

INSPECTION REPORT

WESTWOOD FARM INFANT SCHOOL

Reading

LEA area: West Berkshire

Unique reference number: 109864

Headteacher: Miss S Gould

Lead inspector: Mrs L Brackstone

Dates of inspection: 24th - 26th May 2004

Inspection number: 258389

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 to 7 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	203
School address:	Fullbrook Crescent Tilehurst Reading Berkshire
Postcode:	RG31 6RY
Telephone number:	(01189) 426 113
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr G Alexander
Date of previous inspection:	22 nd June 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Westwood Farm is an average-sized infant school situated in Tilehurst, which is a suburb of Reading, and caters for boys and girls between the ages of three and seven. There are 203 pupils on roll and this includes five children who attend the specialist Hearing Impairment Resource Unit that is based at the school. The number of pupils admitted each year has recently been reduced from 67 to 60. There are currently three Year 2 classes, two Year 1 classes, two Reception classes and an afternoon Nursery setting. The majority of the pupils are of white ethnic backgrounds. There are a small number of pupils who have a mixed African/Caribbean or Asian background. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is 15 per cent and this is about average. Six pupils are statemented and this is a higher than average number of pupils for one school. Their range of needs include social and emotional, speech, visual, hearing and moderate learning. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is low but this does not reflect the true intake of the school, which includes a wide range of families, including single parent units. Attainment on entry is very variable but is average overall. Social and listening skills are below the expected level when they start school. Most pupils transfer to the neighbouring Junior School at the end of Year 2. At the time of the inspection, a new headteacher had been in place for just under a term and a half.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
21872	Mrs L Brackstone	Lead inspector	The Foundation Stage Special educational needs English as an additional language English Information and communication technology
9942	Mrs S Stevens	Lay inspector	
20614	Mr D Kimber	Team inspector	Science Geography History Religious education
24528	Mr G Muton	Team inspector	Mathematics Art and design Design and technology Music Physical education

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a satisfactory school that provides a sound standard of education. Standards attained are as expected and achievement is satisfactory. The overall quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory and the curriculum provided is adequate. The leadership of the new headteacher is good and she has quickly identified areas that need improving. The leadership of key staff and governors is satisfactory. They are developing well under the clear direction of the new headteacher. Management of the school is satisfactory. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Standards in mathematics and reading are above average.
- The leadership of the new headteacher is good, and she has a clear understanding of the need to keep senior staff and governors fully informed on school issues.
- The attitudes and behaviour of the pupils are good because their spiritual, social, and moral development is cultivated well. However, there is not enough focus on preparing the pupils to live and work in a multi-cultural society.
- Overall, provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. The Hearing Impaired Resource Base provides good specialist support.
- The school takes good care of its pupils.
- Links with parents are good.
- Not all teachers insist on high standards of work and some lessons lack challenge.
- Provision for information and communication technology is unsatisfactory.
- The outdoor area for Foundation Stage is underdeveloped and there are insufficient resources to promote physical development.
- Attendance rates are unsatisfactory.

The school was last inspected six years ago, using a different framework for inspection, and this makes comparisons difficult. However, a significant number of the weaknesses identified in 1998 remain. Since the arrival of the new headteacher, a term and a half ago, these weaknesses have started to be identified and systematically rectified. Improvement since the last inspection is very recent, but given the potential of the new head and her senior staff, improvement can be judged to be satisfactory overall.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

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

Children start school with overall levels of attainment that are expected for this age group. However, social and listening skills are below expectations on entry into the Nursery. Achievement in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory; it is good in the Nursery where the teaching is consistently good, and satisfactory in Reception. By the start of Year 1, standards

are as expected in all areas of learning except listening and writing. Pupils achieve satisfactorily overall in Years 1 and 2. Inspection findings indicate that by the end of Year 2, standards are above average in mathematics and have been well maintained since the national tests of 2003. Standards in reading have improved and these are good. Standards in writing have been maintained at a similar level to those in the 2003 national tests. Speaking, listening, and science standards are average. Standards in information and communication technology meet national expectations. In religious education, the standards attained meet the expected levels of the locally-agreed syllabus. Pupils who attend the Hearing Impaired Resource Base achieve well in relation to their prior attainment because of the good support they receive from specialist staff. All other pupils achieve satisfactorily. There are no differences in the attainment of boys and girls.

Pupils' personal development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good and promotes positive attitudes towards learning. Pupils behave well. Attendance is unsatisfactory because too many parents take their children out of school for holidays during term time. Punctuality is satisfactory.

The quality of education provided by the school is satisfactory. Teaching is satisfactory overall. Teaching is consistently good in the Nursery and often good in one of the Year 1 classes and in Year 2. In these classes, the teaching staff have a good understanding of the needs of the children and make lessons interesting. Equal opportunities are promoted well. In the Nursery and in Years 1 and 2, teaching assistants are used well. Teaching is less than satisfactory when adults do not engage themselves sufficiently well with the children, and expectations of work and behaviour are not high enough. Procedures for tracking pupils' attainment are satisfactory and are starting to be used to inform teachers' planning. However, pupils are not involved in discussions on how they might improve their work. The curriculum is satisfactory overall; provision for pupils in the Hearing Impaired Resource Base is good. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. The accommodation is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2 except for the information and communication technology suite, which is sited in the middle of a thoroughfare. The outdoor areas for the Foundation Stage, particularly in the Reception class, are unsatisfactory, because they have not been sufficiently developed and planned for. The school takes good care of its pupils and links with parents are well established. The school has appropriate links with other schools but would welcome opportunities to extend links with the local community.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership of the new headteacher is good and she has quickly established a senior team who share her vision and drive for the school. Subject co-ordination is satisfactory and is developing well under the direction of the new headteacher. The leadership and management of the governors is satisfactory overall. They are supportive of the school and have recently started to understand their role of challenge and support as they have become more informed in school matters.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are very satisfied with the school and are particularly impressed with the leadership of the new headteacher. Pupils trust their teachers and feel that they are treated fairly. In discussion with inspectors, they pointed out how much they liked the '*hard work*' that they do!

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Ensure that the children in Reception are given more opportunities to develop their independent writing and listening skills.
- Reconsider the position of the computer suite, and provide more opportunities for the pupils to use their information and communication technology skills across the curriculum.
- Develop the use of the Foundation Stage outdoor play area so that physical skills can be promoted better.
- Ensure that all teachers have appropriate expectations for the pupils and provide them with sufficient challenge.
- Improve provision for cultural development to ensure that pupils are suitably prepared to live and work in a multi-cultural society.
- Introduce target-setting with the pupils so that they know what they need to do to improve.
- Ensure that governors understand their responsibilities and are involved in school matters.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Children start school with standards as expected. They achieve satisfactorily in the Foundation Stage and, by the start of Year 1 of the National Curriculum, standards are as expected in all areas except listening and writing. By the end of Year 2, overall standards are as expected and achievement has been satisfactory over Years 1 and 2.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils attain standards in mathematics and reading that are above the national average.
- Achievement is good in the Nursery, in one Year 1 class and across Year 2.
- Standards in speaking, listening and writing are below the expected level by the end of the Foundation Stage.

Commentary

Attainment on entry into the Nursery

1. Attainment on entry into school is variable. There are a significant minority of children who start school with good levels of skills. However, there is a high proportion of children who start school with undeveloped social skills and below the expected levels in listening skills. Therefore, overall attainment on entry is judged to be as expected for this age group. All children achieve well in the Nursery because the quality of teaching is consistently good. Achievement in Reception is satisfactory overall and this reflects the quality of teaching. By the end of the Foundation Stage, standards attained are as expected in all areas of learning. However, there are weaknesses noted in the listening and writing skills of the children.

Standards in the National Curriculum tests of 2003

2. The results of the 2003 national assessment tests for pupils in Year 2, which are tabulated below, indicate that standards were above average in mathematics and this represented good achievement. In fact, over 40 per cent of pupils performed at a higher than expected level in mathematics. Standards in reading and writing were average, which represented satisfactory achievement. There are no national tests for science but standards were average in the teacher assessments. The number of pupils who exceeded the nationally expected level in the teacher assessments for science was good. However, the numbers attaining the expected level was below average. In comparison to similar schools, standards were average in reading and mathematics but below in writing.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 – average point scores in 2003¹

¹ All levels of the National Curriculum are awarded a points score. The average score for all pupils taking the test is used to grade schools in each year. The expected average points at age seven is 15.5. Tables are adjusted to reflect the national average score before grading. The grades are shown in the summary.

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	16.3 (16.4)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	14.5 (14.3)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	16.9 (17.0)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 59 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

3. Trends over time for reading, writing and mathematics are in line with the national average. The school has been tracking differences in the achievement of boys and girls. A weakness in the attainment of boys was noted and successful strategies have been put in place to redress this issue. As a result, during the inspection, no differences were noted in the attainment of boys and girls.

Inspection findings in Year 2

4. By the end of Year 2, standards in mathematics and reading are above average and pupils achieve well in these subjects. These good standards have been maintained since the last inspection. Inspection findings reflect the standards achieved in the national tests of 2003 in mathematics. Standards found in reading represent an improvement since then. However, pupils' competence and use of these skills to support other areas within the curriculum is satisfactory. Speaking, listening, and writing standards are as expected for this age group and this represents a decline since the last inspection. The school is aware that pupils could achieve better in speaking, listening and writing, and has identified this on their school improvement plan. Although standards in writing have been maintained since the tests in 2003, they are not as good as they could be because pupils do not gain a sufficient amount of independent writing experiences in Reception. This makes them too reliant on adults to help them with unknown words. Competence in using writing skills across the school is satisfactory, but could be used better to improve standards in a range of subjects across the curriculum, such as history and geography. Standards in science are satisfactory and this indicates that they have been maintained since the teacher assessments. However, standards in science appear to have declined since the last inspection when they were considered to be above average.
5. Standards in information and communication technology meet nationally-expected levels. However, competence in information and communication technology is not developed across the curriculum and, as a result, there are missed opportunities for skills to be acquired. Standards in Years 1 and 2 in religious education meet the expectations of the locally-agreed syllabus and achievement is satisfactory. It was not possible to make judgements on standards in design and technology, history, geography, music, and physical education because they were not a focus for this inspection.
6. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well in sessions where specialist teaching staff support them. This is because the activities are very well prepared to meet the needs of the pupils and are closely linked to their individual education plans. The special educational needs co-ordinator and the teaching assistants provide clear guidelines and lots of praise is given. This results in good achievement during these short sessions. Their achievement in class over time is the same as their classmates.

7. Pupils in the Hearing Impaired Resource Base achieve as well as their classmates. At the end of Year 2, the most capable pupils' attainments are broadly in line with national expectations in English and mathematics.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils enjoy coming to school and, although many have very good attendance records, the overall attendance in the last year was below the national average. Pupils have generally good attitudes to the opportunities offered by the school. Because relationships in the school are very good, pupils' behaviour and personal development are good overall. They respond positively to the moral and social values promoted by the school. There are good opportunities created for spiritual development and pupils' self-awareness, and this is an improvement since the last inspection when it was judged to be unsatisfactory. Pupils develop very good levels of interest in their own western culture, but the school is not helping pupils to live and work in a multicultural society.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are interested and keen to attend school. Pupils are willing to take responsibility, showing good collaboration and enthusiasm.
- The school is successful in promoting pupils' confidence and self-esteem.
- Pupils have a clear understanding of the differences between right and wrong and are praised and encouraged by staff in making their choices.
- Older pupils show high levels of care for younger ones, including those with special educational needs and those from the Hearing Impaired Resource Base.
- Some parents are taking pupils out of school too frequently in term time.
- Cultural provision is underdeveloped for pupils living in a multicultural society.

Commentary

8. Parents are very good at notifying the school of reasons for absence and, as a result, there is little unauthorised absence. Although many pupils have very good attendance records, 25 per cent of pupils are missing lessons due to the booking of holidays in term time. Historically, parents were unaware that leave during term time was at the discretion of the school and not a right. The school and the educational welfare officer are making strenuous efforts to raise parental awareness of the legal requirement for pupils of compulsory school age to attend regularly. Any extra time taken, above the ten days discretionary leave, is regarded as unauthorised absence and each request considered individually. The small amount of recorded unauthorised absence relates mainly to extra days taken beyond those agreed by the school. Most pupils show good levels of interest in school life and comment to visitors that *'it's a great place to be'*. This attitude has a very positive impact on achievement. Although most pupils behave well, there are times when teaching lacks pace. Consequently, pupils lose interest and their behaviour deteriorates. Pupils comment that they have no concerns about unpleasant behaviour because they know that the school deals with any incidents quickly. There have been no exclusions.
9. The very good relationships in the school enable pupils to work effectively as a team, collaborating and sharing well. Staff consistently and continuously praise and encourage pupils in their work and play, which makes them feel valued and they grow in confidence.

Assemblies contribute well to the moral development of pupils and enable them to be involved in developing a community spirit. Themes are chosen to enhance the pupils' confidence and self-esteem. Pupils and staff treat each other with respect and staff, contributing to the generally calm and pleasant atmosphere in the school, deal sensitively with any lapse by a pupil.

10. Nursery and Reception children enjoy their time at school. They make satisfactory development in listening to instructions, taking their turn and learning to share. The children are encouraged throughout the day by staff in the development of their personal and social skills. The majority respond by their willingness to learn to play together and develop strong relationships with their teachers and support staff.
11. Pupils with special educational needs concentrate well in all their lessons and work hard. They enjoy participating in all the lessons and activities in school, and are eager to take part in class discussions. As a result of the school's commitment to inclusion, and the positive relationships throughout the school community, the pupils become increasingly confident in their social relationships and in their ability to succeed.
12. Children and pupils in the Hearing Impaired Resource Base make good progress in their personal development because the specialist staff have high expectations. For instance, they expect pupils to take responsibility for their personal hearing aids and to develop independence in their use. Some pupils show good gains in this respect, and participate willingly and knowingly in the routine hearing aid checks that are carried out each morning before lessons begin.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence	
School data	5.8
National data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	
School data	0.2
National data	0.4

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides a satisfactory quality of education. The quality of teaching and learning are satisfactory overall and pupil achievement is sound. The curriculum provided is satisfactory and provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. The school takes good care of its pupils, but the new headteacher is aware that pupils need to be more involved in understanding what they need to do to improve in their work. Links with parents are good, but the school lacks strong partnerships within the local community.

Teaching and learning

The overall quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Procedures for assessing pupils are satisfactory and are used appropriately in planning. However, pupils are not sufficiently informed about how they could improve their work.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Equal opportunities are promoted well.
- Most teachers in Years 1 and 2 insist on high standards of behaviour.
- Teaching assistants are used well in Years 1 and 2.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 35 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
1 (3%)	5 (15%)	11 (32%)	15 (43%)	2 (6%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

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

13. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. Teaching is good in the Nursery class and satisfactory overall in Reception. It is satisfactory in Year 1, although it is never less than good in one of the two classes. The quality of teaching in Year 2 is consistently good, and this is where pupils' achievement is at its best. Teaching has remained at a satisfactory level since the time of the last inspection, which the new headteacher rightly feels is not good enough.
14. The promotion of equality of opportunity is a strong focus throughout the school. For instance, most class teachers ensure that, during discussion sessions, both boys and girls are asked questions fairly and equally. Resources such as reading books also fully reflect the interests of all the pupils.
15. Teacher knowledge and command of the subjects they teach are satisfactory overall. In the Nursery, the teacher has a good understanding of the needs of these very young children and this is clearly reflected in her detailed planning. Subject knowledge is satisfactory in the Reception classes, but a weakness is the insufficient use made of the specific steps of learning in their day-to-day planning. Subject knowledge is good in Year 2 and in one of the Year 1 classes. These teachers fully understand the needs of the pupils and plan appropriately to ensure that these are met.
16. Children in the Nursery are actively encouraged to participate in independent activities and this has a positive impact on the application of their learning skills. Teachers in Year 2, and in one of the Year 1 classes, use lots of encouragement to help pupils apply themselves. This was observed in a very good literacy session in a Year 2 class, where the teacher used the tone of her voice very well to motivate her class, and this ensured that the pupils felt confident in their work. One of the best techniques was the manner in which the end of the session was made to feel like a cliffhanger, the next episode of which could not be missed!
17. Teachers use a wide range of teaching methods to help their pupils acquire knowledge and skills. These are most effective in Year 2, where pupils are encouraged to consolidate learning by using their '*talking partners*' to discuss specific features of their learning with a classmate. In other parts of the school, teaching methods are less effective. For example, in the Reception classes there is a tendency for teachers to focus purely on just one specific child or small group for extensive periods of time. This means that other children do not have adequate teacher input and do not apply themselves as well as they could.
18. Overall use of resources to support teaching and learning is satisfactory. Good use is made of big picture books to stimulate writing skills. Interactive whiteboards successfully illustrate skills to whole-class groups. This was evident in a good Year 2 literacy session, where the teacher explained the lesson focus using an interactive whiteboard. An

interesting range of resources is used well in the Nursery to help the children work collaboratively. For instance, the *'Bear Shop'* and *'Office'* promote social skills and encourage independent writing skills. However, in the Reception classes, the use of the outdoor area as a learning resource is unsatisfactory. This was observed in an unsatisfactory session when a large group of children were observed running wildly around and were clearly not involved in purposeful play or any planned learning opportunities.

19. Time is used well in those lessons that are judged to be good or very good. This was evident in a good mathematics session in a Year 1 class with a student teacher, where the pace was well maintained through the use of good questioning skills. Time is less well used when pace is slow and there is an unclear focus for the session.
20. Teaching assistants are used well to support pupils in Years 1 and 2 and in the Nursery. They focus on individual observations during whole-class sessions. The teaching assistants also support small groups during activity times, by helping them to apply the skills they have learnt and be productive. Very good use is made of support staff to help those pupils who have special educational needs. The teaching assistants carefully ensure that the pupils work towards the specific targets identified in their individual education plans. However, teaching assistants in the Reception classes do not always respond quickly enough to situations within the learning environment, and this is a weakness.
21. Expectations of behaviour are good in the Nursery, and in the majority of classes in Years 1 and 2. Teaching staff encourage respect and pupils respond well to this. A good range of effective behaviour strategies are used. For example, some teachers just need to count from *'five to one'* and their class are all ready to listen carefully and quietly. Whilst there are a significant number of children with special educational needs in the Reception Year group, expectations of behaviour are not consistently high enough. For example, children are allowed to climb trees in the outdoor area and this is not corrected. One Reception teacher has devised a good method of encouraging good behaviour during *'carpet'* sessions, where each child has its own marked-out square to sit on. However, this requires much intervention by support staff of which there is an inadequate number to meet the demands of so many challenging children.
22. The majority of teachers in Years 1 and 2 challenge their pupils well. They set clear expectations at the start of each session. For instance, cuddly toys called *'Walt'* are used very well to explain *'What are we learning today?'* This ensures the pupils know what they are going to be learning. However, in the Reception classes and in one Year 1 class, teacher expectations are not high enough. This is mainly because, in Reception, planning is not specific enough and does not focus clearly enough on the early learning goals of the Foundation Stage curriculum. At times in one of the Year 1 classes, teacher explanations are not detailed enough and expectations for learning too vague. This was evident in an unsatisfactory information and communication technology lesson, where the pupils did not know what they had to do.
23. Homework is used satisfactorily to support learning. Pupils regularly take home reading books to share with their parents. Spellings are also practised at home for pupils to consolidate their learning.

24. Teachers and specialist staff work closely to plan the work for pupils with specific learning difficulties, such as those pupils with hearing impairments. They take account of their special needs and the targets in their individual education plans. Teachers ensure that pupils are fully included and are able to follow the content of lessons. Specialist staff provide skilled and sensitive support by reinforcing key vocabulary, information and checking for understanding. Additional specialist teaching helps pupils develop the necessary skills to access the curriculum and become independent learners.
25. Procedures to check and track pupil attainment are satisfactory overall. Half-termly assessments are regularly carried out to ascertain pupils' progress in English and mathematics. At the end of each science unit, pupils are assessed on the learning they have acquired. However, there are no consistent procedures in place for any other subjects. Children in the Nursery are assessed on an ongoing basis. However, in the Reception classes, the assessment procedures are not linked tightly enough to the early learning goals. Generally, teachers use the information they have gained from the assessments to inform their future planning. However, they do not share this information with the pupils so that they know how they can improve. Day-to-day marking is variable, but satisfactory overall. There were some good examples noted in Year 2 and in one of the Year 1 classes.
26. Staff in the Hearing Impaired Resource Base use good assessment procedures to evaluate pupil progress, through a combination of effective ongoing monitoring during lessons and regular more formal testing. Short notes made during lessons are used effectively to target individual work, but these comments are also useful in tracking aspects of personal development such as auditory skills and hearing aid use. Formal assessments are carried out regularly to evaluate pupils' expressive and receptive language and their listening skills, such as speech discrimination, so that teachers can plan individual programmes. The input of other agencies is also used effectively by being incorporated into these programmes. The information from speech and language therapists' assessments and annual audio-logical test results, are all used to focus and refine planning and pupil management so that all the pupils can be supported according to their needs.

The curriculum

The breadth of curriculum opportunities is satisfactory, and opportunities for enrichment are satisfactory. Accommodation and resources are satisfactory overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The outdoor play facilities for the Foundation Stage is unsatisfactory.
- There are insufficient numbers of staff in the Reception classes.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good.
- Arrangements to ensure equal opportunities are good.
- The headteacher has identified some weakness in the balance and content of the curriculum.
- There is a lack of continuity between the Reception classes and Year 1.
- Participation in the arts is good.
- There are good examples of links being made between different areas of learning.
- The preparation of pupils for their move to the junior school is good.

Commentary

27. The curriculum provides a broad range of learning opportunities for pupils covering all the subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education. Provision for the children in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory and links appropriately with the national guidelines for this age group. There are programmes of work for all subjects, although these are at different stages of development. The school recognises that some of these programmes are better than others for ensuring that pupils make progress in their skills, knowledge and understanding.
28. The new headteacher has organised a systematic audit of the curriculum and has identified an imbalance between the amount of time devoted exclusively to English and mathematics and time for other subjects. Also, some of the content of subjects is inappropriate. An example of this is the emphasis given to the study of Australia in Year 2, when a more appropriate approach would allow pupils to study the difference between their own locality and another contrasting one of similar size. Co-ordinators have all provided reports on the current strengths and weakness of their subject in order to begin a complete review of the curriculum.
29. Curriculum provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. Their needs are assessed soon after they start school and careful checks are kept on their progress as they move through the school. Individual educational plans are linked very closely to the needs of the pupils. The targets set are manageable and reviewed regularly. The special educational needs co-ordinator and the support assistants make a strong contribution to the teaching of these pupils so that most achieve well in relation to their prior attainment.
30. Children in the Hearing-Impaired Resource Base are provided with a satisfactory range of curricular opportunities. The school's commitment to inclusive practice means that these pupils receive the same curriculum opportunities as their classmates and the in-class support they receive enables them to participate in the learning opportunities that are made available. Pupils are withdrawn from some lessons, in order for them to consolidate prior learning, or to be prepared for future work, such as new key vocabulary, but this is carefully planned. Consequently, they do not miss the same subject over a period of time and so curriculum breadth is maintained.
31. Pupils with hearing impairment have the same opportunities as other pupils by, for example, changing the order of lessons so that pupils withdrawn from classes do not regularly miss the same lessons. All opportunities provided by the school are available to everyone, regardless of gender or ethnicity.
32. A strength of the curriculum is the way in which the work in different subjects is being linked to promote pupil interest and achievement. For example, pupils use computers in their artwork and make up plays in literacy for puppets which they have designed and made. They also mix paints for cave paintings to link art and history. However, these linking ideas are not yet fixed in the school's long-term plans and rely therefore upon teachers' own initiatives. The formal linking of subjects in curriculum planning is being used as one of the ways of solving the problem of imbalance.
33. In some classes, providing practical and creative tasks encourages pupils' development and achievement. However, the change of emphasis from a practical and exploratory

curriculum in the Reception classes to a much more formal school day in Year 1 is inappropriate for five-year-olds. On the other hand, Year 2 pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, as a result of their teachers working collaboratively with the neighbouring junior school.

34. A small number of activities are provided at lunchtimes, so that provision for out-of-school learning is satisfactory. Whilst the extra curricular provision for music is limited to choir practice in the autumn term, the school encourages good participation in the visual arts by its involvement in a number of art competitions and exhibitions. Visiting artists also add to the enrichment of the curriculum.
35. The accommodation has many good features, including good-sized classrooms, library and school hall. However, the computer suite is inconveniently situated in a thoroughfare and the outdoor area for the Foundation Stage is unsatisfactory. This is because it does not have a suitable surface and lacks appropriate equipment to develop the children's physical skills. In Years 1 and 2, the range of expertise amongst the teachers and support staff is satisfactory. However, there are thirty-two pupils in one of the Reception classes and admission has been agreed for one more child. This exceeds the maximum number of thirty allowed in a Reception class. In addition to this, the number of children in the other Reception class who have special educational needs is significant, and there are not enough teaching assistants to meet their needs.

Care, guidance and support

The school has good and effective procedures and practices to safeguard the welfare of pupils, which have been well maintained since the last inspection. Because of the very good relationships in school, pupils have access to good pastoral care by a knowledgeable and committed staff. The school provides satisfactory personal support and guidance based on monitoring, and pupils are involved in the decision-making process in the school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good procedures for child protection and the quality of the pastoral care.
- The personal support and guidance provided by staff, based on knowledge of the pupils and their needs, are of very good quality.
- The support provided for pupils with special educational needs and those in the Hearing Impaired Resource Base is very good.
- The educational support and guidance provided by the school are not as good as they could be.

Commentary

36. The school is clean, bright and welcoming. There is generally a good awareness of health and safety issues in and around the school. All pupils are well known to staff, who treat them fairly and with good humour. Adult supervision at playtimes and during the midday break is generally good, although there is a lack of overall vigilance in some outdoor play areas. Older pupils keep a watchful eye on younger pupils and mediate in minor disputes without adult intervention.
37. Because relationships are strong and trusting between staff and pupils, communication between them is open and friendly. Pupils are seen sharing a joke amongst themselves

or with staff. They help one another, for example with a skipping rope, showing a willingness to share their own expertise with others. Pupils with special educational needs, or those from the Hearing Impaired Resource Base, are fully involved in all activities and friendship groups. The period at the beginning of the day is particularly valued and helpful for all parents, allowing them the opportunity to speak to teachers about any small matters of concern or family news. However, the inconsistencies in the collation and monitoring of assessment data mean that the educational support and advice for pupils, although good in many areas, is underdeveloped in raising pupils' awareness of how they can improve, as an example.

38. The pupils are involved in the day-to-day development of the school through the making of class and school rules, which are listened to by staff. The recent pupils' suggestion for more play equipment has improved break times and this has had a positive impact on behaviour across the school. Induction procedures for new arrivals are satisfactory and children in the Nursery are helped to settle quickly and happily into the school routines.
39. Staff provide good levels of support and guidance to children and pupils in the Hearing-Impaired Resource Base. A carefully planned programme of in-class support from teachers and teaching assistants enables pupils to participate fully in lessons. Small-group withdrawal sessions provide good opportunities to focus on individual targets. Staff are skilled at supporting and developing pupils' communication and literacy skills, particularly their listening and speech reading skills. This is especially important, as the resource base follows a natural aural approach to language acquisition and communication, and its success is evident in the good progress that pupils make. A structured approach to audiology further supports pupils; routine daily hearing aid checks, regular electronic testing of hearing aids and the consistent use of radio aids in lessons all combine to ensure that pupils are appropriately aided at all times.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has good links with parents and this is a good improvement since the last inspection. Educational links with other schools and the community are satisfactory and have been maintained at this level since the last inspection.

MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- The school promotes opportunities for the parents to be involved in their children's learning and in school life.
- Parents are consulted and involved in the decision-making process.
- Parental support has a very good impact on their children's academic progress and personal development when their children are at school.
- The school deals quickly and effectively with any concerns or complaints.
- Parents raise substantial funds for extra resources, and support very well events organised by the hardworking committee of the parents' association.
- Information for parents, including annual reports to parents which give plenty of information, is clear and well presented.

Commentary

40. The overall quality of information provided for parents about the school is good. The annual reports to parents on pupils' progress fulfil all statutory requirements, although they

do lack specific information about attainment. However, consultation evenings during the year, and the accessibility of teachers, ensure that parents have as much access as they feel they need to any further information. Informal consultation with parents, through the work of the parents' association, and by questionnaires, assists the involvement of parents in the planning of the future development of the school. Staff are available at the beginning and end of the day for a brief chat or exchange of information, and parents are seen to enjoy a 'quick word' as they collect their children from school. The events organised by the parents' association provide a forum for social interaction between parents and start to raise the level of communication. Parents play a vital role in helping and encouraging their children with their homework. The home/school diaries provide a valuable contact in this partnership and impact on the standards children achieve. However, interruption to the children's learning by taking holiday leave in term time can impact adversely on the standards achieved.

41. The school receives limited support from the local community and none from the business community. It is seeking to strengthen both. Community police visit the school, and the liaison with the junior school is now stronger and more productive. The partnership with the community remains an underdeveloped area, although there are trips to local areas of interest, supported by parents and grandparents who help in classes and clubs.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. The leadership of key staff and the governing body is satisfactory and developing well under the good leadership of the new headteacher. Management of the school is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The new headteacher has a strong sense of direction and has recognised a clear need for improvement.
- The headteacher is committed to a school where pupils and staff are treated equally and involved in all aspects of school life.
- The school has good links with initial teacher training institutions.

Commentary

42. Since her arrival, a term and a half ago, the new headteacher has quickly identified a number of areas that need rapid improvement. She has gained the respect of all staff and her drive for improvement has been widely accepted. The new headteacher is truly committed to providing the very best working environment for staff and pupils alike. She is keen to ensure that each individual child has the best possible start to education and works hard to provide a school that is fully inclusive. The new headteacher is a very experienced early years practitioner, and her vision for the future is securely based upon up-to-date experience and understanding of the curriculum for children aged three to seven. She uses this expertise to support her clear vision for the school and is working hard to secure a school where all staff effectively contribute to this positive sense of direction.
43. Leadership by key staff is satisfactory overall. Since her arrival, the new headteacher has developed a new structure to the senior management team, which includes key players who can now develop a shared feeling of responsibility throughout the school. Senior staff are being supported in their development by the local education authority,

and good progress has been made by most co-ordinators over the past term and a half. For example, all subject co-ordinators have prepared an action plan for the future and now have budget responsibilities. However, the creation of effective and cohesive year group teams are not, as yet, fully developed. Historically, the monitoring of teaching and learning has been limited to English and mathematics, but the school is now fully aware of the need to establish consistency of provision across the school.

44. The part-time special educational needs co-ordinator is a very talented teacher whose knowledge and understanding of the needs of pupils with learning difficulties are of very high quality. She liaises very closely with class teachers and their assistants and provides very effective support both within class and during small-group sessions.
45. The Hearing Impaired Resource Base is very well led and managed by an experienced and knowledgeable teacher of the deaf. A very comprehensive range of documentation has been prepared for use by staff working within the base and for other class teachers. These booklets give staff a good balance of technical information, the principles underlying the rationale and philosophy of a natural aural approach and practical guidelines, like the optimum conditions for using residual hearing and speech reading. Further development of the base is identified well in an effective and detailed action plan.
46. Governors are supportive of the school and have a satisfactory understanding of its strengths. This is a similar picture to that at the last inspection. However, it is only very recently that they have been given adequate information about school issues and they are now starting to be involved in shaping the future direction of the school. For example, they are now involved in the development of the school improvement plan and have a more detailed overview of the budget. A number of governors are regular visitors to school. For example, one of the governors responsible for linking with special educational needs works in the Hearing Impaired Resource Base. Consequently her knowledge of the specific needs of these pupils at the school is good and is used to inform others on the governing body. Another parent governor is a very frequent visitor to school and shares her professional expertise with staff. However, a significant minority of governors have minimal involvement with school and their knowledge of school issues is weak. This means that their ability to challenge or support issues raised at governors' meetings is minimal and needs developing.
47. The school has recently introduced a more systematic way in which they can now evaluate themselves. The monitoring of pupil performance over time is a new concept for many staff, but they are keen to understand the importance of this. There are significant issues relating to staff development, but the school is gaining very good quality input from the local authority who are clearly aware of them. Performance management procedures are in place, but the new headteacher, as the most recent member of staff into school, is aware that there is a need to establish detailed procedures for staff induction.
48. The school's contribution to initial teacher training is good and placements for student teachers are offered to both Oxford Brookes and Westminster Universities. Students feel well supported and the school significantly benefits from a freshness of approach. The two students who were on their final placement at the time of the inspection were responsible for two of the good lessons observed by inspectors.
49. The quality of financial planning is satisfactory and has been maintained at this level since the last inspection. The school manages its budget appropriately and the

governors and senior staff have systematically worked through a redundancy situation resulting from the redistribution of numbers being admitted to the school. Effective procedures are in place in the school office for secure financial management. Office staff ensure that the school runs smoothly and day-to-day administration is efficient.

50. The school is concerned about two issues that could affect its improvement over time; it is not a prominent feature within the local community and it suffers from a decrease of parental involvement. However, the school is well placed to improve under the direction of the new headteacher and the supportive members of her team. Most governors are keen to learn more about school life and have very recently gained a greater understanding of their role. The vast majority of pupils are keen to work with the adults and links with the junior school are developing well.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	458,448
Total expenditure	451,050
Expenditure per pupil	2,546

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	28,018
Balance carried forward to the next year	35,416

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory. No judgement about provision was made in the last inspection, so it is not possible to comment on improvement since that time. Preparation for Year 1 of the National Curriculum is satisfactory. The children enter the Nursery on a part-time basis when they are just four and continue their Foundation Stage education in the Reception class when they are about four-and-a-half. Children start Nursery with levels of attainment that are as expected. However, a significant number of children start school with weak social and listening skills and this has a negative impact on all other areas of learning. By the time that they reach Year 1, all children have made sound progress in their learning and achieve satisfactorily in relation to their capabilities. Overall, attainment meets the expected levels by the end of the Reception class, except for listening and writing skills which are below expectations. The quality of teaching ranges from satisfactory to good, but is satisfactory overall. The curriculum is sound and is based around the nationally-recognised programme of work. There are not enough adults employed in the Foundation Stage to meet the needs of the children, particularly as one class has 32 pupils in it and the other has a large number with special educational needs.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are not enough staff to meet the needs of the children.

Commentary

51. Standards on entry into school are as expected. Most children happily leave their parents and carers and enjoy being part of the Nursery environment. They sit well in whole-class situations and use their initiative when working in the different areas of learning within the Nursery. The more capable children play together with others, and there is a concern for the welfare of each other. Behaviour in the Nursery is good.
52. In the Reception classes, the most capable and the average children display good levels of interest in the activities. For example, two girls showed high levels of concentration when they worked for an extended period making models from old boxes and coloured paper. The more mature children have formed good relationships with adults and understand the difference between right and wrong. However, there are a significant minority who do not consider the consequences of others and have no sensitivity to the feelings of their classmates. This was evident in a session in the outdoor area where a group of five or six boys charged around the area and disregarded the feelings of others when they knocked into constructions made by their peers.
53. Teaching is satisfactory. Relationships are positive. However, there is insufficient interaction between adults and children and there is not enough care taken to ensure that children are kept safe. This is partly as a result of insufficient numbers of staff to meet the

needs of the children and also because not all teaching staff integrate as fully as they might with groups of children.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement is good in the Nursery.
- Teachers in Reception do not promote listening and writing skills sufficiently well.

Commentary

54. By the end of the Foundation Stage, the more capable and the average children will be working within the final stage or *'stepping stone'* of the national guidelines for this age. However, a significant number of the younger and less capable children will not reach the final stage or *'stepping stone'* of the Foundation Stage curriculum. This particular group of children are particularly immature, or have specific special educational needs. Overall achievement in this area of learning is satisfactory in speaking and reading, but unsatisfactory in listening and writing. This is because the children in Reception are not taught these skills sufficiently well.
55. Standards in speaking and listening are below expectations on entry into school. The children achieve well in the Nursery where adults encourage children to listen carefully. For example, the well-established routines in the Nursery have a positive impact on the development of the children's listening and speaking skills. When they first arrive for their part-time session, the children are encouraged to be involved in discussions about whose turn it is to be a *'busy-bee helper'* and what picture they should put on the weather display. However, achievement is not so good in the Reception classes. Although a final year student teacher was observed encouraging the children to talk as they evaluated their activity session, listening skills are not always developed so well in the Reception classes. This is because teacher expectations are not high enough. Class teachers do not always use opportunities for discussion to best effect and at times they were not engaged with the children during activity sessions. In addition to this, the very large number of children in one of the Reception classes has a negative impact on achievement.
56. The more capable and average children can recall their favourite nursery rhymes such as *'Twinkle, Twinkle'* and *'Hey Diddle Diddle'*. They enjoy looking at books and most children turn the pages correctly. The older, more capable children know that people called authors write books and are able to read a range of simple key words. Most children recognise an appropriate number of initial sounds. For example, they recognised the letter *'j'* and the most capable were able to suggest some words that began with this, such as *'juice, jungle, and jam'*. The children enjoy taking their books home to share with the adults who, from the comments seen, value the opportunity to contribute to their children's education. This has a positive impact on their learning. By

the end of Reception, the more capable and the average children have attained the appropriate standards in reading.

57. Writing skills are developed well in the Nursery because the children are given a full range of opportunities to 'write' when they are at play. For instance, in their 'office area' they are provided with plenty of paper and pencils to make marks on paper and communicate with their friends. However, in Reception, there are fewer opportunities for the children to experiment with their writing skills. There is too much emphasis on tracing letters and writing underneath sentences that have already been written. Too frequently, adults provide words for the children to copy and this means that they are not developing their independent writing skills. Inappropriate worksheets and tasks are given. For instance, the children were observed still writing about their 'weekend news' on a worksheet on the second day of the inspection when most had forgotten about what they had done on the previous Saturday and Sunday!

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision of mathematical development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- In the Nursery there is a rich variety of purposeful activities that support learning well.
- Learning is reinforced well throughout everyday situations.
- In some Reception lessons, there is uneven application of nationally approved guidelines.

COMMENTARY

58. Standards attained by children are as expected by the end of the Reception year and achievement is satisfactory. Opportunities are used well in all classes to consolidate children's understanding of number through the day, such as at registration. Children use mathematical skills in everyday play situation, such as shops, and enjoy singing number rhymes, for instance, 'Five Currant Buns' and 'Ten Fat Sausages'. In the Nursery, children's progress is sustained well in carefully planned play. The teacher ensures that support staff, and other adults, are clearly aware of the skills and understanding that children can gain from the activities. All adults contribute purposefully in these activities inside and outside the classroom. They intervene well when the children sequence numbers from one to ten and match shapes using a computer program. Adults in the Nursery model language and promote children's mathematical skills and understanding through discussion and timely intervention.
59. Children in the Reception classes enjoy working with three-dimensional shapes and achieve appropriately when adults reinforce learning skills by using mathematical vocabulary effectively. Consequently, most children use language well to describe the size and shape of solids. They also recreate simple patterns using plastic shapes, tiles and paint sponges. Teaching in Reception is satisfactory in this area of learning. Regular mathematical activities are planned. However, the application of national guidelines to support mathematical development is uneven in some Reception lessons. This means that not all children receive the support they need from their teachers because intervention is inconsistent.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Learning opportunities are good in the Nursery.
- Questioning skills are not used sufficiently well in Reception to promote learning.

Commentary

60. Children in the Nursery class join construction pieces together to build a range of models. They are interested in playing with the sand. For example, they use sieves and forks to work with the sand and enjoy exploring different techniques. They also draw maps for their cars to follow and use the computer to play simple games such as finding suitable clothes to dress a teddy bear. By Reception, the most capable children are stimulated well when they look at different types of materials and objects. For example, a group of five boys were totally absorbed looking at how certain toys worked. However, insufficient use of questioning skills was used to motivate the children in their learning. In Reception, the children use information and communication technology well to promote their drawing and letter-writing skills. For example, children were observed creating invitations for a party to celebrate the birthday of a popular character in their reading book. Achievement is satisfactory in the Foundation Stage overall and attainment is as expected by the start of Year 1.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is unsatisfactory in Reception.
- The outdoor area is underdeveloped and does not have enough stimulating equipment for the children to develop their knowledge and skills sufficiently well.
- The area is susceptible to flooding and cannot be used throughout the year.

COMMENTARY

61. Children start the Nursery with appropriately developed physical skills for their age group. They respect the personal space of their friends and move with care when playing in their outdoor area. They mount steps and show increasing confidence when they walk, jump and run. Children in the Nursery develop their skills when they use small utensils such as pencils, crayons and scissors. Teaching in the Nursery is good. The children develop further their physical skills in the Reception classes where they handle objects such as play-dough with increasing control. The more capable, and those with less challenging behaviour or learning difficulties, are able to show an awareness of space and move confidently and safely both around the classroom and in the outdoor area. However, the less capable and those who have behaviour problems or special learning difficulties show no awareness of each other and are unable to use a range of small and large equipment sensibly. Teaching is unsatisfactory in the Reception class, because the area is not sufficiently well resourced by adults and equipment to maintain the interest of all the children. Consequently, play is not always meaningful. This was evident when a group of

children found some sticks to play with and started fighting with them. Another girl started to climb a nearby tree, which was very dangerous, especially as an adult had not spotted her. Standards attained by the end of Reception are as expected in most areas of physical development, except for outdoor play, which is unsatisfactory. Achievement is satisfactory overall, but could be much better if the outdoor area was improved and activities in Reception suitably planned.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Adults play alongside the children in role-play situations and model roles.

Commentary

62. Children already have a satisfactory range of creative experiences when they start the Nursery. During their afternoon sessions, they enjoy playing together in the '*Bears Shop*' and '*The Office*' where their computer skills are developed through the innovative use of an old keyboard and pretend monitor. They are confidently working within the third stage or '*stepping stone*' of the Foundation Stage curriculum. When they move into the Reception classes, they excitedly play in '*hospital*' where they are encouraged by staff to pretend to examine each other with stethoscopes. In the Nursery, the children quickly learn to create pictures using pencils, crayons, paints and materials. These pictures quickly develop features such as eyes, legs, arms, feet and hands. By Reception, they are using a range of different objects to paint patterns and designs. They confidently paint self-portraits of themselves and successfully mix paint to ensure that skin tones are accurate. By the time that they are ready to start Year 1 of the National Curriculum, they have attained the expected standards and overall achievement is satisfactory. Teaching and learning in this area is satisfactory. The children are provided with a range of different materials to use and a range of experiences to explore. This has a positive impact on their learning.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGE 1

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Reading standards are good at the end of Year 2.
- Teaching is good in Year 2.

Commentary

63. Standards at the end of Year 2 are above average in reading, which is an improvement since the national tests of 2003. They are average in speaking and listening and writing. The current standards in writing have been maintained since the tests of 2003. Pupil

achievement is satisfactory overall. This includes those pupils who have special educational needs, such as hearing impairment, behavioural issues and learning difficulties. In relation to prior attainment on entry into school, the current cohort of Year 2 pupils have achieved well in reading. This is because of the good involvement by parents who listen to their children read at home. The school had identified an issue relating to the underachievement of boys in reading. However, this has been rectified by the careful purchase of a range of new books that are more appealing to boys. At the time of the last inspection, overall standards in English were above average. However, the differences in attainment can be explained by the changing nature of the catchment area and the more focused approach to inspections since 1998.

64. Most pupils are encouraged and expected to listen to their teacher and to each other. As a result, most follow instructions sensibly and they learn to respect and value each other's opinions. This is well developed, by a number of teachers, through the use of *'talking partners'* where pupils are encouraged to discuss different issues. For example, in a good literacy session in Year 2, the teacher asked her class to talk to their partners about the use of interesting words in sentences to make them *'super ones'*.
65. Most pupils really enjoy reading and are keen to talk to adults about the stories they have enjoyed. They clearly have a good understanding of the terms *'author'*, *'illustrator'*, and *'publisher'*. The more capable and the average pupils confidently discuss how they enjoy reading books by Roal Dahl and Dick King Smith. A strong emphasis is placed upon the teaching of letter sounds and this provides them with a useful method for working out unknown words in their reading books. The pupils also use the picture clues to help them with new words and the more capable read on to the end of a sentence to gain meaning.
66. By Year 2, more capable and average pupils are writing sentences using capital letters and full stops. Occasionally, they use speech marks to make their writing more interesting. For example, one pupil wrote *'can you take this pie to granny's house please?'* Most of Year 2 know that adjectives make their writing interesting and these are used with developing confidence. This was evident when one pupil wrote *'far, far away in a tiny cottage....suddenly out popped'* and this made her story come alive. Pupils have a good range of opportunities for writing for a range of different purposes. For instance, they use their skills to write letters, create instruction booklets and record accounts of trips to interesting places, such as Legoland. Standards in handwriting are good and, by Year 2, most pupils are writing in a neat and legible style.
67. Teaching is good and has a positive impact on pupil achievement. The key reading skills are taught well and good use is made of letter sounds and blends to reinforce learning. Most teachers have very good relationships with their pupils and their expectations are high, thus stimulating a desire to learn. For example, the pupils were clearly aware that the teacher was expecting *'super-sentences'* rather than *'boring ones'*. Lessons are well planned and are closely linked with the National Literacy Strategy programme of study. Learning intentions are clearly identified and good use is made of the time available. Teachers use an interesting range of resources to ensure that the pupils are adequately gaining their knowledge and skills. For example, very exciting big books are used to motivate the pupils. This was evident in a very good Year 2 English lesson where *'Mr Wolf's Pancakes'* was used to promote the concept of a *'story setting'*. Teaching assistants are used well to support the less capable and this has an important impact on the pupils' learning. Pupils' work is marked regularly and half-termly assessments ensure

that their progress is being checked. However, they are not given sufficient information from these assessments to know how to improve their work.

68. Subject leadership and management are satisfactory overall but are developing well. Teaching has been observed on a regular basis using a simple checklist. Standards of work are also scrutinised carefully to ensure that the pupils consistently develop the appropriate knowledge. The co-ordinator is aware that there is a need to focus more closely on speaking, listening and writing. She has devised a detailed action plan to deal with these areas for development and ensures that the money allocated for the subject is linked to support the initiatives. Resources are satisfactory.

LANGUAGE AND LITERACY ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

69. In Year 2, there are good opportunities for pupils to express their opinions and listen to each other. This is particularly successful when teachers encourage the pupils to discuss features of the lessons with their *'talking partners'*. However, reading and writing skills are not used sufficiently well across the curriculum. For example, the school does not actively encourage the use of non-fiction books and writing skills to support their work in other subjects, such as science, history and geography.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards attained by the end of Year 2 are above the national average.
- Pupils are assessed regularly and the information used to meet pupils' learning needs.
- There is too much use of worksheets in some classes.

COMMENTARY

70. Standards at the end of Year 2 are above the national average and have been maintained well since the national tests of 2003 and from the last inspection. The attainment of pupils in mathematical skills in the current Year 2 was below average when they entered the school. Therefore, the achievement of this particular group of pupils has been very good. However, this rate of progress is not consistent in all classes so that the overall judgment for achievement throughout the school is good. Pupils with special educational needs, including those with hearing impairment and those from ethnic minorities, achieve as well as other pupils. There is no evidence of a difference in achievement between boys and girls.
71. By the end of Year 2, the most capable pupils confidently multiply and divide using two numbers, such as 16 multiplied by 2 and 42 divided by 7. They work in hundreds, tens and units and understand place value up to 1000. The more capable and the average pupils measure, using centimetres and metres and recognise two- and three-dimensional shapes. They identify halves and quarters and tell the time using digital and analogue clocks. The average pupils count up to 100 and add and subtract confidently up to 20. Less capable pupils work with numbers up to 20 and are developing simple adding and subtraction skills, such as "13 take away 4" and "17 add 3".

72. Consistency in the quality of teaching and learning has improved from the time of the last inspection and is now good overall. In the majority of classes, teaching is good and sometimes it is very good. However, there is not complete consistency; the subject leader knows where the quality of teaching is not good and has taken appropriate action. Pupils are divided into three 'sets' based on their capabilities in mathematics and this helps to ensure that teachers present pupils with appropriate challenges or support. Pupils with special educational needs and those who are less confident in the subject have the benefit of being in a small set of only 12 pupils so that they can obtain the extra support they need.
73. Teachers' planning is detailed and thorough which, together with regular half-termly assessments, also helps to maintain progress. There are differences in the way that teachers record pupils' progress and the best practice has not yet been spread throughout the school. The marking of pupils' work, being no better than satisfactory, hampers further improvement in achievement, and the use of target-setting to help pupils understand what they have to do to improve is underdeveloped.
74. Subject leadership and management are good. The co-ordinator has been recognised for her expertise in the teaching of mathematics, and her very good subject knowledge has helped her make a positive contribution to maintaining the good standards in the subject. The subject has not been a main focus for development during the past year. However, the co-ordinator has nevertheless begun a new round of monitoring lessons. This is proving to be a professional and rigorous process in which areas for development for teaching and learning are clearly identified. The subject leader is aware that not all teachers possess her knowledge and expertise. There is currently no commercial scheme of work in the school and this partly explains why some teachers rely too much upon photocopied worksheets. The co-ordinator's preferred approach of promoting understanding, by allowing pupils to find their own ways of investigating and recording mathematics, has not yet been fully taken up by all the teachers. However, she is currently reviewing the supporting materials available to teachers in an effort to improve the provision.

MATHEMATICS ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

75. This is an underdeveloped part of the subject. Teachers do not take full advantage of the many opportunities available for pupils to use and apply their skills, knowledge and understanding of mathematics when studying other subjects.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- Pupils' enjoyment of subject and practical investigational activities aid learning.
- Good team planning in Year 2 enriches teaching and learning.
- Recent developments in the role of subject leader have improved provision.
- There are insufficient opportunities for independent investigation.
- Worksheets are over-used and there is a lack of challenge in some lessons.

COMMENTARY

76. Standards attained by pupils in Year 2 are satisfactory overall. Teacher assessments in 2003 showed the good proportion of pupils attaining the higher levels in science was above the national average. This was offset by a significant number of pupils who did not attain the expected levels. Standards in the last inspection in 1998 were good. The good appreciation by pupils of fair testing, which was noted then is reflected in conversation with many current Year 2 pupils. Pupils achieve satisfactorily, with no noticeable difference in the rates of progress of boys and girls. Pupils with special educational needs, including those who have hearing impairment, are supported well and all pupils get fully involved in activities. Pupils' enjoyment of science is evident and their enthusiastic but well-ordered response to practical investigations contributes well to their learning.
77. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. There was good teaching in the two lessons observed. Pupils were further motivated by well-planned investigations in the school grounds. Year 2 pupils, having visited the '*Rainforest*' in Newbury, made observations in the nature area and grounds to further their understanding of habitats. Year 1 pupils have studied forces. During the lesson observed, their questioning and understanding was enriched by activities with rolling balls and '*buzzing balloons*', both in the classroom and playground. Good quality team planning in Year 2 also has a positive effect upon standards.
78. The recent developments in the role of the subject leader are helping to improve standards, and the school has plans to introduce monitoring of teaching in science lessons shortly. However, at times there is too much reliance upon commercial worksheets. This results in work not being fully appropriate to the needs of pupils, including a lack of challenge for some. Pupils have insufficient opportunities for independent work, such as developing their own ways of recording results or observations.
79. Improvements since the last inspection include the development of a more coherent scheme of work to support teaching and learning, and a stronger emphasis upon skill development in most classes.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The computer suite is inappropriately sited in a thoroughfare.
- Information and communication technology is not used well enough to support the curriculum.

Commentary

80. By the end of Year 2, pupils have attained the nationally expected level and this has been maintained at the same level since the last inspection. There are no differences in the attainment of boys, girls, different ethnic minority groups or those with special educational needs. However, overall achievement could be much better if their skills were used to

support other areas across the curriculum and pupils were given more opportunity to practise the skills they are taught.

81. Pupils use the skills they have developed from their use of computers at home. They are developing confidence in finding their way around a keyboard. The pupils use the mouse as a control pad and know how to drag and drop it. They word-process their stories and present different types of information. The pupils know how to change the font and text size using both arrow and shift keys. They also enjoy programming a controllable toy, and watch it move around in the directions set. Under guidance, the pupils use an Internet programme to seek out information and know that information and communication technology is very much part of everyday life.
82. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. A strength is the way in which the interactive electronic boards and large projectors are used to teach specific skills. This was evident in a Year 2 lesson where the teacher taught the whole class how to change the font and size of text before half of the class actually went to the suite. This ensured that they had acquired the appropriate knowledge and skills. However, only one half of the class had the opportunity to experience the skills they had learnt because the suite could not accommodate all the pupils. This had a negative impact on the learning of the unfortunate other half who could not participate. Pupils enjoy their information and communication technology sessions and most of them are keen and eager to learn new skills. However, in one lesson observed, the attitudes and behaviour of the pupils were unsatisfactory because the quality of teaching was inadequate. The teacher had not prepared them sufficiently well for the lesson and blamed the pupils for not listening. Relationships within this session were tense and pupils became argumentative because they were not fully challenged or involved in their learning.
83. The subject is led and managed satisfactorily. Monitoring is carried out informally but there is not a clear understanding of the standards achieved and how the skills could be used to support learning across the curriculum. There have been no opportunities to monitor the quality of teaching across the school and this means that the weaknesses in teaching have not been rectified. An action plan has been devised. It indicates appropriate areas for development and is linked to the available funds. The computer suite is unsatisfactory. This is because it is situated in a cloakroom area that is a thoroughfare. Consequently, necessary movement around school continually interrupts sessions. Each classroom has a computer, but these are not used sufficiently well enough to develop skills.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

84. The use of information and communication technology skills across the curriculum is unsatisfactory. Computers are not used in individual classrooms to support learning and this means that the pupils are not using their knowledge on a regular basis. Although classes have regular timetabled slots for the computer suite, not all pupils are able to use it on these occasions. This means that pupils do not have sufficient experience of using their skills in different subject areas.

HUMANITIES

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

- The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Pupils' learning is enhanced by participation in activities, discussion and storytelling.
- The productive links with personal, social, health and emotional education and other subjects enrich pupils' learning.

COMMENTARY

85. The pupils' standards of attainment and achievement are in line with the expectations of the locally-agreed syllabus. Evidence was drawn from talking with pupils and staff, looking at planning and records, and from observations of three lessons. Pupils with special educational needs, including those with hearing impairment, are supported well and make a full contribution to lessons.
86. Pupils' interest and motivation are spurred by opportunities to take part in activities and discussions, as well as enjoying stories. Two Year 1 classes were learning about Noah's Ark and God's promise with the rainbow. One lesson featured good use of simple role-play. In the other, imaginative use was made of a coloured parachute and other fabrics in the playground to help pupils grasp the meaning of the story.
87. Talking with the pupils showed how well they develop moral and cultural awareness from their work in religious education. Other observations confirm the good contribution the subject makes to their spiritual and social development. A valuable development since the last report has been the strengthening links between religious education and personal, social and health education. Useful cross-curricular links which support pupils' learning include those of religious education with English (speaking and listening), history, and art and design.

Example of outstanding practice in religious education

The teacher's ability to captivate the pupils' interest, and to promote their imagination and creativity, generated a genuine sense of wonder and expectancy in a Year 2 lesson when they transformed the classroom into a 'special place'.

The lesson opened with pupils recalling gurdwara, church and mosque as special places. The teacher was already inspiring enthusiasm with great expression and variation of tone as pupils recalled features like '*light which never goes off*', '*stained glass*', '*scroll*', '*organ*', '*Torah*'. She explained that '*Today we are going to change our classroom into a special place.*' Pupils were excited, but also remained attentive and composed. The teacher asked how might this be done? With new partners, pupils quickly discussed ideas ready to share with the class. They knew they were all valued, and confidently fed in their suggestions. '*Music*', '*wish board*', '*candles*' – these were all opening bids. Within minutes, the classroom scene was transformed before everyone's eyes – and ears and noses! This was achieved through calm but joyful music from a CD; three small candles, a smoking joss stick (teacher's suggestion) and a flower display collected from the hall.

The teacher then asked them to think how they felt that morning. She used appropriate language to help them think about their feelings, and describe '*what is special*'. Pupils then selected objects special to them and placed them on a central table. Again, this was an invitation to reflect upon feelings. The teacher and teaching assistant modelled sharing something special: The teaching assistant explained that '*this weekend, I met my new granddaughter – had a first cuddle.*' The pupils then whispered special thoughts to their partner, which they keep between themselves. Together they had all achieved a sense of trust and harmony in their classroom, which was now a very special place!

GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY

88. Only one lesson was observed in history and none in geography. It is not possible, therefore, to offer a firm judgement on provision and on standards. From talking with pupils and with staff, and from looking at pupils' work and teachers' planning, it appears that the curriculum enables pupils to cover a satisfactory range of topics.
89. In **history**, work is planned so that pupils learn about particular people and events. Conversations with pupils showed they enjoy learning about events such as the Great Fire of London, and have a sound understanding of changes and continuity in life '*now and then*'. Teachers also make effective use of timelines to promote these concepts. In the lesson observed, learning was enriched by the good use of drama, and use of the Internet for research by a group of pupils.
90. In **geography**, pupils build up an understanding and vocabulary of place and of environmental influences. Map skills are developed as they make use of maps, including those of the school. However, in their topics on contrasting localities, there is insufficient focus upon studying people within these different places.
91. Pupils' progress in humanities is boosted by the discussions, drama and other practical activities by which teachers successfully engage them in their work. This can mean that there is less recorded work in books. However, there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to write more fully about topics they enjoy in humanities, which would also support their work in English.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Art and design

Provision in art and design is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in some aspects are above expectations by the end of Year 2.
- Pupils have a wide range of opportunities to work creatively.
- A system for ensuring consistent progression in skills and knowledge has not yet been established.

Commentary

92. The quality of Year 2 pupils' observational drawing is above expectations, and there are also examples of textile work, done by Year 1 pupils, that are also above expectations. Overall, standards are in line with national expectations. All pupils are encouraged to work creatively, including pupils with special educational needs. Some pupils progress well and their achievements are celebrated both by the school and by the awards they receive from community arts competitions. Overall, achievement is satisfactory, although

the above average standards, reported at the time of the last inspection, have not been maintained.

93. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. However, there is much evidence to show that pupils are given a wide range of creative experiences including painting, printing and three-dimensional work. Teachers often link art and design with other subjects so that pupils make nature collages related to their science work and try painting in the manner of cave dwellers in relation to the work they do in history. Pupils learn about different artists when following themes such as portraiture. However, opportunities are missed to raise pupils' awareness of other cultures through their art and the quality of pupils' work could be raised through consistently higher expectations from teachers.
94. The subject co-ordinator has done much to promote art, especially by ensuring the school's commitment to a number of different competitions and exhibitions. A portfolio has been started but this does not contain guidance on expected standards or development, and assessment in the subject is underdeveloped generally. A new start has been made upon a more rigorous approach to subject leadership, which hitherto has been satisfactory.

Design and technology

95. It was not possible to observe any lessons in design and technology during the inspection so that it is not possible to make any judgements on standards or the quality of teaching. However, it is clear that teachers are following an established scheme of work to ensure that pupils have appropriate learning experiences. Pupils talk enthusiastically about the puppets they are making for their puppet show and how they have made vehicles with axles and wheels. The subject co-ordinator has produced a report on the current provision in the subject and has made a good start to a more rigorous approach to subject management.

Music

96. No music lessons were observed during the inspection, so that it is not possible to make any judgements on standards or the quality of teaching. Pupils sing tunefully in assemblies and hymn practice and are encouraged to listen to the assembly theme music. All teachers have a programme of work to follow so that all elements of music are taught. Pupils talk confidently about their compositions and report that they have regular practice with musical instruments. Choir practices are held in the autumn term but the headteacher, who has taken on the role of subject co-ordinator, has identified the need for all pupils to have more experience in performing.

Physical education

97. Three lessons in gymnastics were observed during the inspection in which the teaching was satisfactory and pupils were showing levels of co-ordination and skill in line with expectations. No lessons were observed in the other aspects of the subject so that it is not possible to make judgments on standards in games, dance or athletics or on the overall quality of teaching in physical education. One of the notable strengths of the lessons observed was the degree of initiative and responsibility expected of the pupils when putting out and packing up apparatus. However, the time spent doing this was too

long compared to the total lesson time available. The school is currently looking at ways of solving this problem.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Provision in pupils' personal, social and health education and citizenship is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils personal, social, emotional and health education is promoted well in lessons.
- There are good curriculum links between personal, social, emotional and health education, religious education and other subjects.
- A formal programme of work is not yet in place.

COMMENTARY

98. The good relationships within classes and the way in which pupils are cared for and their contributions valued all make a good contribution to pupils' self-esteem and their personal development. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Teachers take good advantage of the opportunities available in other subjects to promote pupils' personal, social, health and emotional education such as:
- Discussing trusting relationships in religious education.
 - Giving pupils responsibilities where they have to rely on one another, such as putting the apparatus out in PE.
 - Discussing healthy eating and the importance of exercise in science lessons.
99. Pupils also have opportunities in special circle times to discuss current issues, which might be affecting them in their last half-term before leaving school in Year 2. For example, pupils focus upon '*changes*' and '*looking forward*'. All aspects of personal, social, health and emotional development are being covered on an informal basis. This includes an appropriate drugs education programme. However, a complete programme of work is currently in preparation to ensure that no essential aspects are missed.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Inspection judgement

Grade

The overall effectiveness of the school	4
How inclusive the school is	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	4
Value for money provided by the school	4

Overall standards achieved	4
Pupils' achievement	4

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

The quality of education provided by the school	4
The quality of teaching	4
How well pupils learn	4
The quality of assessment	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	4
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	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	4
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	3
The leadership of other key staff	4
The effectiveness of management	4

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