

INSPECTION REPORT

ALDERMAN COGAN'S CE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Kingston-upon-Hull

LEA area: Kingston-upon-Hull

Unique reference number: 118053

Headteacher: Mrs R Redpath

Lead inspector: Mr K Bardon

Dates of inspection: 11th – 13th October 2004

Inspection Number 266283

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 – 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	393
School address:	Whitworth Street Hull
Postcode:	HU9 3HJ
Telephone number:	01482 376203
Fax number:	01482 783654
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr S Pickering
Date of previous inspection:	17 th May 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Alderman Cogan's is a large voluntary aided Church of England primary school on the eastern side of the city of Hull. Most pupils live in the area surrounding the school which contains a mixture of privately owned and rented properties. About one in eight pupils lives on a nearby estate of council built houses. Many of the social and economic indicators of the district are a little below the national average although at about one in ten, the proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is broadly average. Thirty-two pupils have special educational needs, mainly for learning difficulties, and four pupils have a statement of special educational needs. Both these figures are below average for a school of this size. Broadly speaking there are similar numbers of boys and girls. A very small number of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds. There are no pupils who speak English as an additional language or who are at an early stage in the learning of English. None of the pupils are in public care. The school received achievement awards in 2002 and 2003 and is involved in a Creative Partnership initiative funded by the Arts Council. Approximately half of the children enter reception having had little or no pre-school education at nursery or play school. Consequently, a significant number of children lack personal, social and communication skills and knowledge and understanding of the world and their attainment at this point is well below expectations for their age.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
11807	Keith Bardon	Lead inspector	Science, design and technology
8922	Brenda McIntosh	Lay inspector	
30823	Brenda Clarke	Team inspector	Mathematics, art and design, history
2759	Derek Sleightholme	Team inspector	English, geography, physical education, special educational needs
25352	Geraldine Taujanskas	Team inspector	Foundation Stage, information and communication technology, music

The inspection contractor was:

Independent School Inspection Services

3 Harrowby Road
West Park
Leeds
LS16 5HN

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a good school with a number of very good features. Strong leadership provides the school with a clear sense of purpose and staff and governors are united in their desire to do their very best for the pupils. Pupils of all backgrounds and abilities benefit from effective and enthusiastic teaching and as a result make good progress in their learning and achieve well academically, and very well in their personal qualities. The school has a strong sense of community and pupils enjoy the safe and welcoming atmosphere that prevails. A broadly average amount is spent on each pupil's education and this represents **good value for money**.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Children achieve well in the reception class and in many subjects because the teaching is good, although standards of writing by the end of Year 6 are not high enough.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher provide a high quality of school leadership.
- This is a forward-thinking school which is innovative in many of its approaches to teaching and learning.
- The strong Christian ethos provides a secure foundation for pupils' very good personal development.
- The curriculum is lively and exciting and encourages pupils to learn although there is insufficient use of information and communication technology in many subjects.
- Very good provision is made for pupils with special educational needs.

Since it was last inspected in 1999 the school has made good progress and the key issues from the last report have been comprehensively addressed. Standards have risen progressively and at a faster rate than they have nationally. Pupils' achievement has increased as a result of a more consistent quality of teaching and a far more stable staff. The national strategies have been utilised productively to improve the curriculum and the many interesting and well-conceived developments have taken place from which pupils have benefited significantly.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Overall, pupils' achievement is good. Many children have little or no pre-school education and when they first start in reception they lack basic skills in several key areas. Although children achieve well in reception they have a lot of ground to make up and most are still behind the targets for their age as they move into Year 1. Pupils continue to achieve well in Years 1 and 2 and by the end of their time in this key stage most pupils are attaining standards that are broadly those expected for their age. Pupils' achievement is particularly good in mathematics and standards are above average by the end of Year 2.

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2002	2003	2004	2004
English	C	C	D	C
Mathematics	C	B	A	A
Science	D	D	B	B

Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average. The school and national results for 2004 have yet to be verified.

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

Year 6 pupils perform well in the national tests, attaining results that are often higher than those in similar schools to Alderman Cogan's. In 2004, results were particularly good in mathematics and there was a marked improvement in science results. English results were lower than in the other two subjects because pupils did not perform well in the writing tests. Pupils' achievement in Years 3 to 6 is good and in most subjects standards meet national expectations. Standards in mathematics are above average. These judgements are a little below some of the test grades given in the table

above because in the current Year 6 less pupils are working at an above average level. As the results in English indicate, there are weaknesses in pupils' writing. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 make too many mistakes with spelling and grammar and standards of writing are lower than they should be. In contrast pupils' reading is good and well up to the level expected.

Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are very good. Pupils show good attitudes to learning and readily participate in lessons. Standards of behaviour are generally good and most pupils follow an appropriate code of conduct both in and outside the classroom. A minority of pupils need periodic reminders of what is expected but the school is orderly and the atmosphere pleasant. This is due in no small part to the high quality relationships which exist between staff and pupils and between the pupils themselves and the school's strong Christian values. Attendance is satisfactory and most pupils arrive at school punctually each day.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The school provides its pupils with a good quality of education. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Lessons are well organised and interesting. Pupils are given a clear understanding of what they are expected to learn and work hard to meet the targets they have been set. However, the teaching of writing could be better in Years 3 to 6. Teaching assistants work very effectively alongside the teachers. They support and guide pupils well and make an important contribution to their learning. The good curriculum is enriched with an extensive range of visits, visitors and extra-curricular activities. Many pupils take part in musical activities from which they derive immense pleasure and pride. The school's has forged productive links with the Arts Council which have helped it to develop the teaching and enhance the curriculum. The curriculum for information and communication technology has improved considerably since the last inspection but pupils are still not making sufficient use of the computer and other technology to help them learn in other subjects. The school has a good partnership with parents and provides them with detailed information about events and their children's progress. The very strong links the school has forged with the local community are of mutual benefit and add to pupils' sense of belonging. The school provides its pupils with a very good level of care and welfare and monitors their development closely.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The quality of leadership and management is good overall. The headteacher and deputy headteacher have complementary skills and work very effectively as a team. The leadership they provide and the standards they set motivate staff and encourage the best from the pupils. The school is managed well. Systems and policies function effectively and the school runs smoothly day to day. School finances are managed and administered well. Governance is satisfactory. A number of governors are relatively inexperienced and still to develop a full understanding of how to support and challenge the school. In addition there are a small number of areas in which statutory requirements are not fully met, mostly relating to the information the school sends out.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents hold positive views of the school and of the quality of education it provides. They feel well informed about the progress their children are making and find staff very approachable if they have matters they wish to discuss. Pupils like school and enjoy learning new things. They find staff friendly and helpful and are confident that if they have a problem there is someone in school that they can readily turn to for support and guidance.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The most important things the school should do now are:

- Raise standards in writing by Year 6
- Make more effective use of information and communication technology as an aid to learning in all subjects

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Pupils' achievement is good in the reception classes and in Years 1 to 6. By Year 6 standards are broadly average and better, overall, than those attained by pupils in similar schools.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' achievement in mathematics is good and by Year 2 and Year 6 standards are above the national average.
- In Years 1 and 2, pupils' achievement in both reading and writing is good.
- Pupils' achievement in writing in Years 3 to 6 is significantly below their achievement in reading and this adversely affects standards in English by the end of Year 6.
- Pupils of all ages achieve well in science.
- Although children achieve well in the reception classes, many do not reach the targets for their age by the time they move into Year 1.
- Pupils with special educational needs make good progress.
- Standards are above expectations in music in Years 1 and 2 but pupils do not develop sufficient understanding of how to use information and communication technology to help them to learn.

Commentary

1. In 2004 the results attained by Year 2 pupils in the national tests were above both the national average and those of similar schools in reading and writing and well above average in mathematics.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 – average point scores in 2004

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	16.4 (15.3)	15.8 (15.7)
Writing	15.7 (15.4)	14.6 (14.6)
Mathematics	17.5 (17.4)	16.2 (16.3)

There were 60 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

2. This good level of performance continued a trend of improvement in all three subjects that has been above that of the national trend. Although there is little difference between the results of girls and boys in reading and mathematics, in writing girls have traditionally performed better in the tests than boys. However, the work observed during the inspection showed no difference in attainment between the two and the variation in results appears to be a characteristic of boys' and girls' performance in the tests.
3. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 are achieving well and making faster progress than they did at the time of the last inspection. This is due to the improvements that have been made to the quality of educational provision and to the consistency of the teaching. When they first enter Year 1 most pupils have communication, language and literacy skills that are below expectations for their age. They achieve well in Years 1 and 2 in all aspects of English and standards rise to around the nationally expected level. This evaluation is a little lower than the test results attained in 2004 by the pupils currently in Year 3. This is because the current cohort of Year 2 pupils contains more who are working at an average level and fewer who are capable of working above expectations. By Year 2, standards in mathematics are above national expectations. Many children enter Year 1 with a reasonable grasp of numbers and teachers

successfully build on this, enabling pupils in Years 1 and 2 to achieve well in all aspects of the subject. Pupils' achievement in science in Years 1 and 2 is good and they make sustained progress in their knowledge, understanding and skills.

4. The performance of Year 6 pupils in the national tests in 2004 was well above the national average in mathematics, above average in science, but a little below average in English. In comparison with the results they attained when in Year 2, pupils' performance was well above that of similar schools in mathematics, above in science and much the same as in similar schools in English. Although the test results from 2004 have yet to be fully validated they show a good rise in science results and further improvement in mathematics. Broadly speaking English results have remained at the level they were in 2003. The performance of Year 6 pupils has increased significantly over the years since the school was last inspected. There have been some ups and downs but over time the trend in improvement in the school's results has exceeded the national trend. Since the last inspection the tendency for girls to perform better in the English tests than boys has gradually been eliminated and there is now very little difference between the two. Boys have tended to outperform girls in mathematics and science although the difference is not particularly marked and does not follow a clear pattern. No difference in boys' and girls' attainment was discernible in the work pupils were doing during the inspection.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 – average point scores in 2004

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	26.5 (26.6)	26.9 (26.8)
Mathematics	28.8 (28.0)	27.0 (26.8)
Science	29.6 (28.3)	28.6 (28.6)

There were 49 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

5. Overall, pupils in Years 3 to 6 are achieving well. This positive judgement is similar to the one made at the time of the last inspection in 1999. Pupils' achievements in reading are good and standards are well up to national expectations. Achievement in speaking and listening is also good but the picture in writing is not as positive. While pupils' ability to construct text is satisfactory, standards in writing by Year 6 are below national expectations because they make too many mistakes in spelling, punctuation and grammar. Pupils' good achievement in mathematics is one of the school's strengths. In Years 3 to 6, pupils make rapid progress, particularly in their ability to calculate accurately, to manipulate numbers efficiently and to apply what they have learned in different contexts. By the end of Year 6 standards in mathematics are above national expectations. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 achieve well in science and by Year 6 many have developed a secure working knowledge of the key concepts and ideas. Pupils' understanding of how to conduct an investigation is satisfactory, but not as strong as their knowledge base.

Other aspects of standards and achievement

6. It would appear from the unvalidated test results for 2004 that the school has exceeded the targets it set for Year 6 pupils' performance in the national mathematics tests but fallen a little short of the targets set for English. Although results in reading were above target, pupils did not attain the results in writing that the school had anticipated. The school has set very challenging targets for 2005 as part of its efforts to raise standards further. At this very early point in the school year pupils would appear to be generally on track to meet the mathematics and reading targets but considerable improvement will be needed if the writing targets and subsequently the English targets are to be attained.
7. Many children enter the reception classes without any experience of pre-school education at nursery or play group and often lack the basic skills often associated with children of this age.

The weaknesses are particularly apparent in personal and social development, in their ability to communicate and use language and in their knowledge and awareness of the world around them. During their time in the reception classes, children achieve well in all areas of learning. However, they have a considerable amount of ground to make up and not enough time to do it. Consequently, only a relatively small proportion of pupils are on track to attain or exceed the early learning goals (the goals they are expected to reach by the end of reception) and standards are likely to be below what is typical for the children's age as they move into Year 1.

8. Standards in information and communication technology are broadly as expected at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 and their achievement is generally good. Most pupils have a sound knowledge of what they can do on the computer and are competent in its use. However, few pupils understand fully how the computer can help them to learn in other subjects.
9. Standards in physical education meet national expectations in both Year 2 and Year 6 and, throughout the school, pupils' achievements are good. It is not possible from the small amount of evidence available in design and technology and art and design to make secure judgements of the standards pupils attain. Pupils' work in geography and history indicates that standards are broadly as expected for primary age pupils but insufficient lessons were seen to judge achievement in these subjects. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 achieve well in music and attain standards that are above expectations. Insufficient lessons were seen in music in Years 3 to 6 to evaluate the standards attained by the older pupils but the musical activities pupils were involved in outside of lessons left a very favourable impression of their achievement in this subject.
10. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well because the provision made for their learning is very effective. Early identification of any difficulties pupils have with their learning enables the school to act quickly and provide the support needed. Although in many instances the standards these pupils attain are below national expectations the progress they make is clear and sustained. The school has a policy for gifted and talented pupils, which specifies the criteria upon which identification is to be based. Pupils who are particularly highly attaining are provided with extension activities which enable them to achieve well in their learning. In the past the school has supported talented pupils who have attended sports academies and musical development activities.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to school are good. The school has a strong Christian ethos and pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is very good. Pupils' attendance is satisfactory and punctuality is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' good attitudes help them to learn effectively and achieve well.
- Very good relationships help create a happy learning environment.
- High expectations of behaviour are set and achieved; the school deals very effectively with all forms of harassment.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral and social awareness are developed very well and helps them become mature and responsible.
- Pupils have a good awareness of their own and other cultures and faiths but have too few opportunities to visit places representing other religions.
- Attendance has improved but a significant number of families still take holidays during term-time.

Commentary

11. Pupils like coming to school, are keen to learn, and play a full part in the variety of experiences that the school offers. They are inspired to do well and enjoy learning because

the teachers make lessons fun and interesting. They respond with confidence to the challenges set for them and concentrate well on their tasks. When contributing to discussions or explaining their methods of calculation they are not afraid to make mistakes as they know their answers are valued. Pupils with special educational needs have equally positive attitudes to learning and take a full and active part in lessons.

12. A positive attitude to work is encouraged from the moment the children start school. In the reception classes, children make good progress towards the goals set for them in personal, social and emotional development but they do not reach the expected levels by the time they move into Year 1. Adults are proactive in supporting the children effectively. As a result, after only a short time in school the children are well behaved, most have settled happily and they are already confident with classroom routines.
13. The school gives a very high profile to pupils' social and moral development. Relationships are very good throughout the school because the pupils have a very good understanding of their responsibilities within the school community. This helps to create a happy learning environment. Staff lead by example and use the school's well-established systems effectively to promote good standards of behaviour. Pupils have a very clear understanding of the difference between right and wrong and almost always try to do what they know is right in the knowledge that their efforts are valued. Bullying is not perceived to be a problem by pupils but they feel that if any form of harassment does occur, it is taken most seriously and dealt with very effectively by staff. There has been one fixed-period exclusion during the last school year. This is a success and an indication of the school's strong commitment to inclusion.

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	390	1	0
White-any other White background	1	0	0
Mixed-White and Black Caribbean	2	0	0

14. Throughout the school a distinct special ethos is created through a shared sense of purpose and pride in the pupils and their achievements. The pupils enthusiastically take on extra responsibilities such as being monitors, Road Safety Officers or playground buddies. From Year 3 upwards pupils are able to participate actively in the school council. Pupils are very friendly, polite and welcoming, greeting visitors with a cheerful smile. The atmosphere around the school at lunchtime is positive and sociable. Pupils are full of praise for the 'Snap Two' initiative which is widely used in lessons, because they can talk things through with a partner and learn from each other.
15. Spiritual development is an integral part of the curriculum and the school makes a strong commitment in helping all pupils to achieve their very best. This develops pupils' self esteem and confidence. Spirituality was highlighted in an excellent assembly when the headteacher created a lovely warm atmosphere through her teaching of the traditional meaning of Harvest and why we celebrate. Class discussions give good opportunities for pupils to listen to varied opinions that may not match their own and they show respect for the differing views of others.
16. Pupils have a good understanding of their own cultural traditions and the diversity and richness of other cultures. They are taught to appreciate and respect others' beliefs, ideas and culture and they show a good level of fairness and tolerance. Pupils learn about other world faiths and traditions through art, history, geography and religious education but have too few first hand experiences of visiting places of interest that would help them to learn about living in the diverse cultural heritage of today's society.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year 94.8% (2003/04)

Authorised absence	
School data	4.7
National data (2002/03)	5.4

Unauthorised absence	
School data	0.5
National data (2002/03)	0.4

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

17. During the last year the school has improved its level of authorised absence significantly. Parents are quick to inform the school when their child is absent and any unexplained absences are followed up rigorously. Although the school strongly discourages parents from taking holidays during term time a significant number of families still do. The vast majority of pupils arrive punctually with just a few persistent latecomers.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides its pupils with a good quality of education. Effective teaching is combined with a varied and interesting curriculum, very good care and welfare and constructive links between home and school.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is good in the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 to 6. Teachers make frequent assessments of pupils' work and use the information well when planning lessons.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Lessons run smoothly because they are planned and organised well.
- Pupils readily participate during lessons because teachers make them interesting.
- Reception children are taught and learn well although they have yet to benefit fully from the changes that are being made to teaching and learning in these classes.
- The teaching of writing in Years 3 to 6 is not as rigorous or effective as it is for other aspects of English and pupils do not learn as well as they do in many other subjects.
- Teaching assistants make a significant contribution to pupils' learning.
- Teachers make regular evaluations of the progress pupils are making and act constructively on the outcomes.
- Class management is good and teachers use effective strategies to maintain discipline.

Commentary

18. There has been good improvement in teaching and learning since the last inspection and as a result pupils are achieving more and making faster progress. Under the experienced and thoughtful leadership and guidance of the headteacher and deputy headteacher, the school has constructed a cohesive team of teachers and teaching assistants who work well together.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 50 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0	8 (16%)	22 (45%)	19 (39%)	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. One additional lesson was seen in which there was insufficient evidence to make a judgement about the quality of teaching.

19. Although much of the teaching seen during lessons in the reception classes was of a satisfactory standard, the work children completed last year and the achievement of those who have just moved into Year 1 indicates that over time the teaching and learning for this age group are good. The reception class teachers are currently implementing changes to further improve provision, but these have yet to become fully embedded in their practice. However, the signs are promising and the planned developments are well founded. This willingness to innovate and change is a strong characteristic of the school.
20. Teachers plan their lessons thoroughly to ensure that the new experiences they are providing build constructively on the knowledge and skills pupils have acquired previously. Well-conceived learning objectives provide lessons with a clear focus. Teachers use colourful strategies such as 'Walt the Pirate' (what we will be learning today) to share these objectives with the class at the beginning of a lesson and revisit them at the end so that pupils can appreciate how much they have learned. This helps to generate momentum in the learning because pupils have an expectation that each lesson will provide them with something new.
21. Teachers select activities carefully and organise them into lively lessons that move along at a good pace. They balance periods of instruction and discussion with practical activities which require pupils to do things for themselves. Occasionally the 'teacher talk' part of the lesson goes on a little too long but in most lessons pupils move smoothly from one element to the next. The high level of involvement stimulates pupils' interest and they set about the tasks they have been given with a will.
22. Allowing pupils to do things for themselves has implications for class discipline. Teachers manage their lessons well, using a range of effective strategies to keep pupils focused and working hard. A minority of pupils need periodic reminders about their behaviour but these are given in a sensitive and constructive way so that any disruptions to the flow of the lesson are kept to a minimum. Younger pupils tend to get a little excited at times but throughout the school teachers have adopted a range of strategies that quickly bring pupils back on track. Several of the techniques teachers use emanate from the Creative Partnership links the school has established with the Arts Council. For example, teachers regularly use a technique called 'Snap Two' in which pupils turn to a partner to discuss what they know about the topic under discussion. As well as being useful for class management this strategy is providing pupils with good opportunities to develop their speaking and listening skills and giving them the confidence to express their ideas to others.
23. The teaching of writing is satisfactory in Years 3 to 6 but not as good as it is in other aspects of English and across different subjects in general. The approach teachers in these classes apply does not have the same rigour and as a result pupils do not learn as well. In general, they are not taught well enough how to correct the basic mistakes that many make with spelling, punctuation and grammar when they are writing in all subjects.
24. The role of teaching assistants has developed well since the last inspection and the work they do alongside teachers in class or with small groups in a quiet area makes a very positive contribution to pupils' learning. They are respected by the pupils who appreciate the support they receive. Teachers and teaching assistants take great care to ensure that pupils with special educational needs have work that is appropriate and that they can participate fully in all activities. As a result these pupils learn well.
25. There has been good improvement in the quality of assessment since the last inspection. Teachers are thorough in their approach, evaluating each lesson carefully for the learning that has taken place. The constructive way in which this information is used is clearly evident in the detail of teachers' lesson plans and the well-judged learning objectives they contain. Lessons are taught confidently because teachers have a detailed understanding of what they expect pupils to learn and what to look for to judge whether the pupils are making required gains in their knowledge, understanding and skills.

The curriculum

The curriculum is good and has a number of very strong features. It is innovative and provides many opportunities for enrichment, promoting good achievement and very good personal development. The accommodation is satisfactory and resources for learning are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The innovative curriculum is underpinned by very effective planning.
- Extra-curricular opportunities are very good.
- Insufficient use is made of information and communication technology to support pupils' learning in other subjects.
- Very good use is made of the Creative Partnership initiative to enhance the curriculum.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good.
- The amount of curriculum time for physical education is barely adequate for pupils in Years 3 to 6.
- The levels and quality of staffing are good.

Commentary

26. There has been good improvement in curricular provision since the last inspection. There are now detailed subject plans for all curriculum areas, providing continuity and progression in pupils' learning. Provision for extra-curricular activities was poor and is now very good. Pupils take part in a wide variety of clubs embracing sport, music, literacy and foreign languages. Whilst driving up standards in reading, mathematics and science, the school has ensured that pupils receive a broad curriculum enriched by a very good range of visits and visitors. This provides a stimulating curriculum that interests and motivates pupils, addressing their needs very well.
27. Membership of a Creative Partnership initiative has enabled the school to critically evaluate curriculum provision and to take positive action. The curriculum has been adapted to ensure smoother transition from reception to Year 1 to give a more flexible, practical focus to learning. Effective whole-school training has enabled teachers to evaluate how pupils learn, resulting in the introduction of many new teaching strategies to enhance and accelerate learning. Whilst relatively new, the impact of this initiative can already be seen in pupils' learning, particularly in their speaking and thinking skills.
28. The partnership has provided a catalyst for enriching the creative arts curriculum, so that provision in this area is now very good. For example, the whole school took part in a carnival, working with artists to produce masks of high quality, and undertaking dance and drama activities. Other initiatives include the formation of the steel pans group and a Year 6 multi-media day. The school energetically seeks ways to actively engage pupils in new experiences, for example taking pupils to see ballet at Covent Garden or enjoying the live performances of a visiting dance group or orchestral ensemble.
29. The amount of teaching time for pupils in Years 3 to 6 is below national recommendations. This affects the curriculum time allocated, for example, to physical education which at one hour per week is only just adequate. The aptitude pupils show for this subject suggests that some of their potential remains untapped. The school is currently seeking ways to address this issue.
30. There is a good match of teachers to the curriculum, many of whom have additional expertise, willingly shared with colleagues and pupils. The school has invested in a good number of additional, well-trained teaching assistants who provide very effective group support for pupils in lessons. The curriculum provided for pupils with special educational needs is very good.

The work provided is matched well to pupils' levels of understanding and they have full access to all the activities the school provides, both in and outside of lessons.

31. Provision for personal, social and health education is very good. Planned weekly lessons enable pupils to express opinions and to reflect on many issues. This contributes to their good attitudes to learning and very good behaviour in lessons. Sex education is taught in Years 5 and 6. There is satisfactory provision for drugs education. The school is currently working towards a Healthy Schools award and is well on track to achieve it.
32. A strength of provision is the planned cross-curricular approach that enables pupils to make connections in their learning. For example, a Year 5 literacy lesson involved pupils writing reports about history work on Ancient Greece. Opportunities for pupils to use information and communication technology across the curriculum as a whole are unsatisfactory. Good resources in many subjects ensure that the curriculum can be taught effectively. Library resources are under-developed, something the school intends to address under a major programme of redevelopment which is shortly to commence.

Care, guidance and support

Arrangements for ensuring pupils' welfare, health and safety are very good. The strong caring atmosphere in school helps pupils to enjoy their learning. The school provides pupils with good support, advice and guidance. Pupils are at the forefront of the school's work, and the way the school seeks and acts upon their views is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The atmosphere of warmth and calm creates a happy environment in which pupils are very well cared for so that they can enjoy their learning and achieve well.
- Teachers and other staff provide very good personal support for pupils.
- Prompt and well-targeted academic help and guidance make a significant contribution to pupils' good achievement and personal development.
- Good arrangements are made to help children settle in smoothly to the reception classes.
- The positive way in which pupils' views are sought, valued and acted upon contributes well to the development of the school.

Commentary

33. Pupils are safe and secure at school and the very good attention paid to their care, welfare and safety allows them to concentrate on learning. Arrangements for health and safety are good. Regular inspections of the building and equipment are undertaken and appropriate records are maintained. Daily routines are well planned and pupils are carefully supervised when at work or at play. On a practical day-to-day level the staff and caretaker are vigilant in checking the building to ensure a safe working environment for the children and promptly deal with any hazards found.
34. Parents are pleased with the level of care provided by the school. Pupils find their teachers kind, helpful and fair and feel they are looked after very well. When asked to sum up what it is they like about the school, without hesitation they say it is the way it makes them feel comfortable and safe. Relationships throughout the school are very strong so pupils feel secure and know there is always someone to whom they can turn for help. Child protection procedures are very good and well established.
35. There are good arrangements to help the new reception children and their families to familiarise themselves with the staff and routines of school life. The staff establish early links with parents through well-planned meetings and visits and gather information about the children in order to maximise support and guidance. The school is welcoming, and the friendly

atmosphere as children arrive with their parents to start the school day gives them confidence to quickly settle into the routines of the day.

36. The school acknowledges pupils' successes well by celebrating and rewarding those who have made good gains in their academic and personal progress. This boosts their confidence and raises their self-esteem. Teachers and teaching assistants are quick to respond to pupils' needs and provide them with the extra help they need to improve their learning. Pupils have a satisfactory awareness of how well they are doing and are often involved in assessing their own learning through discussions in lessons. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well in class so they take a full and active part in lessons. The targets on the individual education plans are detailed, giving staff a clear understanding of the specific areas of learning to focus upon, and this helps the pupils to achieve well.
37. Pupils are actively encouraged to contribute towards improving the school. They know that their views matter and the school will try to act upon what they say. The school council helps pupils to learn about democratic decision taking and makes a good contribution to life in school.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The partnership with parents is good. Links with the community are very good and have a positive effect on pupils' learning and personal development. Links with other schools are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school has established good relationships with parents which contribute to pupils' achievement and their good attitudes to learning.
- Parents are very well informed about the school and their children's progress although arrangements for seeking parents' views are less systematic.
- The school's involvement in the Creative Partnership enhances its links with the community and with other schools and enlivens pupils' learning.
- Arrangements to ensure the continuity of pupils' learning between Years 6 and 7 are underdeveloped.

Commentary

38. Parents feel that this is an open, thriving school where they can always talk to staff should they have any concerns about their children. They have positive views about the school and the education it provides. The majority of parents are supportive of their children's learning and this in turn has a positive effect on pupils' attitudes to work and their behaviour.
39. Meetings about children's progress and events where children are directly involved are very well attended. A small number of parents help in school regularly but there are many who will offer assistance on educational visits. Although there is no fund-raising committee parents are very generous with their support for the sponsored events that the school and pupils organise. The school often seeks parents' views about specific things as they arise, such as the school uniform and changes to the school day. However, there are no regular formal arrangements to enable them to contribute to school improvement by giving their comments on the quality of education and other aspects of its provision.
40. Communication with parents is very good and keeps them very well informed about school life, how well their children are doing and what they are learning in class. Parents feel that the 'Learning Logs' provide very good communication between school and home and contain lots of useful information about what the children are doing and learning. The end of year reports give a very good summary of pupils' achievements and progress and include targets for future learning. Parents of pupils with special educational are fully involved in their child's learning.

They find the termly review meetings with teachers are a 'productive link' for finding out about their children's progress. The website is very good and provides a wealth of information about the school and the curriculum.

41. The school makes full use of local resources in terms of working with people and visiting places to bring learning alive for the pupils. Involvement in the 'Creative Partnership' has given the school access to an extensive range of expertise to the benefit of pupils' learning. There is a very good and varied programme of visitors to the school and children visit many interesting local places to enrich their curriculum. However, there are limited opportunities for pupils to visit a variety of places of worship and to gain first hand experiences of other faiths and religions. Pupils attend regularly a variety of venues to sing or perform and at the same time often raise huge amounts of money for charity. The school works closely with a range of schools, sharing curricular issues and staff expertise which contribute to pupils' learning. Although transition arrangements to secondary schools are satisfactory the curriculum links are underdeveloped.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher and deputy headteacher work very effectively as a team and provide very good leadership. The leadership of the senior managers and other key staff is good. Governance of the school is satisfactory. There is a small number of areas where statutory requirements are not met fully, mostly relating to the information the schools sends out. Management is good and systems are effective.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Together, the headteacher and deputy headteacher have created a strong sense of common purpose and direction that is firmly focused on high expectations and pupils' achievements.
- Leadership is innovative and creative in its approach to teaching, learning and the curriculum.
- Arrangements for checking the performance of the school are good and the effective action taken to address areas of weaknesses has played an important role in raising standards and pupils' achievement.
- The school's very good ethos ensures that educational provision addresses everyone's needs.
- Financial planning is good.
- Governors are supportive of the school but a number of them are relatively inexperienced and still to develop a full understanding of how to support and challenge the school.

Commentary

42. Since the last inspection a number of difficult staffing issues have been tackled very well. The very good leadership of the headteacher has steered the school purposefully and dealt efficiently and effectively with many changes. As a result the school has moved on rapidly and standards and achievement are higher. There is considerable agreement among staff, parents and governors that the school has changed for the better, especially in its ethos and how everyone's contribution to school improvement is valued and considered.
43. The headteacher and deputy headteacher have complementary skills and work closely together. Their style of leadership is highly effective and inspirational, firmly focused on providing the pupils with a creative, imaginative curriculum and continually striving for high standards. They are frequently about the school and readily accessible to pupils, staff, parents and governors. The headteacher sets the correct tone by ensuring that pupils and staff feel valued, reinforcing the school's ethos of inclusion and creating a very good climate for learning. The excellent quality of her spiritual and moral teaching in assemblies provides the perfect start to the school day.

44. Managerial responsibilities have been delegated effectively and a successful management team has been formed. Since the last inspection subject management has been developed well because co-ordinators are empowered to check the quality of teaching and learning and then play an active part in putting into place arrangements for improvement. At all times the headteacher and deputy headteacher have a very good overview of what needs to be improved and guide the staff effectively in prioritising areas for development and deciding on the most appropriate action. The headteacher is mindful to make the staff's workload manageable and ensures that they have sufficient time to carry out their management responsibilities.
45. The development of the curriculum and improving the quality of teaching and learning have been rapid since the last inspection. The school has instigated a number of teaching and learning initiatives in recent times in conjunction with the Creative Partnership funded through the Arts Council. Some of these are already having a positive effect on pupils' achievement, for example pupils' increased confidence in speaking and listening. Other initiatives in place are well founded and expected to impact fully over the next two to three years as the pupils move through the school.
46. Self-evaluation processes are good and are well established in the school. Planning for further improvement of the school's provision and pupils' achievement is good and based on appropriate key priorities. The school improvement plan has changed to a more innovative open style and is constructed on a display board for all to see. The school analyses its performance data very well to identify areas for development but is at an early stage of making full use of information and communication technology to reduce the amount of paper work involved. The performance management of staff has contributed strongly to the good quality teaching and standards of work seen throughout the school. A high priority is given to the professional development of each member of staff. For example, careful consideration has been given to the training of the teaching assistants and the development of their role. As a result they work very effectively alongside class teachers, improving the quality of teaching and learning. Arrangements for the induction of newly qualified teachers are very good.
47. The school is a place that welcomes all groups of pupils and makes a high commitment to providing high quality provision to meet their individual needs. This determination shows through the very good provision for pupils with special educational needs which enables pupils to achieve well. The deputy headteacher leads and manages this aspect very effectively and is very clear about the priorities for improving the provision further.
48. The governing body is very supportive of the school and ensures that statutory requirements are met in most areas of its work. An oversight has led to the omission of the school aims or mission statement from the prospectus and the school's assessment results are not accompanied by the national figures. A number of governors are new to the governing body and are relatively inexperienced. They have still to develop a full understanding of how to support and challenge the school. Meetings are held regularly and governors receive detailed reports from the headteacher about all aspects of the school and as a result they have a sound understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. At present there is a satisfactory balance of governors receiving information from the headteacher and finding things out for themselves.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	985030
Total expenditure	961564
Expenditure per pupil	2537

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	45,469
Balance carried forward to the next	68,935

49. Financial planning is good. The school budget is well managed to support the school's priorities for improvement and is regularly monitored, with the help of a bursar, to ensure that spending

levels are within the agreed targets. A large percentage of the balance carried forward included funding that was already earmarked for the school's new heating system. The principles of best value are applied effectively ensuring all resources are used efficiently to meet the high expectations of the school. Key governors have a clear grasp of the financial issues relating to pupil numbers and how this impacts on the school improvement process. There is a three-year budget plan for the school that addresses this issue so that informed decisions can be made about the use and deployment of resources.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

50. Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is good overall. Children start the reception classes with well below levels of attainment overall. They often have few language skills and lack social skills although counting skills are better. About half of the children have no pre-school experience before starting at Alderman Cogan's. This adversely affects their skills on entry and limits their knowledge and understanding of the world around them. Although many have too much ground to make up and are unlikely to attain the targets for their age at the end of their time in reception their progress and achievements are good.
51. The curriculum is organised carefully to allow children to experience a range of activities during each of the sessions. Clear lesson plans, with appropriate objectives, are shared by all staff. Staff know the priorities for each session well and pursue these effectively in the focused activities. However, they do not always utilise this knowledge sufficiently to promote children's learning in other associated activities that take place at the same time. Assessment procedures are firmly established and staff make sound use of entry and exit base line tests and of samples of work to check children's progress.
52. The teaching and learning observed during the inspection were satisfactory but evidence from the work children completed last year and the standards attained by the pupils who recently entered Year 1, indicates that over time teaching is good in all areas of learning. Having very recently taken advice from the local education authority the early years staff have begun to implement a planned series of changes and improvements which have not yet fully impacted on the curriculum, teaching, learning and achievement in the reception classes. However, this is a positive and innovative plan, which is a promising development.
53. The classrooms are bright, welcoming and well organised and relationships between staff and children are good. Activities sometimes lack a dynamic approach which means that children do not 'catch' the enthusiasm for learning in that area. At these times, the pace of learning slows. The experienced Foundation Stage co-ordinator has organised a broadly based action plan which has appropriate priorities for development. Few opportunities have been available for formal monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning to check the impact of the planned curriculum in both classes. This makes it difficult for the co-ordinator to gain a detailed picture of provision and its effect on children's learning, and to plan closely focused improvements.
54. It was not possible to gather sufficient evidence to make judgements about the school's provision in all areas of learning. Those relating to children's **creative and physical development** were sampled and the following information collected. Regular opportunities are provided for children to draw, paint and make models. Children have worked with materials to make collages, such as paper plate 'faces'. They enjoy hand and foot printing with bright colours. Children paint bright and bold portraits of themselves. In music children sing enthusiastically and know a good range of songs. Children develop physical skills through daily outdoor play, which is enhanced by the new outdoor play equipment, giving opportunities for climbing and scrambling. Physical education lessons take place in the school hall and the children enjoy dancing and movement sessions regularly. There is a secure outdoor area but it is awkwardly placed and requires the exclusive attention of a member of staff with a group of children. Table top and carpet activities with small world toys, large and small bricks and soft dough help children to develop their manipulative skills.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers help children to share their feelings and experiences with each other.
- Staff provide good role models for children.
- Children are expected to be independent although many find this difficult.
- Relationships are good, so children feel confident.

Commentary

55. Information about the ways that staff promote children's personal and social development was derived from observations of lessons in different areas of learning and the day-to-day work of the school. Teachers regularly plan activities that help children to understand feelings and share experiences. They use interesting resources, such as puppets, effectively, which encourages children to participate. Children are learning independence through the choices they are required to make.
56. Staff generate a calm atmosphere and welcoming environment and children clearly feel secure and valued. This gives children confidence and many are beginning to let their natural curiosity come to the fore as they delve into the whys and wherefores of the world around them. Staff are good role models, speaking to each other and children in a calm, friendly and respectful manner. This encourages children to do likewise. However, a significant proportion of children have only limited social interaction with others before they start school and this limits their attainment. Although children achieve well in this area of learning it is probable that the majority will be some way short of the early learning goals when they move into Year 1 and standards are likely to be below what is typical for the children's age.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Staff provide good models of spoken language but children's speaking and listening skills are not always given sufficiently high priority in activities.
- At times, lesson plans do not indicate clearly enough what children are expected to learn or identify the important vocabulary that staff need to introduce.
- Opportunities to practise early writing skills are included in many activities.

Commentary

57. The reception classes provide a stimulating environment for children with print colourfully displayed in many areas. From this constant exposure to written language children are beginning to see print as a useful means of communication and to make marks that are an early start to writing. Children are able to practise early writing skills in many areas of the classrooms, for example by writing orders down for the chef in the 'café' play area staff have constructed. Children class start to recognise and write their names, but few correctly form letters well, which is something they have to correct as they get older.
58. Staff provide good models of spoken language and introduce children to letter sounds constructively. They prioritise speaking and listening skills in most activities, but, on occasions, they miss chances to capitalise on children's interests by introducing lively vocabulary to extend children's learning both indoors and out. Sometimes activities do not always identify clearly what children should learn from activities or the vocabulary that children should hear and use. Despite making good progress and achieving well many children are likely to attain standards below what is typical at this age.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children learn to use counting effectively in everyday activities.
- Planned activities provide interesting opportunities to practise mathematical skills, but these are not always reinforced fully.
- Mathematical vocabulary is limited and staff miss some opportunities to develop this.

Commentary

59. Children enjoy learning about numbers and number relationships. Teachers feature numbers prominently in interesting displays and emphasise the importance of numbers in a wide range of activities throughout the week. This helps children to understand the important role that numbers play in their everyday lives. Children join in number songs and rhymes with enthusiasm and these help them to learn basic concepts, such as 'more than' and 'less than'.
60. Staff plan activities that give children access to a range of mathematical ideas. Play in sand and water helps children to learn about 'full' and 'empty' in a practical and enjoyable way. In the 'café' role-play area, children begin to understand that they must have money to 'buy' things and carefully give plenty out to visitors so they can join in as customers. However, there are times when the deployment of staff is not fully effective and opportunities to extend children's ideas and to help them to further their mathematical language are missed. Other activities are organised which do not have mathematical content and the lesson focus becomes a little blurred to both staff and the children. Although children's attainment is a little better in this area of learning than in most others and their achievement is good it is likely that a significant proportion of children will not reach all the early learning goals by the end of their time in the reception classes and standards will be below expectations.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children's learning of the basics of information and communication technology is good.
- A range of well-planned topics helps children to learn about themselves and the wider world.
- Good use is made of role-play to help children understand the real world around them.

Commentary

61. Children benefit from well-planned and effectively managed lessons in the information and communication technology suite and are developing a good level of confidence in the use of computers. They can use the mouse to move pointers around the screen in a controlled way and most are starting to remember where some keys on the keyboard are located. They use the computers in the suite with enthusiasm and these lessons give children valuable experience in a variety of areas, such as matching and sorting.
62. Children learn about themselves and the wider world through a range of interesting topics throughout the year. They gain practical experiences through visits such as leaf collecting in the park and visitors such as baby brothers and sisters who are brought in to help children recognise and appreciate how much they have grown and how they have changed. Teachers extend children's learning well through role-play activities. Children play in the 'café' and take 'orders' for dinner. They announce the bill and take money. When they first enter the school

children's knowledge and understanding of the world are generally weak. They achieve well during their time in the reception classes but have a considerable amount of ground to make up. It is likely that only a minority of children will have achieved the early learning goals by the end of reception and standards will be below expectations.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils in Years 1 and 2 achieve well in all aspects of English and attain standards which meet national expectations.
- While standards in English are broadly as expected by the end of Year 6 the quality of pupils' writing is much lower than that of their reading.
- Pupils in Years 3 to 6 achieve well in reading and speaking and listening.
- Standards of writing are not high enough in Year 6.
- The teaching is good overall although there are weaknesses in the teaching of writing in Years 3 to 6 which adversely affect pupils' learning.
- The use of information and communication technology is underdeveloped.
- Subject leadership is good with clear plans for improvement.

Commentary

63. Year 2 pupils performed well in the national tests in 2004 attaining results that were an improvement on 2003 at both the expected and above average levels. Pupils in Year 2 are currently attaining standards in reading, writing and speaking and listening which meet national expectations. This is a slightly lower evaluation than the 2004 test results indicate because the present Year 2 classes contain fewer pupils capable of working at an above average standard. Although, overall, the performance of Year 6 pupils in the national tests remained much the same as in 2003, the percentage attaining at an above average level improved. As in the previous year there was a wide difference between results in reading and those in writing. Currently, pupils in Year 6 are attaining standards that meet national expectations in reading and speaking and listening but standards are below expectations in writing. Lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs achieve well because they benefit from the sensitive encouragement and support provided by well-briefed and experienced teaching assistants. Some pupils with special educational needs access specialist teaching for some of their literacy work. In these settings they regularly achieve very well through focused support in basic skills.
64. The teaching and learning of speaking and listening are good. Lessons are lively and engaging and teachers promote pupils' speaking and listening skills well in both literacy lessons and during work in other subjects, making good use of the strategies the school has adopted to encourage pupils' learning. 'Snap Two' and 'Snowballing', in which pupils share ideas in pairs or larger groups on a regular basis, feature regularly in lessons. The majority of Year 2 pupils respond well to the opportunities these provide. Most listen carefully to instructions and speak simply but clearly. More able pupils confidently use descriptive words to express their views. By Year 6 most pupils can hold a purposeful conversation with an adult and express a point of view during a discussion. They listen with interest to each other's opinions and pay close attention to guidance from their teachers.
65. Most pupils in Years 1 and 2 join in confidently with their teacher when reading stories in large class books. Pupils find these books appealing and their constructive use has a positive effect on standards. Higher attaining Year 2 pupils can explain a story by referring to the characters, read accurately and discuss the illustrations in detail. Lower attaining pupils read about half the common words correctly using the illustrations to help work out the meanings of words they find difficult. By Year 6 higher attaining pupils can read poetry with expression. They have well-established research skills and can use these to extract information from books and, when given the opportunity, through Internet search engines. Lower attaining pupils

sometimes find reading challenging but they persevere, using techniques such as sounding out and finger pointing to help identify unfamiliar words and maintain the momentum of reading.

66. Higher attaining Year 2 pupils write neatly and carefully, and spell well. Although it is only the beginning of the school year they are able to compose two pages of independent writing, correctly incorporating capital letters, full stops and sometimes speech marks. Their good achievement shows in their story writing that records events in logical order with characters described using well-chosen adjectives. Lower attaining pupils also try hard and by the end of the year have also progressed well to write a page of independent writing, although the layout of the text lacks consistency. Whereas many pupils can spell commonly used words correctly some average and lower attaining pupils do not do this consistently.
67. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 make too many careless mistakes when writing. This shows in the inconsistent application of punctuation and grammar and incorrect spelling. As a result standards in writing at the end of Year 6 are not good enough. Too often, character descriptions fail to incorporate the level of detail expected of the age group and employ a limited range of vocabulary. Handwriting and spelling techniques are inconsistently applied. Whereas the majority of pupils can present their work very neatly, a significant minority could do much better because they currently have an inconsistent approach to forming and joining letters in a cursive style. Teachers deliver lessons confidently and plan them well, adopting securely the principles of the literacy strategy. They are applying a range of effective strategies to raise standards that are beginning to show positive results and to have the desired effect. However, they are not addressing with sufficient rigour the basic mistakes pupils too frequently make in their writing in all subjects. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning of writing in Years 3 to 6 is satisfactory but has areas for improvement.
68. Subject management is good. The co-ordinators have taken positive action to improve assessment through a comprehensive tracking system, to brief the literacy governor regularly on progress and to monitor teacher's planning and occasionally lessons. They have positively encouraged the approaches of the Creative Partnership that have led to improved opportunities for literacy. Co-ordinators' action plans reflect accurately the school's areas for improvement. On the basis of these, teachers are implementing strategies to raise standards in writing but the effect of these has still to show fully in the attainment of the older pupils. All factors considered, there has been satisfactory improvement in the subject since the last inspection.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

69. Pupils' literacy skills are broadly average. Good opportunities for writing are provided in science. Pupils make detailed records of information they have gained from discussion, research and investigations. Through the close attention to the instructions and guidance they are given in physical education lessons, pupils extend their listening skills well. In most other subjects, pupils' use of language and literacy is satisfactory. Insufficient use is made of information and communication technology as an aid to learning. Few examples of word-processed text are displayed around the school and pupils' understanding of how the computer can be used to aid and improve their writing is weak.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' achievement is good and standards are above the national average by the end of Year 2 and Year 6.

- Very good leadership and management of the subject have contributed positively to the very good improvement since the last inspection,
- Teaching is good overall; some lessons are of high quality.
- Teaching assistants are deployed well and the support they provide hastens pupils' progress.
- There is a lack of planned opportunities to use information and communication technology to aid pupils' learning.
- Teachers' marking is inconsistent and pupils do not have individual targets.

Commentary

70. In the 2004 national tests standards were well above national expectations by the end of Year 2 and Year 6, and also well above those of similar schools. This indicates very good improvement since the last inspection, with standards rising from below average at Year 2 and from average at Year 6. Much of this improvement is linked to the systematic, effective introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy, the very good teaching of computational skills and rigorous procedures for assessing and tracking pupils' achievement. Predictions for the current cohorts of Year 2 and 6 pupils indicate that there are fewer higher attaining pupils in both age groups, resulting in standards at above rather than well above average. Consistently good teaching and learning enable most pupils to make good and at times very good progress and to achieve well.
71. Good arrangements for teaching Year 6 pupils in sets according to ability are enabling teachers to set work more closely aligned to need. This, together with very good teaching, is enabling higher attaining pupils to work at a fast pace, whilst those in the second set are taught in smaller groups with good staffing levels. Throughout the school, pupils with below average attainment and those with special educational needs are effectively supported by well-briefed teaching assistants. This enables them to remain focused, to work at a good pace and to achieve well.
72. Teaching and learning are good overall with some very good features. Well-chosen introductory activities grab pupils' attention and engage them immediately in the lesson. Teachers place considerable emphasis on pupils developing mental dexterity with numbers, for example, seeing 16+17 as a near double, or splitting tens and units when adding two-digit numbers. Teachers employ very good techniques to manage pupils' behaviour which result in pupils listening carefully and working diligently. Pupils have very good attitudes to learning because teachers promote positive relationships, giving pupils confidence and the will to succeed. Because the purpose of the lesson is carefully explained, pupils understand what they are expected to learn and how to go about it. In a very good Year 6 lesson, the high expectations of the teacher ensured that higher attaining pupils worked quickly and with rigour. Pupils rose to the challenge because very good teacher demonstration enabled the work to become progressively more difficult.
73. Challenging problem-solving activities encourage pupils to think for themselves, develop strategies, and organise their work independently. Teachers employ a very good range of strategies to engage and focus pupils, for example encouraging pupils to discuss in pairs the answer to a question, or, with younger pupils, undertaking a physical exercise to settle them for the next activity. In a minority of lessons the same challenging work was planned for most pupils; this resulted in the work being too difficult for those of average ability, reducing their overall progress at this time. Occasionally, too much time was given to whole-class teaching, leaving insufficient time for pupils to practise new skills. Most teachers perceptively assess the performance of pupils in lessons, frequently adapting their teaching to developing need. This supports pupils very well. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly but there are inconsistencies of approach. Too often pupils are given insufficient pointers for improvement. Because pupils do not have specific targets they lack a clear longer-term view of the next stages in their learning.

74. Leadership and management are very good. Pupils' test results are rigorously analysed to evaluate strengths and weaknesses in provision and effective action is taken. Well established tracking procedures provide a clear overview of pupils' progress as they move through the school. This provides an effective management tool to identify groups and individuals requiring additional support. These are key reasons why the school's results have risen at a faster rate than they have nationally.

Mathematics across the curriculum

75. Pupils' mathematical competence is good. The application of these good skills across the curriculum is satisfactory but inconsistent. In some subjects, such as science, pupils use numbers and data frequently in their work but in other subjects, for example geography, opportunities are missed for pupils to apply mathematical skills. Information and communication technology is rarely used to support learning in mathematics and pupils' understanding of the range of facilities and opportunities computers and other equipment offer is weak.

SCIENCE

The provision for science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Throughout the school pupils' achievements are good.
- Teaching and learning are good overall but more consistent in the knowledge aspects of the subject than for enquiry skills.
- Pupils enjoy science lessons and are keen to learn.
- The subject is led and managed well.
- Good provision is made for pupils with special educational needs.

Commentary

76. Year 6 pupils performed well in the national tests in 2004, attaining results that were above the national average and similar schools. It is unlikely that results will be quite as positive in 2005 because the current cohort of Year 6 pupils contains fewer pupils capable of working at an above average standard. However, throughout the school pupils are achieving well and standards in both Year 2 and Year 6 meet national expectations. When this level of attainment is compared with the very poor knowledge and understanding of the world that many children have when they first enter the school the very positive gains they make are very apparent.
77. Pupils' knowledge is the strongest aspect of their science and many are able to discuss the key ideas with confidence and understanding. This stems from the good teaching pupils receive which enables them to develop ideas and concepts in logical and progressive steps. Teachers plan lessons carefully so that the activities dovetail into what has gone before. This enables pupils to grasp how new information links to what they have learned previously and encourages them to extend their thinking. Because they feel confident and secure, pupils readily answer questions and put forward their own ideas. They set about practical activities with enthusiasm and excitement. Pupils' behaviour is generally good although younger pupils can become a little over-excited and teachers need all their skills to keep them from bubbling over. The effective teaching combined with pupils' good attitudes and natural curiosity ensures that pupils of all ages learn well. Teachers provide pupils who have special educational with every opportunity to participate fully in lessons and ensure that the difficulties they may have in language or mathematics do not detract from their learning in science. Consequently pupils with special educational needs enjoy their science and maintain a good rate of progress.

78. The curriculum is balanced well and pupils receive regular opportunities to test ideas for themselves. However, while the teaching of enquiry skills is satisfactory overall, it is more variable in quality than for other aspects of science and does not promote pupils' learning as consistently. Many pupils successfully learn a range of key skills, such as how to make a test fair, but do not acquire a full understanding of how to structure an investigation for themselves. Because they do not have a fully secure base, older pupils have difficulty grasping some of the higher order skills, such as how to guarantee and improve the quality of the data they are collecting. There are some examples of very good teaching of enquiry skills. In these lessons, teachers are very clear about the process they want pupils to recognise and involve them fully in the planning of the investigation. Key skills are focused upon and pupils are given a precise picture of the step-by-step procedure they need to follow in order to obtain the information they need. The confidence this well-structured approach gives the pupils is clearly evident and they set about discovering for themselves with a will. A feature of all practical lessons is the effectiveness of the organisation. Resources are prepared thoroughly and as a result time is used efficiently and lessons move at a productive pace.
79. Subject management is good and the co-ordinator has been instrumental in enabling the school to make good progress in science since the last inspection. The monitoring of teaching and learning through the evaluation of pupils' work has been particularly effective and enabled the co-ordinator to accurately identify specific areas for improvement. Much has been done to improve the teaching and learning of enquiry skills but the co-ordinator is fully aware that this continues to be the main area for development.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Throughout the school, pupils' achievement is good.
- Teachers have significantly developed their own skills in order to teach this subject effectively.
- Hardware, although new, is sometimes unreliable and this has a detrimental effect on teachers' planning and pupils' progress.
- The school has established productive links with a nearby high school which give older pupils access to high quality resources.
- Overall too little use is made of the computers to support teaching and learning across the curriculum.
- The subject is led well.
- Assessment is not yet used to full effect.

Commentary

80. Standards meet national expectations in Year 2 and Year 6 and pupils of all ages achieve well. Substantial improvement has been made since the last inspection and the key issue from that report has been addressed well. Accommodation and resources are substantially better and teachers have received the training they needed. The quality of teaching and learning has increased and consequently pupils are achieving more.
81. The school's partnership with a nearby secondary school, which allows classes to use their extensive facilities, has enabled older pupils to experience a much broader curriculum, particularly in control, modelling and multimedia presentations. The teaching they receive obviously inspires pupils who are eager to talk about what they have done. This initiative forms an effective part of the school's strategy to raise standards and to be creative in its approach to pupils' learning.

82. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning in information and communication technology lessons is good. Many teachers are very confident in the use of information and communication technology and provide well-paced lessons with tasks that are both appropriate and interesting. Occasionally, where teachers are not as confident, lessons have a more pedantic pace and pupils do not learn as quickly. In a few lessons insufficient attention is paid to setting challenging work for pupils with differing abilities, or to grouping pupils effectively, and this adversely affects the progress they make, particularly those capable of high levels of attainment.
83. Pupils of all ages enjoy their lessons in the computer suite. They concentrate well when working individually or in pairs on set tasks and are eager to learn. By Year 6 pupils are using more advanced programs competently, such as those needed to put together a multi-media presentation. Throughout the school pupils are developing an appropriate range of skills. However, many pupils have limited opportunities to practise their skills outside of lessons. Consequently familiarity with the position of the keys on the keyboard builds only steadily, slowing the pace of learning. The computers are not completely reliable, and suppliers have not been able to correct recurring faults successfully. During the inspection there were hitches, where one or more computers would not load commonly used programs. This leads to frustration and lack of confidence in planning for full use of the suite, and limits learning for pupils.
84. Good subject leadership has played a significant role in bringing about improvements in information and communication technology since the last inspection. The co-ordinator has innovative ideas for improving the provision, and has developed a range of new facilities through which pupils can access class websites and homework clubs. Along with weekly extra-curricular clubs this effort and commitment ensure that pupils gain as much as possible from the resources at the school, and enhance their learning. Assessment is at a relatively early stage and is not yet used to full effect to plan challenging work for all pupils. The school has appointed a classroom assistant to provide technical support in the computer suite. She prepares the computer suite programs and resources ready for lessons, and then often supports pupils and teachers as they work. This valuable appointment has done much to improve the smooth running of the subject.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

85. Pupils' skills of information and communication technology are satisfactory but they are not applied and developed consistently across the other subjects of the curriculum. This is unsatisfactory. Pupils have too little understanding of how computers and other technology can aid their learning in different subjects. For example, pupils still copy draft work onto the computer rather than redrafting an original electronic version from their file. Some individual research is usefully undertaken using the Internet but much more use could be made for all subjects. As a subject in its own right, information and communication technology has developed very well, but significant improvement is needed to embed it alongside literacy and numeracy as a key tool for learning.

HUMANITIES

86. There was insufficient evidence to support overall judgements about provision, achievement or the quality of teaching and learning in **geography** and **history** as only two lessons were seen in each subject. Teachers' planning was looked at, samples of work analysed and discussions held with pupils.
87. Lesson observations in **geography** and the work in pupils' books and on display show that standards are broadly as expected for primary age pupils. In one of the lessons seen the teaching and learning were good and in the other they were satisfactory. Infant pupils learn about the geographical features and customs of different countries by following the travels of 'Barnaby Bear', a favourite character who 'lives' in their classroom. Some pupils have taken

the bear with them on holiday and have brought back photographs of him in interesting locations. They use these photographs to discuss his exploits, such as having breakfast in Brittany or standing in front of the Leaning Tower of Pisa. Pupils in Year 1 walked through the local area to find out how buildings are used and how they have been constructed. This activity, recorded on digital photographs, provided good links to other subjects.

88. This topic approach is extended satisfactorily in Years 3 to 6 where pupils learn to use mapping symbols and compare the climates of contrasting localities. From this pupils acquire a satisfactory knowledge of places and geographical features and by Year 6 pupils have learned a range of geographical terms such as 'estuary', 'basin' and 'delta' when studying rivers. In a lesson for pupils in Year 6, work on rivers was developed well through the good use of video extracts that provided graphical representation of erosion and deposition. Most pupils recognised the 'meanders' of the River Thames that are clearly visible on the opening sequence of a popular television drama series.
89. Pupils' work in their books and in the small number of lessons seen indicates that standards in **history** meet expectations for primary pupils. This is a similar picture to the last inspection. In the two lessons observed, the quality of teaching was good. Pupils extended their learning, building knowledge and understanding through a series of well-planned lessons. Teachers' good behaviour management enabled pupils to concentrate and work purposefully. A good level of interesting artefacts engaged and motivated pupils. For example, Year 5 pupils examined photographs of Grecian urns, describing differences between then and now in the images portrayed. In both lessons, insufficient attention was paid to pupils' spelling inaccuracies, even when words were incorrectly copied from the whiteboard. Scrutiny of pupils' work over time shows a high incidence of work sheets in Year 6, offering limited opportunity for pupils to reflect on their learning through written work. In other classes, literacy skills are applied effectively.
90. A strength of provision is the good cross-curricular approach to learning. For example, the literacy curriculum for Year 5 has been adapted so that work on myths and legends coincides with historical work on the Ancient Greeks, and the construction of Grecian urns in art and design. This gives good reinforcement, enabling pupils to see connections in their learning. Interesting visits and visitors further enrich the provision. For example, Year 4 pupils have recently welcomed a 'Tudor' visitor, gaining an insight into times past through role-play, questioning and dressing up. The subject was brought alive as they experienced brass rubbing, quill writing and making pomanders.
91. Pupils' attitudes to learning are good. They show interest in the subject, listen and share ideas well, concentrate for good periods of time and show respect for resources used. The co-ordinator has provided clear subject guidelines that support teachers well. A perceptive audit of provision has given clear insight into strengths and weaknesses in provision, providing a good management tool for development. Resources are of good quality and sufficiency. Good use is made of museum loans and library services to support the history curriculum.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

92. Only a small number of lessons were seen in **design and technology** (one), **music** (two) and **art and design** (three). It is, therefore, not possible to make detailed judgements about the provision in these subjects. Further information was gained from discussions with staff and pupils, and from scrutiny of teachers' planning and pupils' work. Hymn practice, assemblies and instrumental clubs provided additional evidence in music. Four **physical education** lessons were observed and further information was gained from talking to pupils and the subject co-ordinator and from the extra-curricular activities which took place during the inspection.
93. **Art and design** did not form a focus for this inspection and there is insufficient evidence upon which to base overall judgements of teaching, learning, standards or achievement across the

school as a whole. In two of the lessons seen the teaching and learning were good and in the third they were satisfactory. Because teachers plan interesting activities that carefully build on earlier learning, pupils develop new knowledge and techniques in a consistent way and become proficient at the basic skills of modelling, drawing and collage. For example, prior to constructing clay vases, Year 5 pupils researched and drew differing Grecian urns, experimented with mark-making techniques and constructed dough pots. This was successful because pupils developed a sense of scale and notion of the finished product, prior to making. Pupils develop satisfactory painting skills, but limited knowledge and application of the techniques used by famous artists reduce the scope of their work.

94. Teachers use a good range of resources to interest and inform pupils' learning. For example, in a Year 4 lesson pupils studied aerial photographs, pictures of the Bayeux Tapestry and aboriginal art forms before developing ideas for painting an imaginary journey. The artistic skills of one teacher are used effectively to provide support for colleagues and to enhance the quality of pupils' learning. Pupils have very good attitudes to the subject, showing interest and enthusiasm in lessons. They express their ideas clearly, working quickly and purposefully. The keenness of most of the pupils in a Year 5 lesson on paper collage was seen in the good range of magazine cuttings they brought from home.
95. Art is used effectively to support work in other subjects. For example, Year 2 pupils used observational skills to carefully draw battery-powered objects in science. The subject is enriched by whole-school initiatives such as the Carnival, enabling pupils to work with visiting artists and to add a multi-cultural dimension to their work. The co-ordinator provides good leadership through effective art teaching, and provision of detailed subject guidelines that support teachers well. Management is less strategic because the quality of teaching and learning in classrooms has not been monitored fully. The subject is resourced well.
96. **Design and technology** was not a focus for the inspection. Because it is still early in the school year this subject has yet to appear on the timetable for Years 3 to 6 and the amount of information it was possible to gather for this age group and for Years 1 to 2 was very limited. There is insufficient evidence upon which to base judgements of teaching, learning, standards, achievement and subject management. In the one lesson seen during the inspection the teaching and learning were satisfactory.
97. Pupils in Year 2 are part way through a series of lessons in which they are making puppets. Although the evidence is limited, the quality of the finger puppets on display and the accompanying written work suggest that pupils have the knowledge and skills expected of the age group. The lesson seen in Year 1 linked well with the work pupils were doing in geography. The objective of using reclaimed material to construct a model house of the type pupils had observed on a walk around the local area was well conceived by the teacher and provided a realistic context for pupils' work. However, many of these younger pupils have yet to develop the ability to link what they observe to what they want to make. Consequently the teacher had to make many decisions for them in order to keep the lesson moving forward. Discussions with Year 6 pupils revealed that from this rather shaky start pupils become familiar with a range of materials, mechanisms, tools and construction techniques. They show an enthusiasm for the subject and recall with pleasure the things they have made. The co-ordinators' management file contains lesson plans and photographs which indicate that the curriculum is sufficiently broad and covers all the required elements. The co-ordinator identifies the focus for subject development as increasing creativity within the curriculum which links well with the whole school improvement plan.
98. The school's knowledgeable and enthusiastic **music** co-ordinator provides specialist class teaching from Year 2 throughout the school. This is a very good use of expertise, which benefits pupils and enhances their learning. Singing is a strongly developed feature and pupils achieve well throughout the school in this aspect of the music curriculum. Pupils sing confidently and tunefully. For example, singing in assembly and hymn practice is very good,

with older pupils confidently singing a second part for the chosen hymns. In one of the lessons seen the teaching and learning were good and in the other they were satisfactory.

99. Pupils have very good opportunities to attend clubs and additional activities to extend their musical skills. As well as choir, pupils attend orchestra, steel pans and recorder clubs each week. Pupils talk enthusiastically about where they have played and sung and it is clear that these experiences have a very positive effect on the personal development of those pupils who participate.
100. Links with the Creative Partnership, through the enthusiastic hard work of the co-ordinator, have significantly enhanced the music curriculum with a range of special projects during the year, such as the Transitions Project where Year 6 pupils invented both lyrics and tunes for their songs and made multi-track recording. Resources are good, and thought has gone into selecting good quality equipment for pupils, such as the steel pans and multi-track recorder, again in conjunction with the Creative Partnership. Forward planning includes the purchase of a computer program which will enhance composition skills for pupils.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Provision in physical education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' achievement is good.
- Teaching and learning are good overall.
- The sports enrichment programme is well structured and very popular with pupils.
- Subject leadership is developing well.

Commentary

101. The two lessons observed in Years 1 and 2 covered gymnastics and dance. Both lessons in Years 3 to 6 featured games skills. The evidence gained indicated that standards in Years 2 and 6 are broadly what would be expected for the pupils' ages. Swimming standards in recent years have been good. The most recent cohort of Year 4 pupils all attained the 25 metres national standard by the age of nine.
102. By copying their teacher's good techniques, most Year 2 pupils can carry out a series of warm-up movements including stretching, jumping and running between each other. Higher attaining pupils have good understanding of how to control their movements such as turning their shoulders or hips and shaking their bodies. Lower attainers have not yet grasped the idea of finding their own space but respond well when helped to do so by their teacher. Pupils respond well to the opportunity to develop dance movements. Year 2 pupils enjoyed moving their arms to percussion sounds representing a hammer and saw as they 'built' the house from the story of the three little pigs.
103. By Year 6 most pupils can dribble a ball with a hockey stick around and between marker cones set out at regular intervals. They work hard and achieve well because they are interested in learning how to improve their games skills. Teachers demonstrate well the skills they expect pupils to acquire. They praise the good effort shown by many pupils and they involve them in demonstrating good practice to each other. Although some pupils become very excitable during team games, most listen to instructions well and respect the skills of their teachers.
104. Pupils thoroughly enjoy the tuition they receive from coaching staff linked to the local professional football club and from the good extra-curricular provision the school makes for sport, and gain much from it. An observation of girls learning to play hockey after school

confirmed that some pupils are attaining above average standards and have become very confident team players. The subject leader has a clear vision for the development of physical education that includes partnership work with a local sports college.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Provision in personal, social and health education is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are good and pupils achieve well.
- Pupils are provided with many opportunities to discuss important issues that affect them both personally and socially and this helps them to mature.

Commentary

105. The school is strongly committed to high quality provision for pupils' personal, social, health and citizenship education and it is firmly embedded in the curriculum. Subject leadership is good and ensures teachers receive the guidance and support they need. The co-ordinator has taken sustained action to raise the profile of personal, social, health and citizenship education and there has been a significant improvement since the last inspection.
106. A cohesive scheme of work is in place and successfully implemented across the school. Teachers' planning is thorough and covers a wide range of personal and social issues such as listening effectively, caring, consideration for others and feelings. Attractive resources have been purchased for all year groups to support the teaching and learning. Health education is included, covering aspects of drugs and sex education. Throughout the school there is a strong focus on personal development and very good links to what is taught in other subject areas. Assemblies are well planned to strengthen pupils' social and moral awareness.
107. Lessons and year group assemblies are effectively planned to allow for plenty of opportunities for discussion. In a Year 5 assembly, pupils considered ways of protecting the environment and the moral issues of killing protected species. Year 1 pupils learned to recognise that some substances that get into our bodies can be dangerous. The school's very good ethos and the staff's success in supporting individuals provide a very good model for a successful community.
108. Citizenship is actively promoted through the many opportunities for pupils to play an important part in helping the school to run smoothly and improve. The school is good at providing pupils with responsibilities to help them build their confidence and self-esteem. 'Playground buddies' help the pupils to develop a sense of responsibility for others and to understand that there is a means for seeking help from other pupils if they have difficulties at playtime. Pupils express their own views through the school council and develop their understanding of democratic decision making. Councillors have a good understanding about their roles and responsibilities. A strong feature of the school council is the way they initiate and organise sponsored events to raise funds for charity and pay for their own ideas which help to improve the school environment.
109. Provision is well supported through involvement in the Creative Partnership, visiting outside agencies and a range of visits. For example, Year 6 pupils visit the local hospital to learn about first aid for children and are involved in a project to help them cope with emergencies in real-life situations.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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