

INSPECTION REPORT

THAMES DITTON INFANT SCHOOL

Thames Ditton

LEA area: Surrey

Unique reference number: 124968

Headteacher: Mrs J Espley

Lead inspector: Mr Eric Jackson

Dates of inspection: 24 – 26 March 2004

Inspection number: 258097

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant school
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 - 7
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	4 - 6
School address:	Speer Road Thames Ditton Surrey
Postcode:	KT7 0NW
Telephone number:	020 8398 5842
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Dennis Clark
Date of previous inspection:	27 April 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Thames Ditton Infant School is larger than most of its type with 132 boys and 135 girls on roll. Currently, the proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average. The number of pupils with special educational needs is also below average. These needs are mainly specific or moderate learning difficulties. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is below average, and a very small number learn English as an additional language. The number of pupils who leave or join the school at other than normal admission times is slightly above average. The socio-economic circumstances of the area served by the school are very favourable. The attainment of most pupils at entry to the school is well above average. The school has achieved a number of awards for its pupils' high achievements, and also has Investors in People status, a Parent Friendly Award, the Basic Skills Quality Mark, and the Artsmark.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
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11437	Mr A Anderson	Lay inspector	
11353	Mrs J May	Team inspector	Areas of learning in the Foundation Stage Science Design and technology Information and communication technology Special educational needs
17767	Mrs S Power	Team inspector	Mathematics History Geography Religious education

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is an **excellent school**, providing a very high standard of education that leads to exceptionally high achievement for its pupils. This is because the headteacher ensures that her own very high standards and vision permeate the school, supported very strongly by the excellent deputy head, the whole staff, parents, and the governing body. The school provides outstanding value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The headteacher's leadership is exemplary so that everyone involved with the school is clear about her vision for its direction, and all strive successfully to achieve it
- Management is excellent, ensuring that all the school's processes are effected very well
- The quality of education is exceptionally high, with a rich and innovative curriculum
- Teaching is excellent for all age groups so that pupils' learning is often exciting, and achievement is very high, including for gifted and talented pupils
- This leads to very high standards for the pupils by age seven in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology (ICT)
- Pupils' personal development is at the heart of their achievements, including for children in the reception classes, and gives them great confidence, poise and independence.

Improvement since the last inspection has been very good, with all issues met some time ago.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Achievement is very good, including for those with special educational needs. Compared to national averages in 2003, Year 2 pupils achieved standards in reading, writing, mathematics and science in the highest five per cent nationally. In reading and mathematics, these were also in the highest five per cent compared to those in similar schools, and well above average in writing. The current Year 2 pupils are on track to achieve similarly high levels.

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
reading	A*	A*	A*	A*
writing	A	A	A*	A
mathematics	A*	A*	A*	A*

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

Attainment at entry to the reception class is generally above average, but covers a wide range, with some children having very good language and mathematical skills. Children achieve very well by the end of the reception year, and easily exceed the standards expected, known as Early Learning Goals, in all the areas of learning recommended for their age. This very good progress is continued through the Year 1 and Year 2 classes, so that pupils achieve very high standards in reading, writing, mathematics, science, ICT, art and design, and aspects of other subjects such as singing in music and dance and swimming in physical education.

Pupils' personal development is outstanding, including the promotion of their **spiritual, moral, social and cultural development**. Their attitudes to learning are exemplary, and their behaviour is very good. Attendance is well above average, and punctuality is very good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is outstanding. Teaching is excellent, as are learning and the curriculum. The headteacher and deputy have led the staff very effectively in innovative and inspiring ways to plan the curriculum, and individual lessons, often involving very good use of ICT. The current focus on thinking skills and creativity, based on Edward de Bono's 'Thinking Hats' techniques, has been superbly adapted by the staff to help these young pupils to be active in their own learning. To listen to five, six and seven year old children discussing in pairs possible problems in how they might approach their work in mathematics or dance, then changing 'hats' to plan creatively how they might overcome them, shows learning based on high and very effective challenge. One in three lessons observed were excellent, and most of the rest were very good, with none unsatisfactory: this ensured rapid progress in most areas of learning for pupils at different levels of prior attainment. The way in which staff link learning across different subjects, reinforcing language, numeracy and ICT skills seamlessly, helps the pupils to make developmental connections in their thinking. This leads to high order personal development, equipping them as active promoters of their own improvement and progress. Thorough and very effective assessment by the staff, alongside pupils' own self-assessment and evaluation, provides a very effective basis for planning new and exciting learning opportunities across the curriculum from reception through to Year 2. For example, the outdoor classroom between the reception classes is used extremely well to reinforce and extend skills, knowledge and understanding developed in other lessons. Care, guidance and support are very good, and there are very strong links with parents and the community. Links with other schools are good, with further progress planned.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are excellent, thorough and innovative. Governance is outstanding, and its influence on the school's continued improvement is shrewd and dynamic. Governors ensure that all statutory requirements are met. The headteacher is a highly skilled and inspiring leader, shaping the school's direction with governors, staff, pupils and parents so that all are involved in the continued drive for excellence in all aspects of its work. Leadership development for other staff is promoted very successfully, and the deputy headteacher is extremely skilled in helping other staff, including those who are newly qualified, to challenge themselves to grow professionally in order to provide lessons and other opportunities that motivate the pupils, accelerating their learning and confidence rapidly. Overall management and school administration ensure that thorough and shared monitoring, evaluation and very effective action planning are central to all the school's processes. The school has a very high reputation, with many visitors from other schools. Staff also visit other schools regularly to check if there are practices that might help them to better meet their pupils' needs.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

The school regularly seeks its pupils' and their parents' views on the education it offers. The School Council is routinely involved in discussions about matters that affect pupils directly. Parents and pupils hold the school in very high regard, and strongly welcome and appreciate the quality of education offered, and the strength of the school's leadership and management.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

Given that this is a highly effective school, to continue to maintain and develop further its high standards it should consider:

- extending the use of assessment, linked to creativity and thinking skills, to ensure that standards achieved in all subjects match those already achieved in English, mathematics, science and ICT.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Achievement is very good, including for those with special educational needs. Children achieve very well by the end of the reception year, and easily exceed the standards expected, known as Early Learning Goals, in all the areas of learning recommended for their age. Year 2 pupils achieved very high standards in 2003 in national tests in reading, writing and mathematics, maintaining the high standards of recent years. The current Year 2 pupils are on track to achieve similarly high levels.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve very well in the reception classes, and easily reach and in many cases surpass the standards expected by the end of the year.
- The standards achieved by the end of Year 2 have been rising above the national trend for a number of years, and have improved very well since the last inspection.
- A very high proportion of seven-year-old pupils achieve at higher than expected levels in reading, writing, mathematics, science and ICT.
- Those pupils with special educational needs achieve very well, and all reach at least the levels expected for their age in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Gifted and talented pupils are challenged very effectively, and make very good progress.
- Pupils' understanding of their own progress and targets for further improvement is very high, helping them achieve very well in other subjects, such as art and design and PE.
- Boys appear to have responded well to measures introduced by the staff to improve their achievement relative to girls' achievement, without a lowering of the standards that girls achieve.

Commentary

1. Children in the reception classes make great strides in their personal, social and emotional development, and become avid learners. This is unsurprising, given the high quality learning environment and stimulating tasks with which they are provided. Almost all parents are very impressed by how well the staff induct their children at the start of the year, and how quickly they settle, and rapidly begin to make real progress, whilst also very much enjoying their work.
2. Pupils in Year 2 achieve standards that are equivalent to those expected of children at least a year older, so that they often attempt tasks well above those generally set for children of their age. They cope very well and enjoy the challenge to achieve such high levels because:
 - They are very well prepared for new work through the carefully structured planning of it by the staff.
 - They are taught to assess their own work from an early age, and to understand what they need to learn to make further progress, with a focus on creativity and thinking skills.
 - The work is so interesting that they clearly enjoy tackling new ideas and extending their skills, knowledge and understanding in all areas of the curriculum.
 - From the reception classes on, children are expected to match the high standards set throughout the school, and they rise very well to these expectations.
3. The table shows that in national tests for Year 2 pupils, the school achieved standards in the highest five per cent nationally in reading, writing and mathematics. These results were in the highest five per cent compared to schools in similar circumstances in reading and mathematics, and well above average in writing. The average points scores appeared to fall back slightly in reading and mathematics because Year 2 pupils could no longer be accredited at higher than Level 3 from 2003; in 2002, a number of pupils reached the very high Level 4 in reading and mathematics, with a consequent higher average points score.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	19.0 (19.7)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	17.6 (16.2)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	19.6 (19.8)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 89 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

4. Pupils with special educational needs achieve very well. Their needs are identified swiftly and targets drawn up that are known and understood by everyone. These targets are reflected systematically in day-to-day activities and work is matched closely to their individual needs. The support for them either individually or in small groups is very effective in helping them to make rapid gains in key skills of literacy, numeracy, speaking and listening, ICT and co-ordination. This success has a strong impact on their confidence and self-esteem that in turn enables them to take part fully in whole lessons.
5. Those pupils identified as gifted and talented work alongside their peers for most of their work, but often have tasks set them in those aspects where they have gifts or talents that demand a higher response than that expected of higher attaining pupils in general. For example, a Year 2 pupil displayed an amazing talent for his age in writing stories. His teacher encouraged him to continue developing this skill so that he is now on his second long story. An unexpected spin-off has been that other pupils in his class are now experimenting with paragraphs and chapters, including some who have special needs in writing.
6. High standards are also achieved in most other areas of the curriculum. This is particularly significant in ICT, where great improvements have been made since the last inspection. Pupils excel in using a wide variety of programs, including word-processing, data-handling, drawing and painting, simulations, and modelling. This is because the staff are highly skilled, and plan the use of the school's high quality resources very effectively. High quality work was seen in art and design, music and PE, reflecting the school's achievement of the Artsmark, and the current focus on creativity. High standards were achieved also in a Year 2 religious education lesson.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes to school are excellent and their behaviour is very good. Pupils' personal development, including the provision of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. Pupils' attendance and punctuality at the school are very good. This aspect is a significant strength of the school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Most pupils have excellent attitudes in the classroom and around the school.
- Pupils are very well behaved.
- Pupils' personal development is excellent.
- The provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent.
- The attendance and punctuality levels are very good.

Commentary

7. Most pupils behave very well in lessons and around the school. For example, in a Year 1 and 2 assembly, pupils walked quietly into the hall and responded very well to the local minister's questions about the Easter story, with its important spiritual message. In the playground, pupils

play very well together using the very wide range of resources available. They develop excellent relationships with all teaching and supervisory staff, and there have been no pupil exclusions.

8. Teachers have very high expectations of pupils' attitudes and behaviour, and they respond very well. There is no oppressive behaviour. Most lessons are very well paced and pupils' concentration levels are exceedingly high. In a science lesson, for example, Year 2 pupils worked very much in harmony with their teacher and their classmates as they carefully conducted experiments to determine which child in the class had the most stretchy sock.
9. The school council has been in operation for a few years and this provides an excellent forum for pupils to debate the school issues of the day, as seen through their own eyes. All other pupils contribute to the school council system and it is consequently a very inclusive process that adds significantly to pupils' personal development. An observed meeting of this pupils' council in action, (all proudly wearing their membership red T-shirts), was very impressive as they debated how they could encourage everyone to walk in quietly and calmly from the playground. Many other opportunities are provided for pupils to take responsibility both for their own standards of work and in carrying out various tasks around the school. The school's provision of these personal development opportunities is excellent.
10. The provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is exceptionally strong and pupils are provided with many opportunities to work together in the classroom, and to explore the richness of the local environment by means of many visits into the community. As part of further cultural development, one Year 2 class presented a stunning presentation about China during a whole school assembly, repeated for parents in the afternoon. This included a wonderful range of dance, costume, drama and music. There was also an excellent contribution to pupils' spiritual development through this work. There are well-developed plans for a special China Day to be held during the following week in which all pupils will have the opportunity to explore and take part in many cultural aspects of Chinese life. Pupils' moral and social development is also of an excellent standard and the recently introduced 'thinking hats' provision plays a significant part in helping children to understand the many different ways of thinking, and how they may be utilised creatively to full effect in their everyday lives.
11. Pupils show excellent social skills in the dining room. Allowing Year 2 pupils who eat sandwiches to utilise the small room adjacent to the playground is excellent, and adds significantly to their personal development, independence and self-esteem.
12. Attendance is very good, well above the national average. The incidence of unauthorised absence is low, well below the national average. The vast majority of parents are very supportive of the school in ensuring that their children attend school regularly and promptly. The school is very proactive in monitoring attendance and is quick to involve external agencies in order to ensure the safety and security of the small handful of children who have inconsistent attendance.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence	
School data	3.7
National data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	
School data	0.2
National data	0.4

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

There have been no exclusions.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is excellent. The outstanding teaching leads to excellent progress in learning, based on a very innovative and stimulating curriculum. Care, guidance and support are very good, as is the partnership with parents and the community.

Teaching and learning

Teaching, learning and assessment are excellent.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- All the staff's expectations of the pupils' progress are very high, supported very strongly by their excellent command of the curriculum.
- Teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage (reception classes) are excellent, and the children learn basic and personal and social skills rapidly.
- The induction of newly qualified staff in Year 1 classes is exceptional.
- The remarkably high quality teaching in Year 2 has a telling impact on the pupils' all-round development.
- The very skilled adaptation of de Bono's 'Thinking Hats' by the staff, allied to developments in creativity, enables the pupils to become outstanding learners.
- The staff's use of their assessment of pupils' achievement is of a very high standard.

Commentary

13. The headteacher and deputy have led the staff very effectively in developing their skills and understanding so that their imaginative thinking and very thorough lesson planning combine to provide many outstanding learning opportunities for the pupils. This is why the standards achieved in reading, writing, mathematics, science and ICT are so high. The staff teamwork in each year group is remarkable as it leads to lessons that are pitched very effectively to meet all the different groups of pupils' needs. Support staff work alongside teachers seamlessly, so that the pupils' progress is consistently faster than is generally seen. Parents and pupils almost unanimously recognise and welcome the high quality of the teaching.
14. The pupils respond to the high quality teaching they receive with great enthusiasm, avid interest and superb concentration in the main. High level personal development for children in the reception classes is built on very successfully in Years 1 and 2. This very good personal development gives the pupils rich opportunities to work independently either alone or in groups. They also understand that they must take turns when working as a whole class. They do this very well, learning to consider other pupils' needs, and listening to other pupils' views and ideas with surprising maturity for their age. Very occasionally, late in the afternoon, pupils' concentration and application falters, and their progress slows to satisfactory levels.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 39 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
10 (26%)	16 (41%)	11 (28%)	2 (5%)	0	0	0

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

15. Over one in four lessons observed were excellent, and most of the rest were very good, with none unsatisfactory: this ensured rapid progress in most areas of learning for pupils at different levels of prior attainment. This high proportion of very good and excellent teaching is much higher than is generally found nationally, particularly for the reception and Year 2 classes. There were two newly qualified teachers taking Year 1 classes during the inspection. They work in a team of four that includes a more experienced teacher, and the deputy head. The deputy

provides outstanding development opportunities as induction mentor for these new staff so that the quality of their work is already consistently good, often very good, and occasionally excellent. This is another excellent example of the high expectations that permeate the school being delivered in practice to promote the pupils' learning. There is also a graduate teacher trainee working in Year 2, and she also speaks very highly of the quality of support she has received.

16. The current whole-school focus on thinking skills and creativity, based on Edward de Bono's 'Thinking Hats' techniques, has been superbly adapted by the staff to help these young pupils to be active in their own learning. This approach was only adopted in September 2003, yet already staff and pupils have become visibly comfortable and confident in its use. The teachers leading these developments are very enthusiastic and convincing advocates of the way in which the techniques empower both adults and children. In a very good music lesson for Year 1 pupils, for example, they were encouraged by the teacher to use the 'creativity' and 'positive thinking' styles to compose a group sound-picture of noises from the playground. This they did with remarkable success for their age, one very-well organised group performing their composition combining rubbing together their hands, hair, arms and cheeks to evoke the soft sounds of the wind blowing through the grass.
17. The way in which staff link learning across different subjects, woven though with language, numeracy and ICT skills, helps the pupils to make developmental connections in their thinking. This leads to high order personal development, equipping them as active promoters of their own improvement and progress. For example, reception children took it in turns in the 'hot seat' to answer questions in the role of Little Red Riding Hood. The other children drew on their understanding of the story very well to frame imaginative questions for their age. This promoted their listening and speaking skills very well. Similarly, Year 2 pupils developed their ICT skills well in ordering the sequence of events in the Easter story on the interactive whiteboard in a religious education lesson. In creating printed patterns using paint and rollers, Year 1 pupils also learned how to rotate the design by turning the block, giving them practical experience of rotational symmetry, to be built on in mathematics in Year 2.
18. Thorough and very effective assessment by the staff, alongside pupils' own self-assessment and evaluation, provides a very effective basis for planning new and exciting learning opportunities across the curriculum from reception through to Year 2. This provides a rich data-base of information gained from thorough and regular checks of how well individuals and groups have achieved, such as from focused marking of groups of pupils' work. The staff use this data very successfully to both plan new work for groups and individual pupils, and to adapt the curriculum to meet each year groups' newly identified needs. This is extremely effective in the promotion of the core subjects, and very effective in most of the others. It also helps the pupils to understand how well they have achieved, and what they need to do next to improve further. However, given the very high quality in almost all the school's work, and the high standards achieved, the systems to assess pupils' achievement and standards in subjects outside the core do not readily present a clear picture of how well the pupils achieve against the levels expected for their age, and whether a similar proportion achieve at above average levels as in the core subjects.
19. The identification and assessment procedures for pupils with special educational needs are excellent. Their individual education plans are of a very high quality. These are reviewed on a regular basis and parents and pupils are fully involved in this process. The plans have very clear targets and these provide key information and data against which progress can be measured. The pupils are carefully monitored and the assessment records and tracking by the special educational needs co-ordinator indicate that they are making very good progress. Records are extremely thorough and very well kept. The quality of teaching is very good for pupils with special educational needs. Their individual targets are clear and precise, and learning support assistants understand clearly what they are to do in order to support the pupils further. Learning support assistants are a very strong team and take responsibility willingly.

The curriculum

Curriculum provision is excellent. Resources and accommodation are of good quality. Teachers and support staff are well qualified and suitably deployed to meet the needs of pupils at different stages of learning.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school provides a creative, innovative and stimulating curriculum for all its pupils, including those who are gifted and talented.
- Excellent provision is made for children at the Foundation Stage in reception classes.
- The quality and range of extra-curricular provision is very good.
- The curriculum is fully inclusive and places strong emphasis on equality of opportunity in promoting high achievement.
- Excellent provision is made for pupils with special educational needs in helping them to achieve their potential.
- The pupils' personal and social development is exceptionally well promoted.
- Provision for literacy, numeracy and ICT is excellent and promotes high standards.

Commentary

20. The headteacher and deputy have led the staff very effectively in innovative and inspiring ways to plan a curriculum that fully meets and goes beyond statutory requirements. As a result, the school is a lively and stimulating place in which to learn and pupils of all ages and abilities are catered for fully. The 'Thinking Hats' strategy, running as a connecting thread alongside creativity through all curriculum planning, is a highly successful development in promoting independence and resourceful thinking in these young pupils. This approach to thinking skills is applied consistently throughout the school and is highly effective in providing challenge and inspiration to all pupils. The school's confident and creative interpretation of the national guidance for literacy and numeracy contributes significantly towards the excellent progress made by pupils of all abilities in these areas.
21. The emphasis placed on creativity within the curriculum is central to the high quality of learning, in making connections between subjects in ways that are relevant and exciting for this age group. Provision for creativity is planned very effectively through a topic or themed approach and every opportunity is taken for pupils to experience art, music, drama and dance linked to other key curriculum areas. Regular whole days with a focus on one subject provide excellent opportunities for enriching and stimulating learning in areas such as science, design and technology, mathematics and the arts. Strong emphasis is placed on promoting literacy, numeracy and ICT skills within a broad and integrated curriculum. The reception classes' curriculum is extremely well designed and planned to marry the areas of learning recommended nationally for the age group with aspects of the National Curriculum programmes of study for pupils in Year 1. The staff's interpretation of this through lessons and activities for the children is outstanding.
22. The school provides very strong support for learning outside the classroom. A very good range of after school clubs, such as cookery, keep fit, computer club and choir, complement and enhance pupils' learning in lessons. A comprehensive programme of visits to educational destinations, such as Tonbridge Castle and Katesgrove Victorian Schoolroom, bring learning across the curriculum to life. Visitors to school bring a rich variety of experience into lessons. For example, the Dynamo Dance project gave pupils a very valuable taste of multicultural dance and the chair of governors contributed his own vivid memories of school life in the past to enhance learning in history.
23. The pupils' personal and social development is an integral part of school life and is promoted particularly well in assemblies and in 'circle time'. Teachers and other adults provide excellent role models for pupils in helping them to become confident, thoughtful and considerate in

dealing with their own feelings and in understanding the impact of their actions on others. The staff include sex and relationships' education very skilfully into their personal, social and health education planning.

24. The highly inclusive nature of the curriculum results in excellent provision for all pupils and is very successful in meeting their particular requirements in terms of gender, capability and background. Provision for pupils identified as gifted and talented is highly effective in enabling these pupils to achieve their full potential through carefully planned and challenging tasks in lessons. The particular learning needs of boys are met very well through visual and practical learning, carefully chosen texts and innovative use of ICT. The individual education plans and matched provision ensure that those pupils identified with special educational needs achieve to their capabilities. Indeed, in almost all cases, pupils so identified invariably attain the levels expected for their age in national tests at age seven.
25. The accommodation is of good quality. Although the building is old, the school makes the very best use it can of the available space. Recent additions have greatly improved the environment, particularly for children in the Foundation Stage. The 'outside classroom', imaginatively set between the three main classrooms, is a particularly exciting use of space to enable the youngest pupils to receive their entitlement to physical and imaginative play in an outside environment. Learning resources for all subjects are of good quality and sufficient for the school to meet all curricular requirements. A particularly effective investment here has been in ICT equipment, including interactive whiteboards in every classroom that are increasingly used to illustrate and explore work across the curriculum.

Care, guidance and support

The procedures for child protection and welfare are very good as are those for supporting and guiding pupils through monitoring of their work. The procedures for seeking, valuing and acting on pupils' views are excellent.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Child protection procedures are in place and very effective, with relevant staff trained in the systems and procedures.
- Teaching and support staff understand the pupils' needs very well.
- The school provides a very high level of support and guidance as pupils progress through the school.
- Care and welfare arrangements are strong, and the staff act immediately on any issues of concern.

Commentary

26. The teaching and support staff, occasionally supported by external agencies, provide a very high degree of welfare support to individual pupils, exemplified by the very good provision for pupils with special educational needs. Pupils' academic performance and personal development is monitored very effectively both formally and informally by the staff, and steps are taken to identify any individual problems with a range of effective strategies. A particular strength here is how well the staff listen to and act on the pupils' own views. The School Council is an active and respected body, and its discussions and decisions involve all the pupils.
27. Teachers and support staff know their children very well and they are quick to notice any personal difficulties they might experience, and to take appropriate action. The school operates very good systems to ensure pupils' health and safety. For example, a record is maintained of pupils' medical needs, including food allergies, which is copied to and monitored by relevant staff around the school. The school also carries out health and safety audits of the site, and a

good example of the outcome of this is at the main entrance which has been designed to allow children and parents to wait in safety prior to the start of the school day.

28. Lessons in personal, social and health education (including circle time) are used very well to provide pupils with advice on their personal safety and security and one such observed lesson was appropriately titled 'being safe'. The bright orange 'visitor' sticker utilised by the school to clearly identify external visitors was very well utilised in this lesson to stress to pupils the importance of not talking to strangers. Children showed a significant understanding of how they are made safe in school and the very good summary session at the end of this lesson allowed children an excellent opportunity to assess their own progress and to demonstrate their understanding of the key points covered in the lesson.
29. The school acknowledges pupils' achievement through the praise given to them in the classroom and, more formally, in regular sharing and presentation assemblies. The walls in the hall and around the school are used very well to promote a wide variety of curricular themes and to celebrate the very good work of the children. This practice is clearly a much valued and effective area of the school's promotion of pupils' personal development and self-esteem.
30. The very high level of child protection and welfare support to pupils at the school, together with the very good procedures for promoting pupils' personal development and well being, have a very positive impact on their learning and achievement and they are a significant strength of the school.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Parents' views of the school are very good, as are the school's links with them. The school's links with the local community are very good, and there are good links with other schools.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Almost all parents and pupils like the school very much.
- Parents feel that the school is very well led and managed.
- The teaching is felt to be very good, and that the staff are very approachable.
- The school reaches out very well to all parents, and involves them successfully in its work.
- The school makes very good use of the community to support the curriculum.

Commentary

31. A significant majority of parents are very supportive of the school and of its aims and objectives. Parents feel that their children like school and that they are making very good progress here. Parents also feel that the teachers are good and that the school is very well managed. They are also impressed with the school's response to any concerns they might have. For example, there is a comments/suggestions' notebook in the entrance for parents' use, and the headteacher responds promptly and clearly to any entries made.
32. The information provided by the school through the prospectus, annual governors' report to parents and via regular and well designed newsletters is of a very high standard. Annual academic reports to parents are of a very good standard in relation to the reporting of the main core subjects and they also include targets for pupils' further development. There are two parents' evenings each year when they have the opportunity to discuss their child's progress and these evenings are very well attended by parents. In addition, there is a 'Celebration of Achievement' evening for all pupils, during which Year 2 pupils engage in a computerised Powerpoint presentation to their parents and the rest of the school.

33. Parents are frequent visitors to the school both in terms of providing very welcome classroom support and in assisting with external visits. All parents have been invited to enter into a home/school agreement, which is well designed to promote improved communication between the school, parents and children. Parental attendance at school concerts, celebrations and sports days is excellent. Discussions with some parents during the inspection confirmed the very strong and effective relationship between home and the school. The Parent Teacher Association is also very active and successful in fundraising and in organising social events for the school.
34. The school also makes very good use of the local environment to enhance pupils' curricular opportunities, and the range of extra-curricular clubs and activities is very impressive. Year 1 pupils recently attended a Victorian School Day during which they dressed in Victorian costume and met the challenge of a Victorian lesson. The school has very good links with local farms and parks where a wide range of environmental studies are undertaken. The local church, post office, library and synagogue are also well utilised by the school to provide pupils with a wide range of experiences, built on very effectively during lessons in school.
35. There are close links with several local schools and staff are encouraged to visit a range of external establishments to learn new skills and to harness ideas which may later be utilised to enhance the provision for pupils here. The present links with Thames Ditton Junior School (to where most pupils will transfer) are satisfactory and both schools are currently developing a range of options to enhance the links between them. The school is about to embark on an 'Organising for Success' initiative which will bring them into much closer contact with other infant, junior, primary and secondary schools in addition to a sixth form college. This is planned to extend the availability of a wider range of resources to enhance the already excellent curriculum even further.
36. The school's very good links with parents and the community and the widening contact with other schools and colleges provides a very strong contribution to pupils' learning and personal development and it is a major strength of the school.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership is outstanding, led extremely successfully by the headteacher, supported powerfully by the deputy head and other key staff. Governance is also outstanding. Management is extremely effective, so that the school is organised and run with impressive efficiency.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher's leadership is inspirational, and has a profound impact on the whole school, ensuring very high standards in pupils' personal development, and in their academic achievements.
- The deputy head is a very influential figure in staff development, and in the very efficient day-to-day management of the school.
- Governors play an outstanding role in the school, and their strong determination to appoint staff of the highest quality has a significant impact on the pupils' achievement.
- The highly effective management of the school translates the vision and mission statement into very effective processes and action on behalf of the pupils' overall quality of education.
- All the staff are totally committed to the school's high expectations for the pupils, led very efficiently by those in key management roles.

Commentary

37. At the heart of the school's success is the very skilled and effective leadership provided by the headteacher. She has extremely high expectations of her own and other staff's work, and is

dedicated to the highest standards for the pupils. She very skilfully takes the whole school with her in realising these expectations in all areas of the school's work. Her unobtrusive monitoring and evaluation of everything that goes on in the school, with direct and effective action taken to offer praise and encouragement, or to recommend improvement, provides the strong skeleton on which the body of the school's educational progress grows. She is strongly supported by the deputy head, who is in very close touch with the day-to-day working of all classes and groups. Her knowledge and understanding of different staff's and pupils' strengths and development needs is deep and thorough. The teamwork and professional confidence shared between these two key leaders shapes the continuous improvement of the school's work very effectively. They are backed up by other key staff extremely well, so that year group and subject leadership is strong and effective. These staff often lead key initiatives, such as the 'Thinking Hats' development, and do so with commitment, rigour and infectious enthusiasm.

38. The governing body, ably led by a close and involved chairperson, provides outstanding support to the work of the school, not only ensuring that all statutory requirements are met, but providing the vital sharp and determined leadership in the appointment of key staff. This informed focus on ensuring that the right staff are in post is the most effective action taken by the governors to maintain and further improve the school's work for its pupils. Individual governors also bring a variety of skills and experiences that are drawn on very effectively in overseeing and agreeing the direction of the school. They take a long-term strategic view, ensuring that the available funds are wisely allocated, and use the principles of best practice in evaluating the success of implemented plans. Many governors visit the school regularly, offering support and keeping an eye on the school's work through their links with subject leaders. There is a rota of governors who become 'Governor of the Month', with specific monitoring duties to report back to the full governing body. The governors rightly have great confidence in the current leadership and management of the school, but are not complacent, keeping a shrewd and informed overview of the overall quality of education offered.
39. The leadership of special educational needs ensures that all pupils are included regardless of their individual differences or backgrounds. Parents are fully involved in identifying targets for their children and individual education plans are kept up to date and revised regularly. The administration and management is every efficient and staff have great confidence in identifying pupils, formulating individual education plans, and ensuring these are reflected in day to day provision for identified pupils. As part of the school's highly inclusive approach, pupils from a variety of ethnic backgrounds thrive successfully together. The recently adopted Race Equality policy ensures that the governing body monitors achievement and relationships here closely. The school identifies gifted or talented pupils early, and provides exciting challenges for them to develop their skills and abilities well.
40. The management of the school is also excellent. There are very efficient systems and procedures in place to ensure that it runs very well, and there is strong administrative support for the headteacher and staff. Parents value this efficiency highly. Chief amongst these systems is that for staff performance management, allied to staff development. The headteacher and other key staff regularly and systematically monitor the quality of education, including classroom teaching, offering informed and professionally developmental feedback on their observations. This has the dual effect of helping all staff to improve, and to promote management skills for key staff. The power of the link here to staff development is illustrated by the success of ICT initiatives, and the adoption of the 'Thinking Hats' strategy.
41. Because the headteacher is only satisfied by the highest standards, she ensures that the school's work is evaluated regularly and rigorously against its aims and mission statement. For example, identifying that boys' achievement followed the national pattern of being lower than girls in reading and writing, the headteacher successfully instituted with the staff 'boy-friendly' techniques to involve and encourage them more effectively. This has helped to improve boys' achievement without lowering standards for the girls.

42. The school's overall improvement plan is very effectively based in this rigorous overview. It includes full analysis of the outcomes of previous plans, is dynamically focused on direct and measurable improvements, and includes detailed mini-plans for each area of the school's work. This detail is specific, but takes account of over-arching issues such as key skills, complementing and extending the major priorities in the main plan. This coordinated planning, closely overseen by the governors through regular updates from staff and governors' own monitoring visits, is the hub of the interlocking programmes that move standards and the quality of education forward progressively year-on-year.
43. Despite unit costs below the national average for schools of this type, although parents are very supportive of fund-raising initiatives, the school achieves exceptional outcomes for its pupils. This represents outstanding value for money.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004 (Balance from previous 2003/4 and next 2004/5)

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	641,866
Total expenditure	613,637
Expenditure per pupil	2,298

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	28,249
Balance carried forward to the next	6,249

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is excellent. The children enter the reception classes with attainment that is above average overall but which covers the full range of attainment, with some children at very high levels in speaking and listening. They make very good progress and achieve very well in all the areas of learning because of the excellent teaching and exciting curriculum. Children well exceed their learning goals. The provision is led very effectively; teachers and learning support assistants make a very strong team. The assessment strategies are particularly rigorous, as detailed observations are made of the children during activities. This provides detailed and useful information, with benchmarks indicating children's progress. This is used very effectively to inform directly the future plans and strategies for learning. As a result, higher attaining children have work that is challenging, and where necessary other children have work carefully modified for their individual needs. The strengths identified at the time of the previous inspection have been maintained and developed further.

Personal, social and emotional development

Provision in this aspect is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- At the end of reception, children easily exceed the standards expected for their age because of the excellent teaching and the very good emphasis placed on the development of these skills.
- There are many opportunities for children to express their ideas and feelings.
- There is an emphasis on learning and because teachers value the children, their self-esteem grows visibly.

Commentary

44. Children arrive to school eagerly, interested and keen to learn. The excellent relationships amongst the children themselves and with adults give them confidence to 'have a go' and try new activities whilst not being afraid to make mistakes. They join in quickly as part of a group and realise the importance of considering the needs of others as well as their own. Most of the children are able to listen for a sustained period of time because the teachers ensure that the lessons are interesting, motivating and well matched to their interest.
45. Teaching is excellent, leading to the children achieving well beyond the levels expected for their age. For example, in a lesson for personal, social and emotional development, children used the main themes from The Red Riding Hood story to discuss and role-play with the teacher what would happen if a stranger offered them a lift in a car. From this, they themselves identified the choices they would have and the appropriate responses.
46. Numerous examples were seen where the children worked unsupervised, behaving sensibly and sharing resources. For example, children filled containers with water, managing not to spill any on the floor. They walk sensibly to the hall for assembly, and take responsibility for their clothes when changing for physical activities, pegging their plimsolls together so that they do not get lost.
47. Children take responsibility for placing their achievement merit awards in their personal wallet on the class achievement board. The atmosphere is overwhelmingly positive, as the teachers and learning support assistants seek to encourage children consistently. The rewards and words of praise are genuine and linked to specific examples of good work, attitudes or effort.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Provision in this aspect is **excellent**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is systematic emphasis on developing communication skills; children speak with growing confidence and use a range of appropriate vocabulary.
- Activities are organised efficiently and effectively whereby the children's literacy skills are developed in every day situations.

Commentary

48. Teachers plan their excellent teaching very effectively together. Planning is comprehensive and builds coherently from the previous day's learning. For example, in a very effective lesson for developing the children's literacy skills, the story of Little Red Riding Hood was revisited and extended to writing a get-well card for Granny. The children listened attentively to a taped message from Granny and then wrote their cards. The rigorous use of questions challenged the children to develop even more vocabulary. The use of their "Thinking Hats" was very effective in encouraging the children to examine the story from differing standpoints and to understand the various ways in which it can be described.
49. Activities are very well designed and absorb the children's interest. In the outside play area, children individually performed a puppet show about Little Red Riding Hood. In small groups they dressed up and acted out the story. The learning support assistant assessed this activity. The role-play corners in all the classrooms are very well planned to encourage writing, note taking and making phone calls. Children have systematic opportunities throughout the day to speak and listen to one another. They were seen regularly having conversations with one another, helping each other and talking together with confidence and ease. They achieve standards well above those expected for their age.

Mathematical development

Provision in this aspect is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Adults take every opportunity to develop mathematical understanding and, as a result, children exceed the goals they are expected to reach by the end of reception. Achievement is very good.
- There is a good ratio of adults to children, which helps the children make progress.

Commentary

50. Teaching and learning are very good. Adults question the children skilfully whilst they are engaged in a variety of activities: because the ratio of adults to children is so good there is always someone trying to draw out and encourage the children's mathematical understanding. The interactive whiteboard is very effectively used to reinforce number work. For example, during a lesson where children were successfully learning to double numbers, the teacher wrote the sum incorrectly on the board. The children quickly spotted the 'mistake' and using the interactive board wrote the sum correctly. The concept of doubling was successfully reinforced in the outside play area where children threw beanbags into hoops, under the guidance of the classroom assistant. There are many references to numbers around the rooms that help children further in their use and application of their well-developed numeracy skills.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

Provision in this aspect is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- First hand experiences and excellent teaching mean that children enjoy finding out for themselves. As a result, they exceed the goals expected by the end of reception and achieve very well.
- Adults ask challenging questions to make children think and extend learning.

Commentary

51. Teaching is excellent. A wide variety of activities organised by the staff helps children to develop their understanding of the world around them very well, including religious understanding through such activities as learning the Easter story. For example, they have made maps to show what Jack saw at the top of the beanstalk, and a firefighter's visit has helped them to find out about fire engines. They have learnt about the Chinese New Year and tasted different Chinese foods. Children confidently use computers to draw and paint and have made class graphs of the colour of their eyes. They develop knowledge of the characteristics of different materials through their play with sand, water and play dough in the excellent outdoor classroom.
52. During the inspection the children discussed the difference between toys that require pushing and pulling. They mimed the actions of pushing and pulling, and identified that a bicycle needs to be pushed with the feet, demonstrating a high level of understanding for their age. They used construction kits to make trolleys that could be used by Red Riding Hood to carry a heavy basket to Granny. The teacher asked challenging questions to help the children see further possibilities and improve their construction models.

Physical development

Provision in this aspect is **excellent**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve well and exceed the goals expected by the end of reception because there are many opportunities to develop their skills.
- The body skills session in the playground is an excellent opportunity to develop the childrens' movement, co-ordination and use of space.

Commentary

53. Children have very good opportunities to develop their physical skills in response to the excellent teaching by the staff. In a lesson observed, the children changed their clothes quickly and independently. They listened attentively to instructions, willingly and quickly recognised the rules in moving, running, hopping, jumping and standing still to the sound of the tambourine. The teacher used the children's own ideas to help others to sequence a range of different movements to demonstrate moving quickly.
54. The excellent body skills activity set up in the school playground is very well organised. The adventure wooden construction, Trim Trail, is challenging, and encourages children to swing, jump, and climb. Supervision is careful but not over-fussy. All the group activities are very well planned to develop physical development such as skipping, throwing and catching. All staff participate in these activities.
55. The children are fortunate in having a covered outdoor play area between the classroom buildings. This area contains a cycle track, climbing frame, hopscotch, a plastic wall for

balancing, a garden area and a range of games for improving co-ordination and dexterity. This area is used daily to help children develop skills and imagination through structured play including puppet shows and role-play. These activities are very well planned and organised by the teachers.

Creative development

56. It was not possible to make an overall judgement on provision or standards in this area of learning but the standards seen were above average. There are many opportunities for children to use their imagination through carefully planned artwork, focused musical activities and imaginative role-play. Work on display covered a wide range of media such as colour mixing to produce paintings of sunsets and the sea, pattern making, lanterns, clay whales, self-portraits, and collage fish.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGE 1

ENGLISH

English

Provision in English is excellent. This is an improvement on the already very good provision at the last inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards achieved in reading and writing are consistently well above the national average in national tests, and usually in the highest five per cent in reading, higher than at the last inspection.
- Pupils' speaking and listening skills are developed very well, as is their handwriting.
- Teaching is outstanding, promoting very good achievement.
- The rich variety in literacy activities provides the pupils with interesting and often exciting learning opportunities.
- Pupils' literacy skills are developed very well across the curriculum.
- The subject coordinator leads with skill and great enthusiasm, helping other staff to link successfully developments in literacy with those in thinking skills and creativity.

Commentary

57. Pupils consistently achieve very high standards in all aspects of the subject. This is because all the staff have the highest expectations of the pupils' response and progress in lessons, and through their homework. Teachers plan very well to build on the pupils' prior learning, using assessment data very effectively to set shared targets, and set tasks and activities that enthuse and motivate the pupils to work hard. For example, in a literacy lesson linked to the topic on China, Year 2 pupils were challenged to develop a character profile for a Chinese boy in a new story. The pupils excitedly discussed in pairs what they could infer from the limited information presented by the teacher on the whiteboard. In building the profile, the pupils referred to the evidence in the text or the picture to substantiate their suggestions, such as that the boy was only four or five because he 'has just started school'. They spoke often in full sentences, sometimes complex, and listened actively and with genuine interest to their partner's comments. This level of work is well above average for their age. Indeed, the Year 2 pupils' reading skills are of a very high order for their age, and they have well-developed research skills when seeking information from books in the library or through ICT.
58. The school has used the format of the National Literacy Strategy, but adapted it significantly to its own developmental priorities. The marriage of the current focus on creativity and thinking skills with successful aspects of the Strategy has led to whole class sessions that are lively

and full of interest. These are usually followed by independent group and individual work where the pupils know what their learning targets are, and plan for themselves how they will reach them. Whilst the staff ensure through this approach that pupils experience the full subject curriculum, they also allow room for individual creativity.

How the school promotes outstanding talent

This example shows how a Year 2 teacher encouraged a high attaining boy to develop further his gift for story-writing, and through his example, inspired others.

A Year 2 pupil displayed an amazing talent for his age for writing stories in his journal (a jotter for pupils to explore their own ideas). His teacher encouraged him to continue developing this skill so that he is now on his second long story. The first not only included paragraphs, chapters, cliff-hanging chapter endings, accurate and high level use of punctuation and sentence and paragraph structure, but imaginative and gripping use of vocabulary and ideas. Much of this is at levels expected of much older children. An unexpected spin-off has been that other pupils in his class are now experimenting with paragraphs and chapters, including some who have special needs in writing. This again has been encouraged by the teacher, and illustrates how pupils' own ideas and plans are skilfully woven into the overall teaching and learning programme for the subject.

59. A great strength of the school's approach to promoting pupils' achievement is in the staff's very well-developed subject knowledge allied imaginatively to what is known about how Year 1 and 2 pupils best learn, and the learning needs of the particular group of pupils being taught. In a very good lesson for Year 1 pupils, the headteacher explained to them that the chair of governors (a well-known and regular visitor) wanted to know their views on the outside play areas, and how it might be further developed. This was to help them to improve their skills in using persuasive language, leading to writing formal letters to the governors.
60. The newly-qualified teacher used what she had learned in staff training sessions to manage this very successful lesson where ICT was used effectively, and the whole class responded with purpose and determination to present their views. Their letters were very well constructed, with good layout, sentence structure, and accurate spelling (two children used the class 'word wall' to spell 'because', for example); this demonstrated high levels of achievement for Year 1 pupils. As well as a linked activity for three pupils using a drawing program to design changes, the support assistant worked with two higher attaining pupils to video a role-played version of a discussion between the chair of governors and a pupil. The teacher was able to work at such a high level because the year teams plan their work together, and she is supported very effectively in her development by the deputy headteacher.
61. The deputy headteacher often supports higher attaining groups or individuals, and pupils with special educational needs. She has a humorous style that engages the pupils' interest through enjoyment, but is also dedicated to the pupils making rapid progress towards their agreed targets. Testament to this is that almost without exception, pupils with special educational needs in reading or writing achieve the levels expected for their age, and the majority of pupils achieve above or well above expected levels in reading.
62. The skilled subject leader has an excellent overview of how effectively teaching and the planned curriculum help to drive up standards. As part of a major review of the subject recently, she monitored lessons throughout the school, and from evaluation of her findings, the senior management team set new targets for further improvement. These included a more creative approach to group reading tasks, and a continued focus on boys' achievement. These plans have been successfully implemented. She also rewrote all the medium term plans for the subject to incorporate the promotion of thinking skills, creativity, and links with the special cross-curricular topics and themes. There is also Seed Challenge grant aid available to extend the accommodation, and it is intended to incorporate a new central library. This is intended to improve provision here from its current satisfactory state.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

63. The strength of pupils' literacy skills, particularly in speaking and listening, opens the way to wider opportunities for learning in other subjects. Whole class, group and paired discussion is an important feature in many lessons, and the staff encourage the pupils to be thoughtful, creative but focused in their choice of vocabulary and style of speech. Observed discussions in art and design, music and PE illustrated the value of this, especially as the specific language to use the different thinking styles is constantly emphasised. Reading and writing, and the use of word-processing programs, also feature in many lessons such as geography and history. Pupils' high quality written descriptions of their visit to a Victorian school give a good example here.

MATHEMATICS

Provision is excellent.

Main strengths

- Standards in all areas of mathematics are very high.
- Teaching is of very high quality throughout the school.
- Teaching assistants make a very strong contribution to the quality of learning.
- Excellent subject leadership and management have a highly significant impact on standards.
- All pupils achieve very well in relation to their prior learning and show excellent attitudes to learning.
- ICT is a strong feature of the subject.

Commentary

64. Over the last four years, the school has been highly successful in maintaining very high standards in the national test results at the end of Year 2, improved since the last inspection. In 2003, all pupils reached the expected level for their ages and an exceptionally high proportion of pupils reached the higher level. In lessons, the picture is similar and all pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve highly in relation to their prior learning. This very good achievement is due to the very high quality of teaching of all ability groups throughout the school. Boys and girls do equally well, due to a recent highly successful initiative to raise boys' achievement. Pupils capable of high attainment do very well due to the excellent and challenging teaching they receive in lessons and in small teaching groups, enabling them to achieve to their full capacity.
65. In the lessons observed, teaching was at least good and sometimes very good in Year 1 and it was excellent in all Year 2 classes. The outstanding teaching was characterised by exceptionally good provision for the range of pupils' learning needs and highly effective teamwork with support staff, who play a high profile role in lessons.

Excellent teaching in mathematics

An example of excellent teaching was observed in a Year 2 lesson about symmetry.

The teacher kept the pupils highly motivated and involved in practical activity throughout. She used the interactive whiteboard as a very effective teaching tool and the new learning was introduced expertly in a way that enabled all pupils to learn at their own pace. Before moving them on to the next step, the teacher constantly checked the pupils' understanding and challenged their thinking: even the 'brain gym' was practised in a symmetrical way. The independent group tasks had been planned in a way that promoted real excitement and anticipation and all pupils set to work with a great sense of purpose, with each achieving to his or her capacity. Their 'thinking hats' were fully engaged as they puzzled out how to create a pattern showing reflective symmetry with different levels of complexity, some using laptops to show their work. By the end of the lesson, pupils could define symmetry in mathematical terms and apply their new learning in different situations, demonstrating a very high competence for their age. The teamwork between teacher and teaching assistant was a very significant factor in this highly successful lesson.

66. Throughout the school, lessons are brisk and lively. Teachers have high expectations of their pupils and keep them on their toes by interesting and challenging teaching methods. They make very effective use of interactive whiteboards, successfully engaging pupils' attention and wasting no time because of the excellent use of made of time and resources. Pupils are encouraged to be resourceful and are proficient in getting out and putting away laptop computers and in solving problems that arise during independent tasks. The National Numeracy Strategy has been implemented extremely effectively. The high priority given to rapid mental recall of number facts and problem solving strategies has been very effective in developing pupils' mathematical thinking skills. The pupils' excellent attitudes to learning and exemplary behaviour are very significant factors in the success they achieve.
67. Leadership and management in mathematics are excellent. The subject manager gives thorough and inspirational guidance and leadership to colleagues through a rigorous programme of monitoring and assessment analysis. She is not complacent, and is constantly seeking ways to maintain and improve the high standards already achieved. For example, a recent successful family learning project became a model for other schools, and ICT has been developed to an exceptionally high standard to support mathematical learning.

Mathematics across the curriculum

68. Very good opportunities are created for pupils to extend their mathematical learning in work across the curriculum. The integrated topic approach to other subjects enables mathematics to be planned and incorporated effectively in subjects such as science, design and technology and ICT, so that mathematical skills and understanding can be applied in relevant contexts for the ages of the pupils.

Science

Provision in science is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are well above average by the end of Year 2 and pupils achieve well.
- The pupils have many opportunities to investigate for themselves and this contributes to the high standards achieved.
- The subject is well led by the recently appointed co-ordinator.

Commentary

69. The emphasis placed by the staff on practical and investigative activities is a key factor leading to the high standards, an improvement since the last inspection. Pupils achieve well because of the good and often very good teaching that has a direct impact on their learning, including those pupils with special educational needs. The "Thinking Hats" techniques are used effectively to assist pupils' investigations, and an area is set aside in each classroom where pupils can continue investigative work outside lesson time.
70. In the very best examples of teaching, the staff's secure subject knowledge and high expectations ensured that all pupils were challenged rigorously in their scientific thinking at a lively pace. In a very good lesson for pupils in Year 2, for example, pupils investigated the stretchiness of socks. They worked in small groups confidently with very positive attitudes to complete the task. They competently recorded their results in a graph on the interactive whiteboard. Skilled questioning by the teacher at the end of the lesson enabled pupils to identify what would be the next stage of their investigation.
71. Information and communication technology is used effectively to record work and to research information using information sources such as 'Living Library' and the Internet. Science is taught where possible as part of a topic and makes a positive contribution to the development

of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. Many examples were seen where pupils recoded their data by compiling and printing pie charts, block graphs, and pictograms. These opportunities give pupils pride in their work and contribute strongly to the high quality of the curriculum offered.

72. The recently appointed co-ordinator is very well informed and has a very good overview of the subject through monitoring teaching, learning and the standards achieved. She is committed to the further development of ICT in the science curriculum. Good assessment procedures are in place and pupils' progress is closely monitored to ensure all are sufficiently challenged. As a result, tasks set meet their needs very effectively. Pupils in Year 2 have their own targets to work towards to give them a better understanding of their own learning.

Information and communication technology

Provision in the subject is excellent.

Main strengths

- Resources are excellent and used very well to support learning.
- ICT is used to assist lesson planning.
- Teaching is very good; this results in pupils achieving very well.

Commentary

73. Standards in ICT by the end of Year 2 are well above average, and pupils achieve very well throughout the school. The well above average standards are due to the very good quality of teaching and strong leadership of the headteacher and subject co-ordinator. All aspects of the curriculum are fully covered. Scrutiny of pupils' work and class topic books indicate how effectively ICT is being used throughout the school. All the weaknesses identified in the last inspection have been addressed, and improvement since then has been very good.
74. The teaching observed during the inspection was consistently very good and in one Year 2 lesson it was excellent. Some very good and excellent ICT teaching was also observed in English, science, and mathematics, where interactive whiteboards were used effectively to support learning. Teachers and support assistants are well trained in the subject and give very effective help to pupils. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress because they receive very good support. The school has recently added an interactive white board and computers to the resources in the room used to support the learning of special needs children; these have improved the provision for these pupils very well. The specialist software for pupils with learning difficulties is very good and is used well by teachers to support learning.
75. The school continues to work hard to develop the use of ICT as a tool to enhance pupils' learning. For example, the use of a digital microscope is being effectively developed. There is an after-school computer club which provides opportunities for pupils in Year 1 and Year 2 to use laptops further to develop the skills acquired during lessons. Year 2 pupils take the laptops home on a rota basis, which also contributes to the high standards achieved.
76. The management and monitoring of ICT is very good. There is clear direction about how the subject is to be developed and how ICT is to be used effectively as a tool to support pupils' learning. Teaching is monitored on a regular basis. Assessment information is used very well to monitor pupils' progress.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

77. The use of ICT is particularly good in English and mathematics. Some very good examples of pupils' work were observed in art and design, where pupils in Year 2 had used a paint program

to draw pictures of a "Beach Scene". They have also used the Internet for research about China and jellyfish, and composed emails to contact Father Christmas.

Humanities

Only one lesson was observed in history in Year 1, and two in geography in Year 1. Analysis of pupils' work, discussions with the pupils, and scrutiny of displays also contributed to the judgements made.

History

78. It is not possible to make an overall judgement about provision, as only one lesson was observed. Evidence from this lesson, from work in books and on display in school indicates that standards are well above those generally seen for Year 1 and 2 pupils, improved since the last inspection. The integrated topic based approach sets historical learning firmly within relevant contexts linked to other areas of learning. Pupils have a very good grasp for their age of the differences between past and present and about sources of historical information. This was particularly evident in the one lesson seen when pupils in Year 1 prepared thoughtful and relevant questions to ask a visitor in order to compare school life in the past with their own experiences. It is clear that visits and visitors make a very valuable contribution to the subject. Work on display indicated that a visit to the Katesgrove Victorian schoolroom was highly successful in engaging the interest of pupils, who were obviously fascinated by this window on the past.

Geography

79. It is not possible to make an overall judgement about provision throughout the school, as only two lessons were observed in Year 1, and none in Year 2. From the evidence of the lessons seen in Year 1, work in books in Year 2 and on display, standards are above those expected for the ages of the pupils and have improved since the last inspection. The integrated topic approach for teaching geography is very successful in promoting links with other subjects such as literacy, ICT and design and technology. In both the lessons seen, pupils in Year 1 achieved well for their ages in creating three-dimensional interpretations of their detailed plans for an environmental garden. They had a good understanding of how maps and plans could represent the physical environment and had devised their own keys to explain the features indicated on the plans. The travels of 'Whiskers' and 'Tails' in Year 1 and work in pupils' topic books in Year 2 indicate a developing sense of the wider world beyond their own country and make a good contribution to their cultural development. For example, pupils' knowledge of some aspects of life and culture in China or Australia is promoted well. However, there is further scope for a closer focus to be given to smaller localities within these countries in order to give pupils opportunities to compare them with their own lives and surroundings.

Religious education

Provision for religious education is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Visits and visitors make a very valuable contribution to learning.
 - The subject makes an excellent contribution to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
80. One lesson was observed in each year group and pupils' work was sampled. From this evidence, pupils achieve standards that are well above those expected by the locally agreed syllabus and this is a considerable achievement since the last inspection. Teaching is very good. In the lessons seen, teaching ranged from good to excellent and pupils achieved well in

developing their understanding of the symbolism relating to Easter and the key events of the Easter story.

Highly effective teamwork in religious education

In an example of excellent teaching in Year 2, the highly effective teamwork between teacher and teaching assistant promoted very good understanding of the order of events leading to the crucifixion of Jesus.

In a carefully planned strategy, the teaching assistant engaged the help of the pupils in explaining the Easter story to her. This was supported by astute use by the teacher of the interactive whiteboard and traditional and religious Easter artefacts to promote very high levels of interest in the subject. In a moment of spiritual wonder, pupils studying a portrayal of the crucifixion were totally silent while one of them explained what was happening. The task of ordering cards representing the key events was extremely well varied to match the learning needs of groups of different prior attainment: this also promoted high quality discussion within the groups. By the end of the lesson, pupils had gained a very good understanding of the symbolism in familiar items such as hot cross buns and Easter eggs.

81. Lessons and other provision make a highly significant contribution to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Opportunities for spirituality are maximised, moral and ethical dilemmas are discussed and cultural development takes place within the context of learning about different faith systems.
82. A very carefully planned programme of visits and visitors is highly effective in promoting positive attitudes to different faiths. Visits to places of worship such as a synagogue and a local church are strong factors in the rich provision for this subject. Close links with other churches and visits of different faith leaders to lead assemblies, provide a good range of multi-faith experiences for the pupils and give them a very good understanding of Christian and other beliefs. These also add to pupils' growing understanding of a range of cultural traditions. Links with other subjects are so well planned by the staff that learning is always relevant and pupils achieve very well in developing their knowledge and understanding of different religions. For example, pupils used a digital camera to photograph the internal features of a church and made Eid cards as part of design and technology studies. They wrote expressively and drew pictures to communicate their learning about Islam and Christianity and developed their speaking skills well in discussing Judaism during Circle Time.
83. Management and leadership of the subject are excellent. The subject leader provides excellent guidance and support to colleagues in the interpretation of the locally agreed syllabus. She carries out careful monitoring of teaching and curriculum planning and is constantly seeking ways to enrich and improve the subject. Assessment is very effective in monitoring the progress of pupils against expectations for their ages.

Creative, aesthetic, practical and physical subjects

One lesson was seen in music, and two in physical education. There was insufficient evidence in these subjects to make a full range of judgements. There are subject leaders in these areas, under the overview of the deputy head. However, detailed discussions were not held with them.

Art and design

Provision in the subject is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are very good, and achievement is good.
- Specific subject skills are taught systematically, and developments in thinking skills are beneficial.

- The staff and pupils are enthusiastic about their work, and the school has achieved the Artsmark for the quality of its work.
- Good links are made with other subjects, including ICT.
- In asking pupils to work in the style of particular artists, the staff do not always explore the specific techniques they used, in order to guide the pupils if necessary.

Commentary

84. The school is an art gallery celebrating the pupils' work. The subject was strong at the last inspection, and has improved since then. There are fine examples of brilliantly coloured tie-dyed fabrics in Year 1, with a surprisingly rich range of patterns. In the same African theme, as part of the Dynamo Project, high quality clay masks show that three-dimensional work is promoted effectively. Year 2 pupils have used native Australian images of the Great Turtle to create their own line and dot painted images very successfully. Working with a visiting artist, pupils have also created a beautiful large fish design for the hall. Pupils in Year 1 have also transferred sewing skills to their fashion work in lessons.
85. There are many opportunities for pupils (and staff) to develop their observation and drawing skills. In the Year 1 lesson observed, two teachers performed a double act 'master class' to exemplify how to draw from life. The pupils were enthralled as their teacher became an artist demonstrating how to look and observe closely, then to transfer the visual image into a pencil drawing. The other teacher gave a commentary with well-judged questions to help the pupils to pick out the key aspects of the skills to be explored from watching their teacher at work. This was high quality teaching, prompting the pupils to see themselves as artists when they made their own drawings of plants and blossom. They achieved high levels for their age in concentrating, looking very carefully from different angles, and experimenting with line and form in their drawings.
86. All the Year 2 pupils studied Chinese watercolour images, staff successfully using the interactive whiteboards to display and discuss them. This was part of their themed work about China, and is a good example of how well skills and understanding in a number of areas of learning are successfully linked by the staff for the pupils, so that their learning is interconnected. In their sketchbooks, built on from last year, Year 2 pupils have practised a range of techniques, including using mixed media. This has led to them being confident to tackle new tasks, as when they used fine brushes and soft watercolours to make an image from life in the style of one of the Chinese examples seen.
87. Many of these Year 2 pupils have very good fine control, being able to manipulate the paint successfully in small areas. They also visualise the intended outcome using their thinking skills – an excellent example of this development aiding their work. However, the staff did not appear to discuss some of the techniques used to create the displayed images, such as dampening the paper to accept the paint, or the sweep and speed of some of the brush-strokes. Nonetheless, all the pupils had good opportunities to develop their observational skills, and drawing and painting techniques.
88. The subject has a firm place in the pupils' learning diet, overseen well by the deputy headteacher, and assessment activities are being developed. It is intended to use a simple task, repeated each year, to measure progress and to exemplify achievement at different stages of development. If this is successful, it could be extended to use national guidance about expected standards in different aspects of the subject to determine how many pupils meet or exceed expectations, to inform future lesson planning.

Design and technology

Provision in design and technology is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are good throughout the school and pupils achieve well.
- The curriculum is enriched by special events such as the Year 1 fashion show.

Commentary

89. Standards are above average by the end of Year 2. Pupils achieve well because of the interesting and challenging activities planned by the teachers. These activities are planned to develop pupils' understanding of the design and make process. During the inspection, Year 1 pupils modelled their decorated T-shirts and their bags for their parents. The pupils paraded very confidently along a catwalk whilst one of their number used a microphone to introduce them and describe their bags and T-shirt decorations. A very good variety of decorations and bags had been made by the pupils, using various materials and colours. The pupils evidently took pride in their achievements and the support of their parents. This event was well organised by the teachers and appreciated by the parents.
90. Year 2 pupils were observed evaluating Chinese masks which they had made. The teacher used the interactive board to raise questions for the evaluation and encouraged the pupils to adopt "Thinking Hats" in order to assess their masks and look for improvements. The process was hindered, however, by the masks being hung in the classroom and not immediately in front of the children.
91. Scrutiny of pupils' previous work showed a wide range of designing and making from windmills to dragons with self-inflating mechanisms and work was completed to a high standard. Pupils' evaluation of their work is being developed. Teachers carry out regular assessment of pupils' work.

Music

92. Although there was insufficient inspection evidence for secure judgements in most areas, music has a central role in the school. For example, the quality of singing in assembly is of good standard, tuneful and well-articulated. Morning or afternoon sessions for Year 1 and Year 2 pupils begin with a ten minute singing session. One Year 2 class began the afternoon session with a short and snappy music session, singing rounds, developing rhythmic understanding, and listening to recorded music. Parents presented the school with a sound system that is used to pipe music quietly around the school: this is unobtrusive, but adds to the burgeoning ethos of creative thinking and artistic endeavour. In one Year 1 lesson observed, the pupils cooperated very well in groups to compose rhythmic sound patterns to represent sounds from the playground. They did this very well, and listened to one another's performances attentively, an essential requirement in their musical development. Music adds depth to the pupils' spiritual and cultural growth, particularly through the themes, such as when Year 2 children learned a song about China to sing in their presentation assembly. There are also links with other local schools in performing arts, and professional musicians regularly visit the school.

Physical education

93. Two lessons were observed, dance in Year 1 and swimming for Year 2: both of these were outstanding. An important similarity between the two lessons was that the staff leading them were subject specialists.
94. Standards in swimming are very high for Year 2 pupils. The school is very fortunate in having a private sports and leisure centre immediately behind it, and has been skilfully entrepreneurial in having negotiated sole access to the outstanding swimming facilities for the three Year 2 classes on Friday mornings. With this package come three trained swimming instructors. In the lesson observed, the class split into three groups, beginners, those close to swimming 25

metres (the standard by the end of Year 6), and those swimming beyond 25 metres. This last group practised water safety skills. The high standards of instruction, the rapidity of progress, and the standards of care and accommodation make this an outstanding opportunity for these pupils.

95. In the Year 1 dance lesson, the recently qualified teacher, herself already a trained dance teacher, set very high expectations for her pupils' behaviour, involvement and quality of work. She was rewarded by an outstanding response from these young pupils, some of them still only five. She led the pupils to develop a creation dance from a native Australian story, using their thinking skills to assess and improve their own and other pupils' work. One boy grew into a crocodile, and his dance simulated the movements extraordinarily. Two girls developed a macabre dance involving one as a snake eating the other as a kangaroo: the concentration and will to create a movement sequence that told the story as they wanted it was very impressive.
96. During this lesson a thunderstorm broke over the school: a few pupils glanced towards the sound, but their involvement was so focused that not one pupil broke rhythm or pattern. This is remarkable for their age, and underlines the quality of the teaching, and the impact of it on the pupils' learning.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

97. There is a clear programme for this aspect, overseen by the headteacher. Two teaching sessions were observed, one in each year group, both of which were very good. One had the focus on Year 2 pupils' likes and dislikes, the other on Year 1 pupils keeping safe in school. Both these lessons (discussed earlier in the report) successfully reinforced the judgement that pupils' development in this area is excellent. The school council ensures that all pupils have a voice as 'citizens' in the school, and pupils confirm how highly they regard this opportunity.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	1
How inclusive the school is	1
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	1
Value for money provided by the school	1
Overall standards achieved	1
Pupils' achievement	2
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	1
Attendance	2
Attitudes	1
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The quality of education provided by the school	1
The quality of teaching	1
How well pupils learn	1
The quality of assessment	1
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	1
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	1
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	1
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3
The leadership and management of the school	1
The governance of the school	1
The leadership of the headteacher	1
The leadership of other key staff	1
The effectiveness of management	1

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