which clearly identify areas that need to be improved. Learning support assistants, who work closely with the class teachers, give extra support. Pupils' work is regularly sampled to evaluate standards and achievement by the subject co-ordinator, who also monitors teaching and learning regularly. The impact has been positive in a very short time and both pupils and staff are aware that the school expects an improvement in standards.
77. ICT is used effectively to help pupils develop mathematical skills and understanding. Teachers use computers to interest and motivate their pupils and to help them practise new mathematical skills. Year 3 pupils use computers to help them understand place value in numbers up to 100. They are well supported by teaching assistants. In Year 6, pupils competently use computers to plot co-ordinates. Pupils enjoy using computers and have positive attitudes towards their work. Year 2 pupils use computers to draw graphs that show how they get to school. They work well together and are keen to complete their work.
78. Very high numbers of pupils have experienced disruption to their learning through frequent school moves and adjustments between different cultural environments. This very high turn over of pupils has been a characteristic of the school during the last three years. A very high proportion of pupils are on the special educational needs register. School evaluations and inspection evidence show that most of the pupils who stay at the school for significant periods make satisfactory progress. Pupils with special educational needs and pupils from minority ethnic groups also make satisfactory progress. In lessons throughout the school, pupils understand ideas in the whole-class sessions but only the more able pupils find it easy to work independently and record work. This is partly because poor literacy skills restrict pupils' ability to record work and express mathematical thinking.
79. The main focus of the school is to improve pupils' numeracy skills. Pupils make satisfactory progress, but they have limited skills in problem solving. Work in pupils' books shows little evidence of them being taught how to find different ways of approaching complex problems.
80. Teaching is satisfactory and has improved since the last inspection, but needs to improve further if standards are to rise. Lessons were seen where teachers provided a good range of practical activities that involved and interested the pupils, but these were few in number. Teachers are implementing the National Numeracy Strategy satisfactorily, but some lessons are too long and pupils become restless and lose concentration. The curriculum in mathematics is satisfactory, but short-term planning does not take sufficient account of pupils' previous attainment. Teaching is not always planned to provide suitable pace and challenge for some pupils. There is insufficient focus on organising different levels of tasks for the different abilities of the pupils. More able pupils are not always challenged and they are sometimes given work that is too easy.

Mathematics across the curriculum

Pupils do not make enough use of mathematics in other subjects such as science, history and geography. There are good links between information communication technology and mathematics.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils have too few opportunities for to develop practical skills.
- Topics are not covered in sufficient depth.
- The way science work is recorded in some year groups does not promote pupils' understanding or pride in their work.

Commentary

81. Though science is taught on a regular basis and the curriculum provided matches national requirements, there are several serious weaknesses in provision for the subject throughout the school. Standards in all year groups are very low and the development of pupils' practical skills is unsatisfactory.
82. The quantity of written work in Years 1 and 2 is limited, but the samples provided create a picture of well below average standards. Pupils' poor writing skills limit the quality of recording in science. Nevertheless, pupils begin to understand about the sources of light and how electricity is used to power devices. In one lesson in Year 1, pupils learned about food chains, and some pupils made good use of computers and the internet to find out more about predators and prey. The work in these year groups does not develop topics sufficiently and pupils need to have more practice at carrying out simple tests and recording results.
83. In Year 3 and 4, some good work on electricity in pupils' books shows that they understand simple circuits. Pupils also learn to classify materials into conductors and insulators. Assessment is used well at the end of the topic to test pupils' capacity to find faults in circuits.
84. Other topics are not covered as thoroughly and pupils' work is recorded in a general topic book. Their work is fragmented and their understanding is not consolidated as well as it should be. The amount of science covered throughout the year is much less than in most schools and it does not promote high standards or achievement.
85. In Years 3 to 6, there are not enough opportunities for pupils to experiment and investigate. Skills such as careful observation, measurement, and recording and analysing results are not developed sufficiently. Nor do pupils have enough opportunities to begin to understand the scientific basis of testing and the control of variables. Pupils carry out tests into dissolving and conditions for seeds to grow, but the work is not developed well enough. There is little evidence of pupils being encouraged to think about their results or to put conclusions into writing. In last year's work in Year 6, there were large periods of time when pupils recorded nothing in science. The practice of preparing pupils for tests needs to be reviewed. Though thorough revision led to improved results in 2003, the revision of topics can and should have a practical element. The period after tests in the summer term could be used more productively.
86. Though the teaching in lessons was satisfactory, teaching in science is unsatisfactory overall. Teachers need to take a much more practical approach to the subject to develop pupils' skills and provide greater challenge and excitement. Teachers also need to use marking more to develop pupils' understanding.

87. The co-ordinators for science have identified the need for a more practical approach and have begun to make arrangements to support colleagues and to improve provision.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision for ICT is **very good**.

Strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching and learning is good and has improved since the previous inspection. This enables all groups of pupils to achieve well.
- Very good use is made of ICT in teaching and learning across the curriculum.
- Very good provision for gifted and talented pupils enables them to achieve very well.
- Standards remain below average.

Commentary

88. By the end of year 2 and Year 6, standards are below average, as they were at the time of the previous inspection. However, by Year 6, pupils who are particularly talented in ICT attain standards which are average for their age, and by Year 2 talented pupils attain above average standards. Achievement is very good. Pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language make good progress. Boys and girls attain equally.
89. By Year 2, the pupils are making satisfactory progress in developing their keyboard skills and their ability to use the mouse accurately. They use capital letters, full stops and the space bar correctly in word processing simple sentences and labels for the classroom. Nevertheless, weak literacy skills mean that many pupils find it difficult to word process lengthy pieces of writing. The pupils create accurate pictograms of their shoe sizes and their favourite foods and bar charts of how they reach school. They generate imaginative pictures of candles, fireworks and stars, in illustrating light and dark as part of a science topic. They program a floor robot. With adult help, they access the Internet to find out about information on topics such as Diwali and toys from long ago. They use a digital camera. Talented pupils create good quality multi-media presentations about healthy eating.
90. By Year 6, the pupils access the Internet to research information on topics such as the Aztecs and rivers, but there is little evidence of the pupils using this information in extended writing of their own. Weak literacy skills, particularly spelling, hinder the progress of many pupils. However, they word process accounts of the Second World War, and attach images to enhance their writing. They change the style, size and colour of fonts to word process accounts of holiday destinations. Many pupils find it difficult to enter and change data on spreadsheets quickly. Talented pupils create effective PowerPoint presentations on topics such as rivers.
91. Some teachers still lack confidence in using ICT, but overall, the quality of teaching and learning is good and has improved since the previous inspection. The expertise of one teacher in Years 5 and 6 is used effectively to teach all three classes in turn. Throughout the school, the teachers make very good use of ICT in different subjects. In a Year 5 / 6 mathematics lesson, for example, excellent use of laptops helped the pupils in plotting coordinates. The teacher's clear explanations were aided by effective use of a projector linked to a laptop computer. This was also the case in a Year 3 / 4 lesson, where the pupils learnt how to 'cut and paste'. In a Year 5 / 6 science lesson, the teacher made effective use of the Internet to enhance learning about producers, consumers and food chains. In other science lessons, good use was made of ICT to represent data about pulse rates graphically.

92. A good supply of laptop and desktop computers ensures that all pupils can be fully included in active learning. Pupils are encouraged to work independently and to experiment themselves, although teaching assistants are well deployed to offer effective support where necessary. The teachers ensure that the pupils learn correct ICT terms and this helps in the development of their keyboard skills. Expectations are suitably high and this is of particular significance in the learning of higher attaining and talented pupils.
93. Although ICT has a high profile throughout the school, leadership and management of the subject are under-developed. There is no regular monitoring of teaching and learning and there are no formal, whole-school procedures for assessment, as was the case at the time of the previous inspection. The co-ordinator monitors planning and is developing a useful collection of samples of pupils' work. Although standards remain below average, provision overall has improved since the previous inspection.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

ICT is used very well across the curriculum.

HUMANITIES

Religious Education

Provision in religious education is **unsatisfactory**.

Commentary

104. The curriculum does not comply with statutory requirements regarding provision for religious education. Religious education is not adequately covered and weaknesses in continuity from year to year result in limited access for pupils. The school does not implement the locally agreed syllabus for religious education and does not give the subject sufficient emphasis. The weekly time allocated in each of Years 1 to 6 does not comply with the minimum recommended nationally. Consequently standards and achievement are unsatisfactory.

History and geography

Provision in history and geography is **satisfactory** in Years 3 to 6. There is insufficient evidence to make a judgement on provision in Years 1 and 2.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Some good use is made of ICT to enrich both subjects.
- Insufficient use is made of the local environment in geography.

Commentary

94. History and geography share curriculum time and both subjects are taught through topics. The standards reached by pupils throughout Years 3 to 6 are well below average largely because pupils' literacy skills are low.
95. In Year 3 and 4 pupils study a range of history topics, including the Great Fire of London, the Tudors and the Romans. Pupils draw time lines to help gain a perspective on the passage of time and learn about Sutton Hoo, a Saxon burial ground. In Year 5 pupils learn about Ancient Greece and the Second World War. Pupils can explain why the war took place and are aware some of the effects on British society such as rationing. In Year 6 pupils carry out a study of Aztec society. This work is covered almost entirely through research using the Internet. Pupils

read information and then answer questions about their understanding. The programme provides immediate feedback to pupils on their knowledge. Though this approach has several strong features, very little written work is covered in the topic and so it does not promote literacy very well. An opportunity to write an essay on the life of the Aztecs would link literacy and consolidate pupils' understanding.

96. In geography too little use is made of the immediate environment or school grounds to cultivate pupils' understanding of plans and maps or to carry out surveys. However, pupils in Years 3 and 4 do learn about different climates and weather conditions in Years 3 and 4. In Years 5 and 6 pupils benefit from a trip to a local reservoir, where they learn about water purification and supply. Pupils also carry out field-work measuring the depth, width and rate of flow of a river. Pupils talked confidently about the methods they used and the results they obtained.
97. This field trip was used well to promote literacy skills. Pupils in a literacy lesson were asked to deliver a short, formal talk to the rest of the class about the visit and then write a draft report of the experience. The school has identified some gifted and talented pupils. In one session these pupils produced multi media presentations, based on their work in geography. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 used the topic of weather and pupils in Year 6 the physical geography topic of rivers. In both cases the work produced by pupils was very good.
98. No actual lessons in history or geography were seen during the inspection and no judgement can be made on the quality of teaching.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Design Technology (DT)

Provision for DT is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Finished products are often imaginatively constructed and of good quality.
- Pupils' design skills are not as strong as their construction skills.

Commentary

99. By the end of Year 2 and Year 6, standards are average, as was the case at the previous inspection. Pupils achieve well. Boys and girls attain equally.
100. By Year 2, pupils have a satisfactory understanding of how levers work and they design and make moving pictures and Christmas cards, incorporating split pins. They design and make imaginative puppets, using a variety of materials. In food technology, pupils make satisfactory progress.
101. By Year 6, the pupils design and make models of fairground rides, incorporating an electric circuit and motor. They make masks, with eyes lit by an electric circuit. Design skills are often weak. The pupils do not often outline clearly the steps which they intend to follow in order to make their models. Their diagrams are often not particularly relevant. Evaluations lack detail as to how the models might be improved.
102. Teaching and learning are satisfactory, as they were at the time of the previous inspection. The teaching of specific making skills is satisfactory. There is insufficient focus on creating detailed plans and on encouraging the pupils to evaluate and, if necessary, adjust these as the work progresses. Teachers make useful links with other subjects, such as history, where

the pupils make good quality models of Second World War '*Anderson shelters*'. In a Year 5 / 6 lesson, the teacher made useful links with science by encouraging the pupils to think of a fair test as they investigated the reinforcing and strengthening of structures. Some times lessons lack challenge for higher attaining pupils and lesson introductions are sometimes too long, so that pupils lose concentration.

103. There are sufficient resources to support teaching and learning. Overall, provision for DT has not altered since the previous inspection.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Provision in physical education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum is well planned.
- Teaching is good throughout the school in this subject.
- There are good links with the local community.

104. The curriculum is well planned and encourages the pupils to be physically active and self-confident. They are given a good range of experiences that focus on developing skills and attitudes that develop healthy life styles. Each class is timetabled for two sessions of physical education every week and all areas of the National Curriculum are covered. The school also employs specialist coaches. Their high level of expertise has a positive impact on pupils' development of skills, especially in competitive games. In a Year 6 class, pupils, instructed by a coach working closely with the class teacher, showed increasing accuracy when running and controlling a ball using a hockey stick. They passed and received the ball from their partner while moving and showed good control. A wide range of extra-curricular activities gives pupils the chance to develop skills in cricket, running, rugby and football.

105. The school has been unable to provide opportunities for residential visits because the costs were too high for both the parents and the school. However pupils do visit the local climbing wall and have opportunities to canoe on a local lake. Pupils in Years 1 to 6 go to the local swimming baths and most are able to swim a minimum of 25 metres by the time they leave at age eleven.

106. Teaching in physical education is good throughout the school and pupils learn well. During lessons, pupils respond to instructions and try hard to do their best. High expectations, good lesson planning, and awareness of pupils' needs were common features in many lessons seen. Teachers involve pupils directly in lessons and challenge them to improve their performance. Year 2 pupils develop the skills of climbing, rolling, jumping and landing when using benches, boxes, frames and mats in the hall. The teacher encourages pupils to contribute ideas and they respond by improving their performance.

107. Good links with the local community enrich curricular opportunities for pupils. The school is involved with 'Awards for All' Lottery grants programme that funds the employment of a coach who provides football coaching during lunchtime. The school has good links with the local secondary school through the Sports Co-ordinator programme and is able to offer the pupils a wide range of sporting activities during the summer term.

108. Resources are adequate and used well.

Music

One lesson was seen during the inspection. No judgement was made on the quality of provision in music.

Commentary

109. Pupils enjoy listening to music and have a growing awareness of the contribution of the subject to the quality of their lives and those of others. Discussion with year 6 pupils indicates that they have little musical knowledge and that their experiences have been fragmented as they have moved through the junior years. A satisfactory programme of activities is in place for each year group and pupils show a growing interest in making music. For example, pupils in Year 2 responded well to a puppet called Simbar and used instruments and although they sat in a cramped space during the lesson, they behaved well and were excited at the prospect of using tuned and un-tuned percussion instruments. Pupils could play and clap to the simple beats in the names. The quality of teaching was satisfactory in this lesson.

Art and Design

No judgement was made on the overall provision in art and design.

Commentary

110. Evidence from 2 lessons and from a variety of work displayed around the school indicates that art is an enjoyable and refreshingly vibrant part of the curriculum. Teachers show the techniques and styles of a range of artists and how these have been interpreted by past pupils. Displays are presented very well and serve to inspire pupils and help them to observe and understand the process of design and the use of media. For example, there are illustrations from the cultures of many lands that include wood carvings and masks as well as a range of illustrations of European art. Lessons are designed to develop pupils' interest and skill, and they are planned to promote the pleasure of drawing, painting and designing. Pupils with additional difficulties in learning gain from support, when they need it. Pupils with a talent in the subject are recognized and their skills are fostered well. For example, a higher attaining pupil in Year 6 was able to capture the fluid movement of a human figure in action and transform this into a 3D model very well. To deepen pupils' knowledge and skill, the work was eventually developed into a moving model. By the time pupils transfer to secondary school, their standard of work is average.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Provision is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The levels of support and guidance to pupils are very good.

Commentary

111. Reference to the emphasis given to the personal and social development of pupils and children has been reported in several sections of this report. In the reception class children's personal and social development is given priority and is a strength in the provision in the Foundation Stage. The support and guidance provided for all pupils is also a strength running throughout the school. Pupils become both responsible and independent. Pupils learn to live and perform in a community that has rules and expectations of everyone. Pupils learn to respect others and their property, learn how to be tolerant of different views. They learn that where there are

disputes, often the view of the majority will prevail. There is a school council, which met twice in the autumn term, bringing together a summary of pupil surveys for discussion.

112. Pupils develop knowledge about health and issues related to drug abuse through a well-prepared programme. Sex education is provided in a relevant way and pupils learn about healthy food and healthy life styles. 'Circle Time' is used to enable pupils to discuss important issues in their lives. Pupils who have emotional problems are very well supported. The inclusion of all pupils, including those in the speech and language unit, and the involvement of their families in the school community is a strength.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	4
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	4
Value for money provided by the school	4
Overall standards achieved	7
Pupils' achievement	4
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	3
Attendance	6
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	4
The quality of teaching	4
How well pupils learn	4
The quality of assessment	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	5
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	4
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3
The leadership and management of the school	2
The governance of the school	5
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	2

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