

INSPECTION REPORT

THORN GROVE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Cheadle Hulme

LEA area: Stockport

Unique reference number: 106079

Headteacher: Mr D Massey

Lead inspector: Mrs J Tracey

Dates of inspection: 28 – 30 June 2004

Inspection number: 258188

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	180
School address:	Woodstock Avenue Cheadle Hulme Cheadle Cheshire
Postcode:	SK8 7LD
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs V Moore
Date of previous inspection:	28 September 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Thorn Grove Primary School is slightly smaller than the average size primary school. There are 180 pupils on roll of ages 3-11. The school provides for deaf pupils from Stockport and surrounding areas. The proportion of pupils who join or leave the school at other than the usual times is about average. The percentage known to be eligible for free school meals (13 per cent) is broadly average. The school is situated on a spacious site. The accommodation and surroundings are well maintained. They are bright and welcoming and provide well for the curriculum and pupils' recreational and social activities. Attainment on entry to compulsory education is average for the vast majority of pupils but it varies overall from one year group to another depending on the number of pupils with special educational needs. The proportion of these is above average; the proportion with statements of need is well above average. Pupils' specific needs include deafness and visual impairment, specific and general learning difficulties. Very few have emotional or behavioural problems that affect learning. The great majority of pupils are of white UK origin. A small number come from other ethnic groups. The proportion of pupils for whom English is not believed to be the first language is below average.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
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30935	Mrs K McArthur	Team inspector	Science Physical education Religious education Foundation Stage
15678	Mrs J Radford	Team inspector	English Music English as an additional language
7994	Mrs P Weston	Team inspector	Geography History Special educational needs

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Thorn Grove is a very effective school. It provides extremely well for pupils' all-round development. Pupils of all abilities and needs progressively gain in confidence and maturity. Deaf pupils are very well integrated in every aspect of school life; they make a valuable contribution to the community as a whole. Currently, standards are average in Year 2 and above average in Year 6. Pupils achieve very well overall in response to the very good teaching. The school is very well led and managed. It provides very good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- pupils' attitudes to learning are very good; the school has created a very good climate for learning in which pupils flourish and are keen to do their best
- provision for English, mathematics and science is very good; standards are above average in these subjects at the end of Year 6
- overall, pupils' progress in information and communication technology (ICT) is very good but coverage of the different programmes of study is inconsistent in Years 1 and 2
- provision in the Foundation Stage is very good overall; facilities for outdoor play in the reception class are not as good as in the nursery
- procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are good but individual pupils are not always provided with sufficient information about how to improve their work further
- provision for pupils with special educational needs is very effective; it enables them to achieve, and sometimes exceed, expectations, by the time they leave the school
- the warm, welcoming ethos emanates from very good leadership and the total commitment of all staff in working together as a team
- parents are very supportive; they work closely with the school, contributing to their children's learning and to links with the local and wider communities.

The school has made good improvement since the previous inspection in September 1998. Provision and standards have risen in ICT and science and there is a much sharper focus to the leadership and management. In addition, the overall quality of teaching has improved further because the methods used are now more closely related to the different ways in which individual pupils learn.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

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

Overall, **pupils achieve very well.** Children make very good progress in the Foundation Stage. Most achieve and often exceed the goals expected of them by the end of reception, particularly in personal, social and emotional development. Standards vary from one year group to another depending on the proportion of pupils with special educational needs. Pupils

achieve well in Years 1 and 2. Currently, standards are average in reading, writing and mathematics in Year 2 and above average in English, mathematics and science in Year 6. Pupils achieve very well in Years 3 to 6 where standards in ICT are also above average. Pupils' results in national tests taken in Year 6 in 2003 were better in English than the other subjects because there was a large proportion of pupils with special educational needs in the age group and the focus was on the development of language skills. The results are higher in 2004. Over half the pupils have exceeded the level expected for their age in mathematics and science. Pupils with special educational needs, including the deaf, achieve very well because of the exceptionally good level of support they receive from specialist teachers and teaching assistants. Deaf pupils and their teachers work hard throughout the school to overcome initial difficulties with communication and language skills. Pupils for whom English is not the first language make similar progress to other pupils because support for them is targeted relevantly on their immediate needs. **Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.** It is reflected in pupils' very good attitudes and behaviour and in the very good relationships between pupils and adults. Attendance is very good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is very good. Pupils' personal development is firmly underpinned by a very good support system that makes good use of home links and external agencies. The provision for deaf pupils is particularly good. It enables them to flourish in the whole-school community. **Overall, teaching is very good.** It is the single most important factor in pupils' very good achievement. Teachers' planning allows for flexibility within lessons. Pupils are encouraged to think for themselves and to explain the reasoning for their conclusions. They are positively encouraged to become independent learners and to assess their own learning against the teachers' aims. The school provides a good, broad-ranging and interesting curriculum that meets all pupils' needs. It incorporates good opportunities for pupils to link up with other schools and extends to an introduction to European languages in the higher year groups. There is a satisfactory range of extra-curricular activities. It is not as extensive as in previous years however, particularly in music and sport. Overall, accommodation and resources are good.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are very good. Leadership by the headteacher and senior staff is very good; expectations are high and pupils and staff are united in their efforts to meet them. The school is very well managed. It provides stable routines so pupils of all abilities feel secure and gain satisfaction from working towards realistic personal targets. Governors base their decisions on sound information about the school's work. They challenge its performance and are forward-looking in strategic planning. Overall, governance is very good.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are very pleased with the quality of education provided and the caring atmosphere that makes every pupil feel valued. Parents have no significant concerns. They like the way children learn to respect each other's different qualities and agree that deaf children are very well integrated in the school community. Pupils think that Thorn Grove is a very good place to start their education. They are keen to learn sign language so that they can communicate more fully with deaf pupils.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Extend the use of the assessment system to provide individual pupils with more specific information about how to improve their work further
- Provide more consistent coverage of all strands of the curriculum in ICT in Years 1 and 2
- Provide better opportunities for outdoor play for children in the reception class as soon as is practicable.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Overall, pupils of all abilities and backgrounds, including those with special educational needs, achieve very well throughout the school. Currently, standards are average in Year 2 and above average in Year 6.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average in English, mathematics, science, ICT and religious education in Year 6.
- Pupils with special educational needs, including those who are deaf, make very good progress because of the very good support they receive from specialist teachers and teaching assistants.
- The focus on the development of pupils' literacy and numerical skills underpins the work in all subjects.

Commentary

1. Overall, children's attainment on entry to the Foundation Stage is average, apart from those whose special educational needs are identified at this early stage. Children achieve very well in the nursery and reception class. By the end of the Foundation Stage many have exceeded the goals expected for their age in all the designated areas of learning. Taken over the last four years, the overall trend in pupils' average point score in statutory tests taken in Year 2 is above that found nationally. In Year 6, the trend is similar to the national trend.
2. Pupils' results in statutory tests taken in Year 2 in 2003 were above average in reading, average in writing and below average in mathematics. In mathematics, the proportion of pupils reaching the level expected for their age was similar to the national average but fewer pupils than expected exceeded this level. Standards vary from one year group to another depending on the proportion of pupils with special educational needs. In the current Year 2, where the proportion of pupils with special needs is higher than in most other year groups, standards are average in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils achieve well overall. Higher-attaining pupils' work is above the level expected for their age, as confirmed by their results in all three subjects in the tests taken in 2004. This represents a significant improvement in mathematics at the higher level this year, which is due to greater challenge and a faster pace of learning for the more able pupils. Teacher assessment of pupils' work in science in 2003 was average. This is similar to the standard of work seen in the current Year 2.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	16.8 (17.0)	15.7 (15.8)
Writing	15.1 (15.6)	14.6 (14.4)
Mathematics	15.6 (17.0)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 24 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

3. In 2003, pupils' results in statutory tests taken at the end of Year 6 were above the national average in English, average in mathematics and well below average in science. Compared with schools with similar prior attainment in Year 2 in 1999, results were well above the national average in English, below it in mathematics and well below it in science. This year group was unusual in that over one fifth of the pupils in the class joined the school after Year 2. In addition, there was a large proportion of pupils with special educational needs, including some who were deaf. The school focused on raising achievement in English so that pupils could understand and interpret information for themselves in other subjects. As a result, progress in other subjects, for example mathematics and science, lagged behind English to some extent. In the current Year 6, where the ability range is similar to that found in most schools, standards are above average in English, mathematics and science. Pupils' results in the national tests in 2004 are significantly higher than in 2003. In particular, in mathematics and science, the proportions reaching level 5 (which is above that expected for pupils' age) increased considerably, from 26% to 59% in mathematics and from 26% to 82% in science. Pupils in Year 6 are achieving very well because they have made progressive gains in knowledge and understanding year-on-year through from Year 3 to Year 6. Throughout the school, there is no significant difference between the achievement of boys and girls.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	28.1 (28.5)	26.8 (27.0)
Mathematics	26.5 (28.9)	26.8 (26.7)
Science	27.2 (30.5)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 39 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

4. Pupils with special educational needs, including those who are deaf, make very good progress in relation to the specific targets in their individual educational plans, which are relevant and kept up to date. Although many of these pupils do not reach the standards expected for their age, they achieve very well when their learning difficulties are taken into consideration. All pupils have equal access and opportunity to experience the full curriculum; deaf pupils communicate their needs and responses very well through sign language and sound. Pupils with special needs make good gains in their overall personal development because teachers and teaching assistants are very well organised and very committed. Very few pupils do not have English as their first language. They make similar progress to other pupils of equal ability due to the well-focused and relevant support they receive from their classteachers.
5. The school has successfully implemented the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies, to the advantage of pupils of all abilities. The schemes of work are well adapted to the school's specific needs, particularly with respect to the development of communication skills for deaf pupils. The school is very sensitive to the importance of developing these skills at an appropriate pace, but as early as possible in a deaf pupils' education, because they enable pupils to access every other area of the curriculum with an increasing degree of independence. Overall, pupils' literacy and numerical skills are above average in Year 6, which places them in a good position to start their secondary education.

6. Evidence from the examination of pupils' work in ICT indicates that standards are average in Year 2 and above average in Year 6, which represents a considerable improvement since the previous inspection. Pupils achieve very well overall in the subject because the school has improved the resources for ICT and developed good teaching strategies. Standards in religious education are also above average by the time the pupils leave the school. Pupils' work was sampled in other subjects. Indications are that pupils achieve equally well across all subjects of the curriculum.
7. Overall standards in each year group vary only in accordance with the range of abilities in the age group, which in this school can be considerable. Progress is slower, although good, in Years 1 and 2 than in Years 3 to 6 because pupils with special needs, including deaf pupils, take longer to develop their communication skills in the early stages. Progress accelerates to very good in the later years because all pupils have gained in confidence by this stage in their education.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour throughout the day are very good. Attendance is well above average and punctuality is good. Relationships throughout the school are very good. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. There is no hint of racism and pupils are secure and confident that bullying is not tolerated.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The high level of attendance contributes very well to pupils' progress in school.
- Pupils, whatever their needs or difficulties, respond very well to the warm climate of friendliness, support and mutual respect throughout the school.
- Pupils show a very good sense of responsibility for each other and for the smooth running of the school community.
- Provision for pupils' moral and social development is very good.

Commentary

8. The school and parents work very closely together to sustain the high level of pupils' attendance. Attendance was above the national figure in 2002/03 and has risen further this year. The amount of unauthorised absence is below the national figure. Pupils respond well to the requirements and pace of a busy and orderly community. The educational welfare service provides good support in monitoring attendance and supporting families where there is any cause for concern.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	4.4	School data	0.3
National data	5.4	National data	0.4

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

9. Pupils have very good attitudes to school. They say that other pupils are friendly and that they feel well supported by all members of the school community. They respond very well to their teachers, and work well together in pairs and in groups. In the playground, they take part with great enthusiasm, both in activities organised by adults, and in the sport

and imaginary games that they organise for themselves. The older pupils are eager to take on a range of responsibilities and duties in school and they show care and sensitivity when looking after the younger children. The pupils who are deaf, and those with other special needs, play a full and happy part in school life. They are highly valued and respected by other pupils and staff alike, and contribute very well to the climate of warmth, friendship and family feeling in school. A very significant aid to progress in communication with the deaf is being established through the developing culture of using sign language throughout the school. Signing is a regular feature in class, assemblies and other whole-school events and is a skill that pupils are developing further through, for example, personal and social lessons.

10. Behaviour is very good throughout the school day. Pupils respond well in class, listen to their teachers and concentrate on their learning. Consequently, they make very good progress. In assemblies they respond very well, listening carefully and taking part with enthusiasm. The school sets high expectations of good behaviour and pupils are eager to gain the recognition and reward of 'Golden Time'. Occasional incidents of unacceptable behaviour are taken seriously and the school works closely with parents to help their children through any difficulties. Pupils know that bullying is not tolerated and should be reported. Consequently they are secure and free from oppressive behaviour and harassment. The school has not excluded any pupil, temporarily or permanently, in recent years.
11. Relationships throughout the school are very good. Pupils have a good level of trust in, and respect for, all the adults in school, who are unfailingly supportive. Consequently pupils know that they are valued as individuals and they grow in confidence and self-esteem. They are very well prepared to accept the challenges and opportunities of secondary education.
12. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. Opportunities for moral and social development are very good. Many are planned but others arise incidentally out of the general provision. From the earliest years the school promotes the pupils' spiritual growth and knowledge of right and wrong in a warm, caring community where all are valued. Subjects such as personal, social and health education, art and design and religious education make a good contribution to the pupils' spiritual development. Many opportunities exist for pupils to marvel at the wonder of living things and to reflect during lessons. When considering the story of *Pilgrim's Progress* and life's journeys, pupils in Year 6 show great maturity in their thoughts and reflections. Pupils respond very well to the climate of care, support and friendship through the very good role-models presented by all staff. School assemblies and personal, social and health education lessons are used very well to promote pupils' social and moral development. The 'signing' by staff and pupils enables deaf pupils to participate fully in these gatherings where time is given to listen and question values and beliefs, and to identify right and wrong actions. Opportunities for pupils to gain knowledge of their own culture and some of the cultural traditions of other countries are satisfactorily woven into the curriculum, for example in literacy, art, history and geography. The school has an effective Race Equality Policy that is monitored properly.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is very good. The school provides a good, wide-ranging curriculum. Teaching and learning are very good. There has been good improvement in provision, both in

the quality of teaching and resources, since the previous inspection. Pupils' all-round academic and personal development is well supported by the pastoral care system that underpins all aspects of the school's work.

Teaching and learning

Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is very good. Good use is made of assessment procedures to guide lesson planning and to determine the make-up of working groups within each class.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching in the Foundation Stage is very good. It is the most significant factor in children's very good achievement.
- Very good teaching overall, combined with pupils' very good attitudes to learning, results in above average standards in Year 6.
- Deaf pupils are very well taught in a manner that helps them to gain in confidence and self-esteem.
- Teachers make very good use of ICT, particularly in Years 3 to 6, and encourage pupils to transfer skills across all subjects.
- The information gained from assessment procedures is used profitably to detect underachievement and instigate action. It is not used sufficiently to inform individual pupils how to improve their work further.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 31 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
4 (13%)	10 (32%)	10 (32%)	7 (23%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

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

13. Teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage are very good. Teachers know just what to expect of children at this stage and employ suitable techniques to stimulate their development. They build up children's confidence, which often encourages them to take the next step for themselves, even if they do not succeed at first. Pupils with learning difficulties are quickly drawn into the group so they too make progress.
14. Teaching and learning are very good overall in Years 1 to 6. They are good in Years 1 and 2 and very good in Years 3 to 6. The difference is due to the slightly slower pace of learning in the current Year 2 due to the relatively large number of pupils with special educational needs in the age group. Although activities are suitably varied to match pupils' capabilities, individual pupils need a great deal of individual support from the

teacher and teaching assistants to move them on. This sometimes interrupts the time spent in teaching other groups of pupils, especially in English and mathematics.

15. Four excellent lessons were seen, one in the nursery and three in Year 6. The key to the high quality teaching in English, mathematics and science in Year 6 was the willingness to 'let go' so that pupils could work things out for themselves. Pupils of all abilities responded well to the high expectations, which at this stage in the year were linked to work at levels exceeding those normally expected of pupils of this age.
16. Teaching is rooted in teachers' secure knowledge of their subjects and the ability to present it in a stimulating way that makes pupils want to learn more. Very good management of discipline, based on high expectations and respect for others, produces an environment in which pupils flourish. That is not to say that the school is without challenge from pupils who are sometimes disaffected. They are handled sensitively so as not to cause disruption to others. Teachers have developed their own strategies for encouraging pupils to believe in themselves. This is often through skilful questioning that draws on pupils to explain their reasoning to other pupils. Examples of this technique were seen in a number of lessons when teachers used responses such "*explain to me, give me proof*", "*discuss with ----, not me*", "*but why?*" Without exception, this approach led to better understanding and in most cases moved the lesson on to the next stage. In addition, it promoted good use of spoken language and the development of literacy skills. Pupils learn well through listening in this school. Their learning is made exciting and relevant by the effective incorporation of practical and investigative activities in lesson planning. This enables pupils of all abilities to inject their own ideas into the resolution of problems and to learn by trial and error. Teachers' positive approach to cross-curricular work encourages pupils to transfer skills and knowledge from one subject to another, which they do. There is a very good input from ICT, which is effective because pupils are not learning the skills in isolation from their intended use. Pupils' work is well marked with respect to accuracy and attention to detail. Written comments praise effort, or note the lack of it, but not enough is said about how to improve the work further. This is an aspect in which pupils would benefit from more guidance.
17. Deaf pupils are very well taught by specialist staff who have very high levels of expertise. The co-ordinator herself is deaf and is an excellent role-model and advocate for these pupils. Very well-targeted individual learning programmes are prepared for each pupil and well - structured activities are very carefully planned to meet the clearly defined needs of deaf children in the nursery and reception classes. There is very close co-operation between school staff and teachers from the deaf base. Teaching deaf pupils is a new experience for some school staff and one that they have readily embraced. Other pupils with special educational needs are consistently well taught. They achieve very well because teachers have a very good understanding of their varied learning needs. Work is carefully matched to expectations and the pupils' capabilities. Teachers and teaching assistants are ably supported in the diagnosis and planning for pupils with learning difficulties by knowledgeable leadership in this area. On occasion, some of these pupils are taught in beneficially small groups with deaf pupils; this change in grouping, and of the teacher, aids social development.
18. Assessment procedures in the Foundation Stage are very good. They inform the teachers well and influence the daily planning of lessons. Good use is made of the information from assessment procedures in Years 1 to 6 to direct planning and to establish which pupils are working on the borderline of levels in the National Curriculum.

Pupils then benefit from being placed in extra groups for a period of time to consolidate their work. Teachers use pupils' self-assessment at the end of many lessons to provide oral feedback to groups of pupils about what to do next. Assessment is not yet used sufficiently however to provide individual pupils with information about how to improve their work further.

The curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is good. The school meets all statutory requirements and provision for extra-curricular activities is satisfactory. Accommodation and resources for learning are good overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The well-balanced curriculum provides pupils with a good range of interesting activities and experiences for learning. The school constantly seeks to review, develop and improve the curriculum.
 - Pupils do not fully cover all the programmes of study relevant to their age in ICT in Years 1 and 2.
 - The school successfully implements its philosophy of fully including all pupils in everything on offer. Provision for pupils with special educational needs, including those who are deaf, is very good.
 - There is some enrichment of the curriculum but extra-curricular activities outside the school day are limited.
 - The children in the reception class do not have direct access to an outdoor area for learning, and the nursery classroom is cramped.
19. The curriculum is effectively organised. The school uses national and commercial schemes of work as a good basis for teachers' curriculum planning. Very good support for pupils with special educational needs ensures their full inclusion in everything the school has to offer. A well-designed programme promotes pupils' personal, social and health education very effectively. Since the previous inspection, the school has rigorously reviewed and improved the curriculum. This has ensured a better balance of the time given to all subjects, the provision of greatly improved ICT facilities and tuition, and the development of the curriculum in design and technology. However, in ICT, pupils do not yet cover all strands of the curriculum in Years 1 and 2.
20. The curriculum for children in the nursery and reception classes is good. Very detailed plans successfully link all areas of learning and ensure all children experience a good range of stimulating, varied learning activities. However, the reception class does not have direct access to a learning area outside, and this limits their entitlement to the full range of outdoor activities appropriate to their age.
21. Provision for the inclusion of all pupils, including those from other ethnic backgrounds, permeates the school's organisation. The school's commitment to equality of opportunity is illustrated by the very good quality of its support for pupils with special educational needs, including those who are deaf. A special sound system has been installed throughout the school to enable all pupils, including the deaf, to benefit from listening in improved acoustic conditions. The deaf base provides a good environment for individual and group work as well as being a cultural 'home base' for deaf pupils. However, when a number of pupils are in the base it can become cramped and result in pupils becoming distracted. Deaf pupils experience a highly effective busy daily programme matched to their individual needs. For much of the

day they are very well placed in the mainstream classes, experiencing the same broad curriculum as their hearing friends. In these lessons very well trained specialist assistants, who are also proficient in sign language, support the pupils' learning very effectively showing awareness of the modifications needed in relation to language and ability levels.

22. There are very good links with the local high school. Older pupils learn French and German and Year 6 pupils visit the school for lessons. This early contact with the high school helps to ensure a smooth transition for pupils when they transfer at the age of eleven. The school's participation in the EU 'Lingua project' enables pupils to communicate and share experiences with schools in Sweden, Spain and Germany by e-mail, promoting international links. Recent visitors to school included an Egyptologist who enthralled pupils by bringing a new insight to the research work they have just completed in history. Activities outside the school day are satisfactory but not as extensive as found in many schools, especially in sport.
23. The school has a good number of teaching and support staff, all of whom are deployed very effectively. Good quality resources are used well to support learning activities in all lessons. Children in the reception class occasionally use the nursery's outdoor area but they lack regular experience in the full range of outdoor activities. The teacher and staff in the nursery have created a very bright and well-organised room, but the space is cramped, and some activities have to be carried out in the cloakroom, which is not satisfactory.

Care, guidance and support

The school provides a very good standard of care for all its pupils, whatever their needs or disabilities. Pupils also care very well for each other. Pupils and teachers work well together in a climate in which pupils' views and needs are taken into account.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school has excellent procedures to introduce pupils into school life.
- The provision of advice and support based on careful monitoring of pupils' personal and academic progress is very good.
- Procedures to promote pupils' well-being, safety and personal growth are very good.

Commentary

24. The whole school operates in a very good climate of care and concern for the individual. The school is a happy place where pupils feel confident and able to learn. The staff works closely with parents and agencies to provide a very high standard of support for every pupil's specific needs or difficulties. Teachers and other adults take the time to discuss any issues that arise so conflicts or concerns are quickly resolved. The governors and staff have very good procedures to promote and monitor health, safety and security throughout the school and on school visits. Playtimes are supervised well and lunchtime is a friendly, social occasion.
25. Procedures to introduce children to the nursery are excellent, based on very close co-operation with parents so that, from the very start, children have a happy experience of school life. Further assessment in the reception class, which is shared with parents, ensures that children make the best possible start in the main school. Pupils who are new to school at any other time are discreetly supported and quickly settle into school life.

26. Procedures for monitoring and supporting deaf pupils are very well organised. Teachers and teaching assistants have very high levels of understanding of these pupils' individual needs and are very caring and sensitive in their relationships with them. Staff are always available to talk to parents if required, in person, by telephone, or because of the co-ordinator's deafness, through text messages. Very good links with the resource base for the deaf in the high school lead to a smooth transition into the next phase of their education. Support for other pupils with special educational needs is equally good. Parents are invited to reviews every term and are fully involved in agreeing new learning and behaviour targets. They are very pleased with the support their children receive. Gifted and talented pupils are well provided for within the total dedication of the school to enable all pupils to achieve to the very best of their ability across all areas of the curriculum.
27. Classteachers have very good procedures to monitor the academic and personal development of their pupils. Areas of difficulty are identified at an early stage and remedial action is prompt. Teaching assistants make a very good contribution to the high standards of care throughout the school. Pupils say that the friendship and support they receive from the school staff is one of the best things about school. Pupils, themselves, play a significant part in the overall climate of warmth and enthusiasm by befriending each other and caring for the younger pupils. Child protection procedures are in place and all staff know what to do if they have any concerns.
28. The school has good systems for involving pupils in school affairs. Pupils complete an annual questionnaire expressing their views on a range of topics. Teachers and other adults listen carefully to pupils' ideas and concerns. The school has good plans to introduce a school council during the next academic year to involve pupils further in consultation and decision-making.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school works very well in partnership with parents, other schools, colleges and the community. Home-school links are strong.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Staff and parents communicate and co-operate very well in a climate of mutual support and respect.
- The Parent Teacher Association makes an excellent contribution to the life of the school.
- Parents are very well informed about the school and their children's progress.
- Parents' views are very well represented on the governing body.
- Parents provide very valuable voluntary help in school.
- Links with the local community and other institutions are very good.

Commentary

29. Parents are very pleased with the school and feel strongly that they are made welcome. They share information with staff and discuss any concerns so problems are solved before they grow. Pupils' success and progress are celebrated both at home and in school. The school provides a very good flow of information about the curriculum and the calendar of events; information evenings are very well attended.

30. The Parent Teacher Association makes an excellent contribution to the school. It provides a range of activities throughout the year, including such highlights as the Christmas Pantomime and the Family Barbecue at the end of the school year. Fund-raising events have raised very substantial amounts of money, which have been used to enrich the curriculum. Most recently, a new library has been provided for the infants.
31. Parents are very well represented on the governing body. Their views are also sought through an annual questionnaire so that governors and senior managers are kept in touch with any issues or concerns raised by parents.
32. Parents offer their time and skills on a regular basis, contributing very well to the pupils' progress in school and to the overall family atmosphere. At the end of the school year, written reports provide parents with a very good account of what pupils have learned, how well they have worked and, in the core subjects, targets for the future. Where there are concerns about progress, teachers keep in contact with parents throughout the year.
33. The school has very good links with local schools and with all early years' providers, sharing information and best practice. The independent nursery that operates on the school site and provides for nursery age children outside school hours is a particularly good example of supportive interaction that meets parents' needs well. Good links with universities, colleges and training institutions support well the need for placements for their students and trainees.
34. Links with the local community are extensive. They enrich the curriculum, for example, through visits to a local church and through sharing the experiences of visitors to school. The premises are used well by community groups, which adds to the school's income, and local businesses support fund-raising events. The school is well regarded by the community it serves.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The quality of leadership and management is very good. The leadership of the headteacher and senior staff is very effective. It is backed up by very good management systems that translate decisions into effective practices that directly influence pupils' achievement. The school is very well governed.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The leadership and management of the school inspire confidence and target pupils' achievement as a high priority.
- There is a very good team spirit among the staff, which encourages pupils to work with similar commitment to each other and the school.
- The management of the Foundation Stage and of pupils with special educational needs, including those who are deaf, is very good.
- The school's commitment to providing equally for all pupils is very good. It is evident in policies and planning, and effective in practice.
- The school provides very good value for money.

Commentary

35. The school is forward-looking and self-critical. Management systems have improved significantly since the previous inspection. A strong learning ethos has been created due to the commitment of staff and their understanding of the links between their work and the priorities in the overall development plan. The school's long-term strategic planning is relevant and realistic. It takes into account potential changes and is flexible enough to deal with any contingencies that might arise. The headteacher and key staff have managed change well. They have been proactive in pursuing the school's own agenda, such as provision for the deaf and extension of the work in modern foreign languages, while making good progress with local and national initiatives. Staff and pupils work well together in this harmonious community. Arrangements for the inclusion of all pupils noticeably permeate every aspect of the school's work. Morale is high and effervescent.
36. Training for middle managers is improving their management and organisational skills. Good opportunities are provided for them to become involved in consultation about major decisions. They have embraced self-evaluation processes well, recognising what is working well and where further development is needed. This is a sound basis for action planning, as is demonstrated by the current focus on the extension of teaching strategies to take into account how individual pupils learn best. Management is good in the core subjects, English, mathematics and science, and in ICT and religious education. It was not possible to make absolute judgements in other subjects because they were sampled rather than inspected in depth. However, the work seen and the programmes of study indicate that management of all subjects is good overall. Leadership and management are very good in the Foundation Stage. The headteacher and staff have very high profiles around the school. They generate a peaceful and respectful atmosphere in which pupils thrive. The senior management team analyses pupils' performance in detail. Subject leaders use this information well to influence long-term planning and planning for lessons. The school's performance management system is linked very well to staff training and to areas designated for improvement.
37. The support for pupils with special educational needs, including those who are deaf, is very well managed. The full integration of all pupils is a paramount objective of the school. The success of the very complex planning necessary to achieve this so very effectively is yet another indication of the unequivocal equal opportunity ethos of the school.
38. The governing body is very effective and fulfils all its statutory responsibilities. There is a wide range of expertise among governors that is harnessed well to the school's needs. Groups of governors work very closely with the headteacher. They devote considerable time and energy to their work, synthesising information and challenging the school where necessary. Recommendations to the full governing body are succinct and relevant, leaving time for rigorous debate on essential matters. Governors are fully involved in planning the strategic direction of the school. They have a clear understanding of its strengths and high expectations of pupils' achievement.
39. Day-to-day management of the school is very effective. The school is bright, cheerful and well-maintained. The administrative and maintenance staff make a very significant contribution to its smooth running and efficiency. Financial control and planning are very good. The school manages its affairs well and regularly keeps within its budget. The basic income is relatively low but spending is prudent and well-matched to strategic planning. The school is proactive in seeking out extra funding.

40. Parents have confidence in the school and its leadership. Taking into account the funding, pupils' standards of work and achievement and the very good provision overall, the school provides very good value for money.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	585,846
Total expenditure	582,053
Expenditure per pupil	2,881

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	4,159
Balance carried forward to the next	7,952

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Provision in the Foundation Stage is **very good**. The quality of teaching is very good overall, with some excellent teaching in the nursery. Children enter the nursery with personal skills and development similar to that normally seen at their age. The great majority of children in the reception class exceed the goals expected of them in all areas of learning by the end of the year. This represents very good achievement due to very skilled teaching and very well planned curriculum experiences that are imaginatively linked across all areas of learning. Children with special needs are very well supported and integrated into all activities so they too achieve very well.

Excellent induction procedures and very good levels of care ensure that the children are happy and secure. Very good information is provided for parents. Each week they receive a newsletter about the children's activities that suggests ways in which they can support learning at home. Parents willingly help in class, for example, by bringing in a new-born baby or working in the outdoor area. Very good management of the Foundation Stage reflects skilled, knowledgeable and thoroughly committed leadership that has led to the creation of a strong team of staff. Teachers know what to expect of children as they grow and mature and their progress is carefully monitored through very good assessment procedures. Good quality resources support learning well. The accommodation for the nursery is used very well, but the room is small and some activities have to be carried out in the cloakroom. The reception classroom is spacious, but there is no direct outdoor access for the children to experience the full range of learning activities outside. Improvement since the previous inspection is good.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching, learning and achievement are very good.
- Children enjoy their learning, behave very well and persevere with their tasks.
- Relationships are very good.
- Children are helpful and aware of the feelings of others.

Commentary

41. The skilled team of staff create a calm, warm and very caring atmosphere and provide very good role-models for the children. Children feel secure and valued and begin to develop some independence. They respond particularly well to their teachers' high expectations with very good behaviour and attitudes that significantly aid their progress. They enjoy learning and persevere well because they are encouraged and praised for their efforts. Children's increasing knowledge of personal care is developed well through other activities. For example, when mixing ingredients for cakes they knew that they must wash their hands *'to get rid of the germs'*. In the nursery, children sit quietly together at snack time, say *'please'* and *'thank you'* when offered some fruit, and happily discuss what they have been doing. Children in the reception class extend their thinking to

considering how to make other people happy. They are sensitive to the needs of their deaf peers, and use sign language to answer the register. Well-presented stories and parables in assemblies further develop this awareness of others.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good teaching, learning and achievement result in many children exceeding the goals expected of them before the end of reception.
- Children listen well and speak confidently.
- Reading skills are good; children have a good knowledge of letters and sounds.
- Children are not always challenged to write independently at length.

Commentary

42. Very good teaching in the nursery and good teaching in the reception class underpin the very good development of essential communication skills for all children. In the nursery, children confidently join in discussion using language such as *"It feels hot, doesn't it?"* when mixing and kneading play dough. They listen well, which helps them to identify letter sounds for reading and spelling and to follow instructions for their tasks. They enjoy writing "Loopy letters" in the air. One said *"I've been practising this at home with my mum"*. By the end of reception, children write neatly and legibly. However, the use of worksheets and some directed writing does not always challenge them to develop their skills and write independently at length. Most children have good reading skills by this stage and enjoy a variety of books and stories. This is aided by good support from their parents, who regularly hear them read at home.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are very good. Children achieve very well.
- Good resources are used effectively enabling children to learn through practical investigations.
- Most children have a good knowledge of mathematical concepts and vocabulary relevant to their age.

Commentary

43. Teaching has a strong emphasis on practical activities, which provide the children with a wide variety of opportunities to investigate mathematical ideas and concepts. The classrooms are resourced well with equipment for counting, matching and sorting, and

recognising numbers, values and shapes. Children in the nursery count accurately to 10 and back, and many count further. They love playing a quick game to 'find one more', which develops their mental agility very effectively. In reception, many children have progressed to recording addition using digits rather than symbols and record sentences about subtraction after practical investigations. They recognise most coins, but some found the task of doubling and halving different amounts of money too challenging. Most children name common two-dimensional shapes and some manage three-dimensional ones. Staff demonstrate the use of mathematical vocabulary well by explaining the meaning in different ways. Children in reception confidently used 'more than', 'half' and 'double' when they counted and shared out sweets in a practical investigation. The great majority of children exceed the early learning goal in mathematics.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is very good and children achieve very well.
- A varied range of interesting activities with a strong emphasis on practical investigations is used to make learning interesting and exciting.
- The nursery has a well-planned outdoor area, but the children in the reception class have no direct or regular access to learning activities outdoors.

Commentary

44. Very good teaching provides exciting and worthwhile activities that increase children's knowledge of the world. They meet the early learning goal by the end of their time in reception. Regular lessons in the ICT suite result in children in reception being able to use the computer controls competently to access programs, draw and change colours. In the nursery, children demonstrate skills appropriate for their age; they use the mouse to 'point' 'click' and 'drag'. The children learn about Christianity, and become aware of different ways of life in stories from the Hindu and Muslim faiths. In the reception class they begin to show an understanding of change over the passage of time, for instance, through comparing a baby's needs with their own. The nursery outdoor area is used very well; there was great wonder and excitement when the children dug up the potatoes they had grown. This activity was used very effectively to encourage the development of vocabulary when the children examined the roots, stem and leaves and explored the texture of the soil. There is less scope for children in the reception class to learn through such activities because there is no direct access to an enclosed outdoor space.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching, learning and achievement are good.
- The children have very good attitudes. They behave very well and have a good regard for safety.
- In the reception class, facilities for outdoor play are very limited.

Commentary

45. Children use apparatus and equipment confidently and safely because they have very good attitudes and behaviour and have been taught to be sensible and careful. The apparatus in the outdoor area for the nursery provides for a good range of challenging and imaginative opportunities. Children in reception do not have regular access to these facilities but they make good use of the school hall for physical education lessons. Their movements are controlled and well-co-ordinated, and they manipulate buttons and zips well when getting ready. Control of small tools such as brushes and scissors develops well as children progress through the Foundation Stage. In reception, children's neat handwriting shows good handling of the pencil.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The children achieve very well due to very good teaching.
- Well-planned activities encourage creative expression, imaginative activities and language development.
- Children express their imaginative ideas by using a wide variety of materials.
- Children enjoy music and sing well.

Commentary

46. Children work with a wide range of materials and media. For example, they mix and blend colours boldly to create bright paintings and collage with pastels, chalk and pencils. All the children enjoy singing. Imaginative teaching in the nursery linked singing with letter practice, for example, the children drew letters in the air as they sang '*Who built the Ark?*' In the reception class, children showed a good sense of rhythm when clapping the syllables of their name. Children learn very well from role-play. Their response indicates that they observe, remember and imitate real-life situations well. It was impressive to see how children in the nursery handled a doll in the house corner after watching a parent with her new-born baby.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average in Year 6 because of very good progression in learning and pupils' very positive attitudes to their work.
- Pupils with special educational needs and deaf pupils achieve very well because of the very good support they receive.
- Well-focused help for lower-attaining pupils has enabled them to make very good progress.
- ICT is used effectively to raise standards of literacy across the school.
- Older pupils do not receive enough detailed guidance on how to improve their work further.

Commentary

47. Pupils' results in statutory tests taken at the end of Year 2 in 2003 were above average in reading and average in writing. In Year 6, pupils' results were above average compared with all schools and well above average when compared with schools of similar prior attainment in Year 2 in 1999. Evidence from the inspection shows that overall standards in English are currently average in Year 2 and above average in Year 6. There is no significant difference between the achievement of boys and girls.
48. Pupils generally come into Year 1 with average literacy skills overall. However, in the current Year 2 there is a larger than average proportion of lower-attaining pupils and pupils with special educational needs. Analysis of pupils' work, together with lesson observations and school documentation, indicates that pupils generally achieve well in all areas of the subject. Overall, standards are average in writing and above average in reading. In discussions, pupils usually speak clearly and listen carefully to others while waiting their turn to respond. Although there are wide variations in attainment, most pupils read and write with reasonable accuracy. Written work shows that pupils of all abilities make good progress over time in developing sentence structure and vocabulary, and in getting to grips with basic spelling patterns.
49. Pupils achieve very well in Years 3 to 6, progressively building up their literacy skills year by year. Boys and girls achieve similarly. This is because they benefit from teaching of high quality, and are very well motivated. They demonstrate fluency and confidence in reading and discussion, and write very effectively in a wide range of styles. For example, pupils develop characters in their stories and plays through skilful use of dialogue, and they produce lively and detailed reports about visits to places of historical interest.
50. Pupils of all ages take pride in producing their work attractively. Particularly impressive is the very effective and varied use made of ICT in daily work and in displays, and the high standard of handwriting, especially in Year 1.
51. The quality of teaching and learning is very good overall. The strengths of the teaching lie in the teachers' secure subject knowledge, confident class management and very good relationships with their pupils. Consequently, pupils have a very positive attitude to the subject, and are keen to learn and show what they know. When working together in pairs and small groups, they collaborate well and share lesson materials in a responsible way. A particularly strong feature of the teaching is the careful planning, which enables all pupils to take an active part in the lesson. Deaf pupils make very good progress because they are skilfully supported through signing by classteachers and teaching assistants. Pupils with other special educational needs also achieve very well as a result of effective

support, especially if they have guidance in the form of structured writing prompts when they are working independently. Assessment of pupils' work is good overall. It is used well to respond to individual needs, as in the case of pupils who have boosted their achievement because of extra, well-focused teaching in language and literacy. Written work is regularly monitored, and teachers include encouraging comments of a general nature on their pupils' progress. However, older pupils do not have enough guidance on how specific targets for improvement can be achieved.

52. Leadership of the subject is satisfactory. Overall management is good. There is a shared commitment within the teaching teams to further development of the subject, and the scrupulous monitoring of standards in all areas of the subject is used to very good effect in instigating action to improve achievement. Good improvement has been made since the previous inspection. Standards of handwriting and spelling have been raised and pupils have become adept in the use of ICT. The newly refurbished library is making a very good contribution to pupils' enjoyment of reading and also to the development of their research skills.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

53. Standards of literacy and language are good overall. Pupils listen carefully and speak fluently; teachers' skilful and stimulating questions encourage everyone to take an active part in discussions. Examples of good speaking and listening were observed in science and religious education lessons, and in geography where pupils make good use of specialist vocabulary. Most pupils read fluently, and pupils of all ages benefit from the wide range of fiction and non-fiction books available in classrooms and in the library. Pupils who are hesitant readers receive effective support. Work on display around the school shows that pupils are confident in writing for a variety of different purposes. For instance, pupils produce good independent evaluations in design and technology. In history, they made effective notes when listening to a talk on ancient Egypt. A particular strength is the way in which pupils use ICT to complement oral presentations and to enhance their written work.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Overall, pupils achieve very well through very good teaching that focuses on pupils' exact needs.
- Pupils with special educational needs, including the deaf, achieve very well due to the high quality support that they receive.
- Good use is made of ICT to aid pupils' learning, particularly in Years 3 to 6.
- Pupils are not given enough specific information about how to improve their work further.
- The subject is well led and forward-looking.

Commentary

54. Pupils' results in national tests taken at the end of Year 2 in 2003 were below the national average. The great majority of pupils reached the level expected for their age but the proportion exceeding it was well below the national average. The school has challenged higher-attaining pupils to a much greater extent this year. The 2004 results show a significant increase in the proportion of pupils reaching the higher level. Overall, pupils achieve well in Years 1 and 2. Evidence from the inspection shows that the overall standard of their work is average. This accurately reflects the range of abilities in the age group, which has a higher proportion of pupils with special educational needs than in most of the other years.
55. Pupils achieve very well in Years 3 to 6. They gain satisfaction from success in meeting the targets set for them. These are challenging, but realistic. Pupils' performance in national tests taken at the end of Year 6 in 2003 were average, which represents good achievement considering that there was a high percentage of pupils with special needs in this group and that over one fifth of the class joined the school after Year 2. Standards of work in the current Year 6 are above average. National comparisons are not yet available but it is significant to note that just over half the class has exceeded the level expected for their age in the 2004 tests.
56. Pupils with special educational needs, including the deaf, achieve very well throughout the school. They meet, and often exceed, the targets set for them by the time they leave the school. Their main difficulty is in understanding and communicating the language that is used to access the work in mathematics. The very good support they receive from specialist teachers and teaching assistants gives them confidence and encourages them to try things out for themselves.
57. Overall, pupils' numerical skills are above average. Mental arithmetic features as a significant part of all lessons. Pupils' mental agility in applying the basic operational skills of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division is very good. It influences their approach to problem solving because they understand that there is often more than one way of getting to an answer. A very good example of this was seen in Year 6 when pupils worked out how to set up a workable monetary system using coins of just two denominations. Many pupils went as far as to consider how change would be given if the exact amount for a purchase was not tendered. Other aspects of mathematics, such as shape, measure and data handling are covered equally well. Good use is made of ICT, both as a tool to reinforce basic concepts for individual pupils and as a means of showing how technology can be used to save time through the manipulation of figures for visual presentation.
58. The overall quality of teaching and learning is very good. Teaching is good in Years 1 and 2 and very good in Years 3 to 6 where some excellent teaching was seen. Teachers have a good understanding of the subject material, which they use to pitch work at a suitable level. For example, in Year 5, the most able pupils debated amongst themselves how to translate complicated shapes in four quadrants using positive and negative co-ordinates while lower-attaining pupils focused on accurately moving a simple shape in the positive sector. Lower-attaining pupils gain in confidence and self-esteem through step-by-step practice of basic mathematical skills. Teachers make the aims of the lesson clear and encourage pupils to assess for themselves whether they have been achieved. They clearly take note of 'who can do what' because subsequent lesson plans either incorporate reinforcement or use the previous lesson's work as a starting point. Teachers constantly assess pupils' knowledge and its correct use. Support is quickly directed to

individual pupils, often within the same lesson, when it becomes clear that there is a lack of understanding. Useful techniques are pointed out to all pupils, for example, the use of jottings as an indication of interim steps in questions involving more than one operation. Teachers are enthusiastic, which is reflected in most pupils' enjoyment of the subject. They encourage pupils to write their work up neatly and logically, which most do. The work is well marked but comments are more often about effort and achievement rather than how to improve further.

59. The subject is well led and managed. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are used well to determine where extra support is needed, either for a short time or over an extended period. The school responds quickly to aspects of work detected as needing attention through the analysis of test results. Improvement since the previous inspection is good.

Mathematics across the curriculum

60. Pupils' numerical and mathematical skills are used well in other subjects. Older pupils often make use of them in presenting work for their independent research, particularly where graphs and charts have greater impact than tables of data. Particularly good use is made of mathematics in subjects such as geography and science, which are often reliant on the interpretation of data. The combination of mathematics and ICT in the analysis and presentation of work across all subjects is a very positive feature of the planning of the curriculum.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in Year 6 are above average. They have risen since the previous inspection.
- Pupils achieve very well by the time they leave the school due to very good teaching overall.
- Teachers use their good subject knowledge to plan interesting lessons that meet the needs of all pupils. There is a very good emphasis on learning through investigation.
- Pupils behave very well and have very good attitudes towards their work.
- Teachers' marking does not often show pupils how to improve their work further.

Commentary

61. In 2003, teacher assessments for pupils in Year 2 were similar to the national average. Pupils' results in national tests taken in Year 6 were well below the national average. The test results for Year 6 showed a dramatic improvement in 2004. Every pupil reached the level expected for their age and over 80% exceeded it. Evidence from the inspection, including examination of pupils' work over the year and lesson observations, shows that standards are currently average in Year 2 and above average in Year 6. This is due to good progression in Years 3 to 6, very strong teaching in Years 5 and 6 and pupils' very good attitudes to learning. Achievement is very good overall. It is good in Year 2 and very good in Year 6. Pupils with special educational needs, including deaf pupils, achieve very well because they are very well supported by specialist teachers and teaching assistants.

62. Strong emphasis on learning through practical investigations gives pupils many good opportunities to use and extend their scientific knowledge. They demonstrate secure knowledge and understanding of scientific ideas. By Year 6, they employ a variety of methods to tackle problems. They use perceptive thinking skills to draw inferences, pose sensible questions, make well-reasoned predictions and set up suitable tests. Pupils' good reading and writing skills enable them to extract information and write clear reports of their results. They present results in suitable forms, such as reports, charts, lists and illustrations. Good use is made of ICT to measure and analyse variable quantities, such as temperature and pulse rate, and to process reports and data.
63. Pupils behave very well and show very good attitudes to science because they enjoy their lessons.
64. Teaching and learning are very good overall. Some excellent teaching was observed in Year 6, leading to improved standards in the most recent statutory tests. Teachers use their good knowledge of the subject to plan a varied range of meaningful activities that capture pupils' interest. They ensure pupils use correct scientific vocabulary; older pupils confidently referred to '*particles*', '*substances*', '*liquid*' and '*toxic*' during an investigation on pollution. Good quality books, displays and resources, including the school grounds, are used well. Pupils' work is marked regularly, but does not often show pupils how they can improve or develop their work further. Thorough assessments of pupils' knowledge and understanding are made at the end of each topic. This information is used well. For example, it identified the need for the current focus on investigative activities.
65. Leadership and management are good. They lead to teachers' good working knowledge of the science curriculum and colleagues' support for one another. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. Science makes a good contribution to all pupils' spiritual, social and moral development because they are excited by their discoveries, are aware of the importance of treating creatures and the environment with care and respect, and co-operate well together. Improvement since the previous inspection is good. All the issues raised have been fully resolved.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology (ICT) is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve very well overall, but particularly in Years 3 to 6.
- Teaching is very good. It stimulates pupils to want to learn.
- Pupils do not cover all the strands of the ICT curriculum relevant to their age in Years 1 and 2.
- Leadership and management of the subject are good. They make a significant contribution to the rising standards in the subject.
- Teachers and teaching assistants make good use of technology to support deaf pupils.

Commentary

66. Overall, pupils achieve very well. They achieve satisfactorily in Years 1 and 2, where standards are average, and then make rapid progress in Years 3 to 6. Standards are above average in Year 6. The standard of work rises progressively in the junior classes

because of the very good teaching and the good resources in classrooms and the computer suite. The computers in the infant classrooms are not as up-to-date and the computer suite is some distance from them. Consequently, the main focus of the work in Years 1 and 2 is on basic skills and word-processing. Pupils use these well and catch up on other parts of the programme of study in Year 3. In Years 3 to 6, lessons are lively and relevant to work across the curriculum. In fact, a number of skills are taught in the context of other subjects. This arrangement works well because pupils can see the purpose of the work and they are adventurous in seeking to take it further. An excellent example was the individual websites created independently by pupils in Year 6 on the evacuation in World War 2. The quality and content were such that the sites could easily be used to engage the interest and attention of children and adults of all ages. Discussion with groups of pupils from all the junior classes revealed a very good understanding of the potential of technology and the ability to use it for a given purpose. Pupils work collaboratively, sharing ideas and helping each other to present work in a format that is visually appealing and useful. They are not afraid to experiment with different programs to tease out information. By the time they leave the school most pupils have a sound grounding in the use of ICT to provide and manipulate information and data, and to control things.

67. Pupils with special educational needs, of all kinds, benefit enormously from using computers because they gain the confidence to work independently. Communicating through technology is often easier for them than through other channels. They achieve very well. The school as a whole benefits from the sound system that has been installed in all classrooms and the hall. It improves the acoustics, and hence the listening skills, of all pupils.
68. Many pupils' operational skills in parts of the ICT curriculum are advanced for their age. Displays of work about the school are eye-catching and informative. They generate interest and inspire pupils to aim for high standards. The range of work is indicative of an understanding of what motivates pupils to want to learn.
69. The overall quality of teaching and learning is very good. Teachers are gaining in expertise and their enthusiasm is infectious. It results in pupils realising that the computer is only as good as the user's ability to make it perform the operations required. In Years 3 to 6 in particular, teachers present pupils with challenging demands. This sometimes includes prior theoretical work, often time-consuming, which later contrasts with faster results obtained through computer programs. A typical example was Year 4's work in science on the classification of plants and insects. Lessons have good pace and clear aims. Teachers make good use of pupils' self-assessment at the end of the lesson to re-structure subsequent lesson plans if necessary. Promotion of pupils' literacy skills is an integral part of the planning. Good strategies in the teaching of ICT, which work for all pupils, build on allowing pupils to experiment for themselves and to learn from their own mistakes. This works well because well-informed teaching assistants work alongside the teachers so pupils do not have to wait long for help. Pupils become more independent as their confidence grows - to the extent that some older pupils now submit homework via electronic mail.
70. The subject is well led and managed. There has been a significant improvement in provision, both in the quality of resources and in the structure of the curriculum, since the previous inspection. There is still not enough software as staff would like in some

subjects, particularly for pupils in the infant classes. This is partly the reason for the slower, although satisfactory, progress in Years 1 and 2.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

71. The school has focused on integrating ICT into the planning in all subjects. This has been very successful and pupils now view ICT as just another tool to assist their learning. Older pupils are discriminating in its use, for example, they discuss and compare the circumstances when it might be more appropriate to use a non-fiction book for information rather than the Internet. As an off-shoot to this, pupils pointed out the pleasure they gained from using books. They consider ICT to be complementary to, but not a replacement for, books. Good examples of the use of ICT for word-processing, research, control and measurement, data handling and presentations were seen in English, mathematics, science, art, history and geography.

HUMANITIES

Very little geography was being taught during the inspection but an excellent English lesson was seen that centred on an ongoing project about rivers of the world. In this lesson the pupils showed a very good working knowledge of the use of ICT to aid them in their very sophisticated presentations. They were enthusiastic and knowledgeable about the aspect of the river that they had chosen to base their presentation on and were totally engrossed in their work. There were excellent relationships all round, the lesson was fully inclusive with ethnic minority pupils and pupils with special educational needs working together and taking a full part in their group's project. Work on display throughout school is of a high standard and supports the planned curriculum for this term. An example of this is the attention given to local environmental issues, which resulted in letters to the local Member of Parliament; as a consequence, she visited the school and pupils were able to present their concerns.

History

Provision in history is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching is good and promotes good achievement.
- There are very good links with other subjects.
- Pupils enjoy the subject.

Commentary

72. Although only two lessons of history were seen during the inspection, the evidence from these, together with the work on display and in the pupils' books, indicates that standards are above average across the school. This represents good achievement and the maintenance of standards seen at the time of the previous inspection.
73. In the two lessons observed, teaching was very good, and, as a result, pupils' imagination was stimulated. The teachers used good resources and because of this, younger pupils

were aware of the differences in fashion, custom and practice since 1900. In the lesson for older pupils, an exceptional presentation by a visiting specialist totally engrossed staff and pupils in the consideration of life in Ancient Egypt. Excellent support from the class teacher enabled the deaf pupils in the class to fully understand the information being shared. The planning for this lesson is typical of that that underpins many of history and geography lessons. These subjects are used as a catalyst for the development of other subjects. For example, pupils are following up the lesson on Egypt with individual presentations that will engage the use of literacy and ICT skills and provide opportunities for assessment.

74. Leadership and management of both history and geography are good. Teachers plan interesting lessons that build well on children's enthusiasm and interest. Both subjects make a good contribution to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Assessment is usually through observation, discussion with pupils, role-play and written work. It is used well when planning follow-on work.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average in Year 6; teaching and pupils' achievement are good overall.
- Good attitudes and behaviour aid learning, and older pupils demonstrate a mature, reflective response.
- Religious education makes a very strong contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Commentary

75. Standards of work in Year 2 are in line with those expected for pupils' age in the locally agreed syllabus. By Year 6, standards are above those expected. Achievement is good overall. This represents good improvement since the previous inspection. Pupils develop a good understanding of the teaching of Christianity from Bible stories, ceremonies, festivals and the lives of significant Christians. Knowledge of how Christians practise their faith is enhanced well through links with the local church. It influences pupils' thinking when they write simple classroom rules.
76. Pupils also learn about the major world faiths of Islam, Hinduism and Judaism, and compare the fundamental principles basic to each. Some interesting responses were seen when pupils in Year 4 designed Hindu-style shrines to celebrate important figures. Older pupils become more reflective and use their knowledge well. They compared their own feelings with Jesus' feelings and sacrifice, and considered the sacrifices their parents make for them. Pupils show good understanding of difficult concepts in their response to issues and ideas. For example, pupils in Year 5 recalled their work on The Holy Spirit when discussing '*The person I would like to be*'. The theme was followed through to Year 6 in a study of *Pilgrim's Progress* when pupils compared Pilgrim's choices with the choices they meet in life. Their mature approach showed a very good ability to reflect, and a strong sense of the difference between right and wrong. Religious

education makes a very strong contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

77. Overall, teaching and learning are good. Teachers' good understanding of the locally agreed syllabus provides a good basis for their planning and ensures good coverage of the curriculum for religious education. Imaginative teaching presents information in a variety of ways, interests and involves pupils, and enables them to examine some difficult ideas in a supportive atmosphere.
78. Leadership and management of the subject are good, providing clear guidance and support for staff to plan and develop religious education in an imaginative and reflective manner that helps pupils to achieve well.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

It was not possible to make judgements about standards, provision and teaching in art and design, design and technology, music and physical education because only a few lessons were seen in these practically based subjects. However, other evidence from the inspection indicates that:

- these subjects form an integral part of the whole-school curriculum, providing pupils with a wide range of experiences;
- pupils with special educational needs gain enjoyment and satisfaction from practical activities;
- there is a good focus on teaching the skills that underpin these subjects.

Art and design

79. There is a more consistent approach to planning than at the time of the previous inspection. There is a good focus on the teaching of specific skills, which are built up year-on-year. Pupils understand that preparatory work is needed before art work can be started. For example, in Year 3, pupils learned how to use viewfinders and sketchpads to draw the section of a still-life arrangement that they found most attractive. It was interesting to see how some pupils went for a simple, clear outline of shapes while others chose from the more complex part of the arrangement. Pupils are beginning to appreciate the purpose of sketchbooks as a means of experimenting with texture, line and colour. Some particularly good work was seen in Year 6 where excellent self-portraits had been produced in the style of the 20th century artist Andy Warhol. The stylistic images demonstrated good use of a digital camera, the ability to photocopy on acetate and the successful use of paint combinations. The good quality of this work is indicative of thoughtful planning and skilled teaching.
80. Displays of work throughout the school are of high quality. They show how teachers use art in cross-curricular work to create good visual images of events and situations. Leadership and management of art and design are good.

Design and technology

81. Pupils' work in this area has improved considerably since the previous inspection when standards were below average in Years 3 to 6 and progress was unsatisfactory. The schedule of work has been redesigned so that skills are developed progressively. Pupils

understand what is involved in the design and make up of products. On completion of the work, they decide whether the product fulfils its intended purpose, and, if not, make sensible suggestions as to how it could be improved. Pupils collaborate well and share ideas and expertise, not just within their class but across age groups. For example, Years 1 and 5 worked well together earlier this year in designing toys with levers and cams. Some good work was also seen in Year 2 where pupils had made puppets and 'pop-up' books for inclusion in a lovely display of books and artefacts relating to the Beatrix Potter stories. Design and technology is making a good contribution to work in other subjects. The subject is well co-ordinated and plenty of guidance is available to help teachers make the most of the resources.

Music

82. In the two lessons that were sampled the standards were average and the quality of teaching and learning was satisfactory. The teachers managed the pupils effectively, with a pleasant but firm approach, which ensured that the various activities were carried out in a responsible way. Initial 'warming up' exercises showed that pupils had a clear recall of previous work. Pupils enjoyed performing the action songs and they worked together successfully when matching their clapping to the rhythm of the music. Most pupils sing in tune using appropriate expression, and they can keep time to different rhythms with reasonable accuracy.
83. The subject makes a positive contribution to pupils' social and cultural development, although there are not yet enough opportunities for pupils to appreciate music from different cultures. Satisfactory progress has been made since the previous inspection in sustaining the provision of music throughout the school.

Physical education

84. The standard of work in the one lesson seen was above average. Pupils in Year 6 demonstrated good gymnastic skills when working with a partner to practise and refine a series of balances. Very good attitudes, co-operation and behaviour led to good achievement and a healthy regard to safety. The very good teaching was stimulating and enthusiastic. Skills were developed well and pupils were encouraged to self-evaluate their work.
85. Discussion with the subject leader supports the view that standards are at least good overall. The physical education curriculum is covered thoroughly, as seen in teachers' planning. Pupils in Years 3, 4 and 5 swim at the high school. There are no non-swimmers by the end of Year 6. Resources are good. Currently, football is the only extra-curricular sports activity.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

86. The school has a very good policy and programme to provide for pupils' personal, social and health education (PSHE). The programme is very well designed to: develop pupils' confidence and sense of responsibility; prepare them to play an active role as citizens; develop a safe and healthy life-style; develop good relationships and respect for the differences between people. Drugs education and sex education are sensitively

introduced, with the additional help of outside agencies, and parents are able to see and discuss resources and materials. The school's work in PSHE was sampled through discussion with pupils and by observing their response in lessons and other activities to issues affecting their personal development. In every class, a special time, '*circle time*', is allocated to enable pupils to discuss topics, incidents or concerns in a mutually supportive way. Assemblies and curriculum subjects include an extensive range of opportunities for pupils to learn about themselves and their relationships, and how to take their part in society in and beyond school.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	2
How inclusive the school is	1
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	2
Overall standards achieved	2
Pupils' achievement	2
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	2
Attendance	2
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The quality of education provided by the school	2
The quality of teaching	2
How well pupils learn	2
The quality of assessment	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	4
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	3
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	2
The leadership and management of the school	2
The governance of the school	2
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	2
The effectiveness of management	2

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

