

INSPECTION REPORT

MOAT FARM INFANT SCHOOL

Oldbury, West Midlands

LEA area: Sandwell

Unique reference number: 103949

Headteacher: Miss Helen Barlow

Lead inspector: Ms Margot D'Arcy

Dates of inspection: 6th - 8th July 2004

Inspection number: 262800

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant
School category:	Foundation
Age range of pupils:	3 - 7
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	305
School address:	Brookfields Road Oldbury West Midlands
Postcode:	B68 9QR
Telephone number:	(0121) 552 1885
Fax number:	(0121) 544 3494
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs A Emery
Date of previous inspection:	28 th September 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This is a larger than average-sized infant school. All children except the 70 in the Nursery attend full time. There are fairly equal numbers of boys and girls. Most pupils are of White British heritage. Minority ethnic groups comprise mostly Asian Indian and Asian Pakistani; there are ten Black Caribbean pupils and a very small number of dual-race. All pupils speak English as their first language. The proportion with special educational needs (27 per cent) is above average. The range of pupils' needs includes moderate learning difficulties, speech and communication difficulties, physical difficulties and autism. The proportion of pupils joining and leaving the school other than at the usual admission and transfer times is quite low. The school has a higher than average proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals and the area in which it is situated suffers from some social and economic deprivation. Children's overall attainment when they begin school is well below what is expected for their age.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
23158	Ms Margot D'Arcy	Lead inspector	Science Information and communication technology Music Physical education
16472	Mrs Catherine Stormonth	Lay inspector	
17907	Mr Michael Bowers	Team inspector	Design and technology English as an additional language
27816	Mr David Williams	Team inspector	English History Religious education
32516	Mrs Annette Mc Gibbon	Team inspector	The Foundation Stage Special educational needs Mathematics
23276	Mrs Margaret Mann	Team inspector	Art and design Geography

The inspection contractor was:

Tribal PPI
Barley House
Oakfield Grove
Clifton
Bristol
BS8 2BN

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a very good school. Pupils achieve very well and attain standards that are above average in many subjects. This is due to very good teaching. Pupils' personal standards, such as behaviour and attitudes to work, are particularly good because the school promotes these very well. Excellent leadership and very effective management from the headteacher, key staff and governors are supporting improvement and underpin the many, very good, qualities of this school. Both pupils and parents are very happy with the school, which provides **very good value for money**.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Excellent leadership from the headteacher is backed up by very good management strategies and very good support from the governors.
- Children in the Foundation Stage¹ and in Years 1 and 2 achieve very well and by the end of Year 2 standards are above average in many subjects; they are well above average in information and communication technology (ICT) and design and technology.
- Throughout the school, the quality of teaching and learning is very good.
- Systems to assess pupils and to use the information from assessments to promote their progress are very good.
- There is good provision for pupils with special educational needs.
- Pupils learning English as an additional language are supported very well.
- Good learning experiences are enriched by a wide range of additional opportunities.
- The school is successful in ensuring that all pupils are valued and fully included.
- The school provides a very good standard of care for pupils, but too many minor injuries are sustained through boisterous behaviour in a cramped playground.
- Pupils have very good attitudes to school, behave well and develop very good personal qualities.

Very good improvements have occurred since the last inspection. Overall, attainment has improved. The standards and achievement of pupils with special educational needs are now much better. Standards and provision for ICT have improved significantly and there is now very good provision for design and technology. The senior management structure has been refined and is now working very effectively. Many areas that were already effective in 1998 have improved even more.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

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

Achievement is very good. From a fairly low starting point when they begin school, pupils progress rapidly so that by the end of Year 2, standards in many subjects are above average. This is so in the

¹ Nursery and Reception.

speaking, listening and writing aspects of English and in science, art and design, design and technology and music. Reading skills are broadly average, as are those in mathematics. Mathematics results have risen sharply this year in response to the school's very good action to improve standards. Improvements to reading look set to follow, again in response to very good plans to address some weaknesses in comprehension skills. Pupils make good progress in religious education (RE) and attain the standards expected by the locally agreed syllabus. Progress in ICT is very good, with pupils demonstrating standards well in advance of what is expected for their age. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress, as do those who speak English as an additional language.

Children in the Nursery and Reception classes make very good progress in personal, social and emotional development, knowledge and understanding of the world and physical development. By the end of the Reception Year, standards in these areas are broadly in line with what is expected for children's age. While children do not reach the expected goals in communication, language and literacy, mathematical development and creative development, they make good progress in all three areas.

Pupils' attitudes to school are **very good** and their behaviour is **good**. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **very good**. The school has very good procedures to check on and promote attendance but, despite improvements, levels are below national figures because too many pupils take holidays in term time.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The school provides pupils with a **very good** education. The quality of teaching is very good, with strengths in many areas. Support staff make a very good contribution to teaching and learning. The school provides a good curriculum with lots of opportunities for pupils to benefit from visits, visitors and extra-curricular clubs. Pupils with learning difficulties are well catered for and those learning English as an additional language receive very good support. Pupils are given very good advice and guidance. Their views are actively sought and acted upon. Relationships with parents and the community are very good. Accommodation and resources are good.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The overall quality of leadership and management is **very good**. The headteacher provides excellent leadership. The philosophy that children come first and that every child should have the opportunity to fulfil their potential is evident in all that is done. The headteacher receives very good support from the deputy and other senior managers. Governance is very good. Governors are committed and work hard to support the school. They meet most of their legal obligations, but do not ensure that there is a daily act of collective worship.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents have a very good opinion of the school and are happy with what it provides. Pupils like their school very much. They say that that they enjoy lessons and get on well with teachers and other staff.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Improve the use of the cramped playground to reduce the number of injuries caused through boisterous play;

and, to meet statutory requirements:

- Ensure that there is a daily act of collective worship.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

From a fairly low starting point pupils achieve very well. By the end of Year 2, standards are mostly above average. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress. Throughout the school, boys and girls do equally well. Pupils who speak English as an additional language do as well as others in their year groups.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Nursery and Reception children make at least good progress in all aspects of their work.
- In Years 1 and 2, pupils make very good progress.
- Standards in English and science are above average and in mathematics they are rising rapidly.
- The minority of pupils who speak English as an additional language achieve very well.
- The progress made by pupils with special educational needs has improved considerably since the last inspection and is now good.

Commentary

1. Most of the children begin school with standards that are well below those expected for their age. During the Nursery and Reception Years, they make very good progress in the areas of personal, social and emotional development; knowledge and understanding of the world; and physical development. By the end of the Reception Year, standards in these areas are broadly in line with what is expected for children's age. While children do not reach the expected goals in communication, language and literacy, mathematical development and creative development, they make good progress in all three areas. Effective teaching and good learning experiences promote children's overall, good progress and provide them with a firm foundation for beginning the National Curriculum in Year 1.
2. Year 2 pupils' national test results in 2003 were in line with the national averages in reading and writing, but below in mathematics. Compared with those of similar schools, however, these results were above average in reading and writing and broadly average in mathematics. Over the past few years (2001-2003) the school's results have not risen at as fast a rate as national figures. However, the significant rise in tests results that occurred in 2003 has been further built upon this year. The most recent test results (2004), as yet unpublished and unconfirmed, show sharp rises in writing and mathematics. This has come about in response to the school's action to address identified weaknesses in these two areas. While there has been a fall in reading results this year, the school has identified the reason for this and has already made it a priority to improve pupils' comprehension skills, which is the weak aspect; pupils' interest in reading and their good levels of accuracy, based on effective word building skills, are strong features.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	15.7 (15.2)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	14.6 (13.1)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	15.4 (15.3)	16.3 (16.5)

3. Inspection evidence shows that standards in English and mathematics are rapidly improving in response to the school's effective provision for these subjects. In particular, the strong emphasis given to promoting problem solving skills in mathematics, along with matching work more precisely to pupils' needs, is paying off.
4. In 2003, teachers assessed Year 2 pupils' standards in science, speaking and listening as broadly average. Inspection evidence shows that most pupils are achieving very well in these areas in response to good teaching and learning experiences. The very good opportunities pupils are given to air their views and discuss their work with others is promoting rapid improvements to speaking skills. These are now broadly average for most pupils by the end of Year 2. Comprehensive coverage of the science curriculum, with an especially good emphasis on promoting experimental and investigative skills, has underpinned the good rise in standards, which are now above average.
5. Throughout the school, pupils achieve very well in ICT and design and technology and attain standards that are well above expectations by the end of Year 2. Pupils make good progress in RE and achieve standards that are in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. Good progress in art and design and music results in standards that are above expectations by the end of Year 2. There was insufficient evidence to make secure judgements about standards and achievement in geography and history. Overall, standards and achievement have improved significantly since the last inspection.
6. The school monitors the test results of individuals and different groups of pupils closely to ensure that provision is tailored to allow all to achieve as well as they can. Over time, test results show no significant differences between boys' and girls' achievement, although there have been some marked differences in some years. Inspection evidence did not find any significant variation between boys' and girls' achievement.
7. Most of the pupils who speak English as an additional language have sufficient English skills to learn effectively alongside their classmates without specific, additional, support. However, some children in the Foundation Stage have underdeveloped English communication skills. This is because, often, older family members look after them in the evening and communication takes place in the first language. Nevertheless, these children have made very good progress in response to the school's provision for them. Of the 12 pupils learning English as an additional language in Year 2, 25 per cent are working at an above average standard in reading, writing and mathematics and a further 50 per cent are working at the average standard. These results mirror those of pupils who are not learning English as an additional language. The school's assessment data also shows very good progress of asylum seekers, as depicted, for example, by rapidly rising reading age scores.
8. While pupils with special educational needs do not always attain the standards expected for their age, they progress well in relation to their prior attainment. This is because their needs are identified early and good provision is made to address them. Pupils' achievements show significant improvement since the last inspection.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils have very good attitudes to school. Their behaviour is good and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. Although improving, attendance is below the national average. Punctuality is good. Overall, standards have improved since the last inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are very enthusiastic about all aspects of school life.
- Behaviour is usually very good in lessons, which enhances learning. However, a minority of boys are too boisterous at playtimes.
- Moral and social development are very strong.
- Attendance levels are adversely affected by too many pupils taking holidays in term time.

Commentary

9. Standards and provision in this area have improved since the last inspection. Pupils really enjoy school. In discussion they praised fun and interesting lessons, caring and helpful teachers, clubs, improved playground facilities and the happy atmosphere with their friends. Pupils feel really pleased by their achievement and are proud of their work. They show surprisingly good levels of maturity, answering questions sensibly in a well considered and measured way.
10. Pupils are helpful, friendly and very polite. They behave very well in lessons. Playtimes are lively and pupils amuse themselves well. However, a minority (mostly boys) let off steam by tearing around the cramped playground, sometimes knocking others over in their wake. A small number also play-fight and engage in some rough horseplay, most of which is good-natured, but which does have an impact on the number of minor injuries sustained. Bullying and other forms of harassment are rare and are simply not tolerated. When any pupil raises a concern about another pupil's behaviour, it is dealt with swiftly and seriously and pupils are very pleased about this. There has been one exclusion in the past year.

Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
White – any other White background
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean
Mixed – White and Asian
Mixed – any other mixed background
Asian or Asian British – Indian
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani
Black or Black British – Caribbean
Any other ethnic group
No ethnic group recorded

Exclusions in the last school year

Number of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
181	1	0
1	0	0
6	0	0
5	0	0
3	0	0
41	0	0
18	0	0
10	0	0
1	0	0
3	0	0

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

11. Pupils with special educational needs are very happy and secure within their class groups and relate very well to their classmates and adults. These very good relationships give pupils confidence to join in with all activities. They try hard and show good levels of concentration.

The good climate for learning contributes very well to pupils' academic and personal achievement and is particularly beneficial for those who have a behavioural component to their needs.

12. Pupils' personal development is fostered very well. Spiritual development is good especially when pupils explore and understand values, beliefs, feelings and emotions. Pupils express these elements well in assemblies, for example, showing reverence during reflection time, in circle time and in lessons such as religious education, art and design, science, ICT and in their writing. Constant positive reinforcement of care for others, kindness, trust, bravery, a good work ethic and high moral standards are real strengths. Nursery and Reception children achieve very well in personal and social development.
13. Social awareness is promoted very well especially when pupils raise money for good causes and support a range of charities. Pupils are keen to take on responsibility and are maturing into very confident individuals with high self-esteem. They conscientiously carry out their roles as playground buddies, school council representatives or monitors very well. They benefited hugely from their recent residential trip to Egmond Hall and are excited about their forthcoming 'graduation ball'.
14. There are many good opportunities for pupils to develop an awareness of their own and others' cultures, with learning being enriched and extended by this provision. Teaching about the main religious faiths, celebrations of a range of festivals and the multicultural aspects featured in music, art and design, geography and literacy are strengths. For instance, Nursery children enjoyed learning about the richness and diversity of African art, crafts and music and turned their home corner into an amazing jungle, complete with dressing up clothes, animals and sound effects.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	7.9	School data	0.7
National data	5.4	National data	0.5

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

15. The school promotes attendance very well and does all it can to improve attendance levels. In the past year attendance has improved and unauthorized absence has dropped significantly. However, levels are still stubbornly below the national average. Almost a quarter of absence is attributable to pupils being taken on holiday in term time, despite the school's best efforts to discourage this. Punctuality is good and pupils are effectively developing the important life skill of good timekeeping.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides its pupils with a very good quality of education.

Teaching and learning

The overall quality of teaching, learning and assessment is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Throughout the school, there are many strengths in teaching.
- Pupils are given a good insight into how well they are learning.
- Teaching assistants make an effective contribution to teaching and learning.
- Pupils with special educational needs receive effective support that promotes good learning.
- Pupils learning English as an additional language are taught very well.
- There are effective procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 38 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
2 (5%)	10 (26%)	20 (53%)	6 (16%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

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

- The high standard of teaching reflected in the table was consistent in both the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1² and between different classes in the same year group. Teaching has shown good improvement since the last inspection.
- Throughout the school, there are strengths in many aspects of teaching including: teachers' subject knowledge; the methods they use, such as questioning, explaining and demonstrating; and their use of resources to capture pupils' interest. Of particular note are teachers' high expectations of what pupils can achieve and of their behaviour. These are well met by pupils and reflected in their very good progress and keenness to learn. Together with the strong relationships that teachers have with pupils, all these features provide a very conducive ethos for learning. Setting arrangements³ for literacy and numeracy in Year 2 are working well, allowing teachers to match work more closely to pupils' needs. Teachers provide many opportunities for collaborative work in groups and pairs, with discussion being a central part to aid understanding as well as speaking skills. Teachers also promote the skills of literacy, numeracy and ICT very well across the curriculum.
- In all classes, an especially good feature of teaching and learning is the sharing of learning objectives with pupils and their involvement in assessing their own learning toward these. The 'Big Picture', as the school calls it, is completely understood by pupils. Teachers do not shy away from using technical vocabulary to explain learning objectives, but often translate these into child-friendly language so that pupils understand fully. Objectives are frequently revisited within lessons, with new ones set if the teacher and pupils feel that they have achieved them, as well as at the end. All of this gives pupils a clear insight into how well they are doing. Overall, marking is comprehensive; this, together with good quality verbal feedback from teachers, informs pupils well about how effectively they are learning.
- Teaching assistants make an effective contribution to teaching and learning. Overall, they are well deployed and are actively involved in all parts of lessons. For instance, they encourage the involvement of reluctant pupils; help to maintain specific pupils' concentration; lead group work and, in a variety of contexts, make assessments of pupils' personal and academic achievements.

² Key Stage 1 contains pupils in Years 1 and 2.

³ Where pupils are organised into teaching groups on the basis of their attainment.

20. Pupils with special educational needs benefit greatly from the school's commitment to inclusion and sensitivity to individuals who have difficulties with learning or behaviour. These pupils are taught well. They receive good support, both in class and when withdrawn from the classroom to undertake work in groups or individually. Work is effectively planned to address the targets in pupils' individual education plans (IEPs) and to link with class work. All adults who work with these pupils record their progress thoroughly, resulting in assessment information playing a key part in helping to plan pupils' future work.
21. Teaching for pupils learning English as an additional language is very good. The school has adopted a rigorous language interaction programme that challenges them, in small groups, to practise and develop English conversational skills. Consequently, children in the Foundation Stage gain a full range of communication experiences and learn to respond positively to the adults who work with them and their classmates. This use of small group, language related, activities continues, where necessary, into Years 1 and 2 until pupils are considered confident, independent, English speakers. If a pupil is not making sufficient progress, the school request help from specific multilingual support teachers who work with the pupil. This very good practice enables the school to plan and provide appropriate strategies for all pupils, thus ensuring that they all achieve to their capabilities.
22. There are consistent and effective practices for assessing pupils' attainment and progress and this aspect has improved since the last inspection. Teachers use a wide range of assessments and make very good use of the information from these to track the progress of individuals and different groups, such as boys and girls, pupils from minority ethnic groups and any different classes or sets. Throughout the school, the most comprehensive and firmly established systems have been developed for English and mathematics where pupils have individual targets that help them assess their own learning and thereby gain an awareness of how well they are doing. Assessment in other subjects is based upon national guidance materials. Staff use assessment information effectively to determine how well pupils are learning and what they need to do to improve. For pupils with special educational needs, the information is used particularly well to set new targets. Staff working with Nursery and Reception children regularly collect and record information on children's experiences and achievements. These records provide a very comprehensive picture of what children have achieved.

The curriculum

The school provides all pupils with a good curriculum. The standard of accommodation and resources is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- All pupils receive a good range of relevant learning experiences.
- Investigative skills in mathematics and science are promoted well.
- There is good provision for promoting ICT skills, both as a discrete subject and across the curriculum.
- There is very good provision for pupils' personal, social and health education.
- Links with other schools support effective curriculum planning.
- The curriculum is enriched by visits, visitors and a wide range of extra-curricular clubs and activities.

Commentary

23. The curriculum for all pupils is well planned and provides a good balance between the learning of basic skills and other work. All subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education are planned for well. There has been good improvement since the last inspection, with much better provision now for design and technology and more time for ICT. This has resulted in improved standards in both subjects. Planning in all subjects is carefully thought through to ensure that learning experiences are interesting, relevant to pupils and build on what they already know. The curriculum for Nursery and Reception children is firmly based on the six areas of learning, with a good balance between play, work that children choose for themselves and that which is structured more closely by their teachers. Very good provision is made to promote pupils' personal, social and health education.
24. Pupils identified as having special educational needs have complete access to the full range of learning opportunities. The IEPs that are constructed for these pupils have clear and achievable targets. They are used well by teachers and other staff to plan and support pupils' learning.
25. Key investigative skills in mathematics and science are well planned into the curriculum for these subjects. The good focus given to these elements ensures that learning has real meaning for pupils and promotes their thinking skills very well. There is good planning to ensure that ICT skills are promoted at every opportunity within a range of subjects.
26. The school works closely with other schools to find ways of improving the curriculum; for instance, through exploring how different teaching methods benefit pupils with different learning styles. Other innovations include the 'Enable' project which is helping to provide additional reading opportunities for identified pupils and the 'Learn' project which focuses on how to address pupils' different learning styles.
27. The school has worked hard and successfully to develop a wide range of extra-curricular activities. These support learning in many subjects, including ICT, physical education (PE), music and art and design. Very good improvement has been made since the last inspection with regard to this feature. Further enhancements come in the way of regular visits to art galleries and museums, such as to the Black Country Museum where pupils learn about life in their locality in years gone by.
28. There is a good match of teachers and support staff to meet pupils' needs. The overall quality of resources is good and has improved much since the last inspection. The school has deliberately worked through a process of improving resources where any previous deficiencies existed.
29. Although the accommodation is somewhat lacking in space, it is used well. Displays are of a high standard, providing both support for learning and a celebration of pupils' achievements. Much has been done to improve the outdoor playground facilities, including providing play equipment, but the playground remains considerably cramped for the number of pupils. Nursery children have good opportunities to learn outdoors in the carefully developed area. Significant thought has been given to how Reception children can use the playground facilities at various times in the day because they do not have constant access to an outdoor learning environment.

Care, guidance and support

The school takes very good care of pupils and provides them with very good guidance and support. Very good account is taken of pupils' views and their involvement in school life is very good. This aspect is even stronger than it was at the last inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The care provided for pupils is a key strength and this helps them to achieve their best.
- Pupils confirmed strongly how much they valued the excellent relationships they have with staff.
- Assessment information is used very well to provide effective support and guidance to pupils.
- Too many minor injuries are sustained through boisterous behaviour in a cramped playground.
- Arrangements for helping pupils settle into school are very good, but those to prepare Year 2 pupils for transfer to the junior school could be better.

Commentary

30. The school has a fully inclusive approach to helping others in a very supportive and caring community. Pupils feel they would always have someone to turn to if they were ever worried or troubled. They are very aware of the purpose of the 'worry box' and feel confident to use this if they need to. Staff know pupils very well and any issues or unhappiness are detected quickly. Those pupils are helped and supported and issues resolved to benefit learning and improve school life.
31. Year 2 pupils said that they felt well prepared for the national tests and received good support and guidance about these. Other pupils are aware of their performance and their learning targets. Teachers make very good use of day-to-day and other assessments to guide pupils and raise standards. Pupils with special educational needs are monitored closely and receive the attention and support they need to make good progress. Overall, the care shown to these pupils is very good. There are good links with outside agencies and every effort is made to ensure that all these pupils are fully integrated into school life. The care comes not only from staff, but also from other pupils, who look after those who find aspects of school life difficult.
32. Whilst the school does not post notices in languages other than English around the building, it recognises the different cultures of pupils learning English as an additional language by celebrating religious festivals and important events in their lives. This ensures that the pupils feel valued and appreciated. The school has identified a number of parents and students as translator volunteers. Consequently, the school can call on their expertise to help it communicate with parents in their first language when necessary.
33. The arrangements for child protection and for children in public care are very good and all requirements are fully met. Pupils with a range of medical needs are catered for very well. The Individual Care Plans for pupils with conditions, such as diabetes, severe allergies and epilepsy are excellent. When pupils are ill or injured they receive a high level of care and attention. The concern however is the high number of pupils who are injured when others bump into them or knock them over or are hit by a hoola-hoop or skipping rope in the confined playground space. All the risk assessments and routine checking systems for health and safety throughout the school are thorough and issues are addressed swiftly. The security arrangements in the open site are good and improving.
34. Individual arrangements are made to ensure all Nursery children settle quickly and happily when they start school. Staff inspire children to really enjoy learning and daily routines. Mid-term arrivals are also well catered for. The preparation of Year 2 pupils for junior school is adequate but could be better. In discussion, pupils were unsure what to expect and some are apprehensive about leaving the safe haven of their infant school. Work is continuing on links

here, which have shown some recent improvement. The school council has been firmly established and pupils are excited about its potential to involve them in school improvement. They feel they have a voice in school and are keen to improve aspects, such as the playground areas and equipment and the dining room. Pupils talk openly and easily to their teachers and classmates in circle time and can put forward ideas and opinions.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The links with parents are very good; the school is popular and held in very high regard. Links with other schools and the local community are very good. This aspect has improved since the last inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a very strong partnership with parents to support pupils' academic and personal development.
- The school actively seeks parents' views as an important part of school improvement.
- Very good links with local schools and the community broaden pupils' learning experiences.

Commentary

35. Parental support for pupils' learning and for the wide range of school activities is very good. Most parents feel a very strong sense of partnership based on very good two-way communications and mutual trust. All parents who responded to the questionnaire and those spoken to during the inspection, felt great confidence in the school across most aspects. Parents really enjoy the termly special activity days, which are very popular.
36. Parents are welcomed warmly into school as an important part of the school 'family' community. They say that they find the school is very approachable. The 'open-door' policy works very well and parents find it very reassuring to be able to pop in and talk to staff whenever needs arise. Formal consultation arrangements are very good and attendance at these is improving. School reports provide parents with very good information, especially for the core subjects of English, mathematics and science where individual progress is reported in detail and advice for improvement is very helpful. The quality of other information like newsletters and curriculum fact sheets is very good. The parents' association is very active, providing for a busy social calendar and very useful funds.
37. Parents' views are regularly surveyed formally and informally. These form an important part of continuous school improvement and parents appreciate this. Many parents help in school; for example, the 'Enable' reading project is wholly reliant on parental voluntary support. The parents of pupils who have special educational needs are very supportive of their children. All attend the annual reviews and know that they can meet the co-ordinator whenever they have a concern.
38. Links with the local community are very good. These include the local police, fire service and the school nurse as well as visits from many other locals to help to enhance pupils' personal development. Links, such as those with local churches and the public library benefit pupils' academic development in subjects such as reading, RE, art and design, geography and history. The school supports local charities and local senior citizens and, in turn, the community supports the school in its major fundraising events.

39. Overall, links with other schools are very good. The 'Little Duckling' toddler group is hosted by the school helping the youngest children to transfer easily and happily to Nursery. Links with the adjacent junior school are satisfactory and developing. Links with local high schools, colleges and university are good and provide work experience for students, resulting in many mutual benefits for pupils' learning. There are very effective links with a local special school and with the primary school to which this school was federated, enabling continuous sharing of good practice. The new 'Triad' arrangement⁴, as part of the local education authority's 'Raising Standards Initiative' is presenting some excellent links and some exciting prospects for improving and enriching provision and learning.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The quality of leadership, management and governance is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher's leadership of the school is excellent.
- The deputy headteacher is a key player in the very effective way that the school is led and managed.
- Subject and other co-ordinators make an effective contribution to leadership and management.
- There are very good systems to check on standards, achievement and the quality of provision.
- Governors are a strong and supportive team and play a major role in the school's work.

Commentary

40. The headteacher provides the school with excellent leadership. The philosophy that children come first and that every child should have the opportunity to fulfil their potential is evident in all that is done. Great value is put on promoting pupils' all-round development and this pays off with strengths in pupils' academic standards, as well as their personal development. The headteacher is very effective in promoting strong teamwork and commitment from staff. The school's very positive tone and ethos also emanate directly from the headteacher and underpin the school's many successes. This is most clearly evident in pupils' enjoyment of school and the very good progress that they make.
41. The last inspection's recommendation to improve the structure of the senior management team has been successfully addressed. This group is now very effective in supporting the headteacher in the way in which the school is led and managed. The deputy, in particular, is a key player being responsible for a number of significant areas. The headteacher and deputy headteacher work very well as a team and are both significantly involved in monitoring the school's performance and leading action to promote its improvement. A good example is the improvement that has occurred this year in mathematics, which has been led by the deputy. Co-ordinators are knowledgeable about their subjects. They provide good role models as teachers and give colleagues good advice and guidance.
42. The headteacher leads and manages the provision for pupils learning English as an additional language very well. Her clear vision for this aspect is very evident in practice. The performance of pupils is regularly tracked and their test results carefully analysed and compared with those of other groups. The deputy headteacher, who co-ordinates the tracking of all pupils' achievement, uses published tests to check pupils' progress during each year. This ensures that any underachievement is quickly identified and acted upon.

⁴ The school is the co-ordinating school of four in a project to raise standards and improve school provision.

43. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is led and managed well. The special educational needs co-ordinator regularly monitors pupils' progress toward their IEP targets and provides colleagues with good support, for example, with planning. The link governor is new to the role but is visiting regularly and rapidly gaining a thorough insight of this aspect.
44. There are very good systems to check on the quality of teaching and learning. The headteacher and deputy regularly monitor teaching and learning and have a sharp and perceptive insight of the quality of both. Together with the detailed analyses of performance data, this supports the school in identifying and prioritising areas for improvement. These are clearly set out in the school's improvement plan, with detail about how they will be achieved and how success will be measured. This is a school that knows its strengths and weaknesses and is clear about how it will go about improving its standards and provision. The priorities that have been identified are the correct ones for the school at this time.
45. The governing body is a committed and effective team. They are well informed and have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Many members are regular visitors to the school and play an active part in its strategic development. Their effectiveness in this stems from the very good information that they receive from the headteacher and co-ordinators. While governors fully understand their role in supporting the school they are also very aware of their role as a critical friend. In this capacity they are vigilant in questioning the school about its work and in requiring it to account for its performance.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	847,101
Total expenditure	880,372
Expenditure per pupil	2,886

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	118,793
Balance carried forward to the next year	85,521

46. Financial management is very good, with governors playing a substantial part in financial decision-making. Budgeting relates directly to the priorities set in the school's improvement plan. The school is making very good use of all the financial resources available to it. Effective use is being made of the surplus (accrued through the school's involvement in various projects, such as the 'Triad Plus') to maintain the good staffing levels. Everything possible is done to ensure that the school gets the best value from the spending and other decisions made. Good use is made of new technology, for example, to record and analyse assessment and attendance data to support the raising of standards.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

47. The provision for children in the Foundation Stage, including those with special educational needs, is very good and has improved since the last inspection. The Foundation Stage is very well led and managed. The co-ordinator provides a good role model for teaching. Provision is continually monitored to ensure that all children enjoy a wide variety of stimulating learning experiences, some of which are led by adults and others based on child-initiated play. The team of staff regularly evaluate their work in order to continually improve. Thorough assessments enable a very close check to be kept on the progress that individual children make and to inform the planning of learning experiences to suit the needs of every child. Teaching is never less than good and is often very good. The very supportive atmosphere engendered by staff allows secure relationships to flourish and promote children's very good attitudes to school.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The very good procedures to help children settle into school and the simple routines promote very effective development in this area.
- Skills of independence are promoted well.
- Good behaviour and social skills are continually promoted.

Commentary

48. Very good teaching ensures that children achieve very well. By the time they leave the Reception classes their standards are in line with what is expected for their age. The school has very good induction procedures, which enable children to settle quickly into school. Established routines help children to feel secure and enable them to become independent and develop self-confidence. In the Nursery, children enjoy choosing from a range of interesting and challenging activities and show good levels of interest in their work. Relationships are very good and children are eager to share their achievements with adults. While there is still a good emphasis in the Reception class on helping children to learn through play, work here becomes more structured and directed. This helps children to increase their ability to concentrate and persevere with work. Staff encourage the children to think for themselves and be self-reliant. In both Nursery and Reception, children's behaviour is good and they often show acts of kindness towards each other. This stems from the very good attention to moral and social development that is continually promoted throughout each day by the staff.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good and sometimes very good.
- Basic skills are thoughtfully planned and promoted well.

- Learning support assistants make a valuable contribution.

Commentary

49. While standards by the end of the Reception Year are below expectations, children achieve well. The more able attain the expected goals and most others are not far off reaching these. Children with special educational needs are supported well and also make good progress.
50. Nursery children are provided with a wide range of experiences that cultivate and promote the development of early literacy skills. They respond enthusiastically in lessons. This results from their teacher's ability to interest them and provide activities sensitively matched to individuals' needs. Children enjoy sharing books, listening to stories and practising writing skills, such as letter formation. Good emphasis is placed on the development of speaking and listening skills and there are lots of opportunities for this. In particular, teachers' creation of very good pretend-play situations support these skills well and promote children's good progress.
51. In the Reception classes, the daily literacy lesson makes good use of national guidance to teach key skills in reading, writing, speaking and listening. These are promoted effectively in whole class sessions, thoughtfully prepared group work and play situations. Children show growing confidence in talking about books. They recognise familiar words and make good attempts at word building when reading and writing. In both the Nursery and Reception classes, support staff make a good contribution to teaching and learning and are an essential part of the teaching team.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good.
- There is a good range of activities to suit the needs of all children.

Commentary

52. Children make good progress. By the end of the Reception Year the more able attain the expected goals and many others are only slightly below this level. Children with special educational needs are supported well and also make good progress. Teaching is good because teachers have good subject knowledge and plan a range of interesting and appropriate work.
53. In the Nursery, children practise counting and number recognition in many situations. For instance, during registration children count the number present in their family group and stick their name card onto a given number. A wide variety of mathematical activities enable children to learn about mathematics in interesting and relevant ways. Many Nursery children can count to five and are beginning to recognise some numerals. Some of the more able can put numbers to ten in the correct order and count beyond ten. Other areas of mathematics are promoted well in a range of contexts, such as in the sand and water and when children are encouraged to talk about the shapes of everyday objects.

54. In the Reception classes, the daily mathematics lesson makes good use of national guidance to teach children about numbers for counting and calculating and about shape, space and measures. Many children recognise numbers to five and count confidently to ten and beyond. Some recognise numerals to 12 and add and subtract objects up to a total of ten. A wide range of practical learning opportunities including play with sand, water, construction toys and various games ensures that children develop the ability to name a variety of common shapes, compare items by length, height or weight and gain an awareness of pattern and symmetry.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is very good.
- Teachers provide a wide range of interesting activities that motivate children to learn.
- ICT skills are promoted particularly well.

Commentary

55. Children achieve very well and attain the expected goals by the end of the Reception Year. In the Nursery the provision of an imaginative range of learning opportunities develops children's curiosity very well. Adults support children very effectively in investigating their surroundings and the interesting objects on display. There is a very good range of activities to promote children's scientific, geographical, historical, designing, making and ICT skills, as well as their cultural and spiritual awareness. Children are encouraged to discover things for themselves during play activities. Children's ICT skills develop very well because class computers are readily available and used in a systematic and planned way to reinforce learning across the curriculum. The outdoor classroom is a stimulating resource to develop children's knowledge and understanding of the world.
56. In the Reception classes, a carefully planned programme enables children to investigate objects and materials using all their senses. For instance, they look closely at similarities and differences in materials and are encouraged ask questions about why things happen and how things work. During a lesson on colour mixing, children were totally absorbed discussing the rainbow effect created as colours merged into each other. Children's ICT skills continue to develop well, for example, because access to the computers forms an integral part of teaching and learning throughout the day.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good teaching and a good curriculum promote children's very good progress.
- Reception teachers make good use of the hall and playground to compensate for the lack of an outdoor learning area.

Commentary

57. Children enter the Nursery with lower than average skills. However, because teaching is very good and children are provided with a wide range of learning experiences they make very good progress. By the end of the Reception Year, most reach the expected goals.
58. Children in the Nursery learn to move with control and co-ordination when using outside play equipment. They handle a range of small tools, such as brushes, scissors and glue spreaders with increasing confidence. Reception children move safely, with confidence and imagination during PE lessons. They travel in a variety of ways, such as running, jumping, hopping and skipping and at different speeds and levels. While playing some vigorous invasion games, Reception children demonstrated the very good progress that they had made during the year in gaining an awareness of space and of others around them. Reception children competently manipulate fastenings and dress and undress unaided. Adults have high expectations of what children can achieve and continually provide opportunities to extend their skills. Although Reception children do not have free access to an enclosed outdoor area, staff use the hall and playground creatively to ensure that this does not adversely affect the development of their physical skills.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good.
- A wide range of stimulating activities is provided to promote children's creativity.

Commentary

59. Although standards are just below expectations by the end of the Reception Year, good teaching and learning experiences result in children achieving well. When children begin Nursery they have had fairly limited experiences of using different media and materials and many lack the confidence to express their views and join in pretend play. However, in both Nursery and Reception classes, staff provide a wide range of stimulating activities that enable children to experiment with new and exciting materials, such as textured paints, foam and a variety of paper and modelling materials. Overall, the teaching is good and this results in children making good progress. Occasionally, however, adults over direct activities, which inhibits children's creativity.
60. Although no music lessons were seen during the inspection, planning shows that music is a regular part of the curriculum. There are also numerous opportunities for children to take part in pretend play. The Nursery has an excellent theme room that was decorated as a jungle during the inspection. Children delighted in dressing up as African animals and listening to a tape recording of jungle animals. All three of the Reception classes also have pretend play areas that help children to develop speaking and listening skills as well as their imaginative skills, for example, in the hairdresser shop.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGE 1

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve very well and attain above average standards by the end of Year 2.
- Teaching is good.
- Pupils receive a good curriculum.
- The subject is led and managed very well.
- Literacy skills are promoted effectively in other subjects.

Commentary

61. Pupils make very good progress. The school has placed a great emphasis upon improving basic skills and this is having a marked impact upon standards, which are above average by the end of Year 2. Speaking and listening skills are good, with the talking partner system⁵ having a positive impact on this aspect. Reading standards are broadly average. By Year 2 pupils are accurate readers with good word building skills. Some weaknesses in comprehension, reflected in the slight decline in the most recent (2004) results are being addressed well by the school. Standards in writing are above average. Pupils write in a range of forms and make good use of descriptive words to enhance their work.
62. From an early stage, pupils learn subject specific vocabulary, such as ‘phoneme’, ‘adjective’ and ‘verb’ and show a good understanding of these. For instance, pupils in Year 1 looked for descriptive words to illustrate some writing and then for action words to make it more exciting. Year 2 pupils had learned about connective words and made good progress finding some that were time related, such as ‘eventually’, ‘suddenly’ and ‘afterwards’.
63. Provision for the acquisition of basic skills is good. A great deal of emphasis is placed upon phonic work, with this being planned into the curriculum in a methodical and effective way. Year 1 pupils look at initial letters and sounds at the beginning and ends of words and this helps them to read sentences accurately. Year 2 pupils look at letter patterns, such as ‘igh’ and ‘ough’, which promotes good spelling skills. The impact of this work can be seen in the steady improvement in reading standards over the last three years. As part of the school’s action to drive up standards in reading, plans are in hand to alter the way in which reading schemes are used so that books can be matched more closely to pupils’ needs. All classes have a good range of books available and the fiction and non-fiction libraries are well stocked.
64. Writing has shown particularly good improvement. There is a push in all classes for pupils to look at their work closely to ‘make it better’. Pupils look to see if they could use more interesting and descriptive words; for example, in a Year 1 lesson based on the antics of animals, pupils suggested words, such as ‘burrowing’ and ‘galloping’. The setting arrangements in Year 2, together with projects to boost standards and achievement, such as the ‘Enable Project’, have all helped in the raising of standards.
65. Teaching is good. Teachers plan in great detail and liaise well together about this to ensure that pupils of the same age in different classes are taught the same things. Teaching methods are good, although occasionally teachers do not include enough pupils in question and answer sessions, which slows the pace somewhat. The relationships between teachers and pupils are very good, which results in pupils trying hard with their work to please their teachers. Support staff make a positive contribution. They are caring and dedicated and have good knowledge of how they can best support pupils with different needs. All pupils have their own targets and are

⁵ Where pupils discuss ideas and/or questions with a partner before sharing them with the teacher or class.

aware of what they need to do to improve. Pupils' work is conscientiously marked and thoughtful advice is offered.

66. Leadership and management are very good. The literacy coordinator is a leading literacy teacher in the local education authority (LEA) and has a very good knowledge of the English work being undertaken in the school. She has led many staff training sessions and, accordingly, teacher subject knowledge is good. Assessment procedures are rigorous and used well to inform future planning. There has been good improvement since the last inspection. In particular, the underachievement of pupils with special educational needs has been successfully dealt with so that these pupils now make good progress.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

67. There are many good opportunities for pupils to extend their language, reading and writing skills in other areas of the curriculum. For instance, they write extended stories about their visits to St Michael's Church during their RE lesson and read extracts of life during Victorian times in history lessons. Pupils are encouraged to write lists of facts about various world religions and to provide factual written work based upon various world countries in geography lessons. They do this well.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well and standards are rising.
- Teaching is very good, but the quality and consistency of marking could be improved.
- Pupils have very good attitudes towards mathematics.
- The subject is very well led and managed.

Commentary

68. Pupils are achieving well. Standards are rising and are now broadly average by the end of Year 2. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well and make good progress.
69. Pupils' use of number is promoted effectively. By the end of Year 2, higher attainers know multiplication and division facts and have a secure understanding of fractions and decimal notation of money. Average attainers are fairly secure in addition and subtraction facts. They subtract two-digit numbers competently, know doubles and halves and use this knowledge to work out calculations. Lower attainers have made good progress in learning about tens and units; they order numbers to 100 and subtract by counting back. Other aspects, such as measure and shape, are promoted well and there is a very good emphasis on problem solving, which is helping pupils to apply what they have learned in real situations.
70. Teaching is very good overall and during the inspection none was seen that was less than good. Teachers have high expectations of pupils and time is used very well in lessons to practise mental calculations and learn mathematical ideas. Teachers are very clear about what they want pupils to learn and explain the learning objectives to pupils at the start of every

lesson. They provide a range of stimulating activities, use correct mathematical vocabulary and give good explanations. Work is creatively adjusted to suit the needs of all pupils. The more able are given harder work and pupils with special educational needs are supported well. Teachers keep a close check on all pupils' progress and are quick to adjust lessons in response to their assessments. For example in a Year 2 lesson a teacher, noticing that pupils were experiencing difficulty in constructing a tally chart, gave additional explanations, discussed the difficulties with the pupils at the end of the lesson and amended her planning for the next day.

71. The quality of marking, although providing encouragement, could be improved so that it gives pupils more advice about how they could do better. Although pupils have individual target sheets, not all teachers update these regularly and more reference could be made to these in marking. However, verbal feedback is comprehensive and pupils show a good awareness of how well they are learning.
72. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good. They clearly enjoy mathematics, are well motivated and concentrate hard. Pupils work well co-operatively and independently. Resources are used effectively and computers frequently make a significant contribution to learning.
73. The leadership of the subject is very good. The co-ordinator closely monitors standards, teaching and learning. She also identifies areas for improvement and trains staff to implement these. For example, analysis of test results showed that pupils were not doing very well with problem solving so weekly problem solving activities have been established to ensure that pupils receive regular practice with this important skill. Over the past year, the new co-ordinator has had a big impact on the improving standards in mathematics.
74. Overall, there has been good improvement since the last inspection. Although standards at the end of Year 2 remain broadly average, attainment on entry is now lower than it was in 1998 so the overall level of achievement is therefore better. The quality of teaching has also improved, being more consistent and monitoring of the subject is much more rigorous.

Mathematics across the curriculum

75. Mathematics skills are promoted well across the curriculum. Linked work in science supports the collection, analysis and recording of data, such as in graphs. In design and technology, pupils' measuring skills are reinforced effectively, as is their understanding of shape when, for example, they think about design features. Some good reinforcement also occurs in PE. For instance, Year 1 pupils were asked to estimate the number of throws their partner might make in a minute and then were required to count these and subtract one from the other to see how close their estimations were.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve very well in response to good teaching and learning experiences.
- There is a good emphasis on practical work and the development of scientific skills.
- Good links with other subjects reinforce scientific learning.

Commentary

76. Pupils make very good progress and attain above average standards by the end of Year 2. This reflects very good improvement since the last inspection. During Years 1 and 2, pupils receive comprehensive learning experiences in all aspects of science, with a good emphasis on experimental and investigative skills. These experiences build progressively on earlier learning becoming more challenging as pupils get older. Teaching is very good overall and there was some excellent teaching in Year 2.
77. By Year 2, pupils have good knowledge and understanding of life processes, physical processes and materials. During the inspection, excellent teaching, reflecting high expectations of what pupils could achieve, allowed them to build very well on what they already knew about forces. While pupils used their past learning to make good predictions about whether a variety of objects would float or sink in water, in this lesson they learned that objects float because the upward push from the water is greater than the downward push of gravity. Pupils understood this complex idea because it was taught to them in a way that was entirely appropriate to their age and stage of development. Plentiful resources were available to support pupils' practical investigations and there was very good opportunity for them to work in groups, discussing and recording their findings as they went along. Very good questioning from the teacher allowed pupils to express their ideas and really tested their scientific thinking. This lesson also contributed very well to pupils' spiritual development: pupils found that whilst a stone sank when it was dropped into water, when it was placed in a plastic container the container floated, thus they discovered that weight was not the deciding factor on whether an object floated or sank. Practical work was also the key component of a good lesson in Year 1 where pupils explored a range of sounds to describe their properties and understand, in simple terms, how sound travels.
78. These successful lessons were underpinned by teachers' good subject knowledge, thorough preparation, good questioning, explanations and demonstrations and the provision of lots of opportunities for practical work. Teachers always used correct scientific vocabulary in their explanations and, as they continually prompted pupils to observe, describe and to record what they found out, they expected pupils to do the same. In response to this effective teaching and lively learning opportunities, pupils showed high levels of motivation, worked hard and, consequently, learned very effectively. The frequent opportunities for them to work in groups and discuss their work or ideas with a partner also supported effective learning and promoted social skills very well.
79. Some good links are made with other subjects, such as pupils using their knowledge of materials to support work in design and technology and in mathematics when findings are communicated in charts and graphs. The subject is led and managed well.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils make very good progress.
- Standards are well above expectations by the end of Year 2.
- There is a very good curriculum.
- Teaching is good.
- ICT is promoted very well as a cross curricular skill.
- The subject is led and managed very well.

Commentary

80. Pupils achieve very well and by the end of Year 2 they attain standards that are well above those expected for their age. This represents very good improvement since the last inspection.
81. By Year 2, pupils are very competent users of ICT. They access a range of programs quickly and easily with little support. They have very good knowledge of the uses of word processing programs, art software, multimedia presentations, the Internet, control technology and digital photography.
82. During the inspection, Year 2 pupils were prepared very well by their teacher for accessing the Internet to find information about animals and insects. Initial demonstrations and explanations in the classroom, prior to pupils going to the ICT suite, primed them well for the work to come. For example, pupils were reminded where to type the web address, the language of web addresses and which keys to use to write them. The teacher injected a real sense of awe as she told pupils that 'www' meant that they were connected to information sources across the whole world. During the practical work, pupils used the computers competently to find information to answer the questions that they had been set and were able to explain, simply, the function of search engines. Later in the week, Year 2 pupils demonstrated their skills in producing slide show presentations entitled 'A Day in my Life', which incorporated text, pictures, animations and sound.
83. Pupils are helped to understand the uses of ICT in everyday life and are given good opportunities to understand how ICT-based methods compare to manual methods. For instance, linking with their study of the artwork of Mondrian, Year 1 pupils compared their computer-generated pictures with those they had produced by hand and realised that those done on computers were completed much more quickly and could be easily changed or corrected if mistakes were made.
84. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Since the last inspection, teachers have gained significantly more confidence and expertise and are using this to good effect to continually promote ICT skills in a range of contexts. This has stemmed from very good leadership and management of the subject and a constant drive to improve standards and provision. In addition to the much improved resources and increased staff training, the leadership has enabled the appointment of a skilled support assistant who makes a very significant contribution to the high quality of provision. An after school ICT club enhances provision. During the inspection, pupils in the club were taking photographs with the digital camera and incorporating these into information sheets compiled using the Internet and a word processing program.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

85. ICT skills are promoted very well across the curriculum and, in turn, ICT makes a very good contribution to learning in other subjects. Teachers continually strive to make relevant ICT links when planning work in other subjects and ensure that good use is made of classroom computer, in addition to using ICT to support research in a range of subjects and word-processing programs supporting writing skills. Pupils also use a programmable floor robot to support shape and space work in mathematics and data handling programs to sort and classify information.

HUMANITIES

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils cover a wide range of work about world religions.
- Teachers' subject knowledge is good but more opportunities could be provided for pupils to express views.
- Visits and visitors enhance learning experiences.

Commentary

86. Although it was only possible to see two lessons, pupils' work and discussions with them show that they make good progress and attain standards that are in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. Pupils' work shows good coverage of a wide range of religions and related topics, reflecting good curriculum provision. Good use of visits and visitors adds relevance to pupils' learning experiences. For instance, parents have visited the school to share some of their differing beliefs and values. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' personal development, helping them to gain an understanding of and respect for, people's differing cultures.
87. In the lessons seen, teaching was satisfactory in one and good in the other. Pupils enjoy lessons, which are planned to capture their interest and be relevant to their age and stage of development. For example in one lesson pupils acted out a range of celebrations associated with Christianity, including a christening and a wedding, which helped them to understand the meaning of these important occasions. Year 1 pupils talked enthusiastically about their recent visit to St Michael's Church. They were able to name and explain various artefacts within the church, such as the lectern, font and pews. Year 2 pupils talked quite confidently about various world religions, including Hinduism and Sikhism. They know, for example, that Muslims fast during certain times of the year and eat only when the sun has set. While teachers' subject knowledge is good, allowing them to provide pupils with a wide range of factual information, there were some missed opportunities for pupils to express their own views.
88. In **geography** and **history** work was sampled so there was insufficient evidence upon which to make secure judgements about provision, standards and achievement. In the one geography lesson seen the teaching was good. No lessons were seen in history.
89. The **geography** curriculum is covered effectively and early geographical skills are developing well. Through their study of 'Barnaby Bear's' journeys and adventures, pupils have gained a good knowledge of the map of Great Britain and of many places on the map of the world. They explain clearly their understanding of a town, a country and a continent and can make good attempts at drawing the shape of different countries, for example, India. They are making good progress in learning about the difference between the human and physical features of two contrasting environments that they are studying (Oldbury and Chembakoli) and the effects of the climate in these places. Work is recorded well in pupils' books and informative displays and makes a good contribution to the development of their literacy skills. For example, each class maintains a diary of Barnaby's journeys and Year 2 pupils produce leaflets for tourists visiting Chembakolli. Map reading skills are developing well; pupils work out their own routes to school and around their immediate environment, as well as discovering the routes taken by

aeroplanes to various places in the world. Geography contributes well to pupils' cultural development.

90. In **history**, pupils receive a wide range of relevant learning experiences. Pupils have learned about the bubonic and pneumonic plagues, the Crimean war and about key individuals from the past, such as Mary Seacole and Florence Nightingale. Victorian studies have involved Year 2 pupils looking at lifestyles, including games on the beach; learning that Victorian ice-creams were called 'hokey-pokey'; and that during the time of outdoor toilets, there was a need for a 'gozunder' in each child's bedroom.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Design and technology

Provision in design and technology is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Since the last inspection, there has been a very good improvement to provision and standards.
- Work is planned well and is rich and varied.
- There are good links with other subjects.
- There are good procedures for evaluating provision and standards.
- Pupils' evaluating skills are satisfactory, but are not as well developed as their skills in designing and making.

Commentary

91. By Year 2, pupils' design and technology skills are well above expectations for their age. They achieve very well, producing design sheets and models of very high quality. Teaching is good overall. Pupils have learned how to assemble a design sheet that includes carefully labelled and detailed diagrams. This was evident in their work to make puppets, incorporating sliders and levers to move dancers and accurate directions for connecting wheels to axles. By Year 2, these design sheets identify the required lists of materials and the necessary tools required to complete the project. Finished products are completed to a high standard. Pupils' evaluating skills are not as well developed as their designing and making techniques, although during the inspection Year 1 pupils were satisfactorily evaluating the taste and appearance of the fruit salad they had made.
92. In the one lesson seen during the inspection, excellent teaching allowed pupils to make rapid progress and achieve very well. They used hand lenses to examine carefully the visual detail of common and more exotic fruits. One could hear a pin drop as pupils watched the teacher model how to draw a cross section of a melon. This and pupils' use of hand lenses, ensured that all produced observational sketches of high quality showing good detail. Groups of pupils, mindful of food hygiene, used forks, graters and knives safely and effectively to cut up and prepare a fruit salad. The excellent planning and organisation of the lesson included the thoughtful deployment of a student who was fully aware of her assessing role in the team. Pupils compared their finished product with their earlier sketches and discussed with the adults whether the taste was as expected.

93. Work in **art and design** and **music** was sampled. Whilst secure judgements about provision cannot be made in these subjects, there was sufficient evidence to judge standards and achievement.
94. In **art and design**, pupils achieve well and produce work of a standard above what is expected for their ages. By Year 2 they have had a wide range of experiences in painting, collage, sculpture and in using a variety of media. Their observational drawing is well developed and many have produced good quality portraits of themselves. Pupils show good knowledge of colour mixing and of using a variety of brushes, tools and materials to good effect. For instance, Year 2 pupils make intricate three-dimensional butterflies in clay and Mod-Roc⁶. They make models and paint with confidence and care, deriving inspiration for their work from the study of artists, such as David Rogers, whose art is based on the use of natural materials. Visits, for example to a local gallery where pupils work with professional artists, also make a good contribution to pupils' artistic development.
95. All work is displayed colourfully and mounted with flair. Appropriate captions and explanations support displays. Art is developed well and used effectively within other subjects. For example, in RE, pupils produce three-dimensional places of worship and in literacy they illustrate their stories very effectively. The subject contributes well to pupils' spiritual and cultural development.
96. In **music**, pupils achieve well and attain standards that are above expectations by the end of Year 2. These pupils show a good understanding of the musical idea of pitch, discriminating well between high and low sounds. They do this when listening to musical excerpts and when singing or playing instruments. Teaching is good and reinforces such key ideas well, using, for example, 'fun' songs, musical exercises and actions that pupils find amusing. In Year 1, pupils gained a good awareness of the musical idea of duration in this way. They also used instruments effectively to demonstrate this, for example, playing a cymbal differently to show how it can produce long and short sounds. A visiting music teacher takes all classes for one lesson a week and provides good teaching. Pupils were heard singing only in assemblies during the inspection. They sang enthusiastically and with clear enjoyment, accompanying their singing with actions. An after school recorder group adds to the provision, with pupils reading standard notation to play individually, in pairs and as an ensemble.
97. Work in **physical education** was sampled and there was insufficient evidence to make secure judgements about provision, standards and achievement. Two lessons were seen, one in each year group; one was taught satisfactorily and in the other teaching was very good. In the satisfactory lesson in Year 2, pupils made steady progress using hockey sticks to manoeuvre a ball between fixed cones and began to appreciate the rules of relay racing. While some useful teaching points were made, for example about how to grip the hockey stick for best effect and pupils were given opportunities to evaluate their work, some weaknesses in the teacher's management of pupils limited the impact of learning. Pupils, overall, were too noisy and did not pay sufficient attention to the teacher. While standards were broadly in line with what is expected, given earlier standards at the end of Reception and in Year 1, these pupils were not achieving as well as they could. In the Year 1 lesson, pupils' throwing and catching skills improved considerably as the lesson progressed. They learned a range of defence tactics and games skills, which were taught in such a brisk and exciting way that they applied themselves extremely well and enjoyed the lesson thoroughly.

⁶ A modelling material.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

98. Work in personal, social and health education (PSHE) was sampled. The school places a high emphasis on this aspect and has a very good programme for it. Pupils enjoy their weekly lesson and additional circle time, both of which help to instil good values and a good work ethic. Two related awards were recently achieved: the Healthy School Award recognises the high quality encouragement of a healthy lifestyle and the QISS (Quality in Study Support) award indicates high standards of enrichment to the curriculum to extend pupils' personal development.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Inspection judgement

Grade

The overall effectiveness of the school	2
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	2
Value for money provided by the school	2

Overall standards achieved	2
Pupils' achievement	2

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	2
Attendance	5
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

The quality of education provided by the school	2
The quality of teaching	2
How well pupils learn	2
The quality of assessment	2
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	2
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2

The leadership and management of the school	2
The governance of the school	2
The leadership of the headteacher	1
The leadership of other key staff	2
The effectiveness of management	2

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

