

INSPECTION REPORT

WEDNESBURY OAK PRIMARY SCHOOL

Tipton, West Midlands

LEA area: Sandwell

Unique reference number: 103926

Headteacher: Mr D Ward

Lead inspector: M J Weaver

Dates of inspection: 23rd - 26th February 2004

Inspection number: 258325

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:	438
School address:	Greenacre Road Tipton West Midlands
Postcode:	DY4 0AR
Telephone number:	(0121) 556 3387
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs E Barker
Date of previous inspection:	27 th April 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The school is situated near the outskirts of Tipton and has 438 pupils on roll with an equal number of boys and girls, including 41 children attending the Nursery part-time and 37 attending full-time. The majority of pupils in school are of white British heritage, with only 13 pupils with English as an additional language, although none are identified as at an early stage of learning English. The attainment of children on entry to the Nursery is well below average, with language and communication and mathematical development being very weak. One hundred and three pupils have special educational needs, which is well above average, the great majority having speech and communication, and moderate learning difficulties, with a small number having specific learning difficulties. Three pupils have statements of special educational need, which is below the national average that encompasses these needs. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals at 28 per cent is above average. The number of pupils joining school after the normal starting age is average, with fewer pupils than average leaving the school before the end of Year 6. There has been substantial staff turbulence over recent years, with most of those having left reported to have received promotions elsewhere. Staffing is now considered by the headteacher to be stable. The school has received an award for School Achievement in 1999 and a Young Enterprise Award in 2002. The school's most significant partners are Ocker Hill Junior and Tameside Primary Schools in a 'TRIAD' scheme to raise standards in English and mathematics, but particularly in information and communication technology.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
9352	M J Weaver	Lead inspector	
8992	J Vischer	Lay inspector	
30128	S Stanley	Team inspector	English Geography History Music Religious education
20560	P Adams	Team inspector	Mathematics Science Information and communication technology Art and design Provision for pupils with special educational needs
14732	E Korn	Team inspector	The foundation stage Design and technology Physical education English as an additional language

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

The school provides an adequate standard of education. Although standards are rising in English, mathematics and science, the school could enable pupils to achieve more. This is because weaknesses in the management systems do not sufficiently ensure rigorous monitoring of teaching and learning to drive up standards. Leadership of the school is satisfactory. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, although there is less good or very good teaching than would normally be seen, and this means that pupils could do better. Most pupils achieve satisfactorily over time and the school gives satisfactory value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Almost half of the teaching seen was good but teaching over time is satisfactory.
- Information from the monitoring of lessons is not used rigorously enough to help improve teaching and learning.
- The provision for pupils' care, welfare, health and safety is good. High standards of behaviour are expected and pupils respond positively. Pupils have good attitudes to learning. Their social and moral development is good.
- Management of the school does not yet ensure that all lessons consistently focus on setting appropriate work for all pupils.
- Good provision in the Nursery ensures a happy and secure start to school.
- The school has sought to improve the level of attendance but it remains below the national average, mainly due to the holidays that pupils take in term time; this has an adverse impact on the learning of a small proportion of pupils.

The school has **sustained the quality of provision** as at the last inspection. Teaching is broadly similar. The school is a welcoming place and continues to develop pupils' self-esteem well. The school has satisfactorily addressed most of the five key issues identified then, but has not done enough to drive up standards in information and communication technology (ICT), mathematics or science by using assessment information effectively. This is largely because the school has experienced a considerably high turnover of teachers over recent years; the school reports that this has now ended, which should enable it to enjoy a period of stability. All required subjects are taught but there is not a sharp enough focus on using assessment information to improve standards at a faster rate. The work of governors has improved in that they now monitor the school's financial affairs closely, but their involvement in setting the direction of the school is not yet developed.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

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

Similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 2.

Achievement is satisfactory. The table above shows that pupils' attainment in the national tests in 2003 was well below average in English, mathematics and science. The similar schools grades show that these pupils did not make enough progress in English and mathematics since they were in Year 2. Inspection findings indicate that current standards have improved in English, mathematics and science compared to the results in the national tests in 2003. Standards have fallen in ICT and music and are now below average. Standards at the end of the Foundation Stage are broadly average in all aspects except for speech and communication and mathematical development, although children achieve well overall. Standards are average in geography and religious education at Years 2 and 6 but below average in all other subjects. The achievement of pupils who speak and

use English as an additional language and pupils with special educational needs (SEN) is satisfactory, including a small number of pupils with specific learning difficulties.

Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are generally good. Pupils' moral and social development is good; their spiritual and cultural development is satisfactory. Attendance is below the national average but punctuality is satisfactory.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is satisfactory. Teaching is satisfactory overall with good teaching evident in several classes, particularly in Year 6. Children's learning in the Foundation Stage is good, but low standards on entry reflects the fact that many have limited skills in using English and this adversely affects their communication abilities and learning when they transfer to Year 1. Pupils' learning is satisfactory in Years 1 to 6. The school has recently placed more focus onto matching work to pupils' abilities, but has not yet ensured that all pupils consistently receive appropriate work. The quality of education for pupils with SEN is satisfactory. The curriculum is broad with a specific focus on raising standards in English and mathematics; this has been effective. The library is too small in size and has too few books; the demountable classroom for supporting pupils with SEN is deteriorating rapidly, although it does not have an adverse impact on the teaching or learning of these pupils.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership, management and governance are satisfactory overall. Leadership of the school is satisfactory, but the management is weak as it has not ensured a sufficiently clear focus on ways in which to drive up standards at a faster rate. The school has been through a disruptive period over the last few years due to the large number of teachers joining and leaving, but is now poised to make effective progress with a stable teaching staff in place. The headteacher has ensured that the school is a welcoming and caring place in which pupils enjoy their learning, and the falling standards, due largely to the high turnover of staff, have now been halted. Several staff monitor lessons and this generally contributes satisfactorily to improving pupils' learning, but more focus is needed to ensure that work is consistently matched to pupils' needs. The work of governors is satisfactory. They have improved their involvement in the financial matters of the school, but have not yet become sufficiently involved in setting the school's long-term direction. The accommodation is adequate for teaching the curriculum, but the substantial distance between the Batmans Hill Nursery and main school does not enable the co-ordinator to spend sufficient time at the main site in order to monitor and further improve the quality of teaching. All statutory requirements are met.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are generally satisfied with the school but say that improved communication about their children's progress is required. They also say that there are too few out-of-school clubs and activities and inspectors agree with this. Although some parents are concerned about pupils' behaviour and bullying, inspection findings do not support these concerns. Pupils enjoy school and many find that learning is fun.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The most important things the should do to improve are:

- Drive up standards by improving teaching in all subjects, sharing good practice and ensuring that work set is consistently well matched to pupils' abilities.
- Improve the management of the school by developing the role of subject co-ordinators and establishing effective assessment systems in science, ICT and all other foundation subjects.
- Ensure that the planned curriculum provides sufficient time for the systematic development of pupils' knowledge and skills in all non-core subjects.
- Provide a range of clubs and activities at lunch and after school.
- Continue to work to raise the level of attendance.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Standards in the Foundation Stage are **below average overall**, but achievement is good. Standards are below average overall at Years 2 and 6 but pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Standards in English have improved at both Years 2 and 6 since the last inspection and the national tests in 2003 when they were well below average.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good improvement has been made in English, mathematics and science at Year 6 since the national tests in 2003.
- Standards remain below average overall and could be higher.
- Children achieve well in the Foundation Stage.

Commentary

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	24.4 (24.4)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	24.2 (24.0)	26.8 (26.7)
science	27.0 (27.0)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 56 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

1. Standards in English, mathematics and science have been falling over the last four years to well below average in 2003 because of weaknesses in pupils' use of English and skills in mathematics. Inspection findings show that this declining trend has now been halted in these subjects and standards are now only below average, largely due to the school now having a stable workforce. Improvements in the leadership and management of English and mathematics have ensured a much sharper focus on pupils' learning, with English now having a beneficial impact on pupils' learning in other subjects. The school improvement trend at Year 6 has been below those seen nationally, but the steady decline in standards has been halted, with good improvement now clearly evident in all three subjects. School data shows that pupils' inward mobility of 7.1 per cent in Year 6 in 2003 has not significantly affected the standards being attained.
2. When compared to schools with similar numbers of free school meals, standards in English and mathematics were well below average and below average in science. However, a more accurate measure of whether pupils are doing well enough is given by a comparison with schools whose Year 6 pupils performed similarly when they were in Year 2 - that is, schools whose pupils entered Year 3 with similar standards. This shows that pupils' performance was below average in English and mathematics when compared to their prior attainment at Year 2 and average in science, and suggests an improvement overall over the previous year.
3. Current Year 6 standards in most of the other subjects remain below average as found at the last inspection, except for geography and religious education which remain average, yet progress since then has been satisfactory, although underachievement has been clearly evident during the intervening years. Standards in ICT also remain below average, but this masks the improvement made as national expectations have increased significantly since the last inspection. Pupils' use of computers to support other subjects is generally satisfactory when using the portable laptop computers, but too little use is made of the classroom personal computers. The current achievement of the majority of pupils, including those with SEN and

those for whom English is an additional language, is satisfactory and is sometimes good, particularly in Year 6.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	14.0 (13.2)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	12.4 (11.9)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	14.6 (14.0)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 56 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

4. Standards at Year 2 in the national tests in 2003 were well below average in reading, writing and mathematics. In comparison to other schools with similar numbers of free school meals, standards were also low. Although this is not a secure indicator, in the absence of national data to show comparative progress for this age group, it indicates that pupils could do better. Current Year 2 pupils are achieving standards that are below average in English, mathematics and science; this is an improvement since the national tests/tasks in 2003. Standards in all other subjects are below average, except for geography and religious education, which are average. Pupils' use of computers to support other subjects using the school laptops is satisfactory, but too little use is made of classroom personal computers. The trend in results in Year 2 is broadly in line with the national trend and improvements in pupils' attainment are evident over the last two years, although standards have been depressed due to the large number of pupils with SEN.
5. Current standards in the Foundation Stage are below average overall because of children's weak development and limited vocabulary in English and weak mathematical development. Standards are broadly average in personal, social and emotional development, knowledge and understanding of the world and physical development, where most children are likely to attain what is expected in these early learning goals by the end of the Reception Year. They are unlikely, however, to achieve the expected levels in their language, literacy and communication and mathematical, and imaginative and creative development. Children achieve well overall by the time they enter Year 1, including those with SEN and those for whom English is an additional language, but their limited skills in English are having a detrimental impact on their ability to progress at a faster rate.
6. Pupils' achievement, including those who speak English as an additional language, is now satisfactory overall, and is an improvement over pupils' attainment in the national tests in 2003, when pupils' underachievement was evident. School information shows that some pupils had previously not made the progress of which they were capable, because of the weak assessment systems in place at that time and lack of matching of work to pupils' abilities. This particularly affected the higher-attaining pupils. The school has recently begun to focus on setting work that is matched to pupils' individual abilities and, as a result, the previously falling standards have been halted. This focus, however, is at an early stage of development. Specific provision for the highest-attaining pupils (the gifted and talented) has yet to be started.
7. In 2003, few Year 6 pupils with SEN achieved the expected levels in English, mathematics and science. There is evidence of some of these pupils making good individual progress in classes, but their overall achievement is only satisfactory. This rate of progress is positively enhanced, however, by the targeted support they receive when withdrawn from lessons, particularly in Years 4 to 6. All pupils, whether in class or when withdrawn from lessons, demonstrate good attitudes and behaviour and work with interest.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and relationships are good. Pupils' moral and social development is good and their cultural and spiritual development is satisfactory. Attendance is unsatisfactory but pupils are punctual in arriving at school. Provision for pupils' personal development is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils enjoy being in school and are willing to take responsibility.
- The school sets high expectations for pupils' conduct; pupils respond well and this effectively promotes a sense of involvement in a community.
- Pupils develop good relationships with their classmates and teachers.
- Pupils often work hard in lessons even when the focus is not clear, but they are not always stimulated to learn as effectively as they could.
- Attendance is below average.

Commentary

8. Pupils are happy and cheerful. They know the class rules well and strive to keep to them. Their positive attitudes are reflected in the enthusiasm they showed in lessons, even when the focus of the lesson was not clear. They try their best at even puzzling or confusing tasks and are rarely distracted or disaffected. Many junior pupils take a responsible and mature attitude in their role as school council members in running the recently introduced council and are keen to inform their classmates of what is discussed and the decisions made. This should give pupils an opportunity to influence the work of the school and develop their role in living in a community. Several older pupils also are keen to take responsibility at breaktimes for running the school tuck-shop and fulfil their roles well.
9. Pupils behave well in lessons and within the school buildings. They are exuberant and excited at playtimes and lunchtime, but no aggressive behaviour or bullying was evident, although on occasions a few become over-excited and do not pay full regard to other pupils. Their behaviour is nevertheless good overall. It represents an improvement since the last inspection and the school's hard work in achieving a calm and peaceful learning environment. The school sets high expectations for pupils' conduct and works well to achieve them, although the well-developed and very effective system of rewards and sanctions is applied better in the classroom and dining hall, with full involvement of the lunchtime supervisors, than in the playground. The school is relatively free from bullying and teachers quickly resolve any issues.
10. Pupils have good relationships with one another and are happy to work together and help each other out. Boys mix well with girls, although when they have opportunities to work with partners of their own choice, they generally choose their own gender. The headteacher acts as a very good role-model in helping to develop pupils' good relationships, such as in his story-telling techniques involving and guiding pupils in assemblies. The school effectively promotes pupils' moral and social development well and pupils' ability to distinguish right from wrong is developed well, not only through the school's rewards and sanctions but also through its fostering respect for the feelings and values of others. The school enables pupils with responsibilities to develop their role well in living in a community. This is further supported by the good provision for residential trips for older pupils that develop a good team spirit. The school is free from racism, with only one recorded incident of verbal abuse in the last two years.
11. The school's efforts to consistently stimulate a desire for pupils to learn, although satisfactory overall, are not as effective as they might be and adversely affect pupils' personal development. This is often seen in the lack of encouragement for independent learning such as in using classroom computers and gaining their own information from library books, although some good examples were seen in Year 6. The lack of clubs and activities at lunchtime and after school, however, does not enable pupils to develop their opportunities for

learning. This is significantly different from that seen in most other schools. Although pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory overall, there are missed opportunities for developing their awareness throughout the curriculum, with little planning in subjects in a coherent manner, such as in art and design and music, to make lessons stimulating and exciting. Similarly, opportunities are missed to promote a range of cultural and multi-cultural experiences.

12. Attendance is below the national average, even though it has improved for specific individuals because of the school's focus on raising attendance in the last two years. The low attendance is mainly because several families take their holidays in the term time. Unauthorised absences are lower than average and this indicates that pupils enjoy being in school.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year 2002/03 (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data:	6.3	School data:	0.2
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.

13. The school promotes attendance well using a system of specific rewards for pupils and regular reminders to parents. Parents generally make appropriate efforts to get their children to school on time, and punctuality at the start of the day is satisfactory. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Efficient registrations at the start of the day, coupled with a brief settling-in period, ensure that lessons start promptly.

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	Number of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White - British	438	4	0

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

14. Few pupils have been excluded and this reflects the efforts the school makes to promote good behaviour and good relationships. Considerable effort has been made by the school to rectify the behaviour of the temporarily excluded boys, with some success.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is **satisfactory**. Teaching is now satisfactory overall. Assessment information in English and mathematics is used satisfactorily, but more could be done to drive up standards at a faster rate. The curriculum is broad. Pupils are well cared for. Links with other schools are satisfactory.

Teaching and learning

Teaching is good in the Foundation Stage and satisfactory in Years 1 to 6. Pupils' learning overall is satisfactory, as is assessment.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching was seen in some classes, but the overall percentage of good or very good teaching was less than is typical, and this limits the rate at which standards are improved.
- Teachers encourage pupils to work hard in lessons and they have high expectations for pupils' behaviour.

- Foundation Stage teachers have good subject knowledge and deploy classroom assistants well.
- Assessment of learning in English and mathematics is satisfactory, but is not yet developed or used in other subjects to ensure that standards are improved. This is a weakness.
- Teachers' marking is inconsistent and does not sufficiently help pupils to improve their work.

Commentary

15. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. This is similar to the findings at the last inspection when teaching was sound. However, examples of good teaching were seen in some year groups, particularly in Year 6; this is a slight improvement since the last inspection. The quality of teaching ranges from poor to very good. Teaching observed in half of the unsatisfactory lessons was by supply teachers. In the good and better lessons, teachers ensured that pupils worked at a good pace and provided plenty of opportunities for pupils to offer ideas and suggestions. This was evident in some English and ICT lessons where an enthusiastic beginning motivated pupils to participate fully in the following work. In these lessons, pupils achieved well, developing confidence and good self-esteem.
16. Teachers' affirmative manner and high expectations for pupils' behaviour has developed positive attitudes in pupils. As a result, pupils are attentive and listen closely to their teachers. Despite this, academic standards remain below average due to the high proportion of pupils with SEN, who have too limited a range of knowledge and skills in English and mathematics. Pupils could achieve higher standards if the work set were more consistently challenging.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 46 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0 (0%)	2 (4%)	20 (43.5%)	20 (43.5%)	3 (7%)	1 (2%)	0 (0%)

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

17. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is good overall. The co-ordinator has good subject knowledge and her planning is good. Although she is based at the Batmans Hill Nursery, she has deployed staff well in the main school Nursery and Reception classes and monitors work each term. This ensures a clear focus on the tasks children do in lessons in order to improve, but the medium-term planning is mainly a list of activities for each of the areas of learning, without clear learning intentions related to the early learning goals¹. This does not provide sufficient support for the relatively inexperienced LSPs² in the Reception class. Children's learning is good in the co-ordinator's classes and satisfactory at the main school. The effect of the split site on the Reception staff is considerable as they do not have opportunity to observe the good practice of the co-ordinator and have less opportunity in which to develop their own teaching skills. Assessment information is used satisfactorily and staff work hard in supporting the children in their care. All staff provide positive encouragement that enables children to make the most of their time in school.
18. Teachers' subject knowledge in Years 1 to 6 is satisfactory. The school has experienced a high turnover of teachers for several years that has limited its capacity to sustain a stable staff team and build effectively on good practice. Teachers in the Year 6 classes provide specialist teaching in English and science, and this is having a positive impact in English in particular, due to the very competent skills that the teacher uses. Team-teaching also takes place regularly from the autumn term to boost pupils' English, mathematics and science skills, but the subject duration in mathematics is too long and does not ensure that pupils sustain their

¹ Children are expected to reach the early learning goals by the end of the reception year and commence learning in the National Curriculum on entering Year 1.

² Learning Support Practitioners.

concentration sufficiently to make the most use of the time. Teachers have begun to provide targets for pupils' learning in Years 2 and 6 in English and mathematics. This is a good start but, as target-setting is not provided in Years 3, 4 and 5, there is insufficient planning for the progressive development of pupils' learning. This is a barrier to sustaining pupils' systematic learning. Plans are in place to set targets in science in the summer term.

19. Assessment information in English and mathematics is satisfactory. This is an improvement since the last inspection when it was unsatisfactory. The assessment co-ordinator and deputy headteacher are further developing the information system for recording pupils' learning, but have not yet ensured that all teachers are using the information to best advantage. Assessment systems are not yet in place in other subjects, resulting in insufficient matching of work to individual pupils' abilities. Although this reflects the findings at the last inspection, the school has established a clearly defined timetable for implementing assessment in science, ICT and all non-core subjects. Most teachers conduct evaluations of the outcomes of their lessons weekly, but many do not use this information sufficiently well to set challenging work in the following lessons. Assessment for all pupils with SEN is satisfactory and pupils are soundly supported throughout the school, generally in classes but more particularly when they are withdrawn for specific support.
20. Satisfactory levels of homework are provided in Years 1 to 6 in line with the school's expectation, but too little of the work is marked sufficiently enough to be effective and it does not fully enable pupils to develop their own learning further. This is a weakness in that management systems are not sufficiently rigorous. This is also the case in a number of subjects and does not ensure that pupils learn at a fast enough rate, as marking is too often 'ticked' or given positive comments but with little indication as to why the comments are made. These weaknesses mean that marking has little impact on helping pupils to improve.

The curriculum

The curriculum, although satisfactory in its breadth, lacks balance because of the amount of time devoted to English and mathematics. Curriculum links with other schools are good. There are too few opportunities for enrichment. The accommodation and resources are satisfactory overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The strong curriculum provision for improving English has been effective in raising standards.
- All statutory requirements are met.
- The time spent on the different subjects of the curriculum has not been carefully planned.
- Links with other primary schools are beginning to have a positive impact on pupils' learning.
- Enrichment opportunities are unsatisfactory and there are too few clubs and activities outside the school day.
- The numbers of teachers and support staff to meet the demands of the curriculum are satisfactory.
- There are some significant weaknesses in the accommodation, but resources in the Foundation Stage are good.

Commentary

21. The curriculum and the provision for acts of collective worship meet statutory requirements and are generally presented in a manner that is meaningful and relevant to the pupils. All subjects of the National Curriculum, religious education and personal and social development are provided, including aspects of citizenship, and sex education and drug awareness are taught. The curriculum generally provides for equality of access for all pupils but there is not always sufficient challenge for some higher-attaining pupils. Pupils are satisfactorily prepared for entry into secondary education.

22. A considerable amount of time has been devoted to raising standards in English and mathematics, and standards in English have clearly started to rise. This has been at the expense of many other subjects, which are blocked to be taught in the summer term, and are not regularly given enough time to systematically develop pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding. As a result, the standards seen in ICT, history, art and design, design and technology and music are all below national expectations at Years 2 and 6. Many subjects, such as physical education, music, and design and technology, are not fully planned and the school relies on national guidelines that are not yet adapted to the school's needs.
23. The provision for children with SEN is satisfactory. The co-ordinator has organised documentation, with individual education plans for pupils in all classes. However, it was observed that often these have group targets without sufficient plans for individuals, although provision for specific needs such as visual impairment is sound. All statutory requirements are met with the school meeting the revised Code of Practice in its policies and procedures.
24. Curriculum planning is now one of the school's priorities. This process has been severely restricted in the past by the lack of a stable teaching staff. Recent permanent appointments have taken place and the school now has a satisfactory number of teachers and support staff to meet the needs of the curriculum. However, many staff are recently qualified with little experience of curriculum planning and they have yet to include the latest national recommendations on linking subjects to guide this development. The school has recently joined forces with two other local primary schools, and expertise within the three schools is being shared to develop pupils' attainment, primarily in ICT but also in English and mathematics. This innovation, known as TRIAD, includes support for members of staff as they plan and monitor the curriculum.
25. The school provides three residential visits annually and occasional visits to places of interest linked to the curriculum, but there are too few other opportunities to further enrichment. Good use is made of the local sports academy for Year 6 pupils for physical education including tennis, but no regular opportunities are provided for sport, clubs or the arts outside of lessons. A significant proportion of parents returning questionnaires commented upon this weakness and inspectors agree with their views. The school participates in a local football competition, but overall there is insufficient participation in sports, the arts or other areas of interest.
26. The accommodation is adequate to deliver the full curriculum. The school lacks a suitable library: the current library is too small for teaching library skills to classes and is not attractive so as to encourage pupils to develop an interest in reading. The range, quantity and quality of the books are unsatisfactory. These limitations restrict pupils' opportunities for research, particularly as the library does not have a computer. The demountable classroom for pupils with SEN is rapidly deteriorating and has neither toilet nor water facilities, and this adversely impacts on the status of pupils using the demountable classroom. The school field, however, is exceptionally large and caters well for a range of sporting and social activities such as summer fairs. Resources are satisfactory overall.
27. The Reception classes and the Batmans Hill Nursery are in converted accommodation that, although of ample size, lacks the large windows and the bright airy environment of the purpose-built Nursery on the main site. One Reception classroom has almost no natural light. Although the impact of this is reduced by the children being taught in other areas during parts of the school day, this is not a satisfactory situation. Plans are in place to move all Foundation Stage children into a purpose-built area in the main school and this should be attended to as soon as is possible. Although the ratio of adults to children is satisfactory, there is a lower than average number of teachers in the Nursery and fewer teaching assistants in the Reception classes. Overall, children are well prepared for entry into the Reception Year and satisfactorily for entry into Year 1. Resources for the Foundation Stage are good.

Care, guidance and support

Provision for pupils' care, welfare and health and safety is good. The support, advice and guidance they receive, based on monitoring, are satisfactory. Involvement through seeking and acting on pupils' views is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Child protection and health and safety procedures are good.
- Pupils have a good trusting relationship with at least one adult.
- Involvement of pupils in the development of the school through seeking their views formally is in its infancy.
- Identification and support for pupils with SEN is satisfactory overall.

Commentary

28. Child protection procedures are better than average because of the close involvement of the midday support staff and because of the practice of recording verbatim pupils' statements. Health and safety similarly is better than in many schools because of the higher frequency of whole-site checks which also involve a third party – a trade union representative via the local education authority. This not only ensures that advice is up to date but also the prompt rectification of any issues. First aid is satisfactory and well organised but there is only one suitably trained member of staff. Advice that pupils receive concerning their welfare and more general personal development is good. The quality of the rewards and sanctions and the good relationships in school are effective. Pupils are confident that they have at least one adult to turn to in case of personal need. Noticeably, this involves the headteacher who is very approachable, but also midday supervisors who are regarded as understanding. However, the guidance pupils receive based on academic monitoring is only satisfactory because assessment is not used sufficiently rigorously to ensure that pupils receive work matched to their individual needs.
29. The ethos of listening to and acting on pupils' views so that pupils are formally involved in the school's development is just becoming a part of school life and is satisfactory. A detailed survey of pupils' views in Years 4, 5, and 6 was very recently carried out and the results analysed fully. A school council has been established for pupils in Years 2 to 6, but only three meetings have been held so far; full consultation and feedback to classmates are at an early stage of development. The council has yet to make an impact on school development. The school is keen to support pupils who have had difficulties in their self-discipline and has very effectively integrated some pupils who were struggling to cope at their previous schools.
30. The emphasis on the identification and support for pupils with SEN is satisfactory overall and, although weak in Years 1 and 2, once identified, pupils receive regular sessions where they are withdrawn for specific help in learning. The sessions seen were effective and related well to pupils' needs. Relationships with pupils were handled skilfully. Although only a small number of pupils are allowed to receive statements of SEN, the school receives sufficient funding for extra adult support in classes. Appropriate support is provided by external agencies.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Links with parents are generally satisfactory, but there are weaknesses. Links with the community are good. Links with other schools and colleges are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of information about the school and on pupils' progress is unsatisfactory, apart from in the Nursery.

- The school does not seek parents' views effectively.
- Parents of pupils with SEN are satisfactorily involved with reviews of their children's progress.
- The school has effective links with the community and with the local church.
- Although links with schools are only satisfactory, a promising new local network has been established.

Commentary

31. The school provides a reasonable quantity of information to parents, and consultation evenings are well attended. A termly newsletter is provided with some curriculum information and annual reports on pupils' progress, but these are not of sufficient quality to inform parents in much depth. As a result, parents do not feel sufficiently informed. Newsletters are short and almost brusque at times, and curriculum information is largely concerned with the termly topics without sufficient detail on the work that pupils are following. Pupils' end-of-year reports provide reasonable information on their progress but gives insufficient guidance on what pupils need to do to improve; this reflects the comments of 19 per cent of parents who returned the pre-inspection questionnaire. Inspection findings support parents' comments where they are unsure as to how their children are progressing and how they might improve. This is a weakness.
32. Although there is no 'Friends' Association', the school carries out occasional targeted fund-raising initiatives that many parents support. A small number of parents help in school, especially in the Foundation Stage. The school is conscientious regarding parents' concerns and complaints but some parents are concerned that the agreed actions are often ineffective, particularly as the school does not readily seek to involve parents. Parents of pupils with SEN are kept informed about their children's learning and are aware of their children's inclusion on the SEN register. They are involved in the preparation of their children's individual education plans and in regular reviews of their children's progress, although these take place at parent/teacher open evenings and this limits discussion, resulting in targets that are not always fully known by parents. Some parents are, therefore, insufficiently aware of how their children are performing and this is a weakness.
33. The school does not seek parents' views effectively. Apart from required consultations, it has not encouraged parents to have a role in the future development of the school and does not project an image of wishing them to be involved. This is reflected in the pre-inspection questionnaires where 14 per cent of parents show concern. Consequently, parental views, for example about the lack of after-school activities, remain unheard and many parents feel dissatisfied with the school's response; 13 per cent of those returning questionnaires expressed their dissatisfaction with the poor range of lunchtime and after-school clubs and activities. Inspectors agree with parents' concern.
34. The school has good links with the community. It has established a purposeful link with the local Church of England, with the vicar conducting monthly assemblies, and all pupils visit the church to celebrate a religious occasion. This results in pupils and their parents becoming familiar with the church, and community ties are strengthened when the vicar is recognised in other parts of the community, such as in the secondary school and the local supermarket where he acts as the community chaplain. The supermarket supports the school's work in small but consistently positive ways. A Young Enterprise Scheme involving two parents that extends pupils' opportunities for understanding aspects of business operates in the summer term for pupils in Years 3 and 4.
35. Links with other schools and colleges are satisfactory. The TRIAD network with two primary schools is good but is still at an early stage of development. Transfer arrangements to the local secondary school where most pupils go are satisfactory, but the lack of sporting events and competitions has an adverse impact on pupils' wider social and personal development.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership of the school is **satisfactory but there are weaknesses in management in raising standards at a faster rate**. Governance is satisfactory and statutory requirements are met.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher ensures that there is a calm and positive atmosphere in the school.
- Co-ordinators are keen to develop their subject responsibility but their role in setting and monitoring standards is not yet sufficiently developed.
- The curriculum is not effectively co-ordinated, monitored or evaluated.
- Governors are very supportive of the school. They monitor finances closely but are not sufficiently involved in setting the direction of the work in school and this limits their effectiveness in helping to bring about improvement.

Commentary

36. The headteacher provides satisfactory leadership and management overall. This largely reflects the findings at the last inspection. He has created a positive ethos where pupils feel secure and able to enjoy the work they do. He has made some effective appointments in gaining teaching staff over the last twelve months that has led to a much-needed stability among teachers, but more now needs to be done. Clear lines of responsibility have been established and some examples of effective teamwork have been introduced in English and mathematics at Year 6. His management has weaknesses, however, that have not yet ensured that teachers consistently set work for pupils of all abilities in order to drive up standards. The recent initiative to match work to pupils' abilities is beginning to have beneficial impact on the quality of teaching and learning but has yet to become fully embedded throughout the school. This initiative is particularly effective in raising standards in English that are now led by the very effective co-ordinator. This co-ordination is a good model for other co-ordinators to follow.
37. Leadership and management by other key staff are generally satisfactory. Many of the co-ordinators are new in post, some only very recently, but all are keen to ensure that their subject responsibility is developed well. They have adopted national guidelines in their subjects but not all teachers moderate pupils' work sufficiently closely to the National Curriculum levels, leading to staff having an under-expectation of what pupils can achieve. This was particularly evident in the national tests and teacher assessments in 2003 in mathematics at Years 2 and 6, and English and science at Year 6. The monitoring of pupils' work by co-ordinators, although mentored by the deputy headteacher, does not yet ensure that sufficient criteria are implemented in assisting co-ordinators to effectively monitor or establish standards at the end of Years 2 and 6. Induction for newly-qualified and new staff is good, and effective in-service professional training opportunities are in place. The SEN co-ordinator has organised documentation so that there are individual education plans for pupils in all classes. However, it was observed that these often have group targets that are not sufficiently specific for individual pupils' learning needs and this is a significant weakness. All statutory requirements for pupils with SEN statements are met.
38. The school improvement plan is an effective document for directing the work of the school, with a particular focus on raising standards in English, mathematics and science, linked closely with support from the local education authority. The school has developed an action plan to meet the needs of pupils of 'borderline attainment' to enable a greater proportion of pupils to achieve the expected Level 4, to develop the learning of pupils with SEN, and to provide booster classes for Year 6 pupils. Whilst this remains an essential need, it has resulted in other subjects being squeezed and prevents the systematic development of pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding in non-core subjects. The school provides more focused work in these subjects when the national tests are completed to ensure that overall curriculum requirements are met but this does not ensure pupils' systematic development. The curriculum

is not sufficiently monitored to ensure that pupils have full opportunity or time to achieve the expected standards at the end of Years 2 and 6.

39. Governors have become more effectively involved in the work of the school and largely fulfil the key issue at the last inspection. They now monitor the school finances and spending plans closely and ensure that property is secure. Although there is a high carry forward, contingency planning is effective in that the headteacher, deputy headteacher and governors have secured sensible spending plans to address likely budget reductions over the next three years due to the expected fall in numbers on roll. Governors, however, have yet to become effectively involved in setting the strategic direction of the school. Performance development is satisfactorily in place and all other statutory requirements are met, including pupils having full access to all parts of the school. The school administrator is efficient and effective in monitoring and controlling financial and day-to-day matters and enables the school to run smoothly.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	1,267,395	Balance from previous year	98,417
Total expenditure	1,228,783	Balance carried forward to the next	137,779
Expenditure per pupil	2,419		

40. The school compares its performance well against local and national schools and ensures that competitive tenders are obtained for purchased services, but it does not ensure the principles of best value well enough. It does not challenge its own performance or consult with parents sufficiently. Despite this, the school provides generally satisfactory value for money overall.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

41. Children join the Nursery at the start of the term following their third birthday and many attend for more than one year before entering the Reception class. Thirty-five children attend full time at the Batmans Hill Nursery and nine have part-time places. This Nursery is situated three-quarters of a mile from the main school. All 33 Nursery children on the main site attend for a half-day only. Forty-eight children are in the two Reception classes, all of whom started in September. Each of the rooms is decorated brightly with children's work, but only in the purpose-built Nursery is the environment bright with natural light. The Nursery and Reception classes on the main site are not adjacent to each other.
42. Despite the distance between the three classrooms and the staffing disruption when the school became responsible for the Batmans Hill site, the Foundation Stage co-ordinator has successfully created a team across the year groups that has a consistent approach to teaching and a shared understanding of the Foundation Stage philosophy. Her influence is strong throughout the Nursery as she undertakes all the short-term planning and monitors the teaching and learning in the Batmans Hill site thoroughly. The activities provided take account of how young children learn. As a consequence, the teaching is good and children achieve well and frequently very well over the two years that they attend. The impact of the co-ordinator on the Reception year is less effective, where teaching, although satisfactory overall, is frequently unsatisfactory when teaching mathematics. These staff are keen and committed, but they are relatively newly-qualified and lack opportunity to observe the good practice of the co-ordinator. Monitoring of the Reception teachers' planning is not thorough and regular observations of their teaching has only recently become formalised. Consequently, the achievement of children in Reception is only satisfactory overall.
43. Procedures for evaluating children's learning are inconsistent. There is good practice in the Nursery but this is not extended into the Reception Year. The way in which Reception children are taught language skills, mathematical skills and their pre-science learning does not provide very precise planning based upon prior knowledge of children's learning, and this is not happening. As a consequence much of the teaching is not sufficiently challenging for the children, particularly in mathematics, and they do not achieve as well as they could. Children's activities are not tracked and they can spend many days without practising or extending their reading, writing and counting skills.
44. Children enter the Nursery with standards well below those expected for their age, particularly in their spoken language and in their imaginative development. They achieve well and frequently very well during this time and enter the Reception Year with average standards in all but their spoken language and their imaginative development, which are below the expected levels, because of children's limited use of English. Reception children's achievement is satisfactory in all but their mathematical development, which is unsatisfactory because there is insufficient focus on developing children's use of number. Children enter Year 1 with average skills, achieving the early learning goals for their personal, social and emotional development, knowledge and understanding of the world and physical development. They do not achieve the expected levels in their mathematical development, language, literacy and communication skills, or imaginative and creative development.

Personal, social and emotional development

Provision in personal, social and emotional development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children enter with levels well below expectations for their age.

- They achieve very well and, by the time they leave the Reception Year, they are attaining the early learning goals for this area of their development.

Commentary

45. Even though children enter with low standards, teachers ensure a consistent approach and considerable emphasis by all adults in the Nursery and Reception classes on promoting children's personal, social and emotional development; this enables the children to make very good progress. Children are placed into family groups with one adult when they enter the Nursery and this helps them to make good relationships and become confident. Rules and routines are consistently reinforced and children try hard to conform. From entry, adults encourage children to listen attentively, share together, consider the needs of others and take turns. Transfer arrangements between the Nursery and Reception classes are good and support children's confidence well. Younger Nursery children are starting to make choices and by the end of their time in Nursery, they confidently select their own equipment and express their own needs as they play together. By the end of the Reception Year, children work and play well together in a constructive manner, show interest and, at times, excitement with their learning where they concentrate well on their tasks.

Communication, language and literacy

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children enter with well below average spoken language skills.
- Children achieve well in the Nursery where the provision is good.
- Most children recognise the sounds of letters and the initial sounds in words before they leave Reception and achieve well in this aspect of their learning.

Commentary

46. When children enter the Nursery, they use very little interactive language. Older Nursery children and those in Reception frequently play together in imaginative role-play with very little sustained dialogue and with few conversations. Developing children's spoken language is a priority in the Nursery and adults play a range of exciting games to enrich children's linguistic experience. Whenever adults work with children, they provide a constant dialogue, mainly of directional language to give a good role-model, and almost all children in Reception can use language to express needs and concerns in response to adults' comments. However, children are not always given sufficient time to consider and construct a response to the questions asked, and adults do not always have sufficiently high expectations, frequently accepting one-word answers when children could provide a more lengthy response, which limits the development of children's speaking abilities. The co-ordinator sets a good example, eliciting considerable language from children, including the repetitive language found in stories, and all teachers attempt to extend children's language when reading a story, providing language structures for thinking, and ordering and structuring information.
47. There is a good emphasis on teaching the sounds and the shapes of letters in the Nursery and Reception classes. Nursery staff provide a wide range of interesting and varied activities to develop these skills and most children enter the Reception year recognising many letters and their sounds. Children are extended well and almost all Reception children can identify the initial sound in words, with more advanced children identifying the final sounds in words. Children enjoy listening to stories as teachers read books with considerable animation. However, children do not choose to select or browse through books independently. Higher- and average-attaining Reception children are starting to read very simple books. They recognise many words, but do not use their knowledge of letter sounds to work out unknown words.

48. Nursery children receive good individual tuition in how to form letters correctly but this is not continued sufficiently in Reception. Some Reception children, mainly girls, write and copy letters and words accurately. Almost all children can write their name and around two thirds are starting to write simple words independently, but the majority of children do not attain the early learning goals by the time they leave Reception because of their weak grasp and use of English.

Mathematical development

Provision for mathematical development is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children enter the Nursery with well below average standards. They achieve well and enter Reception with only below average standards.
- Teaching in Reception is unsatisfactory, and children's work and records show that they do not make consistent progress in counting and calculating nor do they achieve satisfactorily.

Commentary

49. On entry, Nursery children learn to count and sort, and learn about basic flat shapes and repeating patterns. Although much of this teaching is well structured to the ways in which young children learn, it does not ensure that pupils achieve as well as they might. They can identify groups of objects to five with the support of adults. Higher-attaining Reception children are only able to count accurately to 20 as there is insufficient emphasis on counting or on activities that precede addition and subtraction. Children are not provided with correct models of language for comparative size, or with an enriched vocabulary. The lessons are frequently too easy because assessments are not accurate and records are not sufficiently well used. The supporting activities are interesting but without specific challenge. The majority do not achieve the early learning goals at the end of Reception because the unsatisfactory teaching does not promote learning at a faster rate.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children enter with experiences well below average standards for their age.
- They receive good support in the Nursery and Reception classes and achieve very well.

Commentary

50. Children enter Nursery with low standards. Teachers provide good consistency between the Nursery and Reception classes to develop children's knowledge and understanding because planning is effective. All children have opportunity to use water, dough and sand, and tools such as scissors, pencils and paintbrushes with increasing accuracy. Reception children show independence and considerable care when building and balancing bricks. Reception teachers provide an exciting and broad curriculum. Through satisfactory teaching, they effectively develop children's observation and classification skills, such as while looking at a range of animals. They develop effective observation of the features of animals, when supported by adults. Children use computers and manipulate a mouse sufficiently well to activate a simple program. Children are gaining a sense of history as they reflect on birthdays and a sense of geography as they hunt for objects in the classroom. Children have good opportunities to celebrate a range of cultural traditions. As a result of the effective provision, most children are likely to attain the early learning goals by the end of Reception.

Physical development

Provision in physical development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children are provided with a good range of activities to develop their control of tools and pencils.

Commentary

51. Nursery and Reception children receive many opportunities to manipulate small objects, tools and soft materials, which they do safely and with sufficient precision. Through the daily outdoor provision, Reception children run and skip forwards and backwards and have sufficient control to stop when told and to move their bodies in time to music. They throw with relative accuracy and manipulate bats and balls well. Teaching, although varied, is frequently overly directive in providing too few opportunities for children to experiment independently, whilst at other times it is largely restricted to observing children as they play. Most children are likely to attain the early learning goals by the end of Reception.

Creative development

Provision in creative development is **good**.

- Children enter with levels well below that expected for their age and achieve well.

Commentary

52. Nursery and Reception children have considerable opportunity to select and use a range of fabrics and materials for collage and other creative and decorative activities. Older Nursery children create interesting patterns but they cannot give any meaningful explanation for their work. Reception children give clear reasons for their choices but these tend not to be for creative reasons. In these activities and in role-play, adults rarely intervene in more than a superficial manner and this limits the development of children's interpersonal and imaginative skills. The exception is the co-ordinator, who becomes involved in children's role-play, effectively extending their creativity, language and ability to maintain an imaginary role. Good opportunities for creative music are timetabled. Despite children's good achievement, the majority do not attain the early learning goals by the end of Reception.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good in Years 3 to 6 and, as a result, achievement is good.
- The subject is very well led and progress is beginning to be monitored.
- The school encourages reading and the enjoyment of books but the library accommodation and resources are inadequate.
- There is insufficient use of drama to develop pupils' understanding of language.

Commentary

53. Standards are below average at Years 2 and 6 as a result of the wide span of ability, showing an improvement since the last inspection and since the recent national tests in 2003 when

standards were well below average. Standards are beginning to rise because of the strong focus on raising pupils' attainment. This is beginning to increase the proportion of pupils previously attaining the higher Level 3 in reading at Years 2 and Level 5 at Year 6. Several reasons account for this improvement in standards:

- The new co-coordinator has been tracking standards with great care and monitoring teaching.
 - A common scheme of work has resulted in improved consistency in teaching and learning.
 - Booster lessons for Year 6 pupils are having beneficial impact.
 - The co-ordinator is beginning to build a good team amongst the staff, who know their pupils well.
54. Pupils, including those with SEN, achieve satisfactorily throughout the school, with good support given for the few with particular needs such as visual impairment. There is only a small minority of pupils in all years who are working at average and above standards. No significant difference is evident between the achievement of boys and girls or those with English as national language as, they speak English fluently.
55. Standards in speaking and listening are below average in Years 1 to 6. A significant minority of pupils in all year groups speak confidently and make themselves understood, but many younger pupils are limited by a restricted vocabulary. Staff work hard to extend pupils' vocabulary by repeating and explaining unfamiliar words, and encouraging pupils to talk to each other. Missed opportunities to use drama to help pupils communicate confidently were evident in some lessons, whilst in two lessons, teachers gave pupils too much information and this limited the opportunities for them to contribute orally.
56. Standards in reading are below average overall, but improving because of the school's focus on developing pupils' reading in Years 1 to 6. This is beginning to have a positive effect in two ways:
- The recently introduced structured reading programme has enabled pupils to select books from a published scheme and to choose additional books that they might enjoy.
 - Most pupils read regularly and discuss their books with more than one adult; they show enthusiasm and enjoyment in reading.
57. Most pupils regularly read individually to adults, both at home and at school, and this is a key feature leading to raised standards, although higher-attaining pupils do not always have the opportunity to read or discuss their books individually with the teacher. A good range of non-fiction books is used across the curriculum, with old and worn books being removed. Some older pupils are developing preferences for the work of different authors, with Jacqueline Wilson and Betsy Byers being firm favourites. Year 6 pupils were able to talk about Shakespeare's *Midsummer Night's Dream* and *Romeo and Juliet*, with one higher attainer expressing her enjoyment of *Jane Eyre*.
58. Staff work hard and successfully to drive up standards in writing, which have now improved to below average. Factors that have been instrumental in raising standards include improved planning, the provision of interesting writing tasks, opportunities for pupils to write across a range of genres and celebrating pupils' writing through displays. The school is continuing to target writing as an area for improvement. Weaknesses that currently inhibit pupils' progress are the lack of effective marking that informs pupils how they improve, too few opportunities to re-draft work and the lack of scrapbooks to celebrate pupils' work. A key feature in a Year 2 lesson was the way in which pupils were encouraged to use adjectives to describe the colour of a garment and details on its pattern and design. This enabled all pupils to learn a more expressive vocabulary to use in their writing of a fable.

59. Teaching and learning are satisfactory in Years 1 and 2 and good in Years 3 to 6, with some very good teaching also in Years 3 to 6. Strengths lie in teaching at a brisk pace, skilful questioning, very good subject knowledge and the way in which pupils become engaged and learn. A good feature of lessons seen was the way in which teachers shared the learning intention at the start of each lesson, enabling pupils to know what they were expected to learn. Teachers assess pupils' work well to check pupils' reading, writing and spelling skills and this is another factor leading to pupils' improved attainment. Teacher assessments are recorded and used by the co-ordinator to identify priorities for improvement, but pupils do not have specific personal targets that they can refer to in lessons to improve their writing. Most marking gives comments or indications to help pupils improve their own work although, in lessons and work seen, there is little evidence that pupils are given the opportunity to complete unfinished work, write out spelling corrections or re-draft work. All teachers insist on high standards of behaviour and pupils respond well.
60. The co-ordinator has a very clear view of what needs to be improved and is working well with staff to put improvement strategies into practice. Most strategies are new and have yet to make a full impact on standards. The library and resources are inadequate. They are situated in a thoroughfare where pupils cannot read without noise and are too small to support teaching in class groups.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

Satisfactory use is made of pupils' literacy skills in other subjects, with some good examples evident in history, but more needs to be done to develop pupils' use of spoken and written English. Pupils' work is well celebrated in displays around the school, which reveal a shared sense of enjoyment and pride in their achievements.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are below average.
- Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, with examples of good and very good teaching in some classes.
- Teachers' short-term planning is inconsistent across the school.
- A lack of consistent challenge means that higher-attaining pupils are not achieving as well as expected.
- Teachers' marking is not always informative and pupils do not always know how to improve.
- There is insufficient use of numeracy across the curriculum.

Commentary

61. Standards at Years 2 and 6 are below average. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Although this reflects the findings at the last inspection, it indicates an improvement since the national tests in 2003 when standards were well below average, and that the continuing lower standards since 2000 have been halted. Standards attained by higher-attaining pupils, however, are well below those expected at Year 6 because they receive too little challenge, and at Year 2 because pupils are not confident with their number facts. Inspection evidence shows that there is no significant difference between the attainment of boys and girls or those with English as an additional language as they speak English fluently.
62. Current teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, with some good and very good teaching being evident. In one Year 6 class, teaching was very good because the teacher has in-depth knowledge of the subject and taught it skilfully. She used the numeracy strategy well, set effective questions, taught at a good pace and challenged pupils of all abilities. She provided

clear and logical exposition on rotation of a shape around a vertex and pupils were encouraged to explain their work, where they correctly described the difference between 90° and 180° rotations on a four-quadrant co-ordinate graph. However, in other lessons, less well developed basic skills, such as knowledge of multiplication tables slow productivity.

63. Teachers' lesson planning varies between classes, with some good lesson plans that link effectively to the numeracy strategy units. However, there is no consistent pattern across the school, resulting in a curriculum that does not always match the needs of different groups of pupils. Good teaching in Year 1 results from the teacher effectively planning tasks and questions that provide good opportunities to discuss their work and meet the needs of all pupils. This suits the varied needs of the different groups within the class and makes for better learning. Not all teachers are fully aware of the numeracy strategy expectation for mental starter sessions. Effective usage was evident at the start of a Year 4 lesson because the teacher promoted problem-solving questions at a good pace, involved all pupils and challenged them to explain their learning. Also, some teachers are insufficiently aware of National Curriculum levels; as a result, the work set is often at the same level or without challenge, such as in a Year 3 lesson on solving number patterns where the teacher did not match the task to pupils' abilities. Whilst work was matched to pupils' abilities in many lessons observed, this was not evident in books, indicating the very recent introduction of setting work to pupils' abilities. There is an over-reliance on worksheets, particularly in Year 2, which also results in all pupils doing the same activity and this limits the progress that pupils can make.
64. Teachers are using a variety of mathematics approaches according to their preference; this inconsistency is matched in the variable quality of marking and absence of a presentation code for numeracy. Homework in Years 1 and 2 does not always match pupils' abilities, and provision is inconsistent across school. This supports parents' comments. In many lessons teaching assistants are used well and provide useful support, most commonly for those with learning difficulties or for low-attaining pupils. Assessment of pupils' attainment is undertaken systematically and pupils' progress is monitored usefully. As a result, pupils who are making insufficient progress are identified. However, there is no systematic approach to setting targets for pupils, which limits their understanding of how they are doing. Pupils' attitudes are positive and teachers set good expectations of behaviour. In better lessons, pupils sustain interest in their work and enjoy the challenge of activities. Where teaching is less effective, as was seen in a Year 4 mathematics lesson on co-ordinates, pupils became excited and lost concentration.
65. Leadership is satisfactory but management is poor. The co-ordinator is influencing subject development through sound action planning with specific annual foci. She has promoted more opportunities for using and applying mathematics in learning but there is insufficient awareness of this requirement in some classes. She has begun monitoring and evaluating teaching but this needs to be further developed and made more evaluative to ensure that standards are raised effectively in all year groups.

Mathematics across the curriculum

66. There are few opportunities, either planned or incidental, for pupils to use their mathematical skills and knowledge across other subjects and this is a significant weakness.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards have improved since the national tests in 2003.
- Limitations in assessment lead to inconsistent work planning.

- The quality of teaching is effective in some classes, but not all pupils achieve as well as they could, particularly higher attainers.
- Effective management has ensured that previously identified weaknesses have been addressed.

Commentary

67. Standards at Years 2 and 6 are below average. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Although this reflects the findings at the last inspection, it indicates an improvement since the national tests in 2003 when standards were well below average, and that the continuing lower standards since 1999 have been halted. Current standards in Year 2 are below average, because teaching is not sufficiently matched to pupils' needs. Overall, pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language achieve at the same rate as their classmates.
68. Limitations in the use of assessment result in a lack of consistent identification and tracking of pupils' progress, but the school has specific actions for improved formal assessment and target setting to be introduced in the forthcoming summer term. A lack of teachers' awareness of pupils' prior learning results in less effective planning which, although satisfactory overall, limits the level of challenge. Teacher assessment has not been sufficiently accurate, but good use is now beginning to be made of the information gained to identify weaknesses in teaching. This should ensure that all pupils receive work that is matched to their abilities. Good practice was evident in one Year 3 class, where the teacher used assessment to ensure that higher-attaining pupils were challenged to consider the properties of materials in depth, making definitions, outlining examples and giving reasons for their conclusions. This good practice needs to be developed across all classes.
69. Year 6 pupils are aware that the moon is not a light source and are able to explain that moonlight is reflected sunlight. They are aware that force is measured in Newtons. They can devise a fair test and explain how they will record relevant data. Year 2 pupils are able to identify what happens when a solid melts and can accurately predict what happens when it cools. They classify animals by how they move and are aware of healthy and unhealthy foods. Often their explanations are limited by poor general knowledge and language skills, but pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good.
70. Teaching is satisfactory, with some examples of good teaching. A Year 6 teacher showed very effective subject knowledge through careful questioning that led pupils towards improved scientific enquiry. They developed an understanding of the properties of light, they could describe how light from a source created shadow when reaching an opaque object, and that the size of shadow will vary with the distance between them. In this lesson, pupils performed at a level appropriate to their age, correctly using scientific language including transparent, translucent and opaque. Planning is effective when teachers set clear learning objectives, ensuring that all pupils are aware of what is expected of them and understand how the present lesson is linked to previous work. However, higher-attaining Year 2 pupils were not achieving as well as they could because they were not challenged with good questioning or given the opportunity to extend their knowledge, skills and understanding. Too often, tasks are not well matched to pupils' individual abilities, with an over-reliance on worksheets and copying from the whiteboard. Work was generally matched to pupils' individual abilities in lessons, which clearly indicates the more recent initiative, as matched work was not evident in pupils' books. Matching work is not consistent, however, such as in a Year 4 lesson on the uses of electricity where all pupils had the same task to list appliances needing electricity; consequently, higher-attaining pupils were not challenged to think more deeply.
71. The subject co-ordinator has developed the curriculum to provide more opportunities for scientific enquiry. He has improved monitoring and the evaluation of teaching, and there is evidence of recent improvement in some areas, such as standards achieved by higher-attaining Year 6 pupils. Satisfactory progress has been made in addressing some of the

issues raised at the time of the last inspection. The curriculum shows breadth in its coverage of all required attainment targets with some useful cross-curricular links, particularly with art and design, ICT and mathematics. There is no evidence of homework being set in science.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are below average at Years 2 and 6.
- The lack of assessment procedure limits teachers' ability to match work to pupils' abilities.
- Pupils enjoy this subject; their attitudes and behaviour are good.
- The use of laptops has a positive impact on pupils' learning.
- Pupils in Years 3 to 6 have limited access to e-mailing.

Commentary

72. Standards are below average in all of the National Curriculum attainment targets and reflect the findings at the last inspection. This, however, masks the improvements actually made against the more demanding national expectations. In the lessons seen, teaching and learning were satisfactory. Achievement is satisfactory, including for those with SEN, with no significant difference evident between the attainment of boys and girls or those with English as an additional language.
73. The subject co-ordinator has been in post for only six weeks, and is devising an action plan to develop the teaching and learning through the implementation of a scheme of work based on national guidelines. Her initial focus is on teaching in the Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2 to establish good basic use of computers, using projectors and laptops, from which to develop systematic learning in Years 3 to 6. She is aware of the need to develop her own expertise and that of her colleagues and is beginning to draw upon the TRIAD ICT project to support her strategy, the project focusing initially on Years 3 to 6 and the training of teachers. The use of laptops linked to this offers good opportunity for the co-ordinator to evaluate pupils' attainment and progress and to create a portfolio of evidence to determine the range of attainment targets covered and the standards attained. Weaknesses identified at the last inspection have been addressed satisfactorily, but further actions are needed to develop assessment across the school; the school has plans in place to formalise assessment in the forthcoming summer term to measure pupils' progression rather than their experience.
74. Pupils enjoy using computers. Year 2 pupils speak with confidence about printing work and saving files in a word-processing program. They show understanding of how to make font variations by 'dragging' and 'highlighting' to add emphasis to written text. Good links are made with science as Year 4 pupils record the forces measured when pulling a shoe across different surfaces. They interpret their results and explain the link between the numbers of Newtons recorded and the degree of friction involved. However, limited opportunities for use of the Internet, e-mailing and control programs mean that some key skills are underdeveloped. By Year 6, pupils use a publishing program to produce work about the Victorians. They can set a banner, word-process two columns of text and insert a picture. They use a multimedia program to create presentations about the school, making use of text, photographs and clip art. These lessons have good links with literacy and the interest developed has led to pupils doing work of their own volition during the half-term holiday.
75. The mobile computer provision, using a set of laptops, promotes equality of access and fulfils the school's policy of including all groups of pupils. Pupils respond to this opportunity and responsibility well, sharing their skills, co-operating well and working independently when given opportunity. The use of laptops is a positive feature in pupils' learning, as it engenders and sustains interest. The timetable for the portable computer suite ensures weekly individual

access to reliable equipment. The computers in classrooms had limited use during the inspection and could be better used, giving opportunities for more class-based work.

76. Access to the Internet is filtered and monitored but there are only limited opportunities for using e-mail. Broadband has been introduced only in the last two weeks; nevertheless, there is already an acceptable use of the Internet to support learning in other subjects. The school is aware of some resource issues relating to broadband cabling, improved classroom computer provision and the need for a wider range of software, particularly for control technology.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

77. Although there are some satisfactory links with English for word-processing and presentation, mathematics, science and art, there is insufficient use is made of computers in most other subjects.

HUMANITIES

Religious education, geography and history were sampled because of timetabling constraints. The limited written evidence available suggests that coverage is satisfactory, but there is less scope for the systematic development of pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding. The school has specific plans in place to introduce formal assessments in the forthcoming summer term, based on 'Focus' materials to fall in line with literacy and numeracy.

78. Although only one lesson was seen in **religious education**, teaching and learning in Year 6 are satisfactory. Strengths lay in the good relationships with pupils and the management of pupils. Pupils were beginning to understand the beginnings of Buddhism and that the 'Tipitaka' is a Buddhist sacred text. They learned key aspects of the 'Four Noble Truths' and the 'Eightfold Noble Path', but artefacts were not used to illustrate this new learning. Work in pupils' books shows that they learn about Christianity and other main religions but there is limited evidence of pupils' experiences in learning from religion. Year 2 pupils have written about the story of Joseph and illustrated artefacts of Judaism, whilst Year 6 pupils have written about different places of worship, prayer, important religious leaders and the history of the Salvation Army.
79. In **geography**, teaching and learning in the three lessons seen were satisfactory overall. In Year 5, pupils made satisfactory gains, developing an understanding of why the construction of a pedestrian crossing in a particular place in their locality may be an issue. Pupils raised a range of answers to address some of the issues but found it difficult to think beyond the immediate location. Year 6 pupils showed good progress in their investigation and research skills on mountains, using a range of written material and maps, but opportunities were missed for some pupils to use ICT. Good features of the lesson included the teachers' motivation of pupils by the use of searching questions, work being well matched to pupils' abilities and effective support given for lower-attaining pupils. Pupils enjoyed the lesson and responded well. Year 2 pupils were able to identify three of the four countries that make up the United Kingdom, although none showed knowledge of Northern Ireland. They were keen to identify the capital cities of the three countries but all had difficulty in this activity, showing little awareness of places other than their own immediate locality. Higher-attaining pupils were keen to use maps to gain information. Work in pupils' books in Year 2 shows that pupils are beginning to identify and use appropriate vocabulary. They have written about a seaside town, comparing it to their own locality.
80. In **history**, four lessons were seen in Years 1, 2 and 5 and teaching and learning were satisfactory overall. Year 1 pupils are becoming familiar with different types of houses, old and new. Year 2 pupils made good progress in their understanding of why the Great Fire of London spread so quickly and burned for so long. They were able to identify the date of the Fire and some key people of the time, including Samuel Pepys. In Year 5, good use was made of time-lines to help pupils accurately identify the time of the Indus Valley Civilisation, and higher attainers were able to accurately identify the Tudor period, but a few pupils were

vague on identifying the Roman and Viking periods. The lesson, however, was short and opportunities were missed for pupils to feed back their findings. Pupils' work in books shows that they have written about Tutankhamun and King Alfred and have discussed what objects they would need to undertake a voyage on the *Mayflower*. Year 6 pupils have learned out about life in Victorian times, with a range of displays showing their project work. The subject is well established, but the two co-ordinators are only just beginning to address the many issues from the last report.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Pupils' work was sampled in art and design, design and technology, music and physical education because of timetabling constraints. Acts of collective worship were observed in classes and in the hall. As in humanities, the school has specific plans in place to introduce formal assessments in the forthcoming summer term, based on 'Focus' materials to fall in line with literacy and numeracy.

81. Only two lessons were seen in **art and design** in Years 5 and 6 where teaching and learning were satisfactory. Work seen in pupils' books and displays throughout the school indicate that standards are average at Years 2 and 6, although the breadth of study is limited, with pupils having few opportunities to work with clay and ceramics or to produce large artwork in three dimensions. Year 6 pupils gained an awareness of changes to an object's size and the reducing intensity of colour over distance, but too much focus was given to copying the teacher's example rather than developing their own. Year 6 pupils are aware of the styles of some famous artists and are beginning to use sketchbooks to develop their own drawings, but little progression is evident across the year groups. Drawings in sketchbooks show lack of detail, perspective and refinement because teachers are not using an appropriate range of drawing materials nor emphasising the importance of shading, scale and form. Generally the work on display supports other subjects, such as in science, where paintings and diagrams in Year 6 illustrate pupils' knowledge of structures within the human body.
82. The co-ordinator has developed a sound curriculum plan, but insufficient time is regularly given to the subject. As a consequence, pupils are not systematically learning the range of skills necessary. Year 5 pupils, however, make and decorate clay pots and Year 3 pupils use paper weaving to represent the scales of fish. There is little three-dimensional and craft work. The lack of assessment procedures means that teachers cannot plan effectively to promote pupils' learning. On occasions, resources are used well to support pupils' learning, such as in Year 5 where the teacher had accessed the Internet to provide a good range of images to support her lesson, but ICT is not often used as a source of information nor as a tool in developing pupils' knowledge or understanding. On other occasions, a lack of resources inhibits pupils' learning, such as too few larger-scale examples of famous artists' work to develop pupils' critical awareness. The weaknesses identified at the time of the last inspection have been addressed satisfactorily, but further improvements are needed to raise the profile and impact of this subject on pupils' learning.
83. It was possible to observe only one lesson in **design and technology**, but teaching and learning were good. Standards in pupils' work vary throughout the school but, from discussions with pupils and scrutiny of their work, standards are below average at Year 6. No teaching of this subject takes place in this year group until the end of the summer term. The standards of pupils' planning and designing in Year 5 are well below expectations and pupils do not evaluate their work. Standards in Year 4 are satisfactory, and in Year 3 the standards are good, where pupils design and evaluate their work well. Standards in Year 1, where the one lesson was seen, were average. They handled tools such as scissors with some control but were not learning how to use more complex tools. The teaching and learning of mechanisms for movement were good and pupils were introduced to the skill of evaluating their own work.
84. Only one **music** lesson was able to be observed; teaching and learning were satisfactory. Pupils were enthusiastic and a few had the opportunity to play claves and tambourine, where they improved their response to rhythmic patterns. In this lesson, and in a short practice

observed in the hall, the quality of singing was generally tuneful and many pupils enjoy singing, but many also lack confidence in singing aloud. Teachers lack subject skills in music and rely heavily on recordings and support from a pianist. The recently-appointed co-ordinator is a skilled musician who is keen to develop the subject. She has already begun to implement an agreed scheme of work to overcome the previous inconsistency in the programmes of work being taught. The curriculum is supported by instrumental tuition in brass.

85. In the four lessons seen in **physical education**, teaching and learning were generally satisfactory. The subject is underdeveloped, however, with insufficient emphasis on developing a healthy lifestyle. It was not possible to judge standards at Year 6, but school records show that just over half of the pupils have attained the expected requirement to swim 25 metres. Standards in Year 5 gymnastics and a Year 4 games lesson were average. Standards in a Year 2 games lesson were below average. The teaching seen in Year 4 was good, and pupils achieved well as they practised and developed the skills needed for basketball and netball. The teacher praised pupils' ideas and used them well as a model for the class. At other times, teaching by the school's staff is satisfactory. Teachers actively promote good health and safety, but do not consistently raise pupils' heartbeat to promote physical fitness or emphasise the importance of physical activity on health. The new co-ordinator is keen to negotiate more time in order to meet recent guidelines for two hours of exercise each week. The subject is not yet fully planned and leadership until now has been unsatisfactory. There has been no significant development since the last inspection and the scheme of work has yet to be completed. Pupils enjoy the opportunities that they receive for physical education.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

86. This area of the curriculum was sampled. Effective links with other subjects help to promote pupils' learning. Pupils' awareness of drug use and misuse and sex education are developed well within science. The school council has recently been started and pupils are keen to fulfil their role as council members. Although several tasks are given to support pupils' personal development, they are limited in range and scope and left to individual class teachers to plan.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Inspection judgement

Grade

The overall effectiveness of the school	4
How inclusive the school is	5
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	4
Value for money provided by the school	4

Overall standards achieved	5
Pupils' achievement	4

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	3
Attendance	5
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	4

The quality of education provided by the school	4
The quality of teaching	4
How well pupils learn	4
The quality of assessment	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	5
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	4
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	4
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	4
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	4

The leadership and management of the school	4
The governance of the school	4
The leadership of the headteacher	4
The leadership of other key staff	4
The effectiveness of management	5

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