

INSPECTION REPORT

Cove Infant School

Cove, Farnborough

LEA area: Hampshire

Unique reference number: 116141

Headteacher: Mrs J Sampson

Lead inspector: Ruth Frith

Dates of inspection: 23 – 25 February 2004

Inspection number: 260662

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:	Infant
School category:	Foundation
Age range of pupils:	4 – 7 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	169
School address:	92 Fernhill Road Cove Farnborough Hampshire
Postcode:	GU14 9DP
Telephone number:	01252 543737
Fax number:	01252 376513
Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr. Kenny Dawkins
Date of previous inspection:	8 March 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Cove Infant School is a smaller than average size primary school. It is an urban foundation school which provides for boys and girls aged four to seven years. Pupils come from a range of social backgrounds but overall, the socio-economic status of families is average. A lower than average percentage of pupils receives free school meals. When children join the school, overall they show levels of attainment which are broadly average but there are weaknesses in a significant minority of children's language skills. Currently, a very small number of pupils have been identified as having special educational needs. Most pupils are from White – British heritage and one pupil is bilingual. Pupil mobility is relatively low but over several years, teacher mobility has been quite high. Similar to other schools in the area, Cove Infant School finds it difficult to recruit teachers and at the time of the inspection, three out of the six class teachers were temporary, with two of these starting to teach their class on the first day of the inspection. Also, after two days, due to other commitments, one of these was replaced by another temporary teacher. The school currently has an acting deputy headteacher who has been in post since January.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
2490	Ruth Frith	Lead inspector	Science Geography History English as an additional language Foundation Stage
9519	Sue Pritchard	Lay inspector	
28320	Robert Willey	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Art and design Design and technology
23805	Margaret Lygoe	Team inspector	English Music Physical education Religious education Special educational needs

The inspection contractor was:

Cambridge Education Associates

Demeter House
Station Road
Cambridge
CB1 2RS

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be made initially to the inspection 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 INSPECTION FINDINGS	
STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS	9
Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL	12
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	16
PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECTS	19
AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE	
SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGE 1	
PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS	32

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

The school has successfully maintained a satisfactory standard of education during a time when it has been very difficult to appoint permanent teaching staff. The school provides a happy and supportive environment where pupils become confident and enjoy learning. Teaching and provision are satisfactory, overall, resulting in satisfactory achievement. These are good in classes and areas led by established staff. Parents have a great deal of confidence in what the school provides for their children. Overall, the school provides satisfactory value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- In 2003, Year 2 pupils attained average standards in reading, writing and science and above average standards in mathematics. However, some pupils are not achieving as well as they could in writing.
- Teaching and learning are good in the reception classes and this helps children to achieve well. Frequent changes of teachers have affected the consistency of teaching in Years 1 and 2, where it is sound overall.
- Pupils with special educational needs receive good support and achieve well.
- Pupils' attitudes to school are good which helps them to maintain good rates of attendance.
- Pupils' personal qualities are developed well and this leads to good attitudes, relationships and behaviour. Staff find out what pupils think about the school and take this into account very well.
- Leadership by the headteacher and established managers is good, as are the management and governance of the school.
- Good systems are in place to ensure that pupils are well cared for and that the school is a safe place in which to learn.
- Links with parents are very good and they, in turn, support the school well.

The school has shown satisfactory improvement since the last inspection and successfully addressed all the main issues identified in the last report, apart from the recruitment and retention of teachers. The governors have developed their roles well and, together with staff, continue to strive to raise standards. The way teachers assess what pupils have learnt has improved and the information gained from this is used to track their progress. Also, good opportunities are now provided for parents to meet with teachers and find out how well their children are doing.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

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

Children achieve satisfactorily, overall. They achieve well in the reception classes and satisfactorily in Years 1 and 2. By the time they enter Year 1, pupils reach the standards expected for their age and frequently above this in some areas of learning. Pupils in Year 2 are achieving satisfactorily overall in English and in science and currently working at average levels in speaking, listening, reading, writing and science. They are achieving well in mathematics because provision, teaching and learning are good. Pupils in Year 2 are likely to maintain the above average mathematics standards the school achieved last year. Pupils are also achieving well in information and communication technology and are attaining above average standards. Pupils with special

educational needs achieve well due to the effective support provided. Bilingual pupils achieve in line with their peers. Higher attaining pupils usually achieve well, apart from in writing where they are not always sufficiently challenged.

Provision to develop pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural education, is good. Pupils enjoy going to school and attendance is good. They are encouraged to become involved in their learning and work with others. As a result pupils behave well, develop good attitudes and become aware of the needs of others. They show a good understanding of environmental issues and are interested in the local and wider community.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school and the quality of teaching are satisfactory overall. The headteacher and permanent staff have high expectations and set good standards. Throughout the school, staff insist on good standards of behaviour and engage the attention of pupils well. Developments in the teaching of writing have been restricted because of difficulties in maintaining a permanent subject leader. However, in mathematics, where there has been very good leadership, the quality of teaching is better, pupils achieve well and reach higher standards. Teaching and learning in the reception classes are also good. Throughout the school, learning support assistants make a positive contribution to the pupils' learning and the standards they achieve and maintain stability in those classes where teachers frequently change.

The curriculum is good in the reception classes and satisfactory elsewhere. This is because staffing is more stable in the reception classes and these teachers have developed the curriculum well over time. Across the school, there are particular strengths in the provision for pupils with special educational needs and in the way pupils are prepared for their next stage of learning. A good range of clubs, visits and visitors enriches the curriculum and provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is good. Accommodation and learning resources are good, but the inability of the school to appoint permanent staff has affected the quality of education and the development of teaching and learning. Taking this into account, overall resources are unsatisfactory. Despite this difficult situation, there are good systems in place to support new staff and maintain a good ethos for learning. Staff work hard to ensure that pupils are well cared for and feel supported. They value pupils very effectively by taking their views into account through, for example, class discussions and the school council. This results in pupils who are confident and proud of their school. Staff have developed very good links with parents and good links with other schools and the community.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good, overall. The leadership of the headteacher and established managers is good. Governance is good and ensures that legal requirements are met. Management is good, overall. The difficulties arising from staff changes have been managed well but have affected the development of some subjects, making subject leadership satisfactory overall. Some staff, particularly the headteacher, have a heavy work load in terms of additional management responsibilities. The headteacher and governors have a clear vision of how the school should develop and are fully committed to running a school where all pupils are helped to develop well, both academically and socially.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

The school communicates with parents very effectively. Parents are pleased with the information they receive and how they are helped to support their children's learning. They believe that the school is well led and managed, teaching is good and their children make good progress. The majority of pupils feel they could approach a member of staff if they had a problem, that teachers encourage them to work hard and they are interested in lessons where they learn new things.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Raise standards in writing.
- Appoint permanent teachers in order to bring stability to all pupils' learning and to ensure a more equitable distribution of responsibilities.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in subjects

Achievement is satisfactory overall. Children achieve well in the reception classes and overall achieve satisfactorily in Years 1 and 2. This resulted in them attaining average standards in reading and writing and above average standards in mathematics in the 2003 national tests.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Due to good teaching and good curricular provision, children in the reception classes make good progress.
- Pupils achieve well in mathematics due to good leadership of the subject and the school's recent emphasis on raising attainment in this area.
- Pupils achieve well in information and communication technology due to improvements in the leadership of the subject, good teaching, facilities and resources.
- Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and consequently achieve well.
- Although pupils' standards in writing are satisfactory overall, there is insufficient challenge for some pupils, particularly the higher attainers.
- Standards have risen in reading, writing and mathematics mainly due to the high expectations of the headteacher and the support given to staff which is bringing about improvements in teaching and learning.

Commentary

1. On entry to school, children's attainment is broadly average although the language skills of a significant minority are below those expected for their age. Due to the good teaching and provision of a broad and interesting curriculum, children achieve well. By the time they leave the reception class, they reach the standards expected for their age nationally in all areas of learning, apart from in their personal, social, mathematical and physical development where standards are higher.
2. Attainment in the 2003 national tests for pupils in Year 2 was average in speaking, listening, reading and writing and above average in mathematics when compared with pupils in all schools. These results show an improvement from the previous year in reading, writing and mathematics and reflect the focus senior managers have placed on improving provision and raising standards. When compared with similar schools, they attained average standards in reading and writing and above average standards in mathematics. Teacher assessment in science indicates an above average percentage of pupils attained the standard expected for their age with an average percentage achieving a higher level. In those areas where there has been stability of staffing, such as in the reception classes, in mathematics and for some time in Year 2, standards are better because there is consistency in learning and appropriate challenge. In other areas such as literacy and in Year 1, improvements in teaching and differing expectations have restricted developments and pupils' achievement. Over the last five years, the school's trend of improvement was broadly in line with the national trend.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 – average point scores in2003

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	16.2 (15.1)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	14.8 (13.4)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	17.1 (15.6)	16.3 (16.5)

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

3. Evidence from this inspection shows some significant signs of improvement, although there is still some underachievement in writing. In some classes, pupils do not have sufficient opportunity to write at length and writing opportunities are not always sufficiently well planned in other subjects. The high level of teacher mobility in the past has affected the quality of teaching in some classes and also the management and leadership of some subjects. This is true of literacy, where the subject manager has only been in place for a term. However, the good leadership by the headteacher has ensured that the school has continued to strive to raise standards of attainment and writing has already been identified as a key area for development. Overall, pupils are achieving satisfactorily in reading, writing and science and are achieving well in mathematics. Pupils in Year 2 are currently working at average levels in reading, writing and science and above average levels in mathematics.
4. Standards in mathematics are above average. This is because children enter Year 1 with above average skills in numeracy, and continue to develop them well over the next two years. The subject has been well led over a number of years and the curriculum has developed well following the monitoring and evaluation of provision and standards. Strengths have been highlighted and developed, and areas of relative weakness have been addressed. This has resulted in teaching and learning which are good or better.
5. Throughout the school, pupils are achieving well in information and communication technology due to the recent improvements in teaching and facilities. The work is well planned and pupils have good opportunities to develop and practise their skills in the two mini computer suites. This has resulted in pupils attaining above average standards. The school has identified the need to use information and communication more, when studying other subjects and this is just beginning to improve. Standards of work seen during the inspection were satisfactory in art and design, design and technology and religious education.
6. No significant difference was noted in the achievement between boys and girls during the inspection although there have been differences in the Year 2 national test results. In 2003, girls did better than boys in reading, writing and mathematics. Over the last three years, girls did better than boys in reading and writing and boys did better than girls in mathematics. From observation, there was no significant difference in the achievement of the few pupils from different minority ethnic groups and bilingual learners achieve in line with their peers.
7. Pupils with special educational needs have positive attitudes to learning and are encouraged to work hard. The support they receive is good and helps them to achieve well in most lessons. Information provided by the school shows that most achieve in line with their abilities, and some reach the standards expected for their age in the national Year 2 tests.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes to learning are good and they behave well. The school makes good provision for their personal development. Attendance rates and punctuality are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are keen to take part in activities and are usually eager to learn.
- There is very good provision for pupils' social development and they begin to take on the responsibilities of living in a community.
- The school expects high standards of behaviour and pupils feel confident that any bullying will be dealt with promptly.
- Some pupils find frequent changes of teacher unsettling and this affects their behaviour in lessons.
- Pupils are taught to respect each other and relationships are good.
- Provision for pupils' spiritual development has improved since the last inspection.

Commentary

8. The school successfully encourages pupils to attend regularly, and parents support the school in this. Most pupils arrive promptly and lessons start on time.

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence	
School data	4.5
National data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	
School data	0.6
National data	0.4

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

9. Pupils have a very good variety of opportunities for developing a sense of social responsibility. They undertake jobs in the classroom sensibly and take messages to other classes. Year 2 pupils show increasing levels of confidence and take on many roles around the school, such as preparing the hall for assembly and operating the CD player. At lunch times they answer the telephone in the reception area, and advise a member of staff if someone has arrived at the door. Pupils conduct visitors round the school showing a high degree of confidence. Playground “buddies” help to ensure that others have someone to play with. The school council gives pupils from all classes a voice in managing the school. Pupils demonstrate a very high level of environmental awareness. They are proud of the school grounds, and are eager to show off their designs for the planned “butterfly garden”.
10. Almost all pupils like school and are keen to take part in activities. In most lessons pupils behave well and try hard to follow instructions. Class teachers and learning support assistants expect, and achieve, good standards of behaviour. The attitudes and behaviour in some lessons are very good, where pupils are swept along by high quality teaching. This was seen in Year 2 in history and in physical education. All teachers, including temporary teachers, remain calm and ensure that pupils understand what is expected of them. Some pupils, however, find it difficult to cope when they have unfamiliar teachers. One Year 2 class had two different temporary teachers during the three days of the inspection. A minority of pupils became silly, giggling and moving around the carpet area, and some learning time was wasted. The learning support assistants provide a valuable consistency in provision and know all pupils well. They play a significant role in reinforcing good behaviour during the lunch-break and around the school. Behaviour in the playground is good. Pupils and parents are confident that any bullying is likely to be dealt with effectively. There have been no exclusions in the past year.
11. Staff are very successful in supporting pupils who have particular behavioural difficulties. These pupils respond well in most lessons because they are treated calmly and consistently. Good behaviour is praised and encouraged and pupils are given carefully planned opportunities to behave responsibly, for example by taking messages.
12. Pupils respect each other and learn to listen to others when they speak. Teachers value individual contributions and direct questions carefully to involve those who do not readily volunteer answers. They learn to respect the values and beliefs of others. In geography, pupils learn about other countries and they learn about Christianity and Judaism in religious education. Cultural development through art and music is good. Pupils also learn about celebrations such as Eid and Chinese New Year, as well as the Christian celebrations of Christmas and Easter.

13. The provision for pupils' spiritual development has improved since the last inspection and is now good. Assemblies make a strong contribution to this aspect and pupils are encouraged to reflect on their lives and on the needs of other people. In lessons, teachers encourage pupils to stretch their imaginations, for example by empathising with a soldier in the Crimea in a history lesson, and by linking music with happy and sad feelings in religious education.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is satisfactory. The quality of teaching and the curriculum are satisfactory overall. They are good in the reception classes and satisfactory in Years 1 and 2. Across the school, pupils are well cared for and staff seek, value and act on their views very well. Links with parents are very good and links with the community and other schools are good.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. They are good in the reception classes and broadly satisfactory in Years 1 and 2, with some strengths in the teaching of mathematics and information and communication technology. Overall, the way teachers assess pupils' work is satisfactory; it is good in the reception classes and satisfactory elsewhere.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The key problem facing the school is the variability in teaching brought about by frequent staff changes.
- Teaching and learning are good in the reception classes and this helps pupils to achieve well.
- Teaching and learning are good in mathematics and information and communication technology.
- There is some excellent teaching in physical education and history.
- The quality of teaching and support for pupils with special educational needs are good.
- The expertise of learning support assistants significantly enhances the pupils' learning and the standards they achieve.
- Staff have high expectations of good behaviour, engage the interest of pupils' well and this helps to provide a good ethos for learning.

Commentary

14. Teaching in the reception classes has developed over time with established staff and is consistently good, with some which is very good or excellent. Particular strengths include the high expectations and the challenge presented in all areas of learning. Results in the 2003 national tests show that although teaching is generally satisfactory in Years 1 and 2, there have been some dips in the pupils' learning over time, particularly in writing. Evidence from this inspection, however, indicates that pupils are learning more consistently as the quality of teaching improves. The quality of teaching of permanent staff is usually good and sometimes better than this. The chart below gives an outline of the lessons observed during the inspection and shows that two-thirds of lessons are good or better and nearly a quarter very good or better. This reflects the focus of senior management on raising standards through the improvement of teaching, and the good structures in place which clearly outline what pupils are expected to learn and achieve.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 32 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
3 (9%)	4 (13%)	14 (44%)	11 (34%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

15. Despite changes in teaching staff, the good support they receive ensures that the school ethos is maintained with a strong focus on learning. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and demonstrate this well during lessons, in assemblies and around the school. Pupils respond well because they know what is expected of them and they are interested in their learning. When pupils show signs that they are finding learning difficult, additional support is given by teachers or learning support staff and this helps them progress. Learning support assistants are well trained and fully aware of the pupils' needs. When they know that individual pupils can do better, they are encouraged to do so. This is done in a way where most pupils respond well because the relationships between adults and pupils are good.
16. There are some particular strengths in the teaching of mathematics, information and communication technology, history and physical education. Mathematics, physical education and information and communication technology are well managed across the school by leaders with good subject knowledge. They ensure that schemes of work used for teaching are appropriate and that teachers are confident in what they are expected to teach. Clear action plans highlight areas of development so teachers keep up-to-date and receive good support. These features, together with good resources and facilities, maintain good quality teaching and enhance pupils' learning. The good subject knowledge of the history, physical education and information and communication technology subject managers is used well in their own teaching and these lessons act as good examples for others in the school. Particular strengths include the pace and challenge of learning which excite children and motivate them to learn. Many of these lessons also make a positive contribution to pupils' spiritual and social development as, for example, when pupils respond to music or when they find out about the conditions in the Crimean War.
17. Although the way teachers assess pupils' work is satisfactory overall, it has been affected over time due to changes in staffing. Senior managers have ensured that those who need additional help with their learning are well supported but in some cases higher attaining pupils are not appropriately challenged. This is the case in writing, where expectations are not high enough and these pupils could be writing in greater depth. In the reception classes, teachers assess the children well so that they present work of appropriate challenge and learning develops systematically over time at a good pace.
18. Teaching for pupils with special educational needs is good, enabling them to make good progress and to achieve well when they are being supported. Inclusion is good and pupils have full access to the curriculum. Teachers ensure that pupils of all levels of ability take full part in all parts of the lesson, and adapt their questioning to accommodate different levels of understanding. Learning support assistants are fully briefed about each lesson and encourage pupils to try their best in every activity. Targets for pupils with special educational needs are reviewed termly and sometimes more frequently. Progress is assessed, and new targets set. Day-to-day assessment notes made by teachers and learning support assistants are a very good feature. These allow staff to track individual learning over time.

The curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is satisfactory, overall. It is good in the reception year and satisfactory for pupils in Years 1 and 2, although there are good opportunities for enrichment. Although the accommodation and learning resources are good, frequent staffing problems affect the continuity of the delivery of curriculum programmes so resources overall are unsatisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school works hard to overcome the problems caused by difficulties in recruiting and retaining teachers.
- Curriculum provision in the Foundation Stage is good because it covers all areas of learning well and motivates the children to learn.

- Inclusion is good and affords full access to the curriculum for all pupils.
- Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because of the support they receive from teachers and learning support assistants.
- Clubs, visits and visitors enhance the curriculum well and contribute to pupils' knowledge and understanding.

Commentary

19. As at the time of the last inspection, the curriculum provides full coverage of all aspects of the National Curriculum despite staffing difficulties that remain as acute as they were five years ago. The school and its governors have achieved little in the way of attracting and retaining permanent teachers in spite of the stringent efforts they have made. All subjects have a subject leader albeit that these roles are concentrated upon a nucleus of permanent teachers. The acting deputy headteacher holds responsibilities for Early Years, mathematics and physical education in addition to her specific leadership and management duties. The school works very hard to minimise the effects of temporary teachers upon curriculum continuity. The good planning in place and adaptability to situations are key elements in the successful approach to the problem. The flexibility of the school was well reflected during the inspection when the artistic skills of a temporary teacher and the physical education skills of a permanent teacher in Year 2 were used as they taught their own and each other's class for their specialist subjects. As a result, both Year 2 classes had good art and design and physical education lessons and achieved well. However, this kind of response cannot always be achieved.
20. Stability of staffing has proved to be a key feature in the development of the curriculum for children in the reception classes. Here, the good knowledge and understanding of the needs of young children are used well by teachers who plan programmes of work which match the children's abilities and motivate them to learn. A particularly good aspect is the way in which areas of learning are linked through a topic. This helps the children to understand what they are expected to do and to practise their skills and apply their knowledge in different situations.
21. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good, and most support takes place in the classroom. Individual education plans are well written, have measurable targets and are used effectively as working documents. Links between assessment and target setting are good.
22. A good range of clubs, improved since the last inspection, visits and visitors enrich the curriculum. Visits to local venues give good support to many subject areas. Regular visitors to school including the local vicar, school nurse and local police make good contributions to many aspects of the curriculum and particularly to the good, well organised provision for personal, social and health education. Specialist inputs from theatre groups and teachers working in willow for art and design technology, supplement the contributions of regular visitors well.
23. The school is dedicated to inclusion for all the pupils in its care. Careful attention is given to ensuring that all pupils, whatever their needs, have the same opportunities to take part in all aspects of school life. The only exception to this is the lack of appropriate challenge in writing for higher attaining pupils. However, pupils feel they are treated well by thoughtful staff and this is clearly reflected in pupils' views of the school. The school seeks pupils' views, values them and subsequently acts upon them very well.

Care, guidance and support

The systems to ensure the care, welfare, health and safety of pupils are good, as is the pupils' access to well-informed support and guidance. The school pays very good attention to seeking pupils' views and acting on them.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school promotes pupils' ideas and opinions very well.
- Pupils feel safe and secure in school.
- Good attention is given to health and safety matters in school.

Commentary

24. Children in the reception class settle in quickly because of the good induction arrangements. The school makes good use of its formal and informal support networks to get to know pupils and families and tailors its support to their needs. The very good links with other schools build a strong sense of community and security for all pupils. Consequently, pupils are enthusiastic about school and value the friendship of others. They say they particularly like the "Red Hat (buddy) system, the wildlife area, the library, the computers and learning about people and their religions", when talking to the inspectors. Parents are very happy with the quality of care their children receive.
25. The arrangements to secure the safety and welfare of pupils work well. The school takes a meticulous approach in dealing with issues arising from the frequent risk assessments that cover all areas of its work. Child protection procedures are good and firmly embedded in school practices. They are likely to ensure that concerns are identified and brought to the attention of the appropriate authorities at an early stage. The school acts quickly in establishing facts and caring for those affected. Staff are very aware of their responsibilities when administering first aid, tending always to err on the side of caution by seeking specialist advice in the first instance.
26. Pupils are being introduced well to the principles of citizenship and democracy. They elect school councillors and are pleased to see teachers take on board their ideas on school improvement. They share in the sense of pride that comes from knowing their views matter and in manipulating change for the better. The school seizes all opportunities to promote the views of its pupils for the good of the whole community. Pupils' thoughts and drawings on what a butterfly garden should look like are displayed prominently in the foyer. Their concerns about wilful acts of vandalism to school grounds are highlighted and publicised in the local paper. Pupils develop a good sense of equality and justice in their dealing with adults in authority and each other. This helps them communicate, work and play together well. Pupils bond easily with the adults who care for them, even with those who they only get to know for a short time.
27. Systematic assessment procedures help staff track pupils' academic progress and the data are used sufficiently well to set targets for pupils that parents also can understand. The procedures for the identification and assessment of pupils with special educational needs are good and enable the school to identify those pupils who need extra support at an early stage. Support for pupils with special educational needs is good. Permanent staff have a good understanding of individual needs and progress is closely monitored. Programmes to support pupils with special educational needs are reviewed termly and sometimes more frequently.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Links with parents are very good and those with other schools and the community are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers and other staff are approachable and accessible to parents.
- Information for parents is good, with a particularly good prospectus.
- Parents and others give generously of their time to help in school.
- Good links with the community promote a sense of shared responsibility for the school and its work.

Commentary

28. Parents are happier now than they were in 1999 with what the school provides for their children. This is because they are kept better informed about changes and events, and their views on school procedures and practices are more often sought and taken into account. They are regularly updated on the efforts made to secure permanent staff in school. Consequently, parents have faith in what the school tries to do to overcome the problem. Friendly staff pass on information, answer queries or deal with general concerns before they have a chance to develop into complaints. Effective liaison with parents whose children need extra help and guidance is well established.
29. Parents react very positively to the focus on sharing responsibility for a pupil's education between home, school and the community. Recent improvements to the school grounds bear testimony to the hard work and effort of all three groups. People enjoy getting involved with the school and enjoy the sense of camaraderie this brings. Fundraising is supported well through activities that foster a family and community spirit.
30. A particularly well-written prospectus guides parents through all aspects of school life they are likely to encounter. Newsletters are good because along with the usual information about school events, they work to promote children's confidence and independence skills. Parents are given lots of useful guidance to help their children settle into school, and timely reminders of the school's targets for the pupils' personal development. As a result, parents work very effectively with teachers in encouraging pupils to be responsible and enterprising.
31. Almost all parents attend consultation evenings to learn how their children are getting on. They are happy with the verbal feedback they receive. When they wanted more information in reports, they said so. The school took note, changes were made, and reports now give parents a much clearer indication of how well pupils are doing and what they need to do next to improve. Their added comments show that parents appreciate this more helpful style of reporting.
32. Links with local schools are reciprocal and strong. They make a very effective contribution to the cultural development of pupils through the celebration of sport, music and drama. In addition, teachers and pupils are able to build good relationships with colleagues of other schools in the area, helping pupils transfer, with confidence, to the next stage of their education.
33. The school is effective in consulting parents when their children are identified as having special educational needs. Pupils with special educational needs are given very good support when they transfer to junior school. Individual needs are carefully assessed, and the school works hard to ensure a smooth transition. If pupils are thought likely to find aspects of transfer difficult, the schools organise additional visits to familiarise them with the new routines.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management of the school are good, overall. The leadership of the headteacher and established managers is good but the leadership of subject leaders is satisfactory overall. The management and governance of the school are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Leadership and management by the headteacher have been good during an unsettled period due to difficulties with recruitment.
- Some subject managers are fulfilling their roles well although the development of other subject areas has been restricted due to the lack of permanent staff.
- Governors are well involved in shaping the school's future direction.

- The school has a good commitment to inclusion and good management of provision for pupils with special educational needs supports this.
- The school has a large budget surplus but has drawn up an appropriate contingency plan to reduce this, in line with its current priorities for improvement.

Commentary

34. The headteacher demonstrates a strong sense of purpose with a clear focus on developing teaching and learning in order to raise standards. The acting deputy headteacher ably supports her. The work of these two members of staff has been instrumental in managing and developing the school during a period of high staff mobility. The development of a team of professionals with a shared sense of responsibility and focus on raising standards is evident through the good school ethos. Firmer structures are now in place, for example in relation to planning, and this helps to lessen the impact of teachers leaving the school and supports the teaching of new teachers. The management and leadership of subjects have also been affected by the frequent changes in staff. Some of this work has been undertaken by permanent staff so that some teachers have a heavy work load in terms of additional responsibilities. This is particularly so in relation to the headteacher who has had to 'caretake' subjects frequently when teachers change or are out of school through sickness and maternity leave. Until recently, she has not had a deputy headteacher to support her but a recent appointment has been made for after Easter.
35. Governors support and challenge the school well and have a clear understanding of its strengths and areas for development. They are well informed and fulfil their statutory responsibilities well. Through training and the good information which they receive, they have a clear understanding of current developments but feel frustrated at the inability to attract good quality permanent teachers. Together with senior managers, governors have tried hard, through a series of advertisements and contacts with the local education authority, to address this issue but feel they are at a disadvantage as the school is near to other authorities which, for example, give living allowances. They have given enhanced payments to teachers, partly to show how much they value their work and also to encourage teachers to stay in the school for a period of time. When they have been able to appoint, their choice of candidates has reflected their aim to provide good quality education and support.
36. A major aim of the school is to offer good quality educational provision for all. The good management of special educational is a key features of this. Support for individuals is effective and well organised, and pupils giving cause for concern are carefully monitored. The headteacher co-ordinates special needs and has a good overview of provision. As co-ordinator she meets formally every two or three weeks with learning support staff to discuss progress and concerns. However, her daily contact with staff and pupils means that she is always closely involved with individual progress.
37. Overall, the school manages its finances satisfactorily and applies the best value principles satisfactorily when managing and using its resources. However, its ability to use its finances has been affected by the difficulties in appointing permanent staff. The school's carry forward figure from previous financial years, even before the current headteacher was in place, is in excess of the recommended contingency figure. This is due mainly to a period of time with reduced staffing costs due to the lack of a deputy headteacher for two years and relatively inexpensive temporary teaching staff. This has now placed the school in a very favourable position to develop and implement new strategies to address the school's major problem of teacher recruitment and retention. The senior managers and governors have agreed a contingency plan with the local education authority which includes plans for the recruitment of staff, development to the school grounds and repairs to the school, together with a healthy budget to support all the aspects identified in the School Improvement Plan. Taking these issues into account, the school is judged to be providing satisfactory value for money.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	455,216
Total expenditure	357,260
Expenditure per pupil	2,113

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	69,560
Balance carried forward to the next	97,956

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

There have been good improvements since the last inspection, as the school developed its practice and kept up-to-date with changing expectations of provision for children in the Foundation Stage. Key factors in the success of this area of the school are the good leadership and the strong team of teachers and learning support assistants who have a good understanding of how young children learn. They use this expertise well and plan work which maintains the children's interest and helps them with their learning. Planning is good because it clearly covers all areas of learning and makes good links between these, within a specified topic. This ensures that the children have good opportunities to practise their skills in a variety of contexts. The teachers and learning support assistants assess the children's learning on a day-to-day basis through careful observations and use this information to build up an individual profile of learning for each child. This helps them to identify quickly a child who might need additional support or one who should be challenged further.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching is good and this helps children to achieve well and reach standards above those expected for their age.
- Staff have developed good relationships with parents.
- There is a good induction programme.
- Children are encouraged to develop good behaviour, relationships and attitudes to learning.

Commentary

38. Procedures for introducing children and their families to the work of the school are good and develop trust in the staff. Parents are helped to understand how they can support their children and they value this aspect of the school's work. Parents respond well and these good relationships which develop quickly, together with a good induction programme, help children to settle well into the school routines. The teachers have created a caring learning environment where children understand the structure of the day and by the time they enter Year 1, they have developed good attitudes to learning and good behaviour. Children sustain good levels of concentration because they are interested in what they are doing. After completing a set activity they are encouraged to make choices, thereby developing confidence, independence and initiative. One boy was seen playing on his own, developing the idea of a picnic. Due to good encouragement and the provision of appropriate resources, he quickly extended this further by involving other children, giving them a note of invitation and setting out food for everyone. Children are encouraged to play and work with each other like this and consequently are helped to develop good relationships. Teachers and support staff make appropriate comments to encourage co-operation and children learn how to share and take turns. Overall, those children observed during the inspection are likely to exceed the standards expected nationally for children entering Year 1 due to the good quality teaching.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children receive a good range of activities that develops their speaking, listening, reading and writing skills.
- The quality of teaching is good which helps children to achieve well.
- Children receive good support from their parents.

Commentary

39. Children have standards on joining the school which broadly match those expected for children of this age nationally, although a significant group have below average language skills. This is recognised by the staff who create a rich language environment where children know they are valued and listened to, and encouraged to put forward their ideas. Most children, including those with special educational needs, make good progress and have the confidence to speak with adults and each other. Children enjoy stories and reading and this leads to good responses and improved standards. For example, pupils responded well to the story of Goldilocks and could retell it in their own words. A structured approach helped the children to match letters to the sounds that they made (phonic development). This was developed well in a lesson when children were encouraged to sound out the letters to make words when writing a letter of apology from Goldilocks. Children are interested in books, handle them carefully and show enjoyment in a range of stories. All children are encouraged to read regularly with their parents at home, which has a significant effect on the progress that they make and the standards that they achieve. Children start to develop their writing skills by learning how to hold the pencil correctly and recognising and writing their own names. They become aware of writing for different purposes through, for example, writing 'get well soon' cards for Jack and Jill and writing in the class 'office'. Most pupils achieve well because the teaching is good, and will reach the standard expected for their age by the end of the reception year.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children reach above average standards and achieve well.
- Teaching is good and a good range of practical activities reinforces the children's learning.
- Children are interested in their learning.

Commentary

40. The children's mathematical skills and understanding are taught well during specific sessions, and consolidated through daily play activities. Children enjoy their work and respond enthusiastically to the activities provided because much of it is practical and they feel they can achieve. This was seen when a small group worked with a learning support assistant in the café, using and counting money in an imaginative play area. A good range of teaching methods is used to develop the children's learning and also helps to maintain their concentration. Effective use of questions stimulates children's mathematical understanding and prompts responses that demonstrate understanding. Children with special educational needs were effectively supported as both the teacher and learning support assistant asked them questions at an appropriate level and encouraged them to work out the answers. This resulted in them developing their confidence and number skills as they gave the correct answers. In another lesson, the teacher used her very good subject knowledge and knowledge of the children to set

challenging tasks to which they responded very well. Learning developed at a very good pace as the children tried to rise to the challenge of “I am thinking of a number that is more than 6 but less than ten. What is it?” Children achieve well and many are likely to reach levels above those expected for their age when they move into Year 1.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching is good and children achieve well.
- Children achieve well in the area of information and communication technology and reach standards higher than those expected for their age.
- Good links are made with other areas of learning.
- Children develop a good awareness of their immediate surroundings and environmental issues.

Commentary

41. Through talking with the children and staff, observing lessons, looking at displays in the reception teaching area and looking at the teacher’s planning, it is clear that children receive a good range of learning experiences and achieve well. They are likely to reach the standards expected for their age by the time they enter Year 1 and in some areas will achieve above this. A colourful display showed how they are learning about different countries through listening to a visitor who had returned from Africa. Good links with their creative development were made as they painted pictures of Africa and its animals. In one good lesson observed, pupils’ scientific understanding was developed when they explored and identified signs of new life as they walked around the school campus. They were particularly interested in the environmental area and delighted to see a frog in the frozen pond. “Where does the ice come from?” asked the teacher, with a response from one child, “Jack Frost”. The teacher developed their understanding well by asking and answering questions about why the pond had frozen and what might happen if the weather got warmer. Later in the lesson, children were shown the visitors who were making a willow dome. Good teaching developed the children’s understanding that plants are living things which change and grow. Good use was made of a digital camera to record their findings so that they could see growth over time. The teaching of information and communication technology is particularly good and results in children developing confidence and making good progress. They thoroughly enjoy using a programmable toy, and use a drawing program to produce self-portraits and make menus. Some particularly good work was achieved when a learning support assistant worked with small groups in the computer area as they created pictures of a teddy bear. The learning support assistants make a significant contribution to the children’s learning, particularly during the Focus Afternoon, when children work on a variety of activities. This was seen when children were involved in the making of porridge and when they tasted pancakes on ‘Pancake Day’. The latter was just one activity of several, where children develop an understanding of people’s beliefs and celebrations.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is some excellent teaching which helps children to achieve very well.
- Teaching in this area is linked well to other areas of learning.
- Children with special educational needs are supported very well and make very good progress.

- The children's confidence is developed well through using a range of resources.

Commentary

42. The quality of teaching is good and this helps children to achieve well. By the time they enter Year 1, standards are above those expected nationally for children of that age. A good range of activities is provided to develop the children's physical education both indoors and outside. Resources are generally good and the school has reserved funds to enhance the outdoor learning area by providing a covered section. Children develop a satisfactory sense of space and move around the school well with due regard for others, holding doors open when appropriate. They throw and catch, ride bikes and handle items such as scissors, pencils and paintbrushes well. They enjoy playing with malleable material and identify the numbers they make by pressing objects into it. They use construction materials confidently and enjoy using objects when developing their small world play. The children also receive two formal physical development lessons each week and these are instrumental in furthering their learning. One excellent lesson is described below.

Example of outstanding practice

One of two physical development lessons taken in the hall by the class teacher who is also the physical education manager. The lesson is linked to the work done in class on Goldilocks.

Due to the high expectations of staff and the drive to develop the children's skills of independence, the children quickly changed for their lesson and were eager to begin. They settled quickly and behaved very well because they were interested in what they were doing and each part of the lesson was clearly explained. The very good choice of music encouraged children to move well around the hall, using their bodies to interpret the music. The work was well linked to that done previously in class and children followed instructions well as they moved like Goldilocks through the wood. They were encouraged to exhibit moods and emotions, expressing their own ideas and responding to feelings. Very good support from learning support assistants ensured that all were fully involved and achieved very well. The change in one little boy with special educational needs, who was reserved and almost immobile at the start of the lesson, was outstanding as he became fully involved, smiling with enjoyment the greater his involvement. The teacher demonstrated well and used children to demonstrate to others, thereby confirming her expectations. Her excellent teaching ensured that all were constantly stimulated by the music and fully involved.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children enjoy their creative work and achieve well.
- Teaching and learning are good and children reach the standards set nationally for children of their age.
- Good links are made with other areas of learning.
- Learning support assistants and voluntary helpers provide valuable support which helps children learn.

Commentary

43. The children's creative skills are developed well through a range of activities which are linked successfully to other areas of learning, such as knowledge and understanding of the world and literacy. Children become involved in a range of activities and work hard because they are interested in what they do and receive good support. In one lesson, a voluntary helper was well briefed to support groups of children as they experimented in developing textured paint. Language was developed well as they were asked to describe what had happened when different materials were added to the paint. This developed the children's understanding of materials and texture, as did the work done by another group who produced rubbings using a range of textures. One girl was observed using a range of resources to create her own collage

of Goldilocks and her efforts were praised as she matched appropriate materials to parts of the figure, such as the hair. Children's creative skills were further developed well when a learning support assistant encouraged children to develop their responses to music. They understood the differences between sounds as they growled like a bear and acted out the story of Goldilocks to a recording. Children's creative development is further enhanced through the use of imaginative play areas.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGE 1

ENGLISH

Provision for English is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers encourage pupils to practise their speaking skills in many lessons and to extend their vocabularies.
- Some reading sessions are well managed and pupils focus well on reading activities.
- Support for lower ability pupils in reading is good and they tackle new words with increasing confidence.
- Pupils do not have many opportunities for writing at any length, and some higher attainers are underachieving.
- Progress in English has been adversely affected by staff changes.

Commentary

44. Standards are in line with the national average in all aspects of English and pupils achieve satisfactorily. In the 2003 national tests, Year 2 pupils achieved average standards in reading and writing. Compared with results achieved nationally, fewer pupils gained the higher Level 3 in writing. School records show that pupils with special educational needs made good progress and achieved well in the tests.
45. Pupils enter Year 1 with broadly average standards in communication, language and literacy, but the school has identified the need to continue to develop pupils' vocabularies. Many pupils do have a limited range of vocabulary and this affects their progress in all aspects of English. The teachers try hard to introduce new words, and offer frequent opportunities in lessons for pupils to discuss their ideas with others. Pupils respond well to this, and usually focus well on the topics. Teachers' questioning skills are often good, and they direct questions skilfully to include all pupils. In subjects such as mathematics some teachers are particularly effective in encouraging pupils to talk about their work and to use precise vocabulary.
46. Teaching overall is satisfactory, but there are examples of good teaching in some classes. All Year 1 and 2 classes have a daily reading session. In an effectively managed period in Year 2, pupils were very focused and worked well independently on a variety of reading activities. The teacher expected, and achieved, high standards of behaviour, and the teacher and the learning support assistant were able to concentrate on working with their groups. Lower ability pupils are achieving well in reading because of some good support. They tackle new words with a degree of confidence, applying their knowledge of letter sounds. Other pupils read a variety of books with increasing fluency, but their knowledge of some of the technical vocabulary associated with reading (such as *author*, *illustrator*, *spine*, *blurb*) is more limited than usually found at this stage.
47. Pupils learn to write for a range of purposes, and aspects of spelling and punctuation are given adequate emphasis. In general, pupils are more successful in completing factual writing, than in producing imaginative pieces of work. Instructions, for example, are sequenced well and accurately written. When pupils write stories, vocabulary choices are often limited. Teachers

are successful, however, in encouraging pupils to vary the structure of their sentences. All classes practise handwriting regularly, but teachers sometimes accept untidy work, and expectations in this area are not consistent. Pupils have limited opportunities for planning and producing extended pieces of writing, and potential higher attainers are not challenged sufficiently. School assessments show that teachers tend to overestimate the levels pupils have achieved.

48. The continual staff changes have slowed the school's development of English, and progress since the last inspection is unsatisfactory. Some new teachers have been unfamiliar with the national literacy strategy and the school has had to focus on supporting them. The school has identified raising standards as a priority, but the leadership of the subject has not been a stable factor. The recently appointed subject manager has made a satisfactory start on identifying areas for improvement, but has not had time to make an impact on teaching. There is considerable scope for raising the profile of literacy in the classrooms. Classroom reading areas are unattractive and few displays celebrate pupils' writing. The new library area is bright and lively, and promotes an interest in books.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

49. In most lessons, teachers are effective in encouraging pupils to develop their use of language through getting them to speak with each other about their work and put forward their ideas. Teachers widen the pupils' vocabulary by introducing new words and encouraging pupils to remember what they mean and use them. Pupils have satisfactory opportunities to read and to use reference books in various subjects. Year 2 pupils know how to use an index page and can locate information. Writing is not as well developed, and pupils have too few planned opportunities for writing in history, geography and religious education.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards have remained above average despite the many changes in staffing because of very good leadership and management in the subject.
- The quality of teaching and learning ensures achievement remains good.
- A detailed action plan addresses aspects of the curriculum that have been identified as needing improvement.
- Insufficient use is made of information and communication technology to support teaching and learning in the subject.

Commentary

50. The subject leader has been in post for several years. The development of mathematics under her consistent leadership has sustained the above average results the school was attaining at the time of the last inspection. The good planning that underpins the school's mathematics curriculum is effectively countering the inconsistencies in teaching that result from the number of temporary teachers who teach the subject. As subject leader, she carries out lesson observations, interviews pupils from all classes and monitors their work. The information gained from this, and the careful analysis of data gathered from national tests, gives her a very good overview of the subject's strengths and weaknesses. Number and measure aspects of work in mathematics are very strong areas as pupils build systematically upon previous learning. As a result of the number of temporary teachers, too little mathematics is taught using an investigational approach. The co-ordinator is aware of the need to strengthen this area and there is a current focus on improving the opportunities for investigations.

51. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. Good or very good lessons were seen where the teacher is a permanent member of staff and pupils in these lessons achieve very well. Also, the work in their books is of a good quality. This is not the case elsewhere. Classes with temporary or frequently changing teachers do not enjoy a similar consistency in teaching quality. As a result, their progress is sometimes only satisfactory. As pupils achieve very well in some classes and satisfactorily in others, the overall picture is one of good achievement. Planning often shows adaptation in the light of the previous day's experience. The aims for each lesson taken by permanent teachers are always shared with pupils at the beginning of each lesson and revised and checked during the concluding part of the lesson, which is used well to check on understanding. The pace of lessons is good and in the best lessons pupils are offered appropriate challenge. Pupils are given good opportunities to explain their thinking to others, thereby extending the range of strategies all members of the class might use. Target setting has been introduced for groups of pupils and the school is now working towards individual self-assessment by the pupils themselves. Homework is set regularly. Consequently, achievement continues to be good.
52. The action plan is currently focusing on improving the quality of questioning by teachers and problem solving by pupils. In the last part of a very good Year 2 lesson on number sequences, the teacher's questions ensured pupils who had not been members of the group reporting their work could understand what they had done and in another good lesson with the same year group the teacher's questions maintained pupils' interest and developed their understanding.
53. During the inspection, no use of information and communication technology in lessons was seen supporting teaching and learning. Looking through pupils' work, occasional use could be spotted as in the work done by pupils in Year 2 on symmetry but such examples were few and far between. The school has identified this as an area for development.

Mathematics across the curriculum

54. Pupils have few planned opportunities to use their mathematical skills in other areas of learning. They do measure materials in design and technology and use graphs in science but overall, mathematics has few links with other subjects.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

Commentary

- Through monitoring pupils' work and the quality of provision, the subject manager has highlighted appropriate areas for development.
- There is a greater focus on the investigative nature of science and this is helping to maintain pupils' interests and develop their good attitudes to learning.
- Coverage of the science curriculum is satisfactory overall, although pupils do not regularly use information and communication technology in science.
- Pupils' have much interest in their immediate environment and a good awareness of environmental issues.

Commentary

55. In the 2003 Year 2 national assessments for science, a higher than average percentage of pupils gained the level expected for their age. There was an average percentage of pupils attaining a level higher than this. These results were reflected during the inspection, when pupils were working at average levels in Years 1 and 2 and achieving satisfactorily. Following

the monitoring of provision and pupils' attainment and progress, the school highlighted the need to develop pupils' investigative skills more so there has been an emphasis on this area. This is beginning to raise standards, particularly those of the higher attainers. For example, in Year 1, pupils are encouraged to find out which is the best material to use to make Barnaby's umbrella. In order to do this, they are encouraged to discover the qualities of a range of different materials, to predict which might be more suitable, test their ideas and record their findings.

56. Discussions and a scrutiny of pupils' work and teachers' planning indicate that all areas of the curriculum are being taught and a good range of investigations had been provided, particularly in Year 2. Pupils had responded well to questions such as 'Does the person with the biggest head have the biggest hand?' and 'Does everyone have the same fingerprint?' When studying electricity, in response to a question on why the bulb lit up, an above average attaining pupil replied 'There is metal in the wires so the current flows through'. An average attaining pupil wrote 'We made a complete circuit by putting the crocodile clips on the battery and the bulb so the bulb lit up'. Pupils are encouraged to observe, write what they see and relate their findings to their predictions. This is good preparation for later scientific work.
57. The school encourages learning outdoors. Pupils say they enjoy science and finding out about things. Those spoken with indicated interest and excitement about the environmental area and the fact that a fox had been seen in the area. They were concerned about possible issues of vandalism and the effects of litter. Some spoke about their involvement in designing a butterfly garden and what would be a good habitat for such creatures. Many were also excited about the building of willow structures during the inspection and knew that the willow would grow and develop into a dome, which would be covered with leaves and twigs.
58. Although teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, there are some aspects of good teaching which stimulate pupils' learning well, particularly in Year 2. For example, the teacher's questioning helped to develop pupils' scientific thinking and encouraged them to identify the properties of a range of materials and to what use they could be put. Clear learning objectives were identified and shared with pupils so that they knew what they would learn and do. The teachers' marking in Year 2 is good and helps pupils to develop their learning further and improve the presentation of their work. In several instances, direct improvements could be seen following comments from teachers. However, there is evidence in the pupils' work that the use of temporary teachers affects the continuity of learning and the standards achieved. This is due to differing expectations and some teachers not being familiar with the level of work individual pupils need to do.
59. Although leadership and management of the subject have been satisfactory overall, there are signs of improvement with the appointment of a new co-ordinator. Clear issues have been identified and are beginning to be addressed, with the intention of improving standards. Teachers are being encouraged to provide differentiated work to meet the variety of needs within each class, to improve questioning and provide suitably challenging work, particularly for the higher attaining pupils. The way teachers assess what pupils can do has improved and the subject leader is aware of the need to ensure that information and communication technology is used appropriately for the teaching and learning of science.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Despite staffing difficulties, above average standards have been maintained since the last inspection because of the concentration on developing pupils' skills.
- Resources are good and improving.
- The subject leader works hard to improve teaching and maintain standards in the subject.

- Classroom computers are insufficiently used to support learning in other subjects.

Commentary

60. Since the introduction of two mini computer suites, greater exposure of pupils to ICT has ensured the maintenance of above average standards in Years 1 and 2. The well planned curriculum emphasises the development of pupils' skills. The quality of teaching and learning seen during the inspection was good and as a result, pupils were using computers with enthusiasm and confidence. Pupils in Year 2 were seen learning how to add text to graphics. Good demonstrations by the class teacher helped them all to achieve success and technical terms were learned because of her repeated emphasis on them. Teachers know their pupils' strengths and weaknesses because of the programme of continuous assessment that accompanies each unit of work. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress and achieve well.
61. Investment has been made in both hardware and software to support development in the subject. Pupils can now experience control technology through the use of eight 'Roamers' and record their work using digital cameras and camcorders. There is a digital microscope to enhance work in science. The subject leader is in the process of cataloguing all the software available in school and is annotating the list to show the subject areas supported by each program. This is helping to encourage the use of information and communication technology in other subjects.
62. The knowledgeable subject leader supports other staff well. The high staff turnover means that she has to lead informal training each term to ensure that temporary teachers have the skills necessary to teach the relevant sections of the curriculum. She also observes lessons, shares teaching to support class teachers and gives demonstration lessons. In this way she has developed staff confidence and computers are beginning to be used to support teaching in other areas of the curriculum. As yet, however, the use of computers in the classroom is erratic. This is entirely due to the frequent change in staff that has occurred across Year 1 and 2 classes.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

63. ICT is beginning to be used in other areas of the curriculum but as yet there has not been time for it to have maximum impact. Pupils create computer generated pictures in art and design and structures in design and technology. They word process their work in literacy and use a computer word bank to structure sentences in a story. They work on lines of symmetry in mathematics. The frequency of use of computers to support learning in other subjects is developing systematically.

HUMANITIES

64. Inspectors observed two history lessons and one religious education lessons. No lessons were observed in geography. They also looked at pupils' work and teachers' planning. It was not possible to make overall judgements on provision or standards in history or geography.
65. In **geography**, evidence gained from teachers' planning and pupils' work shows that pupils are offered a satisfactory curriculum with a particular emphasis on encouraging them to become aware of the local area and environmental issues. In Year 1 their observational and mapping skills are developed as they record the key features on their journey from home to school. Their knowledge and understanding are developed when they find out about living on a small island and compare this to where they live. Data-handling skills are developed as they use information from a traffic count. In Year 2, pupils develop their understanding of citizenship through trips to a local park and use their literacy skills to write a letter about how this could be improved. This is a good example of how pupils' writing skills can be developed and staff are

aware of the need to develop more activities of this kind. Pupils show a keen interest in environmental issues, such as animal safety and the effect of litter and were delighted when a willow structure was being built during the inspection. Some good ideas were developed when they were encouraged to develop a butterfly area. All these activities have resulted in pupils who are very aware of their own surroundings and are keen to improve them.

66. In **history**, evidence gained from looking at pupils' work and teachers' planning shows that the school is offering a broad curriculum which is relevant to their learning and maintains their interest. In Year 1, pupils begin to develop a satisfactory sense of chronology as they compare the past with the present through, for example, looking at old and new toys. In Year 2, this is developed further as pupils find out about life in Victorian times. There is some evidence of pupils' writing skills being developed when they use a diary entry to describe a day in the life of a servant but work of this kind is limited. The very good subject knowledge, expertise and enthusiasm of the newly appointed subject leader was clearly seen during a Year 2 history lesson when the pupils were told about the life of Florence Nightingale as an introduction to the topic of 'famous people'. Teaching and learning were excellent and pupils' achievement was far greater than might have been expected. Insufficient time has passed for the subject leader to have had a significant impact on developing the subject overall but ideas about how pupils' history skills can be developed, and how teachers can assess how well pupils are learning, are good.

Example of outstanding practice

The first lesson in a series on Famous People. The history subject leader introducing Year 2 pupils to the work of Florence Nightingale, through acting in role as a soldier in the Crimean War.

The teacher quickly caught the attention of pupils as he asked them to talk in pairs about what being famous means. Their ideas were developed skilfully as they moved from identifying people who are rich and live in big houses to comparisons between famous people today and those in the past. Those in the past were recorded on the board which resulted in pupils identifying that there were more men than women. This issue was dealt with very well and led to the pupils using a picture of Florence Nightingale to identify what she might be famous for, and then developing questions for someone who might have known her. Through very good management and support from other staff, pupils continued with this work as the teacher left the room to reappear fully dressed in a soldier's uniform, battered from the effects of war. The pupils were speechless and although some part of each and every one of them 'knew' it was their teacher, they become fully involved and reacted most sensitively to the 'soldier' when listening to his experiences. They noted his injuries and the shock at what he has seen, and offered him support. One child with special educational needs lightly touched 'the soldier' almost to see if he was real. Questions were asked and the 'soldier's' replies helped to give pupils a 'picture' of life at the time and the work of Florence Nightingale. Pupils whispered some poignant good-byes as he hobbled on his stick across the room and through the door and silence returned. In a few minutes, when the teacher entered the room, a child excitedly announced "We've had a soldier here, we've had a soldier here!"

Religious Education

Provision for religious education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils make a personal response during lessons in a variety of ways.
- There is good guidance available to support teachers when they plan.
- There is little evidence of written work linked with the subject.

Commentary

67. Standards of attainment seen during the inspection are in line with the expectations of the agreed syllabus and pupils achieve satisfactorily. Progress since the last inspection is satisfactory. Pupils' books and teachers' planning show that activities in lessons are varied,

and offer pupils a variety of ways of making a personal response to the teaching. Aspects of personal life, such as friendship are covered, as well as teaching from the Christian and Jewish traditions. Pupils become familiar with the Christmas story, as well as with stories about Moses and parables from the New Testament. They learn about Jewish celebrations such as Sukkoth.

68. Teaching is satisfactory. Lessons are carefully planned, and the school has assembled a good range of material to guide teachers when they prepare work. In a Year 2 lesson, the teacher used music very effectively to illustrate the themes of happiness and sadness. This provoked a sensitive response from some pupils who were able to find a range of words to express feelings. Some pupils were quite unsettled because the teacher was the second new supply teacher in the week, but they responded quite well to the opportunity to dramatise a story.
69. While teachers use drama well within lessons, there is little evidence of pupils being encouraged to make an extended written response to religious education. When pupils do write, it is usually a few words, or occasionally a short passage such as a prayer. Leadership of the subject is satisfactory. The headteacher has temporarily taken on the role of subject manager in addition to her many other responsibilities.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

70. Two lessons were seen in design and technology and physical education and one in music. No lessons were observed in art and design. Further evidence was gained by looking at pupils' work and teachers' planning. It was not possible to make overall judgements on provision in these subjects.
71. **Art and design** makes a good contribution to the ethos of the school. Work using several different genres was seen during the inspection. Paint is the most used medium in Year 1 and pupils have been taught to use the tones of a single colour to produce effective pictures and to experiment with pointillism. The heavy reliance on temporary teachers for this year group is inhibiting the subject's development, as there has not been any effective training in new techniques. Pupils in Year 2 enjoy a more varied curriculum. They use clay to produce tiles, straw and string to produce prints, wax crayons to make rubbings and paper to produce collages.
72. Standards in **design and technology** are average. Pupils cover a good range of activities from which they learn several techniques for joining different materials, how to make and use simple levers and hinges and how to create winding mechanisms. They take great care in designing and executing their work and take pride in what they produce. They evaluate their work honestly answering the question 'What could I have done better?' There were attractive displays of well-constructed picture frames produced by pupils in Year 2 and finger puppets produced by pupils in Year 1 that included simple written evaluations. Pupils' work is assessed at the end of each unit and the subject leader monitors it on a half-termly basis. Good links are starting to be made with other subjects. This was shown in a Year 1 lesson on designing and building houses when the teacher drew on work on homes done in geography, on shapes learned in mathematics and when pupils used the computer program 'Dazzle' with confidence to design their own structure on screen.
73. In the Year 1 **music** lesson observed, standards of attainment were in line with those expected at this stage. Pupils made, and copied, short patterns of sounds, playing chime bars with good control. In assemblies, pupils listen attentively to music as they enter and leave. The quality of singing in assembly is good, maintaining the standards observed during the last inspection. Pupils stand to sing, and join in actions with enthusiasm and evident enjoyment.

74. The clearly written programme of work supports teachers when they plan, and guides those who have a limited musical background. The subject manager has good expertise and readily supports colleagues. The school benefits from having two pianists on the staff. The subject manager is able to conduct whole-school singing practices while a colleague plays the piano. This arrangement contributes to the standards achieved.
75. Teachers use music effectively in other subjects such as dance and religious education and the subject makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual and cultural development. There is scope for the school to increase the range of instruments from various cultures.
76. Planning for **physical education** is good. Both of the lessons observed were gymnastics sessions but planning documents show clearly that pupils are offered a well-planned programme during each year. Planning for developing games' skills is good. The school has benefited from participating in the "Active Schools" programme in terms of additional teacher training and resources. Resources are good and all pupils enjoy two sessions of physical education each week.
77. Teaching in the lessons seen was good. Year 2 pupils benefit from "specialist" teaching, where the teachers use their expertise to teach their stronger subjects. In an excellent lesson, pupils made rapid progress in developing their gymnastic skills. This was the first lesson in a unit of work, and standards were in line with those expected at this age. The pace of the lesson was brisk and pupils were energetically and purposefully involved throughout. Progress in a Year 1 lesson was slower, but satisfactory overall. The pupils improved their skills in balancing, becoming increasingly imaginative. Not enough attention was paid to proper warm-up activities before the lesson started, however. Teachers insist on good standards of behaviour and pay careful attention to health and safety. This ensures that lessons run smoothly and no time is wasted.
78. Subject leadership is satisfactory. The subject manager has a good understanding of the subject, and provides a good role model for other staff. She has many other responsibilities however, and has had little opportunity to work alongside, or to observe, less experienced colleagues.

Example of outstanding practice

A Year 2 class gymnastics lesson

Pace, expert subject knowledge and high expectations resulted in excellent learning in this lesson. A brisk warm-up session left pupils puffing and the teacher reminded them about the effects of exercise on the heart and muscles. The teacher was energetic, enthusiastic and positive. His very good demonstrations of moving and turning encouraged pupils to become increasingly inventive. The teacher was highly effective in developing movement systematically, urging pupils to think about moving at different levels and using different parts of their bodies as pivots. By the time pupils started to include the apparatus in their work, they were beginning to develop a good variety of turns. The whole class was involved in movement throughout most of the lesson, using the floor as an extension of the apparatus. The teacher's enthusiasm and praise for genuine effort resulted in high quality exertion by almost all pupils. They listened and watched attentively as the teacher explained and then demonstrated how the work would be developed into sequences in coming weeks. The cool-down session, clearing of apparatus and return to the classroom were expertly managed.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION

79. This area of the school's work was sampled by looking at provision throughout the school's everyday practice, in assemblies, during one personal and social education lesson and through speaking with children.
80. Planning for personal, social and health education (PSHE) is good. There is a carefully planned programme followed by all classes, which covers aspects of development relevant to the age of the pupils. Topics are linked closely with the assembly themes and cover aspects such as healthy living, caring for others and how to resolve arguments. The governors have

agreed policies on sex education and drugs awareness. As is usual for pupils of this age, sex education is largely covered through aspects of science and through answering questions simply if they arise. Drugs awareness focuses largely on medicines and warning pupils not to take medicines designed for others. The school invited the school nurse to cover this aspect, and found this valuable and effective.

81. Personal and social education is also implicit in all aspects of school life. Pupils are asked to express their views, and know that their ideas are valued very well. They were consulted about the attributes they looked for in the new deputy headteacher, and drew up plans for creating the new butterfly garden. Citizenship is developed well as pupils learn to take responsibility within the community and the school council introduces them to the concept of democracy.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	4
How inclusive the school is	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	4
Value for money provided by the school	4
Overall standards achieved	4
Pupils' achievement	4
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	3
Attendance	3
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The quality of education provided by the school	4
The quality of teaching	4
How well pupils learn	4
The quality of assessment	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	5
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	2
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3
The leadership and management of the school	3
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	4
The effectiveness of management	3

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