

INSPECTION REPORT

MILLFIELD PRIMARY SCHOOL

Littleport, Ely

LEA area: Cambridgeshire

Unique reference number: 110776

Headteacher: Mrs Lydia Harris

Lead inspector: Mrs Vreta Bagilhole

Dates of inspection: 5-7 July 2004

Inspection number: 256920

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:	178
School address:	Grange Lane Littleport Ely
Postcode:	CB6 1HW
Telephone number:	01353 861612
Fax number:	01353 861635
Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Deana Reckless

Date of previous inspection: 27-29 May 2002

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Millfield Primary School is situated on the south western edge of the large village of Littleport in the Cambridgeshire Fenlands, close to the city of Ely. It is a one-form entry school¹. The pupils come from a wide range of backgrounds but these are average overall in social and economic terms. The school is due to expand because of the building of new houses in the immediate locality. Most pupils are from a white United Kingdom background but there are also some American, Chinese and Filipino pupils. Four pupils speak English as an additional language and the home languages spoken are Cantonese and Tagalog. Twenty-one per cent of the pupils have special educational needs; this is a little above average. Two pupils have a Statement of Special Educational Need. The school has identified eight per cent of the children as gifted and 14 per cent as talented. The school has a small number of Traveller children. The attainment on entry of the children in the Reception class is average. Most children have playgroup experience before joining the Reception class, either at the playgroup on site or at one of the other playgroups in the village.

¹ One-form entry refers to the number of classes for each year group, in this case, one class for each school year.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
17517	Vreta Bagilhole	Lead inspector	English Information and communication technology Foundation Stage Music English as an additional language
9708	Sylvia Daintrey	Lay inspector	Personal, social and health education and citizenship
32447	Lynne Bradbury	Team inspector	Geography History
15011	Marion Wallace	Team inspector	Mathematics Science Religious education Art and design Design and technology Special educational needs Physical education

The inspection contractor was:

PBM Brookbridge & Bedford Ltd
13A Market Place
Uttoxeter
Staffordshire
ST14 8HY

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

The effectiveness of the school is satisfactory and is improving. It provides satisfactory value for money. Standards in Year 6 are average in English and mathematics but are below average in science. Teaching is good and so are the leadership and management of the school. The pupils enjoy coming to school and are very well behaved.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The headteacher is leading the school very well.
- Teaching is good with examples of excellent teaching in the Reception year, Years 1 and 2 and in Years 3 to 6.
- Standards in science are below average.
- The provision for religious education is unsatisfactory.
- Several exciting initiatives are having a very positive effect on the quality of education.
- Attendance is unsatisfactory.
- Behaviour is very good.

The school was last inspected in May 2002 and found to have serious weaknesses in several key areas including leadership and management and standards in Year 2. Her Majesty's Inspectors found that the school was making reasonable progress in March 2003 and that the leadership and management were good. Since then there has been a good improvement in almost all aspects. Standards in English, mathematics and science in Year 2 are significantly higher and systems and procedures for assessment are now good. Procedures for monitoring and promoting pupils' attendance are now satisfactory but attendance levels are still unsatisfactory. The school is no longer causing concern and its capacity for further improvement is good.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

*Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average
Similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 2.*

Achievement is satisfactory in Years 1 to 6 overall; it is good in English, where all pupils are working to capacity, with the less able doing particularly well and the more able well stretched. The early indications of the 2004 test results in Year 6 show that they are similar to those of 2003 in mathematics and science and higher in English. This is reflected in the inspection evidence, which points to average standards in English and mathematics in Year 6 but below average in science. National test results in Year 2 in 2003 were average in reading and writing and above average in mathematics. Teachers' assessments for science were below average. The early indications of the 2004 tests in Year 2 are similar to those of 2003 in reading, writing

and mathematics, with the results of teacher assessments in science showing above average standards. This is a good improvement for the school since the last inspection. Standards in information and communication technology are typical of those expected nationally but standards in religious education are not good enough and are below those expected. The children enter the Reception class with average attainment and achieve well, attaining average standards for this age group in communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, and knowledge and understanding of the world by the time they leave Reception and attaining above average standards in their creative, physical and personal, social and emotional development.

Pupils' behaviour is very good. **Their attitudes and personal development including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good.** Attendance is unsatisfactory.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is good. Teaching and assessment are good and very good in the Reception class. Some excellent teaching was observed in Reception and in English and information and communication technology. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. There are some exciting and innovative curriculum developments in subjects such as English and information and communication technology, which are contributing to improved learning opportunities for all pupils. Participation in the arts is good. However, there are weaknesses in the provision of investigative work in science and in the overall provision in religious education. The provision for pupils' care, welfare, health and safety is good. Links with parents are satisfactory. Links with the community and other schools are good.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good and have improved significantly since the last inspection. The leadership of the headteacher is very good. She has provided the school with the clear vision and drive to overcome the weaknesses found at the last inspection. Overall the leadership provided by other key staff is good. Management is effective and governance is good. Statutory requirements are met.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Most parents support the school. The majority are most happy with the teaching and feel that the members of staff expect their child to work hard. All are very happy with the induction arrangements. There are some concerns about inconsistencies between classes in communication. The inspection team found that there is some justification for these views. The school is involving pupils well in the work of the school. However, in the inspection questionnaires, some felt that there was not an adult they could go to if worried and some had concerns about behaviour.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- raise standards and achievement in science;
- improve the provision for religious education;

- increase the range of strategies for working with parents to improve the attendance of their child.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Achievement overall is satisfactory. Standards are average in English and mathematics in Year 6. Standards in science are below average in Year 6.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in English and mathematics are improving in Year 2 at a good rate and standards in speaking and listening are above average throughout the school.
- Older pupils are not doing well enough in science.
- Achievement is not good enough in religious education.
- Children in the Reception class achieve well.
- Language and literacy, mathematics and information and communication technology are being well used across the curriculum.

Commentary

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	26.1 (25.4)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	27 (25.2)	26.8 (26.7)
science	28.3 (27.8)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 28 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for 2002

1. In the national tests for 2003, pupils in Year 6 attained results that were average in mathematics and below average in English and science compared to all schools nationally and to similar schools. The early indications of results of the 2004 tests in Year 6 are that they are similar in mathematics and science to those of 2003 and have improved in English. Standards in Year 6 in English and mathematics are similar to the last inspection but standards in science are lower. The proportion of pupils attaining the higher level in 2003 was below national averages but this year there has been a slight improvement in English and more of an improvement in mathematics.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	15.9 (11.3)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	15.1 (10.4)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	16.8 (15.2)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 22 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for 2002

2. Since the last inspection, standards in Year 2 have improved well. National test results for pupils in Year 2 in 2003 were average in reading and writing and above average in

mathematics. Teachers' assessments in science were below average. Test results in 2004 are similar to those of 2003 in reading, writing and mathematics and results of teacher assessments are likely to be above average in science. Inspection evidence reflects the results of tests and shows that standards in Year 2 are average in reading and writing and above average in mathematics and science. The significant improvement in standards in Year 2 since the last inspection in English and mathematics has been due to very effective school self-evaluation in the last year, good leadership, the school's systems for monitoring and tracking pupils' progress and consistently good teaching. About a third of pupils in Year 2 are currently attaining the higher level in reading and writing compared to none at the time of the Her Majesty's Inspectors' visit in 2003.

3. Overall achievement is satisfactory with good achievement in English. Achievement is satisfactory in mathematics overall but it is good and in Years 1 and 2. There is unsatisfactory achievement in religious education and for pupils in Years 3 to 6 in science. Achievement in information and communication technology is satisfactory. Pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds do as well as other pupils and this is generally the case for all other groups of pupils. However, the achievement of Traveller pupils and a small number from other families is affected by regular absences from school.
4. Children in the Reception class are on course to achieve the standards expected by the end of the Reception year, having started the year with average attainment overall. The children achieve well during the Reception class because the quality of teaching and learning is very good. The teacher and nursery nurse are inventive and imaginative early years practitioners. Very good planning and organisation ensure that the children experience enjoyable activities that promote all areas of learning. The children make good progress in learning to use the computer. The children achieve very well in their personal, social and emotional development and in creative and physical development, exceeding the standards typically found.
5. Achievement in English has been good across the school this year. Standards in speaking and listening are above average and skills are being developed in all classes with teachers involving pupils well in classroom discussions throughout the school. Pupils are doing well in reading in relation to their prior attainment. In response to the issue in the last inspection, the school makes sure that pupils' understanding of what they are reading is now appropriately developed. Achievement in writing is good and improving at a good rate. Pupils produce well thought-out work, showing good use of grammar and punctuation. Presentation and neatness are not as good as they could be.
6. Pupils are achieving well in mathematics in Years 1 and 2. All of the pupils who took the test in Year 2 in 2004 have attained the national expected level and over a third of them have exceeded it. Achievement has also been good in Year 6 this year and about a quarter of pupils have achieved the higher level, although less of them have attained the nationally expected level because there are more pupils with special educational needs. Pupils are good at applying mathematics and using mathematical knowledge to solve number problems. Gifted pupils are well provided for in an extension group.
7. Achievement in science is good in Years 1 and 2 but unsatisfactory in Years 3 to 6. This is mainly because investigative work is well developed for younger pupils but not for the older ones. The teaching in Years 3 to 6 lacks consistent expertise in teaching science, leading to an overuse of worksheets in some year groups. The school is aware of this and has planned development.

8. Standards throughout the school are typical of those expected in information and communication technology. Thorough training in the use of the school's computer systems has enabled teachers to plan well for the subject and assessment is checking well on the pupils' progress. Currently achievement is unsatisfactory in religious education which has been given a low priority during recent years when the school decided to place all its efforts into improving standards in English and mathematics.
9. Pupils' competence in English, mathematics and information and communication technology across the curriculum is good and enables them to make progress in other areas of the curriculum. The school is showing initiative and innovation in some of the work that it is developing such as writing a scheme for linking poetry with science and using outside links, such as those with the police, to help the pupils achieve better than they would otherwise. This work has produced some excellent results.
10. Most other subjects were not a focus for the inspection but standards observed in history were typical of those usually found. Most parents who responded to the questionnaire are happy with the standards that their children achieve and feel that they are making good progress.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes are good and their behaviour is very good. Personal development is good: moral, social and cultural development is good and spiritual development is satisfactory. Attendance is unsatisfactory.

MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- Pupils' positive attitudes, good relationships and very good behaviour in lessons make an important contribution to their good learning.
- Too many pupils are still missing school for unimportant reasons and this continues to have an adverse effect on their achievement.
- Provision for cultural development includes some very good opportunities to learn about traditions and cultures in the wider world.

COMMENTARY

11. Pupils' attitudes have improved since the last inspection when they were satisfactory. This reflects the improvements in teaching and in provision for many subjects. Pupils of all ages and abilities now concentrate and apply themselves well in most lessons. They enjoy many aspects of the curriculum, especially information and communication technology, but also speak enthusiastically about history, art, physical education and mathematics. They respond very well to the many opportunities provided by teachers for them to work in pairs and groups. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection and contributes well to their social development.

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census

No of pupils on roll

Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
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White – British	154	1	0
White – Irish	5	0	0
White – any other White background	2	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	2	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	2	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	3	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	3	0	0
Chinese	1	0	0

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

12. Pupils behave very well in lessons and assemblies so teachers have to spend very little time on managing behaviour. The guidelines for behaviour management are very clear with the result that pupils know exactly what is required of them and develop a good understanding of right and wrong. They highly value the reward systems which motivate them to work and play well. The school deals with bullying satisfactorily. Relationships and behaviour were very good in the playtimes seen during the inspection when pupils were able to use the extensive grounds and make full use of the climbing equipment and rest areas. Nevertheless, pupils report that a certain amount of fighting and harassment takes place in the playground, and that their ideas for dealing with it are not always followed through. The behaviour of pupils with challenging needs is usually very well managed so they are appropriately included in the class activities and there is no disruption to learning. One such pupil, who has since moved from the area, was excluded on two occasions in the current school year. The table below refers to exclusions in the previous school year 2002/3.
13. Children in the Reception class continue to have very good attitudes and behaviour and to make good progress in their personal development. They sit at their tables for milk time very sensibly and two children serve them very politely. They play very well together in the outdoor area, for example, offering the inspector a cup of tea during their role-play of a tea party. Children are actively encouraged to gain in confidence by speaking in front of the class and this good practice has been taken up in the rest of the school. Occasionally, however, children are not given sufficient opportunity to work independently, such as to develop their writing skills on their own initiative. The personal development of pupils in Years 1 to 6 is promoted well through a range of activities including the personal, social and health education programme, assemblies which encourage active participation and reflection on themes such as friendship and links with the community.
14. Cultural development has improved since the last inspection because there has been a focus on stimulating interest in the creative arts, especially through a special week earlier this year devoted to the art, design, music and dance of Africa. Pupils still talk eagerly about their experiences of making African-style pots. There are striking displays in the foyer as a legacy of their African visitors, and the younger pupils continue to listen intently to stories from Africa in their assembly. Pupils' own cultures are celebrated and some pupils have visited a city very different from their local area. Through activities such as these the school promotes racial harmony well. Spiritual development continues to be promoted satisfactorily, with examples of good practice such as in the Reception class where children experience the wonders of baby chickens hatching from eggs. Whole-school assemblies promote the ethos of the school as a community well, and make

satisfactory use of music and prayer to encourage reflection. Religious education does not make a sufficiently strong contribution to pupils' spiritual development.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (93%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	5.2	School data	1.8
National data	5.4	National data	0.4

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

15. A serious weakness of the school at the last inspection was that procedures for monitoring and promoting pupils' attendance were not good enough and levels of attendance were too low. The school has improved its procedures and they are now satisfactory. Registers are now being maintained correctly and attendance and punctuality are monitored appropriately. Rewards have been introduced in the form of weekly class-based attendance certificates and parents are quickly contacted to supply reasons for their children's absence. A significant amount of absence stems from a small number of pupils, some but not all from the Traveller community, whose families find it very difficult to send their children to school regularly. The school works satisfactorily with the relevant external agencies to deal with this problem. However, there are still too many other parents who keep their children away for reasons that the school rightly does not authorise, such as visiting relatives or meeting friends at the airport. This casual attitude to school attendance is no longer just the case in Years 1 and 2, as it was at the last inspection, but is now spread across the school. The result is that the school's attendance rate for the current school year has deteriorated further below local and national levels, and is a long way short of meeting the school's target. The good teaching seen during the inspection did not benefit the significant numbers of pupils who were absent that week. Parents are not made fully aware, for example in their child's annual report or in the governors' annual report, of the effect of their children's absences on the standards they are able to achieve.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is good. The curriculum is satisfactory and there are some very good innovations and initiatives taking place. Teaching and learning are good. Arrangements for pupils' care, welfare, health and safety are good and links with parents are satisfactory. Links with the community and with other schools are good.

Teaching and learning

Teaching, learning and assessment are good with several examples of excellent teaching.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Excellent lessons were observed in English, information and communication technology and in the Reception class.
- Pupils have clear targets to work towards and are becoming well involved in their own learning.
- Literacy and numeracy are well taught enabling the pupils to achieve well.

Commentary

16. Teaching has improved since the previous inspection and is now mainly good. Forty three per cent of teaching is very good or better. Excellent lessons were observed in the Reception class, Year 1 and Year 6.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 26 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
3	8	11	4	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.

17. Teaching and learning in the Reception class are very good and has been maintained at this level since the last inspection. The class teacher is an experienced early years' practitioner and plans the curriculum well. The classroom is well managed and organised and the nursery nurse is used effectively. The school day contains an appropriate balance of teacher directed and child initiated activities that contribute well to children's growing confidence and independence. In an excellent lesson, the teacher and nursery nurse showed high expectations for the children to gain new knowledge and skills in their understanding of living things and in reporting their findings to the class.
18. Teaching throughout the school engages pupils in productive learning. This is because lessons are well planned and lesson objectives are made very clear to the pupils. Literacy and numeracy skills are taught effectively and a major strength in the teaching is the opportunity given to pupils to discuss their work as a class, in groups or in pairs, paying good attention to the development of vocabulary and explaining their ideas in front of the class. Teachers mostly use questioning skilfully and effectively and this produces good levels of interest from the pupils. Levels of challenge are good in most lessons. In an excellent English lesson in Year 1 the pupils were involved in their own self assessment and evaluation was a key feature of the lesson. In another excellent lesson in information and communication technology in Year 6, the links with the police were outstanding. Teachers generally have a good understanding of the subjects they teach although there is a need for some teachers to undertake more training in science. Pupils' behaviour is very good because teachers have high and consistent expectations of how pupils should behave in lessons. No lessons were observed in geography, music, or design and technology. Satisfactory lessons were observed in mathematics, science and religious and physical education. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory in Years 1 to 6 and good in the Reception class. Teaching assistants are mainly used well.
19. Assessment is good overall and has improved since the previous inspection. Teachers now have better information and procedures to aid their planning. Pupils' progress is well tracked and the targets pupils are set are matched well to what they need to learn next. Good details are kept on all groups of pupils in the school. These systems are particularly well developed in English, mathematics and in the Reception class. The pupils participate well in their own assessment of learning both during lessons and through the marking of work, which is consistent in all classes. However, work is not always matched to consistently meet the needs of all the pupils. For example, an older pupil with a statement of special educational need made satisfactory progress reading some key words. Although the reading level was appropriate the content of the story was more

appropriate for younger pupils. Assessment systems in information and communication technology identify who is achieving the higher and lower levels so that action can be taken. Assessment in other subjects is at an earlier stage but almost all lessons benefit from involving the pupils in their own learning and these systems are developing well throughout the school.

THE CURRICULUM

The curriculum is satisfactory and meets all statutory requirements. It is enhanced by a good range of visits and visitors and support for learning is good. The quality of accommodation and resources are good and are used well to enhance the provision for all pupils.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school places a strong emphasis on literacy and numeracy.
- The provision for religious education and science is less well developed.
- Curricular provision in the Foundation Stage is good.
- There are some very good initiatives that enrich the curriculum.

Commentary

20. The quality of the curriculum has been maintained since the last inspection and school has made good progress developing the curriculum areas identified in the previous inspection report. The National Literacy Strategy and National Numeracy strategies are used very effectively to teach English and mathematics and the school follows national guidelines for most subject areas. The curriculum is developing and while some curriculum areas need to be developed there are some exciting and innovative developments which are contributing to improved learning opportunities for all pupils.
21. Strengths of the curriculum include English, mathematics and information and communication technology. Statutory requirements are met but there are weaknesses in planning the curriculum in science and religious education because both of these subject areas have not had a priority focus in recent years. Although art and design, design technology and history were only sampled during the inspection, indications are that these subject areas are strong but physical education and music are less well developed. The curriculum provision in the Reception class is very good. Provision for personal social and health education is good. It is well established and valued by all staff and the provision is strengthened by the good links with literacy.
22. There are good opportunities for pupils to enrich and enhance their learning through visits, visitors and whole school focus activities. Participation in sporting activities is satisfactory and participation in the arts activities is good. The school is committed to developing creativity across the curriculum. End of term productions and the art club enhance this area of learning. The school has worked hard to improve participation in creative arts events. The creative arts week was very well organised and ensured all pupils developed their knowledge and understanding about African arts and culture. Pupils had opportunities to dance, create African jewellery and ceramics, musical instruments, experience cookery and music during the week. Extra-curricular clubs and activities are well attended. These clubs give pupils appropriate opportunities to extend their knowledge in pottery, football and French. A choir also meets at lunch time. Visits from musicians and theatre companies together with a residential visit for Year 5 and 6

enrich the provision. Innovation is very good. Excellent links with the police, who visit the school frequently, make learning fun and exciting. Pupils learn the importance of public safety because the visiting policeman explains this clearly. The school is also developing innovative links with science and literacy.

23. Pupils have access to all areas of the curriculum and range of learning opportunities. The school makes good provision to ensure all pupils, regardless of ability, gender or ethnicity, have equal access to the opportunities provided. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. The school fully meets the requirements of the new Code of Practice for pupils identified with special educational needs. There is appropriate support for Traveller pupils and the school has identified the gifted and talented pupils. Their progress is tracked well over time. The provision for pupils who have English as an additional language is satisfactory and is well supported by the local authority. Teaching assistants have been well trained to provide good support for these pupils.
24. The resources and accommodation provided are good. The outdoor provision is very good. Pupils enjoy using the outdoor adventure climbing equipment and have the opportunity to develop their physical skills, balancing, swinging, jumping and climbing. The equipment is equally challenging for younger and older pupils. Resources for most areas are good and easily accessible. The school ensures any specific resources are purchased to meet the individual needs of pupils. The classrooms are a good size and provide an attractive learning environment. Displays throughout the school are very good and contribute to the good ethos of the school. Pupils' work is appreciated and displayed sensitively to enhance the school environment. The school and grounds are very clean and well cared for contributing to the quality of the accommodation. Good use is made of the school grounds. The wildlife area is well used, Reception children take great delight in visiting the hens each day to check their food and water and collect the eggs. Because new homes are being built in the locality the school is due to be enlarged and offices and seven new classrooms will be built. There is a good match of teachers to the curriculum and learning support assistants are well used to support individual pupils.

Care, guidance and support

Arrangements for pupils' care, welfare, health and safety are good. Provision of support, advice and guidance based on monitoring is good. The school involves pupils well in its work and development.

MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- Children are very well cared for and supported in the Reception class.
- Members of staff are well trained to ensure the well-being of pupils.
- Academic support and guidance have improved because they are based on better tracking and target-setting systems.

COMMENTARY

25. Parents are very pleased with the arrangements for their children to settle in when they start school. Induction procedures to the Reception class are very good. Members of staff get to know the children very well through, for example, home visits and close links with the pre-school groups. During the inspection, for example, the September intake of children came to the school to experience having lunch in the hall. There is very detailed assessment of the children when they join and throughout their year in the class. This means that their academic and personal needs are quickly identified and they are guided well to achieve, and sometimes exceed, the early learning goals. They are prepared very well for transfer to Year 1.
26. Nearly all members of staff, including teaching assistants and mid-day assistants, have been trained in child protection and first aid procedures. The headteacher is very experienced in child protection issues. She takes particular care to ensure that new arrivals, sometimes from troubled backgrounds, are helped to settle in. The school has a good system for informing parents if their child was involved in an incident requiring first aid treatment. Health and safety procedures, including equipment checks and risk assessments, are properly in place. The caretaker is vigilant in spotting and dealing with any hazards. Pupils are given good guidance on healthy and safe living through the personal, social and health education programme. The school nurse is available to provide advice to pupils and parents.
27. The improvements in the school's assessment arrangements mean that members of staff are now much clearer than at the last inspection about how well pupils are progressing, and are better equipped to set targets which help pupils to raise their achievements. This applies particularly to English, mathematics and information and communication technology. Pre-school booster classes in numeracy for targeted pupils in Year 6 have been particularly effective in raising achievements at the higher levels in the national mathematics tests. Teachers support pupils in their personal development through a variety of methods suited to the needs of their class. There is a strong emphasis in many classes on encouraging pupils to work better in groups. Some classes nominate a pupil to be star of the week so that the special individuality of each pupil can be celebrated by all. The whole school community, including parents, gathers every Friday to reward pupils' successes.
28. Pupils from Years 1 to 6 continue to be actively involved through the school council in putting forward their ideas about school improvements, such as the provision of drinking water and arrangements in the playground. They have recently been involved in the interview process for the new deputy headteacher. The headteacher surveyed all pupils' views last summer and took effective action. For example, school council representatives are now elected termly to give more pupils the opportunity to represent their classmates. Pupils have not, however, always felt confident enough to raise their concerns about relationship problems in the playground and the school has not always pursued their ideas, such as involving Year 6 pupils as playground monitors. Children in the Reception class are involved in the marking of their work, which is good practice. Pupils in the rest of the school are increasingly involved in assessing their own progress at the ends of lessons and other activities.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Links with parents are satisfactory. Links with the community and with other schools are good.

MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- The school is making good efforts to involve parents of the younger pupils in their children's learning.
- The school makes good use of its links with other schools and resources in the community to enhance the provision for pupils.

COMMENTARY

29. The school's partnership with parents of children in the Reception class is very good and has a positive effect on the children's achievement. The members of the Reception staff hold a special reading session so that parents are well prepared for helping their child at home. Targets and activity books are shared with parents so that they are kept very well informed. End-of-year reports are very good and include a bar chart showing the progress each individual child has made over the year. Parents of pupils in Years 1 and 2 are welcomed into the classrooms before the start of the day. The school is making good use of external funding to provide workshops for parents of children in the Reception class and in Years 1 and 2, targeted particularly at families who do not find it easy to approach the school. Successful workshops have been held in crafts and pottery, and the school is currently one of three schools in the county chosen to run a family learning class in information and communication technology.
30. The partnership with parents of the older children is not as well developed and remains much as it was at the last inspection. Parents of children of all ages are broadly satisfied with the school but have some concerns about inconsistencies between classes in communication. The inspection team found that there is some justification for these views. For example, although end-of-year reports on pupils' progress are good overall, they do vary in quality between teachers. Similarly, the curriculum information provided each term does not always inform parents about homework and how they can help. The school does not yet have an up-to-date website to give greater access to parents who cannot come into school frequently. It has not carried out a formal survey of parents' views. The headteacher has appropriately concentrated on making herself visible to parents and building up an atmosphere of trust after a lengthy period of instability in staffing and management. Parents are invited to a satisfactory range of events in the school to enable them to meet teachers and see what their children are doing. A small number of parents help with activities in the classroom and on outside visits, and the school association is well supported. A significant number of parents do not support the school sufficiently well in ensuring that their children attend regularly.
31. The close relationship with the pre-school playgroup that operates on the site has been maintained and it ensures a very smooth transition for children when they transfer to the Reception class. The pre-school children have numerous opportunities to use the school's facilities and visit the school's special events. Staff of the two organisations liaise and support each other very well. Links with the community college to which most pupils transfer have improved since the last inspection and are now good. Members of staff from the college visit the pupils at Millfield and older pupils visit the college for activities such as mathematics, information and communication technology and business enterprise. Year 6 pupils undertake projects in English and science which they will continue in Year 7. Links with the other primary school in the village and with the cluster of local schools are developing well and provide useful opportunities for joint training, such as for teachers in physical education and for governors in what to look for when undertaking a formal monitoring visit to the school.

32. The school has very notable links with community organisations that make a significant impact on pupils' learning and personal development. One is with the police who visit regularly and raise pupils' awareness of social and safety issues, especially in Year 6 through the outstanding decision-making exercise about dealing with crime. Another is with a local group of adults with learning difficulties who come in to work on projects with and for the children, and thereby extend the pupils' awareness of disability.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good. The leadership of the headteacher is very good. The leadership of other key staff is good. Management is effective and governance is good.

MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- Leadership and management of the school have improved significantly since the last inspection when they were serious weaknesses.
- The headteacher is providing very effective leadership and management which is bringing about good improvements in the school.
- Members of staff now have clear roles and responsibilities and their monitoring of prioritised areas is good.
- Governors are now providing good direction, support and challenge for the school.

COMMENTARY

33. The school has been very well supported and guided by the local education authority to help it overcome its weaknesses which arose from frequent changes in leadership and management over previous years. Local education authority advisers have provided very effective assistance in contributing to strategic planning, monitoring the quality of teaching, and evaluating progress. The headteacher, staff and governors have had good access to training so that have been able to develop very good systems for self-evaluation and are well equipped to drive the school forward.
34. The headteacher, who took up post three months after the last inspection, has a very clear vision and sense of purpose which have helped the school surmount the difficulties of the first year when there were considerable staffing problems. She has successfully prioritised the actions that needed to be taken following the last report so that the school is now in a good position to fulfil the high aspirations she has for it. Standards are starting to improve in the key areas of English, mathematics and information and communication technology, and the headteacher knows what needs to be done next. She has introduced a programme of monitoring teaching and learning, and shares good practice when she sees it. She has innovative ideas for a more creative curriculum, which are already starting to bear fruit, and empowers other staff to carry out exciting initiatives, such as in information and communication technology. She and the assistant headteacher have worked very well together to create an effective staff team which includes teaching assistants, mid-day assistants and office staff as well as teachers. The assistant headteacher supported the newly qualified teachers very well in their first year so that they are now making a very valuable contribution to the school's provision. She has been supported well by the headteacher to achieve her first headship and the school has successfully appointed a new deputy headteacher to start in September.
35. Subject leaders in English, mathematics and information and communication technology lead and manage their areas effectively, with the result that standards in those subjects are rising. The key members of staff analyse pupils' performance carefully and devise strategies for improvement. Leadership and management in the Foundation Stage are good. The headteacher has introduced common formats for subject leaders' files and prioritised the other subjects for development. This means, for example, that subject leadership in design and technology, history and art and design is improving rapidly. Subject leadership in science and religious education, although satisfactory, is not yet

strong enough to drive up standards. For example, there has been no monitoring in science which could have revealed that the Year 6 teacher required support and training in that subject to help her raise pupils' achievements in the national tests. Leadership and management of the provision for pupils with special educational needs are satisfactory. The headteacher is currently caretaking the responsibility until a leader can be appointed.

36. The governing body comprises a good mix of new and experienced governors who have a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They know where they want the school to be, and are supporting and challenging the headteacher well to achieve it. They feel much better informed and involved which helps them to carry out their role effectively. They are now linked to specific subjects and areas, which enables them to monitor and evaluate the work of the school more rigorously. They have benefited from a considerable amount of training, including on the interpretation of data, self-evaluation and strategic planning. The school improvement plan clearly states the long-term priorities of the school and the costs involved in carrying it out. The school's finances are managed efficiently with the result that there is a balanced budget and clear priorities on how to use the resources available.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	522,953
Total expenditure	528,004
Expenditure per pupil	2,722

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	16,832
Balance carried forward to the next	11,781

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

37. Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is very good and has been maintained since the last inspection. The Reception class is staffed by a teacher and a nursery nurse. There are very good relationships between members of staff and the children and the staff work very well together. There is a lot of very good teaching. The children are admitted to the Reception class in the September before they are five. The attainment on entry is average. All children are making good progress in all areas of learning and they do particularly well in their creative, physical and personal development. The curriculum is well planned to provide a wide range of interesting and relevant activities, which are well matched to the children's needs. Assessment is very good. The accommodation, including the outside facilities, is good. There are very good links with the local pre-school playgroup which is housed on the school site and most children transfer from the playgroup to the school. Parents feel welcome in the Reception class and receive good information. They are particularly pleased with the induction arrangements when their child starts school. Children are also prepared well for transfer to Year 1. The leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are good and based on the principles of effective early years practice. The work for children with special educational needs effectively enables them to make good progress. Children who are at an early stage of speaking English and the children of travellers also receive good support.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are very good relationships between the children and the members of staff.
- Very good planning and organisation ensures that the children experience a wide range of enjoyable and stimulating activities.

Commentary

38. Most children achieve very well and are on course to exceed the national goals for early learning by the end of the Reception year. The teaching is very good and provides activities that encourage children to ask questions, seek answers, and take decisions. The children feel secure and confident because the members of staff are caring role models for them. The adults lay down very clear guidelines for the children as to how they should behave in and out of the classroom and the children follow these very well. The children have settled into school routines extremely well and work well in small and large groups. The children come in from break time in a very orderly fashion, have their drink, and talk to each other in a friendly and sociable way. The children are fully absorbed in the wide range of stimulating tasks they do.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good opportunities are provided for language development.
- Resources are used very well to enhance learning.
- There could be more opportunities for the children to write independently.

Commentary

39. Nearly all of the children are on course to attain the national goals for early learning by the end of the Reception year, including a quarter likely to exceed them. Standards are similar overall to those found in the majority of schools nationally. Achievement is good in reading and speaking and listening and all of the pupils are working to their potential in these aspects. This is because the quality of teaching and learning are good and often very good. The very good teaching shows high expectations for the development of the children's speaking and listening skills and the children have very good opportunities to talk in front of the class such as in show and tell sessions and reporting back on the health of the chickens and the state of the coop. In a dance lesson the teacher challenges the children very well to tell how they will move in a spiral motion and the children respond by saying that they will 'spin around'. They listen to the staff and are exceptionally good at lining up when told and showing they are ready to start or stop an activity the moment an adult asks them to. Reading sessions with the nursery nurse are effective and the children are fully engaged in reading familiar stories with their teacher. Resources, such as the use of soft toys to help illustrate a story, help make the learning come alive for the children. Most lessons are challenging and show the high expectations of the teacher and nursery nurse. Both pay very good attention to the use of specific vocabulary such as illustrator and author. The children do well in their understanding of letter sounds and the more able know initial blends such as 'ch', 'sh' and 'th'. Achievement in writing is satisfactory. There are appropriate opportunities for the children to do independent writing but this aspect is not as well developed as other areas such as speaking and listening. Writing sessions with the teacher are well organised but some more able children spend the time colouring in because they have already completed the task with the teacher. This time would be better spent if they could have more opportunities to write independently. Children who have special educational needs make good progress and are well supported in the classroom.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children are well challenged to consolidate and extend their number skills.
- Daily activities such as sand, water and role-play provide lots of opportunities for mathematical discussion.

Commentary

40. Nearly all of the children are on course to attain the national goals for early learning in this aspect by the end of the Reception year and about one in five of the children are likely to exceed them. Overall, standards are similar to those typically found in other schools. Achievement is good and children are generally working to their potential. Teaching is effective, with some very good features. The members of staff plan very well so that the children have plenty of opportunities every day to reinforce their understanding of number. Mathematical understanding is developed well through daily stories, songs, games and imaginative play. In one lesson the children sing 'The ants go marching one by one' and a boy collects children as the count goes up. The teacher constantly challenges the children during the singing by effective questioning such as 'What is one more than six?' The children know how to write ten and know that a nought is also called zero. Many calculate and write simple addition and the more able can count in twos to thirty and calculate with numbers higher than ten. The teachers develop the children's understanding of shape and space well and the children recognize most basic shapes. They observe the flow of

water through a drainpipe as Incy Wincy spider passes through and charge an adult ten pence to enter the Butterfly Park.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a wide range of activities indoors and outdoors that stimulate children's interest and curiosity.
- Some excellent teaching enables the children to communicate their observations of living things through language and recording.

Commentary

41. By the end of the Reception year it is likely that most children will attain the national goals for early learning. The children achieve well and are generally working to capacity. Teaching and learning are effective, with very good features. The children do very well in their understanding of living things and excellent teaching was observed by both the teacher and the nursery nurse during the inspection. They are beginning to understand the need to record observations and investigations. Groups visit the hens and the cockerel each day and check whether they are healthy and whether the hen has laid any eggs. They record their findings on a tick sheet. When they go back into the class they report back in precise language to the rest of the class who all listen intently. They also observe frogs in the pond and the growth of caterpillars in the classroom which has a good impact on their learning. They know that there are other countries, such as China, in the world. Children make good progress in learning to use the computer. They construct a simple database by dragging and dropping pictures and use a paint program well to draw a self-portrait after planning how they will do this on paper first. The children use a range of techniques such as cutting, weaving and sewing effectively to make objects such as spiders in connection with their work. The teachers discuss their work very well with them and challenging sessions take place such as observing a spider's web before making one out of pipe cleaners and looking closely at the pattern, texture and colours. Lego and construction kits are easily accessible.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers provide a very good range of activities that offer appropriate physical challenges.
- Good use is made of the hall and the outside area for developing physical skills.

Commentary

42. The children make good progress and achieve very well. By the end of the Reception year, most children are likely to attain the national goals for early learning and a significant number are likely to exceed them. Teaching observed during the inspection was very good. Almost all of the children can explore equipment and use small and large apparatus and tools with considerable confidence and imagination. They are able to choose two wheeled and then four wheeled vehicles, for example, and steer safely and

with control and coordination, showing good awareness of space, themselves and others. During work in the hall and when using the outdoor areas, the children showed that they could travel around, under, over and through balancing and climbing equipment with good control and coordination. They have good awareness of their bodies, are beginning to recognise the importance of keeping healthy and that changes happen to their bodies when they are active; for example, they know that their heart is on the left hand side and it beats faster when they run or jump.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Opportunities for children to use their imagination are very good.
- Teaching and learning are very good enabling the children to achieve very well.

Commentary

43. By the end of the Reception year most children are likely to exceed the national goals for early learning. Achievement is very good. Teaching and learning are very good. There are very good opportunities for children to develop their creative skills and experience a range of creative activities through role-play, art and music. The children make good progress in learning to sing a range of songs and to use their imagination when listening to music. These activities take place regularly throughout the day, such as when changing activities, which is why the children do so well. The staff make all these sessions lively, challenging and very enjoyable. No work using musical instruments was observed. The children are able to complete good observational drawings for their age and to use paint well, mixing the colours before use. Children use their imagination in the 'Butterfly Park', charging for entrance and dressing up as butterflies. There are very good opportunities to use their imaginations in dance sessions in the hall, where they work very well with a partner and dance like raindrops.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are improving at a good rate and standards in speaking and listening are above average.
- The quality of teaching and learning are good with some excellent teaching.
- Literacy is used very well across the curriculum and some innovative work is taking place.
- Pupils are beginning to identify well how they can improve their work.
- Leadership and management of the subject are good.

Commentary

44. There has been a good improvement since the last inspection and achievement is good. Nearly all pupils are working to their potential for learning. In the national tests for 2003, results in reading and writing in Year 2 were average compared to both the national picture and those of similar schools. Performance in tests in 2004 was similar. These results indicate good improvement compared to the low standards found at the previous inspection. Test results in Year 6 in 2003 were below the national average and were not as good as similar schools. The early indications of the 2004 tests in Year 6 are that results are better than 2003 and this is consistent with the inspection findings which indicate that standards are average. Standards have risen due to the good tracking of

pupils' progress, improved teaching and provision and good leadership in the subject. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well and so do the more able pupils. Children from minority ethnic backgrounds and those who are learning English as an additional language do as well as other pupils. The achievement of Traveller children is satisfactory but is affected by stretches of absence from school. There is no significant difference in the attainment of boys and girls.

45. The substantial majority of pupils are confident speakers and pupils throughout the school listen attentively. Standards in speaking and listening are above average. Skills are being well developed in all classes and teachers involve pupils well in classroom discussions throughout the school. Teachers make sure that good attention is paid to introducing new and imaginative vocabulary into lessons and good use is made of drama to develop skills further. Pupils are used to preparing questions or presentations with discussion partners. Most are confident in speaking in front of the class. In Year 6, pupils advise their teacher, who is in the role of a character, to talk to her mother and father about her problems. Role-play was also effectively used in Year 3 to reinforce understanding of words that describe feelings. Pupils who are at an early stage of speaking English are given good support and in an excellent lesson in Year 1 were able to achieve well because of the support they were given and the high expectations of the teacher and teaching assistant.
46. Standards in reading are average and pupils across the school have achieved well this year. This represents a good improvement from the previous inspection and pupils' understanding of what they are reading is now appropriately developed. Year 2 pupils prepare competent evaluations of books they are reading showing a good understanding of the main points and display a good knowledge about the different characters involved. This is because teachers plan this aspect well. In each class there is an author of the month and the pupils write to and receive a reply from some of them. Older pupils read a range of challenging stories, poems and other texts and are regularly challenged by staff to select sentences, phrases and relevant information to support their views and show their understanding of them. The pupils use the school library but not all the younger pupils show adequate referencing skills. Reading diaries go home regularly and parents write comments in them but some more able younger pupils expressed a desire to be heard reading at school more often.
47. Standards in writing are average and improving at a good rate. Achievement is good. A main strength is in the writing across a range of styles. Pupils plan and write stories, film scripts and radio advertisements and use instructional, persuasive and descriptive writing well. They write obituaries and police statements. In Year 4 pupils have written good poems in the Haiku form, which is popular in Japan. Pupils have a good understanding of when to use a formal or an informal style. They decide that an informal style is best used when writing to an Agony Aunt. The use of an adventurous and wide-ranging vocabulary has been a priority this year and the outcomes are clearly noticeable in the pupils' work. Pupils produce well thought out work, showing good use of grammar and punctuation. Handwriting standards are typical of those found nationally but some pupils do not use joining in their work even though this has been taught. Work and presentation is fairly neat but could be of a higher standard. All abilities are making good progress. A lower attaining pupil in Year 6 plans a description of a mountain setting well identifying features such as a dark cave and the cold weather and a higher attaining pupil shows good attention to the vocabulary used such as '*He said "Open the door" in a cruel voice*'.
48. The quality of teaching and learning are consistently good. An excellent lesson was observed in Year 1 and a very good lesson was observed in Year 6. In the excellent lesson the objective

was shared with the pupils and the success criteria, which had a star-rating system, were thoroughly explored. Throughout the lesson pupils were encouraged to match their work to these criteria, to assess their own progress, and to make necessary improvements. This self assessment and evaluation was a key feature of the lesson and a key tool in achieving a very rapid pace of learning. At all stages of the lesson there was maximum engagement of the pupils who had opportunities to work independently and collaboratively, making judgements aimed at improving their own work and that of others. There was a focus on understanding the process of learning which made a significant contribution to pupils' personal development. In the very good lesson there was very good use of role-play by the teacher to help the pupils understand the thoughts of a girl experiencing difficulties at home. In all lessons observed the teachers showed high expectations and challenged the pupils well. Assessment is good and a particularly strong feature is the involvement of the pupils in understanding how they can improve. This is effective because marking is consistent throughout the school and pupils have clear targets to work towards. In some instances the pupils are identifying their own targets such as the correct use of apostrophes. Homework is regularly set and makes a good contribution to pupils' learning.

49. Leadership and management are good and show a clear vision for the development of the subject. Monitoring of planning and classroom practice has been effectively undertaken and has been instrumental in turning standards around. The subject leader has checked that all classrooms have the best resources possible to be a 'literate classroom'. The library is attractive and well laid out with a good range of books. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

50. Language and literacy is well used in other curriculum areas. An interesting and innovative project being undertaken at present is in the writing of a 'digital story' where the pupils work alongside a digital teacher (one who usually works online). In another very good initiative the school has produced a new unit of work linking science and poetry. There are good links with history and geography such as a local study in Year 6 where the pupils wrote about the riots in the past by farm workers in the village.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Strengths in teaching and the curriculum result in above average standards by Year 2.
- Leadership and management are good.
- Mathematical skills are used well across the curriculum to enhance other subject areas.

Commentary

51. National test results in 2003 for Year 2 pupils were above both the national average and the average for similar schools. Results for pupils in Year 6 were average compared to national standards and those of similar schools. The latest test results in 2004 indicate a similar picture for Year 2 and Year 6, with pupils in Year 2 exceeding the school's targets. Since the last inspection there has been good improvement in both age groups. Pupils who have English as their second language and Traveller pupils and pupils identified with special educational needs make the same progress as their peers. There is no

significant difference between boys and girls. Inspection evidence confirms satisfactory achievement overall with good achievement throughout Years 1 and 2.

52. Examination of pupils' work shows that there has been good progress on applying mathematics and using mathematical knowledge well to solve word and number problems. Pupils in Year 2 have made good progress in number work. The more able pupils can add, subtract, multiply and divide by 10 and 3. They understand two-dimensional and three-dimensional shapes well. Average pupils understand and use money confidently in word problems. Lower attaining pupils understand and use information well to create pictograms and have a good understanding of time for their age. The good progress continues in Years 3 to 6. Year 3 pupils can select the number operations and use data handling well. For example, bar charts are used to show the favourite flavour of crisps. Pupils have good knowledge of their own learning. Targets identify work to be done and older pupils identify when they have achieved their targets. Pupils in Year 6 have a satisfactory understanding of shape, space and measures. Average ability pupils in Year 6 can plot coordinates and calculate areas and perimeters. They are confident with numbers and can find fractions of amounts. These skills are consistent with the national expectations for their age. Lower attaining pupils are less secure using different methods when working out their calculations. They, however, develop basic numeracy skills effectively. Gifted pupils are well provided for in an extension group. These more able pupils can, for example, solve simple algebraic statements and this is a year or so ahead of expectations. Data handling is used well and pupils use line, bar, block graphs and pie charts to show changing amounts.
53. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall with instances of very good teaching in Year 6. Lessons are well planned with a variety of interesting activities and the main learning thrust of the lesson is shared effectively with pupils so they know what is expected of them. Year 1 and 2 teachers used movement well to make learning fun, for example, pupils jumped repeatedly to show the number of jumps possible in one minute. In the very good lesson the pace and teacher's enthusiasm for mathematics motivated the pupils and problem solving was used well. Assessment is good. Procedures to track progress are good but they are not used consistently to plan work for different ability groups.
54. The subject leader is enthusiastic and a very good role model for other staff. She has clear vision to develop the subject. Self-evaluation is used well and areas to develop are identified clearly. All classes have been monitored and feedback given to teachers to help them improve the quality of their teaching. Test results are analysed carefully and weaknesses identified.

Mathematics across the curriculum

55. Good use is made of mathematical skills to enhance other subject areas. In science pupils construct graphs and pie charts to show information. Measurement is used well in design and technology as Year 6 pupils make their motorised fairground ride. In geography, Year 6 pupils use coordinates to identify precise location on an ordnance survey map. Art work shows good use of pattern and shape.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average in Year 2 but are below average in Year 6.
- Achievement is good in Year 1 and 2 but unsatisfactory in Year 6.
- The quality of investigative work is not good enough and could be better throughout the school.
- Procedures to check progress are not well used to inform planning consequently tasks are not matched to pupils' ability.
- There are good links with the local secondary school.

Commentary

56. In the test results in 2003 pupils in Year 6 attained below average standards. The early indications of the 2004 tests in Year 6 indicate below average results. In the 2003 teachers' assessments, pupils in Year 2 achieved standards below those expected nationally. In the 2004 assessments, pupils have exceeded their targets and achieved standards that are above average. Inspection evidence confirms standards are above average in Year 2 and below average in Year 6. Pupils with special educational needs, those who speak English as their second language and Traveller pupils make the same progress as their peers. No difference was identified between the achievement of boys and girls. Since the last inspection standards have improved in Years 1 and 2 but have declined in Year 6.
57. The pupils' work indicates that the standard of recording in Year 6 is below average and there is an over-use of worksheets. The school has identified investigative work to be an area for development and inspection evidence would confirm this. A decline in standards is due to the teachers' limited expertise in teaching science and lack of professional development in recent years. Investigative work is a weakness. Older pupils have not learnt a systematic method for recording their work and consequently standards of recorded work are not as good as they should be. There are good links with the local secondary school, which sets work for the Year 6 pupils in the last few weeks of the summer term. Better progress is evident in Year 1 and 2 in investigative work. For example, pupils in Year 2 investigated whether hand size is linked to foot size. They conclude that it was not linked because they found that the pupil with the smallest hand did not have the smallest feet.
58. Literacy and numeracy are well used to enhance learning but information and communication technology is not as well used. In Year 5, the pupils used their mathematical knowledge to draw line graphs to show how liquid changes to a gas when water boils. In Year 3, the pupils used a pictogram to show food eaten by the cats and then used their literacy skills to write down their conclusions. One perceptive pupil in his evaluation wrote, "I don't think the investigation was good enough because we did not have enough cats."
59. The quality of teaching and learning are good in Years 1 and 2 and teaching observed during the inspection in Year 6 was satisfactory. Teachers in Year 1 and 2 are well organised and plan activities that interest the pupils. Expectation and challenge in recording work is not high enough in the Year 3 to 6 classes. Procedures to check pupils' progress are not as well developed as in English and mathematics and consequently teachers do not always adapt work for lower attaining pupils. All pupils complete the

same task. Over-use of worksheets limits opportunity for more able pupils to expand on their answers. Teaching assistants support pupils well in lessons and help lower attaining pupils access the work.

60. The leadership and management of science are satisfactory. The coordinator has identified a clear plan to raise achievement and develop the subject but she has only been responsible for science this year. The school has identified that investigative science is a weakness. Science does not have a strong focus around the school.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Older pupils are achieving well in the aspects of control technology, exchanging information, and multimedia.
- There is excellent use made of links with the police that contribute significantly to the pupils' achievement.
- Leadership and management are very good.
- The use of the computer suite is well managed.

Commentary

61. Standards are typical of those found nationally and the pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Although standards are similar to those found at the last inspection there are some significant initiatives taking place and the provision in the subject is making a good improvement. Pupils have regular lessons and use the suite well. Because of its size the suite can only accommodate half of the class but teachers manage this well and make sure that the other half of the class is usefully engaged in the classroom. A larger computer suite is planned in the new building.
62. The curriculum is good and pupils experience a good range of software enabling them to produce pictures, spreadsheets, multimedia presentations and present text and their written work effectively. Control skills are well developed. Three lessons were observed during the inspection. In a good lesson in Year 1 and 2 the pupils made good progress in controlling a simulated turtle round a treasure map on the screen. The teacher prepared the pupils well for new skills such as taking time before the lesson to take measured steps in the grounds. In another good lesson in Year 3 the teacher was careful to explain technical vocabulary enabling the pupils to progress well in their understanding of how to organise data on minibeasts using headings called 'fields'. In an excellent lesson in Year 6 there were outstanding links with the police and pupils' levels of interest and concentration were raised to a very high level. Pupils achieved above average standards in this lesson.

Example of outstanding practice

Net detectives. Stop that car thief. An exciting scenario in a real live situation

In an innovative and excellent lesson filled with excitement and interest, the pupils in Year 6 achieved very well and displayed very good spoken and written communication skills. Pupils were involved in crime detection and were linked to police officers in the control room who were responding to their messages. Pupils learnt to use walkie-talkie devices. They made decisions, for example whether to send a helicopter to a run-a-way car. Pupils

had to respond spontaneously to the action taking place. Pupils in the computer suite communicated with other pupils back in the classroom using walkie-talkies and radios. The pupils in the suite received real time messages from the police on traffic patrol in various locations. They logged on to a map on the computer and received information about the suspect vehicles. They sent messages to the pupils in the classroom asking for precise coordinates and used their geography skills to identify the position of a stolen car on the ordnance survey map. Pupils identified the correct call sign and sent a patrol out. They then entered information on the make, colour and registration of a car that had been stolen. They learnt to be precise in the information they gave and said 'Over' at the end of all the messages. This lesson made an excellent contribution to the pupils' personal development and the pupils gained a greater understanding of how the police work as well as how information and communication technology is used in the wider world.

63. The subject leader has very good specialist skills and makes sure that planning challenges the pupils well across all aspects. She has improved the confidence and willingness of staff to teach the subject and has led staff meetings. All teaching assistants have received training. There is a thorough action plan based on self-evaluation. Informal monitoring has taken place in all classes and areas for development have been identified with all teachers. Assessment is good and the school has an accurate picture of the standards being achieved. Currently the school is developing ways where the pupils can identify how well they are doing. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

64. There are some very good links with other subjects, especially design and technology and the school is continuing to develop the subject in all areas. Innovations and initiatives such as collaboration projects with the police take place and also there is the work on a new web site developing writing through working with a 'digital teacher', who has also visited the school. Drawings and pictures using art software are of a good standard. In geography, pupils in Year 6 prepare a PowerPoint presentation on the Atlas Mountains. In design and technology, the pupils have used sensors and motors to control fairground rides and also shown on screen how the electronics inside the rides have been set up.

HUMANITIES

65. There is insufficient evidence to make overall judgements on the provision in **geography**. There is evidence of some interesting approaches to the subject, and fieldtrips, which support the development of geographical skills and understanding. Wall displays, however, do offer some evidence of a development and progression of skills and understanding. For example, in Year 1, plotting pupils' holidays on a map is developed well and, in Year 2, photographs and written work explore the places visited. In Year 3, pupils use plans to develop a good understanding of geographical language. In Year 4, pupils develop good skills of comparing and contrasting localities in their study of India. In Year 5, an investigation of a local river highlights geographical vocabulary and landscape features. In Year 6, there is an interesting display exploring the development of Littleport through the ages. The display in the entrance hall on African culture is exciting and interesting and provides a real focal point for a sharing of diverse cultural experiences. Geographical skills were very well used during the crime detection exercise with the police in Year 6.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards throughout the school are below average because this area of the curriculum has not been a focus for development in recent years.
- Achievement is unsatisfactory.
- Opportunities to learn about beliefs and traditions of major world faiths and apply this to living within school and the local community are not as strong as they could be.

Commentary

66. Due to the timetable only one lesson was observed during the inspection but close scrutiny of pupils' work and discussion have enabled judgements to be made. Standards are below the expectations of the local agreed syllabus for pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 and achievement is unsatisfactory. Progress in learning is not as good as it should be. This reflects the low focus of religious education within the school and the low priority given to the subject during recent years when the school had to improve standards in English and mathematics. The school is aware of the situation and the coordinator is eager to develop the quality of teaching and learning and overall provision. Standards were judged to be average in the last inspection. Improvement since the last inspection has been unsatisfactory.
67. Close examination of pupils' work shows the over-use of work sheets and missed opportunities to match work to pupils' ability. The majority of recorded work is superficial and opportunities to apply knowledge of religion to every day life are not well developed. Year 6 pupils, for example, compare a day in their own lives to a day in the life of a Buddhist monk but do not explain the implications of the different life-styles. Pupils in Year 2 have limited knowledge of Christianity. More able pupils in Year 2 know that Jesus was born at Christmas and was crucified and came alive again at Easter. Average ability pupils identify eggs and bunnies with Easter but are unable to explain why Easter is celebrated. Lower attaining pupils in Year 2 associate Christmas with presents and Easter with eggs but have little awareness of the religious significance for Christians. In the better work, pupils in Year 6 write about the Eight Fold Path and literacy skills are used well. The use of information and communication technology to enhance learning has not yet been developed.
68. Teaching in the lesson observed was satisfactory. The lesson was satisfactorily planned and the teacher had a good relationship with all pupils but the work was not matched closely enough to the needs of the many pupils with special educational needs in this class. Pupils made satisfactory progress understanding what the Christian hymns are saying about the Christian faith and developing an understanding of how religions teach and express the value of human beings.
69. The coordinator leads satisfactorily by example and has worked hard to develop resources, which are now good and easily accessible. However, the broader management of the subject is unsatisfactory. Pupils in Year 2 visit the local church but there are currently no visits to places of worship for other religions. The range of visits and visitors is limited. Religious education has a very low profile around the school and this reflects that the subject is in need of development.

History

Provision in history is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Displays are good and show a range of good activities.
- Pupils use historical sources and evidence well.
- There is some very good teaching and learning.

Commentary

70. Two lessons were observed in history. Additional evidence was gathered from a work scrutiny and displays throughout the school. From this, standards were judged to be typical of those usually found. Achievement is satisfactory overall. There has been a good improvement since the last inspection when the provision in Years 1 and 2 was unsatisfactory.
71. Lessons were observed in Year 1 and Year 4 and the teaching was good overall. Learning objectives were shared with the classes. In a very good lesson in Year 1, success criteria were also shared with the pupils. New learning was set into the context of previous learning and role-play was used effectively to engage pupils in understanding what life was like in other historical periods. Collaborative learning gave pupils the opportunity for full engagement in the lessons. Learning was regularly summarised during the lessons so that throughout the sessions learning was secure. Photographic evidence was used as a source for interrogation and there were opportunities to develop skills and understanding through comparing and contrasting observed features. In this lesson the pupils achieved very well in gaining a greater understanding of the past and finding evidence using pictures and photographs.
72. Work scrutiny shows evidence of a range of interesting activities which engage the pupils in independent and collaborative learning. There is good attention to the use of historical vocabulary. In Years 1 and 2, displays contrast the appearance of people in 1900 and 2000. In Year 3 pupils have to make inferences about why Henry VIII had so many wives. Pupils in Year 6 develop research skills through individual projects. They use various sources to make judgements and decisions. Work done usually presents the learning objective and the teacher's response sometimes identifies to what extent the objective has been achieved and future targets. It is not always clear what impact this makes upon following pieces of work. Assessment is at an early stage of development. No evidence of the use of information and communication technology was observed during the inspection but the subject is well used to develop literacy skills. Good use is made of visits to enhance learning such as visiting a local castle to experience Victorian life upstairs and downstairs. This visit by Year 6 took place during the inspection.
73. Leadership and management are satisfactory. There have been limited opportunities for monitoring and development as the school has been focusing upon the core subjects, but the subject leader's file shows a very clear vision for future development.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

74. There is insufficient evidence to make an overall judgement about the quality of provision and standards in **art and design, design and technology, music and physical education**. No lessons were observed in art and design, music and design and technology but one lesson was observed in physical education.
75. Pupils' **art and design** work is valued and displayed attractively around the school. The quality of display is very good and makes a significant contribution to the ethos of the school and the learning environment. Perspex portraits of every pupil in the school hang impressively in the corridor enhancing the unique architectural features of the school. Photographs of the school are stylishly displayed in the entrance area. These photographs are taken by pupils each month and illustrate the changing seasons and colours of the natural area surrounding the school. They provide a valuable learning resource for all pupils. Attractive ceramic tiles and textile visual arts enhance the school environment. Observation of art work around the school indicates pupils experience good opportunities to investigate materials, try out techniques and develop their knowledge, skills and understanding of art and design. The school has successfully raised the profile of the creative arts through enriching experiences such as the creative arts week. Pupils experienced drama, ceramics, cookery and dance during the week. As a result of this week all pupils developed their cultural awareness of African art. Year 4 used their imaginations well to create attractive African style jewellery combining shape and colour effectively. Year 2 pupils made African drums and Year 5 pupils created ceramic pots using a coiling technique. There are good links with science and pupils in Year 1 and 2 create attractive displays using natural materials.
76. Work on display indicates good provision in **design and technology**, which has a prominent focus around the school, and there are good links with other subject areas. Information and communication technology is used well to enhance learning in Year 6. Pupils use their knowledge from both subject areas to design their own motorised fairground rides. Photographic evidence shows satisfactory ability to evaluate their own and others' work and suggest improvements to create an even more effective design. Making skills are satisfactory. Pupils in Year 6 use a variety of methods and materials to make a revolving pirate ship with lights and buzzers. Literacy and numeracy are used well to enhance learning. There are good opportunities for pupils to write about their work and use mathematical skills when designing and making objects and to plan and design; for example, Year 1 and 2 pupils designed and made their own playground equipment, following clear design criteria.
77. Discussion and observation indicates that **physical education** and **music** are improving. In the one lesson in physical education the quality of teaching and learning was satisfactory. Year 1 and 2 pupils enjoyed practising their country dance. There were good opportunities for pupils to talk about the dance and suggest ways to improve. No swimming was observed but scrutiny of records and discussion indicates that the majority of pupils achieve the expected standard by the end of Year 6. The quality of singing in assemblies was very ordinary as was the recorder playing. There is a choir and pupils also have the opportunity to learn to play string and brass instruments.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Provision in personal, social and health education and citizenship is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils think about their own feelings and those of others in a positive way.

- There is good participation in the school's decision-making process.
- There is some very good teaching and learning.

Commentary

78. The provision has made a good improvement since the last inspection when it was satisfactory. The school has adopted a local scheme of work for personal, social and health education and it is being implemented well. Although not enough lessons were seen to make an overall judgement on standards or teaching and learning, the teaching in the two lessons in Years 4 and 6 were very good. The Year 4 lesson taught pupils very effectively about ways to keep safe. Pupils of all abilities were given good opportunities to think about the issues and to speak in groups and in front of the class. The teacher provided very good guidance about how to deal with difficult situations. The Year 6 lesson built on the school's excellent link with the police and was integrated very well with information and communication technology. Pupils in all years have covered appropriate topics such as feelings, what makes people special, rights and responsibilities, personal hygiene, sex and drugs education, and the transition to secondary school. There is good continuity in Years 1 and 2 from the work on personal, social and emotional development carried out in the Reception class. Pupils have good opportunities to develop their knowledge, skills and understanding of citizenship. For example, each term they elect two representatives to take their views to the school council and they often meet and talk with different adults from the community. The new subject leader is enthusiastic about her role and has already reviewed resources, attended a training course on sex and relationships education, and drawn up an action plan for the coming year. She has not yet had the opportunity to monitor the teaching and learning in other classes. Systems for assessing and recording pupils' achievements are under-developed.

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	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	4
Overall standards achieved	4
Pupils' achievement	4
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	3
Attendance	5
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The quality of education provided by the school	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
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	4
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	3
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	3

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