

INSPECTION REPORT

MORDEN PRIMARY SCHOOL

Morden, Surrey

LEA area: Merton

Unique reference number: 102640

Headteacher: Miss Danielle Scrase

Lead inspector: Mr Graham Sims

Dates of inspection: 22 – 25 March 2004

Inspection number: 260559

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

© Crown copyright 2004

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 – 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	231
School address:	Morden Primary School London Road Morden Surrey
Postcode:	SM4 5PX
Telephone number:	020 8648 4168
Fax number:	020 8640 8903
Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Mark Treherne
Date of previous inspection:	27 th September 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The school is situated in the outer London suburb of Morden and serves the local area. It is of an average size, with 204 boys and girls on roll between the ages of 4 and 11. The school has its own nursery, which caters for 27 children who attend part-time. The socio-economic background of the pupils varies considerably, but is generally below average. Around 20 per cent of the pupils take free school meals. Around a third of the pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds, and 13 pupils, two of whom are refugees, are at an early stage of learning English. These proportions are above the national average and are increasing. An above-average proportion of pupils join or leave the school other than at the usual times of joining or leaving. Over 20 per cent of the pupils have been identified as having special educational needs, which is above average. Eleven pupils receive help from outside specialists for a wide range of needs, and five pupils have Statements of Special Educational Need. Children are admitted into the reception class in two stages, either in September or January of the year in which they are five. The attainment of children when they start school varies significantly, but is generally below average and is declining, particularly in terms of their linguistic skills and social development.

There have been significant changes to the school since it was last inspected, and direct comparisons to the previous inspection are now largely irrelevant. The school has changed from an infant school which accepted pupils up to Year 3, to an all-age primary school. Pupils currently in Year 6 have been the oldest pupils in the school for the last four years and are the first group to take the national tests at the end of Year 6 this summer. An extension, comprising two classrooms, a studio, a small computer suite and new offices, has been constructed, as has a new classroom for the nursery. Apart from the nursery teacher, who was absent during the inspection, all of the class teachers have been appointed within the last three years. The class teacher for Year 5 was absent during the inspection on compassionate grounds. The previous headteacher resigned because of ill health a month before the inspection. For the previous two months and during the inspection, the school was being run by the deputy headteacher as acting headteacher, with assistance from the special educational needs co-ordinator acting as deputy headteacher.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
28899	Mr G R Sims	Lead inspector	Information and communication technology Art and design Design and technology Music Physical education
14032	Ms M Saunders	Lay inspector	
30266	Mrs H Rask	Team inspector	English Science Religious education Personal, social and health education English as an additional language
12764	Mrs W Thomas	Team inspector	Foundation Stage curriculum Mathematics Geography History Special educational needs

The inspection contractor was:

Parkman Ltd in association with *PKR*
35 Trewartha Park
Weston-Super-Mare
North Somerset
BS23 2RT

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be made initially to the contractor. The procedures are set out in the leaflet '*Complaining about Ofsted Inspections*', which is available from Ofsted Publications Centre (telephone 07002 637833) or Ofsted's website (www.ofsted.gov.uk).

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6
PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS	9
STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS	
Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL	13
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	18
PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECTS	21
AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE	
SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2	
PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS	33

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Morden Primary School is becoming an increasingly effective school which provides its pupils with a good quality of education. The overall quality of the teaching is good. As a result, the great majority of pupils achieve well, reaching nationally expected standards by the end of Year 6. The overall quality of leadership and management is satisfactory, and the school provides satisfactory value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Standards are improving in English, mathematics and science, although the standard of pupils' spelling, presentation and handwriting adversely affects the quality of their writing.
- The school makes good provision for pupils' personal development, and staff are consistent in using effective strategies which promote good behaviour and positive attitudes to school.
- The quality of the teaching is good in Years 1 to 6, and it is improving in the nursery and reception as the school is taking greater note of national guidance on early years teaching.
- The school provides a good range of learning opportunities outside the formal curriculum, but not enough opportunities for pupils to develop responsibility and independence.
- The school provides a good standard of care for all pupils.
- The curriculum is somewhat restricted by the amount of time devoted to teaching English, and not enough opportunities are taken to develop cross-curricular links.
- The deputy headteacher has provided good leadership and introduced some good new initiatives during her term as acting headteacher.

This is a very different school from the one inspected in September 1999. The change from a first school to an all-age primary school has been managed well. Since the last inspection, children's attainment on entry to the school has changed from average to below average, which accounts for a drop in the standards attained in the national tests at the end of Year 2. The school has dealt satisfactorily with the minor issues raised in the previous inspection relating to homework, the development of pupils' multicultural understanding and the provision of extra-curricular activities.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

*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*

Pupils' overall achievement is good. Children make satisfactory progress in the nursery and reception, although standards are below the expected level by the end of reception, particularly in communication, language and literacy, and children's personal, social and emotional development. Since the last inspection, standards at the end of Year 2 have fallen slightly in writing and mathematics, and more markedly in reading. The national test results in 2003 were close to the national average in writing and mathematics, but below average in reading. Inspection findings show that, with the consistently good teaching pupils are now receiving in Years 1 and 2, standards are improving again, pupils are achieving well, and most are reaching the nationally expected standards in English and mathematics.

Pupils make good progress in Years 3 to 6, particularly in Year 6, where overall standards are at the nationally expected level in English, mathematics and science. The school has done well to

maintain momentum with these pupils who have been the oldest in the school for four successive years, and have not had the benefit of older role models or previous examples of work to which to aspire. There has been good improvement in information and communication technology since the installation of new facilities in September, and pupils are now reaching the expected standards in this subject. The content of pupils' writing is often good, but its quality is often adversely affected by the unsatisfactory standard of pupils' spelling, presentation and handwriting.

The school makes good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, and the ethos of the school is good. Thanks to the consistent use of effective strategies to promote good behaviour, the great majority of pupils behave well and demonstrate positive attitudes towards school. The level of attendance is satisfactory and punctuality is good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The school provides a good quality of education. The overall quality of the teaching is good. It is satisfactory in the nursery and reception, although it is improving as the school is paying greater regard to national guidance on teaching in the early years and is seeking closer liaison between nursery and reception. The teaching is consistently good for children in Years 1 and 2, where teachers manage the pupils very well, set clear expectations and help pupils develop a lively interest in their learning. The teaching is good in Years 3 to 6, particularly in Year 6, where good pace, lively interaction and high expectations motivate the pupils and help them to learn. The school devotes considerable time and energy to meeting the needs of individual pupils, but the way support sessions and withdrawal groups are organised sometimes impinges on pupils' learning in other subjects. Procedures for assessment are good.

The school provides a satisfactory curriculum and a good range of additional activities outside the formal curriculum. A significant amount of time is devoted to the teaching of English and mathematics, which restricts the range of learning opportunities in other subjects. Although there are some good cross-curricular links, there is scope for much more cross-curricular work and for greater opportunity for pupils to develop independent learning skills. There is good provision for pupils' personal, social and health education. The overall range of learning resources and the quality of the school's accommodation are satisfactory.

The school takes good care of its pupils and has good procedures to ensure their health and safety. It provides pupils with good support, advice and guidance and enables them to have a voice in its work and development. The school's links with parents are good, and there are satisfactory links with other schools and the local community.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The overall quality of leadership and management is satisfactory. The governance of the school is satisfactory. Governors show good commitment to the school and fulfil their statutory responsibilities well. The deputy headteacher has instigated many changes which are having a beneficial impact on pupils' learning, and she has provided the school with good leadership during her term as acting headteacher. Leadership of the curriculum and teaching by other staff is generally good, and is developing well as new staff are starting to have an impact as subject co-ordinators. The management of the school is satisfactory.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Pupils' views of the school are generally positive. Most parents have positive views about most aspects of the school, although a significant minority have some concerns, particularly with regard to pupils' behaviour, the range of activities provided by the school and the way the school consults them and keeps them informed. Inspection findings indicate that pupils' behaviour is managed well and there is now a good range of additional activities. The school has taken note of the need to consult parents more widely.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Improve the quality of pupils' spelling, presentation and handwriting.
- Continue to develop the Foundation Stage curriculum, particularly with regard to independent activities, and improve liaison between the nursery and reception.
- Provide greater breadth to the school's curriculum by developing more cross-curricular links and exploring ways in which all subjects can contribute to the development of pupils' literacy skills.
- Provide more opportunities for pupils to take on responsibilities and develop independent learning skills.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

During their time in the school, pupils achieve well. Achievement in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory, and it is good in Key Stages 1 and 2¹. Standards in English, mathematics and science are average by the end of Year 6.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Despite the falling level of attainment on entry to the school, standards at the end of Year 2 are beginning to rise again because of consistently good teaching.
- By the time pupils leave school, most achieve the nationally expected standards in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology.
- The school caters well for a diverse range of educational needs, and those with special educational needs, as well as the more able pupils, achieve well.
- The standards of spelling, presentation and handwriting detract from the overall quality of pupils' written work.

Commentary

1. Over the last five years, the school's results in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 1 have fluctuated, and all were lower in 2003 than at the time of the last inspection. There are several reasons for this. The school has been through a period of considerable change, during which its main energies have been directed towards catering for its ever-increasing size and making the adjustments necessary for the school to become an all-age primary school. During this time, there have been significant changes in staff. However, the most significant reason has been a very definite change in the nature of the school's intake, with an increasing proportion of pupils who have poor language skills when they join the school, and a growing proportion of pupils with special educational needs. The school also now has a larger proportion of pupils who are at an early stage of learning English and, whilst these pupils achieve well, their linguistic abilities have not developed sufficiently for them to cope with national tests as well as native speakers by the end of Year 2. Now that the school has reached its full size, there is a settled complement of teachers, and governors and senior management have started to take increasing note of national performance data, indications are that standards at the end of Year 2 are improving once again.
2. Although there is a very wide variation in children's capabilities, the overall standard of attainment when children enter the nursery and reception is below average, particularly in the areas of communication, language and literacy and personal, social and emotional development. The children's achievement in both classes is satisfactory, although overall standards remain below average by the end of reception. Children's achievement in mathematical development is good and, in this area of learning, most children reach the goals expected for their age. Children's language development, and the ability of many children to maintain their concentration and work independently, continue to be the weakest aspects.

¹ Key Stage refers to the different stages of learning in schools. Children start school in the Foundation Stage, which caters for children aged 3 to 5 and generally refers to children who are in the nursery, reception or early years classes. Key Stage 1 is the first stage of compulsory primary education. It caters for pupils aged 5 to 7 and refers to pupils who are in Years 1 and 2. Key Stage 1 is also frequently synonymous with the term Infants. Key Stage 2 is the second stage of primary education. It caters for pupils aged 7 to 11 and refers to pupils who are in Years 3 to 6. Key Stage 2 is also frequently synonymous with the term Juniors. At the age of 11, pupils start Key Stage 3, which marks the beginning of their secondary education.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 – average point scores² in 2003

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	15.2 (14.7)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	14.4 (14.5)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	16.1 (15.6)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 30 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

3. In 2003, the results of the national tests at the end of Year 2 were below the national average in reading and close to the national average in writing and mathematics. When compared with the results of similar schools, the results were below average in all three aspects. The overall results mask a very wide range of attainment and the fact that almost a quarter of the pupils exceeded the nationally expected level³ in reading and a third in mathematics. The results in reading were pulled down by the 40 per cent of pupils who attained at the lowest end of the nationally expected Level 2 or below, and reflects the fact that an increasing proportion of pupils enter the school with poor language skills.
4. Inspection findings show that the downward trend in reading has been reversed and that standards are now improving again, as indeed they are in writing and mathematics. Although standards are still only average in English and mathematics, pupils' achievement in Key Stage 1 is good because all pupils are making good progress in relation to their prior attainment. The teachers in Years 1 and 2 present good challenge for the more able pupils and a good range of support, with carefully targeted teaching for those with special educational needs or for whom English is an additional language. One pupil, for example, has progressed from being unable to understand any English to participating fully in class activities, even though some aspects of English language are still hard to understand. Standards in religious education are in line with those expected in the locally agreed syllabus, and pupils attain average standards in information and communication technology by the end of Year 2.
5. This is the first year in which the school has had pupils in Year 6, so there are no previous national test results for this age group. The school has set appropriate targets for its first group of pupils to sit the Key Stage 2 tests, and the latest indications are that pupils are set to achieve average standards in English, mathematics and science by the end of the year. This represents good achievement when taking into consideration the difficulties of being the oldest pupils in the school for four years in a row and not having any older role models. In addition, many of the pupils who joined the school part way through Key Stage 2 have required additional support because of their special educational needs. Most pupils have a good range of basic skills in the core subjects⁴, although pupils' written work is often let down by the quality of their spelling, handwriting and presentation. Standards in religious education are in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. Standards in information and communication technology are also average, but this represents good progress during the current year as pupils have had more frequent access to computers and have developed their key skills well. Although foundation subjects⁵ were not inspected in detail, examples were observed of satisfactory standards in subjects such as geography and history, particularly when work in these subjects was undertaken in conjunction with work in English or information and communication technology.

² Average point scores are used as a way of comparing fairly the performance of pupils in one school with those in another. The level achieved by each pupil in the national tests is converted into a points score. The points achieved by all of the pupils are added together and divided by the number of pupils who took the test to arrive at an average point score. An average point score of 15 at the end of Year 2 is equivalent to a middle of the range Level 2, which is the standard expected of seven-year-old pupils. At the end of Year 6, an average point score of 27 is equivalent to Level 4, the national expectation for eleven-year-olds.

³ The standard of pupils' work is assessed against National Curriculum Levels. The national expectation for each subject is that pupils should be working comfortably at Level 2 by the end of Year 2, and at Level 4 by the end of Year 6.

⁴ Core subjects are English, mathematics and science.

⁵ Foundation subjects are: art and design, design and technology, geography, history, information and communication technology, music, and physical education.

However, the small amount of time devoted to these subjects means that pupils have not developed their knowledge and understanding of foundation subjects in great depth.

6. The school has a number of different groups of pupils: those with special educational needs, a small number of pupils who have Statements of Special Educational Need because of more severe difficulties, a small number of pupils who are at an early stage of learning English and a few who have been identified as gifted or talented. The good support provided by teachers and teaching assistants, and the fact that teachers generally match tasks well to pupils' capabilities, enable these pupils to make good progress in relation to their prior attainment, although most year groups contain a small number of pupils whose standards are significantly below those of the majority. This is particularly noticeable amongst the older pupils, where some who have joined the school part way through Key Stage 2 still have a considerable amount of ground to catch up. Although the school has a significant proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds, there is no one predominant ethnic group. These pupils are well-integrated members of the school society who achieve as well as their peers.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attendance is satisfactory and punctuality is good. The school's overall provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils' behaviour and attitudes toward school are good, and their personal development is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Behaviour in lessons is good.
- Pupils have good relationships with each other.
- Pupils work hard during lessons, and most maintain high levels of concentration.
- Pupils arrive in good time for the start of the school day and to lessons during the day.
- There are not enough opportunities for pupils to take on responsibilities or to develop their independence or spiritual awareness.

Commentary

7. The personal, social and emotional development of many children when they join the nursery or reception is below average, and for some children it is well below average. Although they settle into school quickly because of the friendly relationships engendered by the staff, many children find it difficult to share and take turns. Some also find it difficult to stick with a chosen activity for any length of time. Whilst sound progress is evident in their personal development throughout the Foundation Stage, there is not enough emphasis on helping children to become more purposefully independent. Nevertheless, children in the Foundation Stage develop positive attitudes to school.
8. The school is active in promoting good behaviour throughout the school. There is good use of 'effort' points and judicious use of Golden Time⁶. These systems are understood well and appreciated by pupils. Children's behaviour in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory but improves as they move into Key Stage 1. Teachers have to work hard to manage pupils' behaviour but, in most lessons, behaviour is good. During playtime, play is boisterous but mainly good-natured, and pupils move calmly around the school whilst under adult supervision. A number of pupils misbehave if they believe they will not be seen. One pupil was excluded during the previous school year for justifiable reasons.

⁶ Golden Time refers to a period during the week, generally between 30 minutes and an hour, when pupils can choose to pursue an activity of their own choosing. It is used as a reward for good behaviour and work during the week. If there is any misbehaviour during the week, the teacher may shorten the length of Golden Time, although lost time may be redeemed through particularly good work or behaviour.

Ethnic background of pupils**Exclusions in the last school year**

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll ⁷	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	121	1	0
White – Irish	1	0	0
White – any other White background	4	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	7	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	2	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	2	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	3	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	5	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	2	0	0
Black or Black British – African	4	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	2	0	0
Chinese	2	0	0
Any other ethnic group	6	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	11	0	0

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

9. Pupils work well together in groups. This collaborative working is successfully encouraged by the frequent use of paired discussions. In the classroom and at play, all pupils mix and work together with ease. Boys and girls are comfortable in each other's company, and pupils from a minority ethnic background are well integrated into mixed-friendship groups. Pupils are confident and have a high level of self-esteem. Activities, such as circle time⁸ and the positive behaviour management strategies in place throughout the school, have much to do with this. These strategies help pupils new to English or from different backgrounds to settle into classroom routines and to feel valued by their classmates. The playground buddy system helps all pupils to make friends and to take a full part in playground activities and lunchtime routines. The school makes positive recognition of the wide range of linguistic and cultural traditions represented in the school, and this is reflected in displays and classroom activities.
10. In lessons, pupils respond well to most of the tasks set. They concentrate well when working in a group or on their own. They are frequently excited and enthused by their lessons. Whilst pupils' willingness to be enterprising and accept responsibility is satisfactory, there are not enough opportunities for them to demonstrate this in lessons. Pupils in Year 6 have a range of opportunities to help around the school, and they undertake these tasks responsibly and well.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data:	5.4	School data:	1.2

⁷ These figures refer to pupils of compulsory school age, and relate to pupils in Years 1 to 6 only.

⁸ Circle Time refers to a timetabled lesson during which pupils discuss a wide range of personal and general issues. All pupils agree that no interruptions should occur and only one person at a time will speak. Respect for other pupils' views will occur at all times and, therefore, pupils feel confident that they can talk with ease and free from any form of interference or interruption from other children.

National data:	5.4
----------------	-----

National data:	0.4
----------------	-----

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

11. Punctuality at the beginning of the school day is good, with very few pupils arriving after registration. Attendance for the reporting year 2002/2003 was below the national average, and unauthorised absence was higher than in most schools. Current figures show an improvement in attendance compared to the same period last year. The school has a strict definition of authorised absence and does not authorise holidays over ten days. A good range of strategies is now in place to improve attendance further. These include attendance certificates and letters to parents when no reason for an absence is forthcoming.
12. The school does not have any systematic planning for developing pupils' spiritual awareness, depending solely upon opportunities within the act of collective worship. These are of varying quality. Provision for pupils' social and moral development is good, deriving from the caring ethos of the school and the well-structured programme of personal, social and health education. The provision for pupils' cultural development is good and has improved since the last inspection. The school makes good use of opportunities both within and beyond the curriculum to encourage pupils' understanding of other cultures and to value beliefs other than their own. In an English lesson in Year 2, for example, pupils discussed the poem, 'Vegan Delight' by Benjamin Zephaniah. They were keen to understand both the concept of 'vegan' and to hear of the unfamiliar foods.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is good. The overall quality of the teaching is good. The school provides a satisfactory curriculum, which is enriched by a good variety of activities outside the normal curriculum. The staff provide a good level of care for the pupils. The school's links with parents are good, and links with the local community and other schools are satisfactory.

Teaching and learning

The overall quality of the teaching is good. It is satisfactory for children in the nursery and reception and good for pupils in Years 1 to 6. As a result, pupils learn well overall. The school's procedures for assessing pupils' work and using the information gathered to respond to individual pupils' needs are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The teaching is consistently good in Years 1 and 2, and much of the teaching in Years 3 to 6, and particularly in Year 6, is good.
- Teachers motivate pupils through their enthusiasm and their consistent approach to managing pupils' behaviour.
- Good changes have been made to the way the curriculum for children in nursery and reception is planned, but these have yet to become fully embedded.
- There are successful examples of teachers linking work in one subject with work in another, but such links are not always forged.
- Teachers show good awareness of the differing needs of different groups of pupils, but the frequent withdrawal of pupils from lessons for additional support is, at times, disruptive.
- Teachers use a good variety of teaching methods to engage pupils' interest and encourage them to learn.
- There are limited opportunities for pupils to become independent learners.
- There are good systems for assessing pupils' progress and for setting targets so that pupils understand what they have to do to improve.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 45 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0 (0)	2 (5)	21 (47)	22 (49)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)

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

13. During the inspection, most of the lessons observed in nursery and reception were satisfactory, over half of the lessons observed in Years 3 to 6 were good or better, with some particularly good teaching in Year 6, and nearly all of the lessons observed in Years 1 and 2 were good or better. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed. The most positive response to all of the questions within the parents' questionnaire was with regard to the quality of the teaching, with over 90 per cent of parents thinking that the teaching is good and that staff expect their children to work hard. Most pupils feel that they are learning a lot most of the time and that their teachers help them to understand how to make their work better.
14. Apart from the nursery teacher, who was absent during the inspection, no other full-time class teachers have been in post for more than three years. This team of new teachers shows many of the positive aspects in their teaching which were highlighted in the last inspection. They also show great enthusiasm for their work, which, in turn, helps to motivate the pupils to learn. Their willingness and very good team spirit also help to ensure a consistent approach to teaching throughout the school, which is seen particularly in their approach to planning and the management of pupils' behaviour.
15. The style of teaching provided for children in the Foundation Stage has undergone significant changes over the last year as the school has moved away from a more formal setting for its youngest children to one which is much more closely aligned to the national guidance on teaching children aged three to five. Whilst these changes have been embraced with enthusiasm by the two teachers who share responsibility for the reception class, they have yet to become fully embedded which accounts to a large extent for the difference in the quality of teaching between the Foundation Stage and the rest of the school. Since the deputy headteacher has been acting as headteacher, there has been a conscious effort to develop better liaison between the nursery and reception, but the teachers are still seeking how best to plan together for the best advantage of the children. The Foundation Stage teachers provide a welcoming environment for the children and work well in whole-class and small-group teaching situations to develop children's knowledge and understanding across all areas of learning, but particularly in communication, language and literacy and the children's mathematical development. However, the range of purposefully planned activities available for children to choose and the opportunities for them to develop their independence are still somewhat limited. A small number of reception-aged pupils spend part of the day in the nursery, but not enough thought has yet been given as to how this arrangement can best serve the needs of these children, most of whom are still at an early stage of learning English.
16. Throughout the rest of the school, English and mathematics are taught well. There are no subjects in which the teaching is weak, although by far the greatest amount of time is devoted to the teaching of English and mathematics, which often leaves insufficient time for some other subjects to be taught in depth. A number of successful attempts have been made to interlink the teaching of one subject with work undertaken in others. In Year 6, for example, pupils developed their literacy and information and communication technology skills whilst carrying out work in geography on volcanoes. Such cross-curricular links result in work of higher quality and greater depth. Where work is not linked in this way or teachers plan a succession of short tasks, lack of time frequently results in pieces of work being unfinished and is also a significant contributory factor to the poor spelling, handwriting and presentation which detracts from the quality of pupils' written work. More could be done, therefore, to develop cross-curricular links. The frenetic pace of a succession of short, self-contained activities also provides little opportunity for pupils to learn how to work independently. More time has been devoted this year

to the teaching of information and communication technology, and pupils' skills have improved as a result, whilst at the same time providing motivation for pupils' learning in a range of other subjects.

17. Teachers take care to plan their lessons to be relevant to the needs of all pupils. Teachers' weekly lesson plans show what strategies will be used to support pupils with special educational needs and those who are at an early stage of learning English, as well as those who are more able. Most of the teaching assistants assigned to pupils with Statements of Special Educational Needs, and particularly those in Key Stage 1, enable these pupils to take a full part in lessons and have a significant impact on their learning, as well as providing assistance for other pupils. Other teaching assistants are deployed effectively within lessons and have a positive impact on the learning of other pupils. The school works hard to provide additional support by withdrawing pupils, either as individuals or in small groups, for short teaching sessions with the special educational needs co-ordinator or the teacher with responsibility for supporting pupils at an early stage of learning English. Other groups are withdrawn for booster sessions in English and mathematics. Whilst these sessions are well intentioned and frequently well targeted, they have an unsettling and occasionally disruptive effect on the lessons from which pupils are withdrawn, and sometimes necessitate pupils having to catch up work which they have missed. It would be sensible for the school to look carefully at its whole programme of support sessions to see if there are more effective and efficient ways in which this much-needed support can be provided. Teachers have received recent additional training relating to the needs of pupils learning English as an additional language and this is reflected in the awareness teachers show of these pupils' needs in their lesson planning. Whole-school assessment and tracking procedures are systematic. However, additional part-time teaching support for these pupils is not planned sufficiently collaboratively with class teachers.
18. Teachers use a good variety of teaching methods to engage pupils' interest and encourage them to learn. Particularly effective is the strategy of getting pupils to talk to a partner to discuss their answers to a question before engaging in whole-class discussion. This not only engages the attention of all pupils, but also helps to encourage those who are more reluctant to speak in front of others to participate. Teachers manage their classes well, employing agreed strategies consistently in order to ensure good behaviour and maximum participation. They use resources well. In a very good English lesson in Year 1, for example, the teacher had prepared laminated cards of all of the vocabulary pupils were going to use during the week and had brought all of the items of fruit which were mentioned in the story and which, during the week, pupils had the opportunity to taste. As a result, pupils really were able to learn through all of their senses. Small individual whiteboards are used effectively in many classes for pupils to respond to teachers' questions and show them the answers, giving teachers instant feedback as to any pupils who may require additional help.
19. The school has improved its systems for assessing pupils' academic progress since the last inspection, and these are now good in Key Stages 1 and 2. Staff meetings are held to moderate samples of work in core subjects and to ensure consistent judgements throughout the school. Targets are set for pupils in English, mathematics and science. These are reviewed regularly and displayed clearly in classrooms and in pupils' books, and they are helping pupils to have a much better understanding of what they need to do to improve. Pupils' progress is tracked carefully, and the information used to group pupils and identify those who are in need of additional help. There are appropriate procedures to track and monitor the progress of pupils at an early stage of learning English which link effectively into the school's assessment procedures for the National Curriculum. There are sound procedures for assessing pupils' work in foundation subjects. Pupils' work is marked regularly and the teachers' comments are frequently positive and helpful, enabling pupils to know what they need to do to improve. However, mistakes in pupils' written work are rarely corrected in subjects other than English, a contributory factor to the difficulties pupils have with spelling. Teachers use the closing session in lessons well to review what pupils have learnt and to get pupils to focus clearly on whether they have understood the objectives for the lesson.

The curriculum

The school provides a satisfactory range of learning opportunities and a good range of activities outside the formal curriculum. The overall range of learning resources and the quality of the school's accommodation are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school provides a satisfactory curriculum, although its breadth and balance are in need of improvement.
- Provision for extra-curricular and enrichment activities is good and has improved over the last year.
- Provision for the youngest children in the school is sound, although links between the nursery and reception classes are not yet well developed.
- Although there are some examples of good practice, there are insufficient cross-curricular links between subjects.
- There is good, secure outdoor provision for the youngest pupils.

Commentary

20. The school allocates a high proportion of time to developing the core skills of literacy and numeracy. However, not all other subjects receive sufficient focus in order to ensure full breadth and balance across the curriculum. Although the school has prepared a useful curriculum overview map, there are insufficient linkages between subjects. The school recognises this as an area for improvement. Some good examples were seen, which provide a model of the way forward, such as when pupils in Year 6 learnt new technical geography vocabulary in a literacy lesson.
21. School governors play a satisfactory role in monitoring curricular provision. The school has adopted nationally recommended schemes of work, although rarely adapts these to link together themes of study. The school has started regular monitoring by senior staff. All subject policies have been recently reviewed and agreed with the governors, apart from the physical education policy, which is in the final draft process. Links between the nursery and reception classes are not yet well developed, although these classes are well placed to work together.
22. The school makes good provision for personal, social and health education. It has a clear policy on sex education, drugs awareness and substance abuse, and good links have been established with the school nurse and local police to support work undertaken. Pupils enjoy regular circle time sessions where self-esteem is promoted through a range of activities. Able pupils are challenged with weekly problem-solving tasks and moral questions for class discussion.
23. Pupils learning English as an additional language have access to the same curriculum which is provided for all pupils in the school, and teachers adapt their teaching plans to take account of specific language learning needs. However, arrangements for additional teaching support for pupils new to learning English as an additional language are inefficient.
24. The school provides a good range of extra-curricular and enrichment activities. For example, pupils in Year 5 enjoy an annual residential visit to the Isle of Wight, and parents, pupils and staff were involved in a recent science week when visiting scientists set up a range of practical activities and a science learning dome. Since the last inspection, the school has established a good range of after-school and lunchtime clubs for both younger and older pupils. Some of these are fee paying and run by parents or other agencies, such as the local football club. Teachers have set up the computer, science and recorder clubs, for example, and these are popular and well attended.

25. The school is adequately staffed and additional classroom assistants and learning support staff make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning. New staff are given good support within the school so that they can undertake their duties. Accommodation is satisfactory and includes a good dedicated outdoor area for the youngest children and a new computer suite. The oldest part of the school building is in need of redecoration.

Care, guidance and support

Provision to ensure pupils' care, welfare, health and safety is good. There is good support, advice and guidance for pupils based on monitoring their achievements and personal development. The involvement of pupils through seeking, valuing and acting on their views is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school has a positive ethos of listening to what pupils have to say.
- All staff are provided with training in relation to child protection issues.
- The school provides effective personal and academic support and guidance for the pupils.

Commentary

26. The school has found a number of effective ways of listening to the views of pupils. Each classroom has a box, which is emptied daily. Pupils are encouraged to write a note if they are worried about something, and this is then dealt with by the class teacher. Pupils think that issues of bullying and poor behaviour are generally dealt with well. Suggestions from pupils for a review of playground activities have been discussed and indoor activities are now provided for the older pupils. Elections for a school council were held recently and pupils are enthusiastic about this initiative.

27. All teaching and support staff have received training in child protection issues. There is a clear system for reporting concerns about pupils. The school benefits from a purpose-built medical room adjacent to the school office. There is good monitoring of playground mishaps and a very good use of stickers to enable teachers to keep a watchful eye on any pupil who has bumped their head. The school is secure and has good safety arrangements.

28. Pupils are supported well throughout the school. Pupils with special educational needs or for whom English is an additional language are identified for additional support. The school's induction arrangements recognise and celebrate the diverse range of languages which pupils bring to school. Pupils receive timely advice on what they need to do to improve their work. All pupils are given clear targets and these are reviewed regularly. Pupils reported very favourably on this aspect of the school and parents were happy with the arrangements for settling their children when they started school. Although this is the first year that pupils in Year 6 will move to secondary schools, they feel well prepared and are looking forward to this. The personal, social and health education programme makes a good contribution to pupils' understanding of how to keep themselves safe.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Information to parents about pupils' progress and attainment is very good.
- The school has a very effective parent-teacher association in 'The Friends of Morden School'.
- The school is being proactive in promoting links with local communities.

Commentary

29. Annual reports to parents on pupils' progress are very good. They provide good detail of what pupils can do, what they have achieved over the year and clear targets for the mathematics, English and science. The reports also clearly identify how well the pupil is attaining in relation to the average, and the degree of effort they are putting into their studies. The school has a newly produced informative prospectus and the governors' annual report to parents is in a very readable format. In the Foundation Stage, there is good use of home-school reading records to maintain contact between parents and the class teacher. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are kept well informed of their children's progress.
30. The special educational needs co-ordinator has established good relationships with parents. Parents whose children have Statements of Special Educational Need attend statutory reviews. They are also invited to non-statutory reviews and receive copies of their children's individual education plans. The school invites parents to share information about the range of languages spoken or written by their children. Reading resources reflect the wide range of community languages and cultural traditions represented in the school. A group of parent volunteers provides useful additional reading support for pupils learning English as an additional language. The school makes every effort to provide translations of school information into community languages where this may be required by parents or carers.
31. The Friends of Morden School have been very active both in organising social events and in raising significant amounts of money for the school. This has allowed a range of activities to occur which otherwise would not have happened. These have included both trips out of school and visitors and activities brought into school, such as a visit by a theatre company. A number of parents regularly help in school with a variety of tasks, including listening to pupils read. This help is well structured and recorded.
32. The school is participating in a local group to welcome the local mosque. This has also forged greater links with the nearby Anglican church. The school has strong links with the Friends of St Heliers, and residents from the home visit the school at Harvest Festival. There are links with a Beacon school and developing links with the wide range of secondary schools to which pupils will apply.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The overall quality of leadership and management is satisfactory. The governance and management of the school are satisfactory. The acting headteacher provides good leadership. Leadership of the curriculum and teaching by other staff is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The deputy headteacher has instigated many improvements to the school's procedures and is providing good leadership as acting headteacher during the interregnum.
- Governors are playing an increasingly active role and fulfil their statutory responsibilities well, but they do not have a clear long-term financial strategy.
- There is a good commitment to providing additional help to meet the diverse range of pupils' needs, but the large number of withdrawal sessions is, at times, disruptive to normal teaching.
- Most subject co-ordinators fulfil their roles well, many having recently taken on new responsibilities with enthusiasm.

Commentary

33. The overall governance of the school is satisfactory, and some aspects of governance are good. Governors fulfil their statutory responsibilities well. Since the resignation of the previous headteacher, they are beginning to take a more proactive role in holding the school to account for the standards it achieves and for the quality of education it offers. Some governors have a

clearer understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development than others, but there is a good willingness to become better informed. The governing body has adopted the good practice of inviting members of staff to its meetings to report on their area of responsibility. The governing body ensures that all required policies are in place and that they are reviewed regularly. Although designated governors are linked to subject co-ordinators or areas of responsibility, liaison in some subjects is not always as frequent or productive as it could be. In others, such as special educational needs, there is a good, productive working relationship between the designated governor and the member of staff responsible. There is a well-defined structure of committees, with clear delegation of responsibilities. Some governors demonstrate a high level of commitment to the school's work, visit the school frequently and provide a good level of help.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	549,819
Total expenditure	564,831
Expenditure per pupil	2,957

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	105,917
Balance carried forward to the next	90,905

34. The governors do not have a long- or medium-term financial strategy for the school. A substantial surplus accrued under the previous headteacher, but for no specific purpose other than creating an emergency fund. This balance is now reducing as the school is spending more than its annual income. On a day-to-day basis, financial systems and administrative procedures are managed efficiently by the school's administrative staff.
35. Since her appointment two-and-a-half years ago, and more recently in her role as acting headteacher, the deputy headteacher has instigated many changes which are having a positive impact on pupils' learning. These include:
- Implementation of target-setting in English, mathematics and science, which has helped staff to become more focused and enabled pupils to understand what they have to do to improve.
 - Introduction of extra-curricular activities which have enriched learning opportunities beyond the normal curriculum.
 - Improved planning procedures, which have helped staff to develop a greater awareness of the needs of pupils with special educational needs, those at an early stage of learning English and more able pupils.
 - Better use of performance management procedures, which have helped staff to focus on areas for development.
 - Encouragement of change within the Foundation Stage and the introduction of liaison between nursery and reception to encourage a more integrated approach.
 - Production of a mission statement and vision for the school, which is linked in to a new school improvement plan.
 - The introduction of curriculum evaluation meetings for staff to review the effectiveness of subject schemes of work.
 - More frequent monitoring of teaching, which has raised teachers' awareness of good practice.
 - Better training for teaching assistants, which has recently included training on child protection, behaviour, literacy and numeracy.
36. During the interregnum, the special educational needs co-ordinator has taken on additional responsibilities as acting deputy headteacher and has provided good and helpful support to the acting headteacher.

37. The leadership provided by subject co-ordinators is generally good. Most co-ordinators are relatively new to their roles, but have set about their tasks with enthusiasm and, in many cases, have already started to have a positive impact on the development of their subjects. Provision in information and communication technology has improved significantly this year, and both English and mathematics co-ordinators provide good leadership. The co-ordination of the Foundation Stage has been hampered by the absence of the Foundation Stage co-ordinator, although the willingness to develop greater collaboration between the nursery and reception classes is an important step towards strengthening the provision for the school's youngest children.
38. The school shows good commitment to meeting the very diverse range of pupils' needs, seen in the wide range of additional booster, reinforcement and support sessions for selected pupils for which they are withdrawn from normal lessons. Whilst many of these sessions are effective, such as the intervention strategies for literacy which are run efficiently by the special educational needs co-ordinator, they entail considerable movement in and out of classes and occasional disruption to pupils' learning in other subjects. The acting headteacher has been instrumental in raising awareness among the staff in order to provide more effectively for the needs of pupils learning English as an additional language. She has led a recent training session for staff to ensure that all teachers include specific focus on the learning needs of such pupils during lessons and has sought out additional teaching resources for use in school. The school does not buy into the services of the specialist teacher resource within the authority for additional teaching support for pupils learning English as an additional language, choosing instead to provide additional part-time teaching support from an existing member of staff. This arrangement is satisfactory although could be improved by greater collaboration between teaching staff and the support teacher in order to focus on the specific learning requirements for these pupils.
39. The school has managed the change from a first school to an all-age primary school well. It is successfully tackling the additional challenges of decreasing levels of attainment on entry to the school, greater mobility of pupils with some who join the school at a late stage having significant educational needs, and an increasing proportion of pupils at an early stage of learning English. The recent resignation of the headteacher and the long-term absence of the Foundation Stage co-ordinator have also been managed well because of the willingness of staff to take on additional responsibilities.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

40. Provision in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory. When children join the nursery, their attainment is below average, though it is well below average in communication, language and literacy, and the personal, social and emotional development of some children is also well below average. Children achieve satisfactorily in the nursery and reception classes, although overall standards are still below those expected by the end of reception.
41. Since the last inspection, there have been some staff changes and the Foundation Stage curriculum has been introduced. At the time of the inspection, the co-ordinator for the Foundation Stage was absent through illness. The school has recently had building works and the nursery and reception classes are now together. They have a shared outdoor area which is being developed. Teachers have begun to plan together to ensure progression through the Foundation Stage and are aware that this area needs to be developed further. Adult-led activities are planned well and support children's learning. However, the provision for child-initiated activities needs to be more focused on specific early learning goals⁹.
42. A small number of children are at an early stage of learning English as an additional language. Each day a group of these children from the reception class joins the nursery so that they can be supported in developing their language skills. However, the activities are not well planned or structured and do not address their language needs. In practice, children join in general play activities and are not well supported in developing their language skills.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children settle well into school and are used to school routines.
- Opportunities to promote children's independent learning are underdeveloped.
- Adults are good role models for children and have good relationships with them.

Commentary

43. Teaching, learning and children's achievement in this area of learning are satisfactory. Most children adapt quickly to the systems and routines of school. They feel safe and able to work with a variety of adults. They learn to work in both small and large groups with other children, although a significant proportion find it difficult to share and take turns. Whilst children play happily alongside each other, many do not join in co-operative play. Many children find it difficult to sustain concentration on self-chosen tasks and move from one activity to another without being engaged. Some children spend much time moving to different activities or merely watching what is going on, and there is not enough direction by adults to help children to develop the ability to play and learn independently. By the time they enter Year 1, a significant proportion are unlikely to attain the early learning goals expected for their age.

⁹ Early Learning Goals are a set of standards which it is expected that most children will achieve by the end of the Foundation Stage. They are set out into six areas of learning: personal, social and emotional development; communication, language and literacy; mathematical development; knowledge and understanding of the world; creative development; physical development.

COMMUNICATION LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Not enough use is made of role-play to develop children's speaking skills.
- There are few opportunities for children to write independently.

Commentary

44. Teaching, learning and children's achievement in this area of learning are satisfactory. Children start school with skills that are well below average. A significant proportion are receiving speech and language therapy. Children listen well. They enjoy listening to stories and looking at books. Most children recognise initial letters. Children copy their names and sentences written for them by adults. A small number of children can write their names independently. However, children's speaking skills are below average when they start school and, for a significant proportion, they are well below.
45. Staff provide satisfactory opportunities for children to develop their skills, but do not make enough use of role-play. During the inspection, adults were not observed supporting children in role-play or developing their speaking skills in a range of situations. A significant proportion of children are unlikely to attain the early learning goals for this aspect of learning by the time they enter Year 1.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching and a satisfactory range of adult-led activities enable pupils to make good progress in their mathematical development.

Commentary

46. When children join the nursery, their knowledge and skills in mathematics are below average. Staff provide good teaching within a satisfactory range of activities to develop children's skills, such as singing games and rhymes. As a result, children make good progress and achieve well. Children recognise written numbers from 1 to 5 and can match objects accurately to these. They can name solid shapes such as spheres and cones and they know the properties of common solid shapes. Staff make good use of mathematical language and help children use mathematical terms accurately. As a result, most children are on course to achieve the early learning goals for mathematical development by the time they enter Year 1.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children's knowledge and understanding are below average in both the nursery and reception classes.
- Good opportunities are provided for children to develop skills in information and communication technology in the computer suite, but classroom computers are unreliable.

Commentary

47. Teaching and learning in this area are satisfactory, and children's achievement is also satisfactory. Children are given opportunities to use computers, but the program are not reliable and do not always work. In the computer suite, reception children enjoyed using a program to create weather maps. They are able to control the mouse to select objects and drag and drop them to the selected place on the map. Children in the reception class were fascinated to observe the caterpillars in their classroom and could talk about how these would eventually become butterflies.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The outdoor learning area provides good opportunities for children to develop their physical skills.

Commentary

48. Opportunities to develop children's physical skills are satisfactory. Children have access to the outdoor learning area at set times throughout the day. They use wheeled toys and climbing apparatus freely and with growing confidence. In lessons, children are given opportunities to develop their physical skills through sewing, and cutting activities. They use construction materials with average skill and handle scissors, pencils and other small tools with confidence. By the time they enter Year 1, most children will meet the early learning goals expected of them.

Creative development

Provision in creative development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children learn to experiment and become confident with a range of media.

Commentary

49. Children have satisfactory opportunities to develop their creative skills through planned tasks such as colour mixing, working with clay and dough and tasks of their own choosing such as painting. They enjoy cutting and sticking, tracing and using templates. There is a heavy emphasis on language and numeracy skills, and children's independent activities do not sufficiently support their creative development.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Consistently good teaching and good management of pupils' behaviour throughout the school enable pupils to achieve well.
- Pupils improve from below average skills on entry to the school to achieve average standards by the end of Year 6, although the quality of presentation, spelling and handwriting is weak.
- Speaking and listening skills are promoted well in lessons through paired partner discussions and a focus on key vocabulary.

- Good planning by class teachers takes account of the full range of learning needs.
- Good assessment procedures are linked to appropriate target setting which is shared with pupils and parents.
- Good subject co-ordination promotes the development of literacy.
- Teachers are developing some good cross-curricular links, but do not yet fully exploit the potential which other subjects offer to develop pupils' literacy skills.

Commentary

50. The context of the school has changed considerably since the time of the previous inspection, and children now enter the school with limited experiences of literacy. Increasing numbers of pupils are speakers of other languages and new to English when they start school. In addition, a number of children have speech and language difficulties. These factors contribute to an overall drop in standards at the end of Year 2 since the last inspection, although the school has begun to reverse the downward trend in reading standards. Inspection findings show overall standards to be broadly average at the end of Year 2 and Year 6, although in writing there is room for improvement of presentation, spelling and handwriting.
51. Speaking and listening skills are broadly average. Teachers promote these areas well in lessons through the use of response partners, where pupils work in pairs to discuss ideas and solve problems. When discussing texts together or gathering ideas for written tasks, pupils gain from the opportunities they have to rehearse ideas through talking with a partner. Teachers use probing questions to check on understanding. Pupils have good opportunities to address different audiences. For example, pupils in Year 2 were challenged to share their poems with an audience of parents in assembly.
52. Reading standards are broadly average. Pupils enjoy guided reading sessions, where they are encouraged to undertake a range of directed activities relating to different types of texts, and they take reading books home on a regular basis. Reading resources in classrooms are set out attractively and highlight books written by particular authors. As a result, pupils are able to identify favourite authors and the types of books, such as fact or fiction. The upper school library is set out in the Dewey system for reference books. This establishes appropriate reference and enquiry skills development, and older pupils enjoy using the library and computer suite for independent research. A group of parent volunteers makes a valuable contribution by sharing books with pupils learning English as an additional language so that these pupils can extend their vocabulary and comprehension skills.
53. Writing standards are average, although many pupils are careless in the presentation of their written work. The range of writing which pupils undertake is satisfactory and handwriting is regularly and consistently taught. However, many pupils do not make use of the cursive script which they are taught when undertaking independent writing tasks, and revert to printed letters. A significant number of pupils have poorly developed fine motor skills and find it difficult to present clear legible writing. Although pupils have regular spelling tasks, they do not make sufficient use of self-help strategies to edit their own writing. In the lower part of the school, a strong emphasis is made on the development of early phonic¹⁰ skills through games and activities. All pupils are given clear targets for improving written work, and this is particularly effective in increasing awareness of punctuation, sentence structure and the use of words which connect sentences. Pupils in the upper school, however, do not have sufficient opportunities for extended writing in subjects such as history and religious education.
54. The teaching is of consistently good quality. Teachers manage behaviour well and expect pupils to work sensibly on tasks set. Planning takes good account of the full range of different learning needs in each class, and teachers use assessment information well to plan the next

¹⁰ Phonics is a teaching programme aimed at developing an awareness of sounds in the spoken and written word. Pupils learn to read and pronounce words by linking the sounds they hear spoken with the letters, letter groups and syllables they see written.

steps for learning. Good use is made of individual whiteboards to promote early recording skills and phonic knowledge. During the daily literacy lesson, pupils always have some experience of writing, although teachers focus more on the structure and content and rarely on presentation and legibility. Guided reading sessions are organised well to promote a range of reading skills. Teachers make satisfactory use of information and communication technology in lessons and model the processes of reading and writing effectively.

55. Overall provision for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. Teaching assistants make a useful contribution during lessons and when running small-group early literacy and additional literacy support programmes. The special educational needs co-ordinator provides additional teaching support both within the classrooms and in withdrawal sessions. However, some withdrawal arrangements are inefficient and pupils are taken out of lessons in which they could be active learners.
56. Pupils learning English as an additional language generally achieve as well as their peers in lessons, and all teachers have received additional training to identify their particular language learning needs. However, arrangements for additional support from a part-time teacher are inefficient in the use of time, and require closer collaboration and joint planning between staff with regard to the needs of pupils in the early stages of learning English.
57. The co-ordination of English is good. The co-ordinator is well informed, hard-working and enthusiastic. She has worked hard to establish the two school libraries and to ensure that reading materials are graded to enable appropriate match of materials for the full range of pupils' abilities. Lively book events which she has organised, such as a visiting storyteller, and library visits, enhance curricular provision.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

58. The school has identified the development of cross-curricular links for language and literacy as an area for development within the school improvement plan. At the present time, there is insufficient strategic planning to track and monitor extended writing.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching in mathematics is good.
- Pupils achieve well from a low starting point.
- The subject is led and managed well.
- Marking does not always guide pupils as to how they can improve their work.

Commentary

59. Standards in mathematics at the end of Year 2 have shown improvement over the past two years. In the 2003 tests, the proportion of pupils attaining the higher Level 3 in mathematics was above that found nationally. However, a significant proportion of pupils attained well below average results. In lessons, pupils in Year 6 are on course to attain at least average standards. Pupils benefit from the extra input from 'Booster' and 'Springboard' groups. Pupils with specific difficulties in mathematics receive good extra support in small groups with teaching assistants. When pupils start school, their attainment in mathematics is below average. They make steady progress through the school and achieve well.
60. The overall quality of teaching and learning is good. Lessons build well on previous learning and pupils are told what they are going to learn in each lesson. Teachers expect and gain good behaviour from pupils and ensure that all are involved, providing work with partners or groups.

Pupils use number skills in a range of problem-solving activities. They add and subtract decimals showing good understanding of what each digit represents in a given position. Pupils use a range of charts and graphs to record information. However, pupils' skills for tackling problems methodically and planning how they will approach their work are underdeveloped.

61. In the best lessons, teachers encourage pupils to discuss their work and talk about how they have obtained their answers. Pupils are given the opportunity to explore numbers and choose their own methods of working, based on a variety of strategies that they have learned. Lesson endings are used effectively to consolidate learning. The teaching is lively and motivates pupils well. In a small number of satisfactory lessons, the pace of lessons is slow and lesson endings are brief or do not focus sufficiently on whether the lesson objectives have been achieved.
62. Pupils' books are marked regularly, but pupils are not always informed about whether they have met the lesson objectives. Much marking does not give pupils enough guidance about what they need to do to improve their work. As yet, there is little opportunity for pupils to be involved in setting their own targets, though this is developing.
63. The subject is led and managed well. The subject leader has identified whole-school priorities to ensure a consistent approach to teaching, although opportunities to monitor what is happening in classrooms are limited. The school has worked hard to develop systems for tracking how well pupils are doing. Teachers are now beginning to use this information to check progress and establish what individual pupils need to do next.

Mathematics across the curriculum

64. Numeracy skills are promoted satisfactorily in other lessons, such as science and information and communication technology. This enables pupils to develop their data-handling skills. Pupils in Year 6 use mathematics in their work on spreadsheets. Other subjects, however, are not used as well to develop mathematical skills, as teachers do not identify mathematical links in their lesson plans.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching in science leads to satisfactory development of knowledge, skills and understanding across all areas of the science curriculum.
- A strong emphasis on investigative science enables pupils to develop appropriate enquiry and investigative skills through first-hand experiences.
- The well-informed co-ordinator provides good leadership and management.
- Good assessment procedures, target-setting and tracking of pupils' progress keep pupils informed about what they need to do to improve their work.
- There is a good focus on scientific vocabulary in lessons.
- The science curriculum is enriched through science week activities and visitors.
- Pupils do not always present their work well in science.

Commentary

65. Inspection findings show that pupils attain average standards in science by the end of Years 2 and 6. Current targets for pupils in Year 6 indicate that all pupils should achieve the nationally expected Level 4, and a quarter are likely to achieve the higher Level 5. The school identified a need to place greater emphasis on pupils' investigative and enquiry skills in order to raise overall standards, and much evidence was seen during the inspection of developments in this area.

66. The subject is led and managed well by an enthusiastic co-ordinator. Science is promoted well through additional activities, such as the recent science week. Parents and pupils enjoyed undertaking a range of stimulating workshops, including a science-learning dome from the Planetarium. An after-school science club is well attended.
67. Pupils enjoy the practical nature of science activities provided in their lessons. For example, pupils in Year 1 were fascinated when using torches to investigate shiny and dull materials hidden in black pinhole boxes, and a group of pupils in Year 6 were excited by the task of making electrical circuits using motors, switches, wires, bulbs and batteries which they had selected.
68. Marking informs pupils what they have done well and reminds them of what they need to do to improve. All pupils have clear targets which are placed in their books and displayed as group targets around the classrooms as well. Teachers make good reference to these.
69. The teaching is consistently good and takes account of the full range of learning needs, including those of pupils with special educational needs and those new to English. Resources are well set out in advance, and teachers encourage pupils to plan and undertake practical investigations in small groups. Teachers make good links between everyday life and scientific learning. For example, pupils in Year 3 were challenged to solve the problem of clearing spilt water from the floor by investigating materials for absorbing water. Teachers teach technical scientific vocabulary well and reinforce this through displays. Pupils undertake a satisfactory range of recorded work, although standards of presentation are a weakness for a significant number of pupils.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good leadership has resulted in well-managed changes which have led to improvements in the standards achieved by pupils.
- The quality of the teaching is good. As a result, pupils of all capabilities have made good progress this year and are achieving well.
- The teachers have good information and communication technology skills and are keen to make greater use of new technology, but are restricted by shortcomings in the resources available within the classroom.
- The adoption of a new teaching course has provided a good structure for the teaching of information and communication technology skills, but opportunities are missed to relate these to other subjects.
- There are not enough opportunities for pupils to complete extended projects involving information and communication technology and which encourage the development of independent skills.

Commentary

70. The provision in information and communication technology has improved significantly since the installation of the computer suite and the adoption of a new scheme of work at the start of the current school year. Pupils are now getting more frequent access to computers, and staff are making a much more concerted effort to teach new skills. As a result, pupils of all capabilities are achieving well. They have made good progress in a short space of time to attain the standards expected for their age at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. The achievement of pupils in Year 6 is particularly good, considering the lack of input into the subject in previous years.
71. The leadership and management of information and communication technology, which have enabled these improvements, have been good. The groundwork was laid by the previous

subject co-ordinator, and her successor is ambitious to bring even further improvements. Whilst fully acknowledging the positive aspects of the recent changes, the co-ordinator has a clear understanding of what needs to be done to consolidate these gains and to enable pupils to achieve higher standards. A good development plan has been drawn up and research conducted into ways of funding a further upgrade of the school's resources.

72. Pupils learn the important basics of using computers from an early age. Pupils in Years 1 and 2, for example, successfully log on to the school's network, locate programs, print their work and save their files. The strongest aspect of pupils' work throughout the school is their ability to find out and communicate information. Pupils quickly get used to using a word processor to present written work, quickly learning how to change the size, style and appearance of their text. Most younger pupils work quite slowly as they search for letters on the keyboard but, by the time they reach Year 6, many pupils type quite quickly, although none have been taught proper keyboarding technique. In the upper part of the school, pupils extend their ability to communicate information through the use of a presentation program and spreadsheets. There are encouraging signs of pupils making good use of new technology to present their work. For example, posters produced by pupils in Year 5 in connection with a geography project on 'water literacy' demonstrate good awareness of audience and sound technical skills in manipulating text and graphics to produce a pleasing effect. One of the limitations of the teaching course which has been adopted is that most suggested lessons are self-contained units of work which do not offer pupils sufficient scope to develop their ideas or to review, modify and evaluate their work. Although such skills are taught, there are not enough opportunities for pupils to exercise their independence and to work on more substantial projects.
73. The overall quality of teaching and learning is good. The teachers have good information and communication technology skills and are keen to take advantage of the school's computer suite. They give careful consideration to the way they organise teaching groups in order to meet the needs of individual pupils. Many teachers ensure that pupils work in boy-girl pairs, which helps to break down stereotypes and is an effective strategy to manage pupils' behaviour. All of the teachers manage pupils' behaviour well, which is no mean feat in the small and awkwardly shaped computer suite. Good attention is given to meeting the needs of pupils with special educational needs and those at an early stage of learning English. In Year 2, for example, various sessions are set aside during the week for a visually impaired pupil to use the classroom computer to complete her English work and to make progress towards completing a target in her individual education plan. The teachers encourage pupils to discuss their work and possible solutions with a partner, which not only helps them to learn, but encourages good social skills. When present, teaching assistants are used effectively to provide support for pupils or to assist the teacher.
74. Despite the good support of the parent-teacher association, which funded the purchase of a new digital projector for use in classrooms, the quality and quantity of the school's resources remain a limiting factor to greater progress. Resources within the computer suite are good, but the resources available within the classroom limit opportunities for pupils to consolidate what they have learnt in the computer suite. Some of the classroom computers are old and unreliable, some do not have the same range of software which is used in the computer suite, and none have access to the computer room server. Therefore, if pupils are unable to finish a piece of work in their allotted time in the computer suite, they are unable to complete it on the classroom computer, and this is one of the main reasons why many pupils have a number of pieces of unfinished work.
75. The decision to adopt a published course for use in all classes has provided staff with a good structure for their planning and helps to ensure that information and communication technology skills are taught systematically and progressively. However, the tasks and contexts suggested by the course often do not tie in with other work which is being undertaken and, as a result, teachers miss opportunities to enrich pupils' learning in other subjects whilst teaching information and communication technology skills. New assessment procedures have recently been introduced, with the result that teachers now have a good idea of what pupils should be

achieving and how well they are progressing. The school has good arrangements for maintaining equipment and providing professional development for staff. The computer club, which runs on one lunchtime a week, provides a good opportunity for interested pupils to develop their skills even further. During the inspection, for example, a group of keen pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 were developing their ability to put together a presentation about their school.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

76. All staff are making a good effort to identify ways in which new technology can be used to promote pupils' learning in other subjects. In addition to their weekly lesson to teach information and communication technology skills, each class has a second session in the computer suite to use computers within the context of a literacy or numeracy lesson. A very good feature of teachers' weekly planning is the way they identify how new technology can be used to help pupils to learn in all subjects. Occasionally, some of the tasks identified are not the most effective, but there are many good examples of activities which interest the pupils and help to clarify concepts more effectively through the use of computers. The only limiting factors are the number of times each class can use the computer suite and the lack of resources within the classroom.

HUMANITIES

77. During the inspection, no history lessons were timetabled. Teachers' planning shows that the curriculum is covered satisfactorily, although not in great depth, as there is little recorded work in pupils' books. There is a heavy reliance on published worksheets. Some pupils have weak literacy skills which means that it is difficult to assess their work in history. As no lessons were observed, it is not possible to make a secure judgement on teaching in history. The co-ordinator is new to the role. She has made a good start to managing the subject and has a clear view of what needs to be done. She has not yet had the opportunity to monitor teaching, but this is scheduled for the next term.

78. Three geography lessons were observed during the inspection. Teaching and learning were good in these lessons. In Year 4, pupils learn about recycling and how individual actions can make a difference. In Year 6, pupils compiled fact files on mountain ranges and prepared to make presentations to the class. Pupils had made good use of their literacy and ICT skills in their work. They had found information from a variety of sources and presented their work in different formats showing flair and imagination. Some had confidently made PowerPoint presentations.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils gain satisfactory knowledge and understanding of world faiths and respect for individual beliefs.
- Very little of the pupils' learning is recorded in writing, and teachers miss opportunities to use religious education to develop pupils' writing skills.

Commentary

79. It was only possible to observe two lessons due to timetable arrangements, and the subject co-ordinator was absent during the inspection. Scrutiny of pupils' work, displays and discussions with pupils show standards to be broadly average at the end of Year 2 and Year 6, and indicate that the teaching is satisfactory.
80. Pupils in Year 6 show a sound appreciation of the need to respect personal belief. They have sufficient knowledge to discuss aspects of different places of worship. They have a satisfactory understanding of the significance of holy books, celebrations and artefacts relating to different world religions, such as Hinduism, Islam, Christianity and Judaism. For example, pupils in Year 6 talk knowledgeably about similarities and differences in wedding rites within different religious traditions. Pupils in Year 2 are developing a sound understanding of aspects of Christianity. They enjoyed reading a range of different grace poems together as part of their study of Christianity because time was used well to explore this. They understand why a Christian will say a grace before meals.
81. Whilst discussions with pupils show that aspects of religious education are taught satisfactorily, there are indications that the subject is not taught in as much depth as some others and pupils' progress is constrained because of lack of time devoted to teaching the subject. For example, a lesson observed in the upper school was foreshortened due to a late start, and pupils had insufficient time to consolidate their learning on the Shabbat celebration within Judaism.
82. The range of recorded written work for religious education is very limited, and there are few examples of the outcomes of lessons being recorded through such things as photographs, class books or artwork gathered into a portfolio. Very little use is made of opportunities to develop pupils' literacy skills through extended writing or research into religious education topics. The school has good links with the local church, but has yet to develop links with other local places of worship.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

83. Work in art and design, design and technology, music and physical education was only sampled as these subjects were not the main focus of this inspection. Therefore, no overall judgements about provision in these subjects have been made. Samples of pupils' work were examined in art and design and design and technology, and one physical education lesson was observed. Discussions were held with the co-ordinators for art and design, design and technology and music.
84. Work on display around the school indicates that pupils achieve standards in **art and design** which are fairly typical for their age by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Patterns produced by pupils in Year 2 and examples of work in Year 6 inspired by Aboriginal art, as well as sketches of people in action, are of a satisfactory standard. Pupils have their own sketchbooks, but these appear to be a recent introduction as they contain few pieces of work and there is no clear indication in these books that pupils are being taught skills in a systematic way which will enable them to progress beyond their natural artistic ability. Pupils' sketchbooks contain few helpful comments from teachers which might show pupils how they can improve their work. Provision appears to be improving. In the very short time in which she has been responsible for the subject, the co-ordinator is already having an impact on the way the subject is managed. The previous action plan has been evaluated and a new action plan produced. There is good ambition for the subject and, in conjunction with music, the school is aiming towards the achievement of an Artsmark award. Teachers now have a satisfactory scheme of work to guide their planning, and there are satisfactory procedures for assessing pupils' work, which now provide teachers with a clearer picture of how well pupils are doing. Satisfactory arrangements have been made for monitoring the quality of teaching, with time set aside during the summer term for observation of lessons.

85. One of the school's recent targets has been to improve provision in **design and technology**. As well as drawing up an action plan, the co-ordinator has improved the organisation of the school's resources so that materials are readily to hand for each of the units of work in each year group. The small amount of work on display, such as the wheeled vehicles made by pupils in Year 2, is of a satisfactory standard, although the quality of designs, the presentation of work and the depth to which pupils have pursued their work, indicate that standards are below average by the end of Year 6. There are few examples of substantial projects which involve pupils in investigating a product, drawing up careful plans, making their product and then evaluating it. The time allocated to the subject is a limiting factor, although a good innovation at the end of the last school year was the introduction of a design and technology week, during which pupils from all classes were involved in larger scale projects. Photographic evidence from the assemblies in which pupils displayed a variety of kites, shields, masks and other artefacts indicates that the week provided worthwhile experiences for all pupils. A good recent development has been the liaison with the local secondary school, which has resulted in visits being set up for pupils in Year 5 for later in the school year.
86. No musical activities were observed during the inspection. The co-ordinator has made good improvements to the curriculum in **music** and to the way the subject is organised. Through the introduction of a new scheme, much better support is provided for other teachers, none of whom are specialists in the subject. There are good opportunities outside the formal curriculum for pupils to develop their musical skills. Christmas performances and end-of-year summer performances involving singing and dancing have been very successful. Pupils in Key Stage 2 have the opportunity to participate in a lunchtime recorder club once a week. Various musicians, such as drummers, a brass band and a lady demonstrating the bassoon, have visited the school and conducted workshops for pupils. The school has identified those who may be talented musicians and, in one instance, this has resulted in the provision of piano lessons. Parents have been offered extra-curricular instrumental tuition for their children, but there has been little take-up. The school has a satisfactory range of resources, although there is a lack of pitched percussion instruments. Good help is available from the local authority to assist the professional development of staff.
87. In the **physical education** lesson observed, pupils in Year 4 were learning country-dance movements with a view to composing their own dance in a subsequent lesson. The standards displayed by many pupils were below those expected for their age, but sound teaching and the good response of most pupils resulted in visible progress during the lesson. There are good arrangements for pupils to swim in the nearby swimming baths, and opportunities for extra-curricular sport have improved significantly during the course of this year. There is currently no co-ordinator for physical education, and this is a weakness which needs to be rectified.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

88. The school makes good provision for pupils' personal, social and health education. The school has developed an appropriate policy on sex education, substance abuse and drugs education and has good links with the school nurse and local police. Parents are fully informed of the school's approaches and provided with opportunities to discuss any areas of concern. The co-ordinator is well informed, and circle time has been introduced into all classes, in addition to a commercial scheme of work which promotes personal, social and health education. For example, pupils in Years 2 and 6 looked at the issue of bullying and made posters to reflect useful strategies to counteract bullying.
89. All classes have a weekly issue of a moral nature to debate, and this encourages the development of thinking skills and awareness of responsibilities within the wider community. For example, pupils consider whether or not it is acceptable to lie, and try to imagine a world without television.
90. The school has just established a school council with representatives from all classes, and a scheme of playground buddies is already successfully in operation, whereby older pupils

befriend younger pupils or those feeling lonely. Boxes are placed in all classrooms and pupils are able to raise issues of personal concern, in confidence, to their teachers by placing a note in the box.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	3
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	3
Pupils' achievement	3
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	3
Attendance	4
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	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	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	3
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).