

INSPECTION REPORT

BISHOP ALEXANDER PRIMARY & NURSERY SCHOOL

Newark

LEA area: Nottinghamshire

Unique reference number: 122592

Headteacher: Mr C Richardson

Lead inspector: Mr J Heap

Dates of inspection: 8 – 10 November 2004

Inspection number: 266432

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

© Crown copyright 2004

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

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

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Primary

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 3 - 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

Number on roll: 253

School address: Wolsey Road
Newark
Nottinghamshire
Postcode: NG24 2BQ

Telephone number: 01636 680 040

Fax number: 01636 680 041

Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mr S Paver

Date of previous inspection: 17 May 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Bishop Alexander is a community primary school that caters for pupils between the ages of three and eleven. It is situated on the outskirts of Newark. There are 225 pupils on the roll of the main school: 124 boys and 101 girls. This is around the average sized school in England. The roll has decreased in recent years. The school has a nursery class which has 31 boys and 25 girls attending on a part-time basis. Children enter the nursery at the age of three years, and their attainment on entry is very low. There is presently a very small number of children with special educational needs. When pupils enter Year 1, their attainment is well below average, overall, but the intake of pupils includes the full range of ability. Pupils are organised into nine classes, three have more than one age group. Pupils come from a large, suburban catchment area, which has some signs of deprivation and social and economic disadvantage. Housing ranges from local authority estates to private individual dwellings. The vast majority of pupils are white but minority ethnic heritages are represented, including pupils from the Traveller community. Five pupils are learning English as an additional language, and their mother-tongues are Bengali, Hindi and Lithuanian. The proportion of pupils entitled to a free school meal is broadly average. The proportion of pupils on the list of special educational needs is above average: the majority of these pupils have moderate learning difficulties, particularly in literacy. However, other disabilities include dyslexia, autism and cerebral palsy. One pupil has a statement of special educational need, which is below the national average. The school is involved in the Primary Leadership Programme and has received the following awards:

- School Achievement Award - 2001
- Sports Activemark - 2003

Since the last inspection the school has undergone a very difficult time in relation to school leadership and management. At one stage the school did not have its headteacher and deputy headteacher working in the school and this has clearly had an effect on the progress the school has made since the last inspection.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
18824	J Heap	Lead inspector	English Geography History Religious education English as an additional language
9002	D Ashton	Lay inspector	
22113	A King	Team inspector	Science Art and design Music Physical education Areas of learning in the Foundation Stage
14732	E Korn	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Design and technology Special educational needs

The inspection contractor was:

Nord Anglia School Inspection Services
Anglia House
Carrs Road
Cheadle
Stockport
SK8 2LA

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

REPORT CONTENTS

Page

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

6

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

8

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

11

Teaching and learning

The curriculum

Care, guidance and support

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

16

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

20

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

SUBJECTS KEY STAGES 1 and 2

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

30

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a satisfactory and caring school that caters equally for all its pupils regardless of background or ability. Standards are below average overall and pupils' achievement is satisfactory because the teaching is sound. Pupils' personal development is good because the school has an effective ethos and high expectations of attitudes and behaviour. Overall, leadership and management are satisfactory and the school gives sound value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- By Year 6, standards in English and mathematics are well below average compared to all schools nationally.
- Provision and achievement in the Foundation Stage (nursery and reception) are good.
- The programme of out-of-school activities is very good.
- Monitoring and evaluation of teaching, learning and provision are weak.
- The use and development of literacy and information and communication technology across the curriculum are unsatisfactory.
- There are strong links with parents, community and other establishments.

Since the last inspection, overall improvement has been satisfactory. Owing to the upheavals caused by changes in the leadership and management, the school has been slow in implementing the changes required by the last inspection. By Year 2, standards in mathematics have improved, but the reading and writing results have declined and reflect the increased proportion of pupils with special educational needs in literacy. By Year 6, standards in information and communication technology have been affected by the chronic difficulties with the machines, and although attainment is average, in most of the work the use of the internet is weak. Attainment in religious education is average. Curriculum planning for the classes with more than one age group is satisfactory and better than last time. However, monitoring and evaluation is still an area that requires development, even though there have been improvements since the last inspection. In the list of less important issues, there has been little development of the library and the quality of marking. Improvements have been made in challenging the higher attaining pupils, assessment of pupils' work and annual pupils' progress reports.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2002	2003	2004	2004
English	E	E	E	E
mathematics	E	E	E	D
science	E	E	D	C

*Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average
Similar schools are those that have similar proportions of free school meals.*

Overall, pupils' achievement is satisfactory, including those learning English as an additional language, those from minority ethnic and Traveller backgrounds and those with special educational needs (all groups). Pupils enter Nursery with attainments that are very low, overall. Achievement is good in the Foundation Stage, and by the time they enter Year 1 standards are well below average, particularly in personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and learning and mathematics. By Year 2,

standards are well below average and overall achievement is satisfactory. By Year 6, standards seen are below average overall and achievement is satisfactory. Pupils' results in the 2004 national tests for Year 6 were well below average in English and mathematics and below average in science when compared with all schools. The picture is better when comparisons are made with similar schools, English results were well below average, mathematics results were below average and science results were average. The trend in the school's results over time is below the national trend. The decline in English results over several years accurately reflects the higher proportion of pupils with special educational needs in language and literacy. Targets for attainment are ambitious and not always met, as is evident in the unvalidated results for 2004. In national tests, there is no significant difference in the standards achieved by girls and boys. The school recognises the need to raise standards, particularly in English and mathematics. As a result, pupils are now grouped according to prior levels of attainment in mathematics. Achievement is unsatisfactory in information and communication technology and satisfactory in religious education.

Overall, pupils' attitudes, values and personal qualities are good. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils like coming to school, but attendance is unsatisfactory.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

Overall, the quality of education is **satisfactory**. The quality of teaching and learning is **satisfactory**, but lacks consistency. Assessment is satisfactory, overall. The best teaching, learning, assessment and achievement were seen in the Foundation Stage and in Years 5 and 6. The amount of good, and better, teaching outweighed the satisfactory and weak teaching. However, the analysis of pupils' workbooks shows inconsistency in the setting of individual targets and a lack of comments that relate to the targets, particularly in English. Pupils with special educational needs are taught satisfactorily, with pupils getting good support in their small group work. However, teachers do not always match work to pupils' needs in normal classwork.

Overall, the curriculum is unsatisfactory. The curriculum for the Foundation Stage is good. The programme of enrichment activities is very good and provides the pupils with exciting and enjoyable challenges. However, there are insufficient opportunities to use and develop literacy and information and communication technology skills across the curriculum. Overall, the accommodation and resources are unsatisfactory and this affects pupils learning, particularly in information and communication technology and for those pupils with special educational needs. Provision for pupils' care and welfare is effective and they receive sound guidance from adults in the school. The school has good links with parents, the community and other educational establishments.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Overall, leadership and management are **satisfactory**. Governance is sound. The Governing Body is aware that improvements are needed, particularly in the monitoring and evaluation of the school. The headteacher leads satisfactorily. He has a clear vision for the school's development that is shared by the senior management team. However, monitoring of teaching, learning and provision is unsatisfactory and leads to inconsistencies in staff performance and policy compliance. Key staff lead adequately, provide good role models and give impetus to initiatives, such as improving pupils' thinking skills. The leadership of the Foundation Stage is good. Overall, management of the school is satisfactory.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents have positive views of the school. They particularly like the way that their children are becoming more mature, the wide range of out-of-school activities and the advice they receive when their children are entering school for the first time. Pupils are very satisfied with the school and they take very seriously the responsibilities that are provided, such as the school council and various daily monitoring tasks.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The most important things the school should do are:

- Raise standards in English, mathematics and information and communication technology.
- Improve the monitoring and evaluation of teaching, learning and provision by governors, headteacher and subject coordinators.
- Improve the use and development of literacy and information and communication technology across the curriculum.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Overall, pupils' achievement is satisfactory, including those from minority ethnic backgrounds. All children achieve well in the Foundation Stage and satisfactorily in the rest of the school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- On entry to the nursery, children have very low communication and literacy skills and this is a major barrier to learning across the curriculum and through the school.
- By Year 6, standards are rising in mathematics and science, particularly for the higher attaining pupils.
- Achievement in information and communication technology is lowered because access to the internet is presently difficult to manage.
- Standards in spelling are low.

Commentary

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	13.2 (13.5)	15.8 (15.7)
writing	12.6 (12.8)	14.6 (14.6)
mathematics	15.3 (14.6)	16.2 (16.3)

There were 33 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

- 1 The table above shows that standards in 2004 were well below average in reading and writing and below average in mathematics when compared with all schools. Compared to schools with similar numbers of pupils with free school meals, results were well below average in reading and below average in writing and mathematics. The proportion of pupils attaining the higher Level 3 was well below average in reading and mathematics and average in writing. According to teacher assessments standards were well below average in science. Over three years, results in reading were below average and well below average in writing and mathematics. There is no significant difference in the attainment of boys and girls. The school trend is below the national one, with some evidence of inconsistency in results over time.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	24.0 (24.3)	26.9 (26.8)
mathematics	25.3 (24.7)	27.0 (26.8)
science	27.9 (27.4)	28.6 (28.6)

There were 38 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

- 2 The table above shows results were well below average in 2004 for English and mathematics and below average for science when compared with all schools nationally. Compared to schools having similar proportions of free school meals, English results were well below average, mathematics results were below average and science results were average. Overall, standards were well below average in comparison to all schools and below average compared to similar schools. The proportion of pupils attaining the higher Level 5 was very low (in the lowest 5 per cent of schools) in English, average in mathematics and below average in science. Over three years (2002 – 4), results were well below average in English, mathematics and science. The trend is below the national one. There are no significant differences in the results of boys and girls.
- 3 Evidence from the inspection shows that:
- children enter the nursery with very low standards, particularly in personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy and mathematics;
 - standards in reception are well below average;
 - standards by Year 2 are well below average;
 - standards by Year 6 are below average.
- Achievement is good in the Foundation Stage and satisfactory in Years 2 and 6.
- 4 Since the last inspection, standards on entry to the nursery have declined and there is a greater concentration of pupils who show severe difficulties in communication and language development. By Years 2 and 6, standards are lower in English and mathematics. Whilst developments in teaching and organisation have led to some improvement in mathematics, English standards remain stubbornly low, particularly for the higher attaining pupils. The main reasons for this are:
- the above average proportion of pupils who have special educational needs in language and literacy;
 - insufficient opportunities to use and develop literacy skills across the curriculum;
 - inconsistencies in marking that highlight a variable approach to setting individual targets for pupils and the lack of reference to them in subsequent comments.
- 5 However, achievement in English is satisfactory. The majority of pupils are working as well as can be expected. This is evident in the school's tracking of pupils' standards throughout the school. Furthermore, it is clear that pupils make the most progress in Years 5 and 6 where the teaching and learning are strongest. Nevertheless, knowledge and understanding of how the library works is unsatisfactory for many pupils and only the highest attaining pupils have good spelling and punctuation skills.
- 6 In mathematics, standards seen are well below average by Year 2 and below average by Year 6. Achievement is satisfactory. Standards are rising by Year 6 as a result of:
- improvements in teaching and learning, brought about by the grouping of pupils according to prior attainment;
 - good leadership and management, particularly in the tracking of pupils' individual achievements across the school;
 - very good teaching of higher attaining pupils in Year 6.

- 7 In science, standards are below average by Year 2 and average by Year 6. Achievement is good. Standards are rising because:
- there is a greater emphasis on developing pupils' enquiry skills;
 - leadership and management are effective. Most importantly, there have been very worthwhile adjustments to the science programme which have led to more frequent re-visiting of topics. Consequently, knowledge and understanding are regularly consolidated.
- 8 In information and communication technology, standards are below average in Year 6. There is insufficient evidence to judge standards in Year 2. Achievement is unsatisfactory because pupils have too few opportunities to access information from the internet or send messages. This is mainly because of the technical difficulties related to the building. However, there is too little use of information and communication technology skills across the curriculum and this also slows progress.
- 9 In religious education, standards by Years 2 and 6 meet the expectations of the locally Agreed Syllabus and achievement is satisfactory. Pupils have a sound knowledge and understanding of important aspects of a range of faiths, including Christianity, Islam and Judaism. Standards in the subject make a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- 10 In other subjects, standards in history are well below average by Year 2 and below average by Year 6. Achievement is satisfactory. There is insufficient evidence to make secure judgements about art and design, design and technology, geography, music and physical education.
- 11 The achievement of pupils with special educational needs and from other groups is satisfactory overall. It is good for those who are given individualised programmes, and when the pupils are taught in groups outside the usual classroom setting. The majority of the pupils have special educational needs related to literacy. They achieve satisfactorily, and sometimes well with their reading, but not with their spelling. The pupils with behaviour needs achieve satisfactorily. In mathematics the pupils achieve satisfactorily. However, the few pupils with the greatest need do not achieve satisfactorily in the occasional lessons where they do not have additional adult support.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good. Relationships with others are good. Overall, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Attendance is unsatisfactory, but punctuality is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Attitudes to learning are particularly strong in the Foundation Stage and Years 5 and 6.
- Relationships between pupils and between pupils and other adults are good.
- Moral, social and cultural development are good.
- Attendance is weak for a minority of pupils.

Commentary

- 12 The positive judgements from the last inspection have been maintained. Attendance was judged to be satisfactory at the last inspection. It is now unsatisfactory but clearly improving on the levels of recent years. Cultural development has improved since the last inspection.
- 13 Pupils are particularly enthusiastic and work hard when teaching is challenging and captures their interest, for example in the Foundation Stage and Years 5 and 6. Throughout the school, nearly all listen attentively, are keen to answer questions and undertake tasks willingly. This is the result of often good teaching, where teachers maintain a high level of interest which ensures that pupils of all levels of attainment have the opportunity to achieve well. However, on the few occasions when teaching is unsatisfactory, pupils' interest and behaviour weakens and achievement is unsatisfactory. The attitudes of the pupils with special educational needs are good in the groups that are taught in small groups away from the main class and satisfactory when they are taught within their whole class.
- 14 Standards of behaviour are mostly good throughout the school. Pupils discuss and agree class rules and are fully aware of the expectations of teachers and support staff. The caring ethos of the school results in pupils knowing right from wrong and showing consideration for others. No signs of aggressive behaviour were seen and both parents and pupils confirmed that where bullying does occur it is quickly resolved. There have been six exclusions in the past year. This is ample evidence of the school's determination to deal with inappropriate behaviour in a prompt, fair and rigorous manner.

Exclusions

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	217	6	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	2	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	4	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	2	0	0

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

- 15 Spiritual development is satisfactory. The good ethos of the school promotes effective moral, social and cultural development. Staff give a positive lead in fostering pupils' views of right and wrong and in developing good relationships. For example:
- by dealing promptly with incidences of unsatisfactory behaviour and inviting discussion amongst the pupils;
 - by giving praise and encouragement at every opportunity as well as acting as good role models.

From the day they start in the nursery, children are encouraged to become independent and this makes a good contribution to the way that they progress well by the end of reception. Pupils take their responsibilities of living in a community seriously and develop good levels of maturity by the time they transfer to secondary school. Responsibilities range from acting as a school councillor, helping with equipment and assemblies and acting as door and library monitors. A school councillor is responsible for organising and cataloguing the guided reading scheme. Pupils play harmoniously together and work well together in groups. Many opportunities exist for pupils to experience life outside school, for example, a whole school visit to the seaside and a visit to the Houses of Parliament by the school councillors. Cultural development is good. Provision that highlights similarities and differences in the local area and other settings are commonplace in subjects such as geography, history and religious education. Pupils are well catered for in relation to multicultural issues, through multi-faith studies in religious education and art and music from other cultures.

- 16 Attendance is below the national average due in part to parents taking holidays in term time. Attendance awards have been introduced and with the assistance of the education welfare officer the school is taking effective action to improve attendance and reduce unauthorised absences.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	4.1	School data	2.0
National data	5.1	National data	0.4

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

Overall, the quality of education is satisfactory. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Overall, the curriculum is unsatisfactory, with shortcomings in the use and development of literacy and information and communication technology. The school has good links with parents, community and other major partners. Overall, the quality of care, guidance and support for pupils is good.

Teaching and learning

Overall, teaching and learning are satisfactory. It is good in the Foundation Stage and Years 5 and 6. Overall, assessment is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Assessment information is used well to plan children’s learning in the Foundation Stage.
- Marking is inconsistent, particularly the use of comments about pupils’ individual targets.
- Pupils’ good learning in Years 5 and 6 is enhanced by teachers’ effective planning.
- Teaching and learning in information and communication technology are adversely affected by the ongoing technical difficulties with the system.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 40 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	5 (12.5%)	21 (52.5%)	12 (30.0%)	2 (5.0%)	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.

- 17 In relation to lessons observed, the quality of teaching and learning remains very similar to that of the last inspection. There has been a good improvement in the quality of teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage because of successful changes in the organisation and a greater emphasis on teamwork and use of assessment information. The analysis of work in pupils' books shows that there remain some shortcomings in marking and that the school policy is not followed consistently by a minority of staff. Other areas of assessment are better than previously reported and are having a positive impact in subjects such as mathematics and science. In many ways, the new management team has done well to maintain these qualities in the face of significant staffing difficulties in recent years.
- 18 In the Foundation Stage, teaching and learning are good and this leads to good achievement. Key features are:
- the very good encouragement of children to take part in the full range of activities;
 - the effective use of assessment information to plan the children's work.
- These are very important because the vast majority of children come to school with very poor standards in personal, social and emotional development, communication and literacy skills and in mathematics. Across these areas of learning, the children make good progress, even though the outcomes remain well below average.
- 19 In Years 1 and 2, the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. However, it is here that the two unsatisfactory lessons and none of the very good lessons were observed. The strongest teaching is in Year 2. Here, resources are used well to challenge and enthuse pupils, for instance in science and art and design. The analysis of pupils' work shows that there are shortcomings in:
- teachers' planning, because marking is not rigorous enough to provide guidance for the learning in the next lesson;
 - the way teachers organise their lessons. For example, many pupils in Year 1 still require activities that are based on learning through play but these are not catered for sufficiently and pupils are given tasks that are not suited to their needs. Furthermore, a contributory factor is that the classroom does not have the range of resources needed to support this way of working;
 - the way that pupils apply themselves to tasks and the amount and the quality of work that they produce.
- Further reasons for these weaknesses are the relative inexperience of some of the teachers and shortcomings in the monitoring of teaching and learning by management.

- 20 In Years 3 to 6, the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. All of the very good lessons were observed here. The strongest practices were observed in Years 5 and 6 and this is where pupils make the most progress because of:
- good knowledge about subjects that enables teachers to plan learning objectives that are supported by work from several areas of the curriculum. For example, in Year 6 the work on the Second World War focuses on literacy, skills in speaking, history, religious education and personal, social, health and citizenship education;
 - successful encouragement and engagement of pupils. This was also observed in a Year 3 poetry lesson where the teachers' obvious enjoyment of poems enthused the pupils;
 - the brisk pace in lessons that captures interest and ensures that learning is, at least, sound and often better.
- The use of teaching assistants is often weak.
- 21 In English, teaching and learning are satisfactory. The school has a strong approach to teaching letter sounds and pupils find this useful when confronting previously unseen words. Less successful is the approach to teaching spelling and punctuation and the unsatisfactory use and development of literacy skills across the curriculum. In mathematics, there is very good teaching in Years 5 and 6 because of high expectations, brisk pace and very clear explanations of how to do work. The grouping of pupils by prior levels of attainment is having a satisfactory impact, overall, because the quality of teaching and learning is variable.
- 22 In science, teaching and learning are good. The main strengths are:
- the good and widespread use of practical work that allows pupils to experiment and explore;
 - the effective matching of work to pupils' needs.
- In information and communication technology, teaching is satisfactory overall but learning is unsatisfactory. This is because the network is not working properly, owing to technical difficulties caused by the building. Consequently, important aspects of work are not covered properly, such as using the internet, thereby hindering pupils' learning.
- 23 In other subjects, the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory in religious education and history. In art and design, design and technology, geography, music and physical education there is insufficient evidence to make a secure judgement.
- 24 The teaching by the learning support assistants for the pupils with special educational needs in the groups taught outside the usual classes is good and the pupils achieve well at these times. In many class lessons, the work is not modified well enough to meet the specific needs of the pupils with special educational needs. Teachers do not sufficiently assess and monitor the work of the pupils with special educational needs when they work under the guidance of the learning support assistants.
- 25 The school has devised a 'map' of assessment procedures, so that teachers and support staff are aware of when procedures will be used. These include tests that are legally required and others that are optional. The results from these tests provide valuable information about individual strengths and weaknesses and trends

across the school.

- 26 Overall, pupils' achievements in lessons are adequately assessed. Judgements are used to inform planning, but these tend to evaluate coverage, rather than provide an in-depth analysis of individual pupils' learning. Plans do not generally include the levels in the National Curriculum, which means it is not clear what pupils are to learn and what they are to achieve next. The most useful assessments are done in the Foundation Stage. As a result, lesson plans are based on the effective evaluation of what children already do, know and understand. There are comprehensive systems to manage this type of information, including progress through the nationally agreed stepping stones to learning. Staff share information regularly, creating individual profiles of each child.
- 27 Overall, the assessment in most subjects is satisfactory, but in mathematics it is good. Marking is regular and comments are usually helpful and supportive. However, targets for pupils' learning are not referred to closely enough, particularly in English.

The curriculum

Overall, the curriculum is unsatisfactory. The enrichment activities provided are very good. The accommodation and number of support staff are inadequate to meet the needs of the curriculum.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school provides enrichment activities that are exciting and contribute significantly to the pupils' enjoyment and positive attitudes to school.
- The curriculum lacks sufficient breadth because there are insufficient opportunities to use and develop literacy and information and communication technology skills in other subjects.
- There are insufficient resources and support staff to meet all the curricular needs of the pupils with special educational needs.
- The curriculum for the pupils in the Foundation Stage is good. However, there are insufficient links between Reception Year and Year 1 for the pupils to receive the continuous programme they need.
- The resources for information and communication technology are unsatisfactory.

Commentary

- 28 The curriculum meets all statutory requirements and religious education is taught in accordance with the locally Agreed Syllabus. The personal, social, health and citizenship education programme rightly has a considerable and successful emphasis on alcohol and drugs misuse, understanding anti-social behaviour and sex and relationships education.
- 29 Yearly and termly planning for Years 1 to 6 are fully established, but subject coordinators do not have a full overview of their own or other subjects. The low attainment and social skills of many of the pupils when they enter Year 1 are not sufficiently taken into account and the curriculum for these pupils lacks a sufficiently practical approach. The school is starting to link subjects together to enhance pupils' learning. Activities to develop pupils' sensory and thinking skills are good innovations.
- 30 The literacy and numeracy strategies are well implemented. Teaching pupils in groups according to their prior levels of attainment in mathematics provides equal opportunity for all. The skills pupils learn in literacy are not sufficiently practised in the other subjects of the

curriculum. Opportunities to extend the pupils learning and research skills, using the internet, computer software and the library are severely restricted by inadequate resources and accommodation. Recent changes have provided a good curriculum for science and standards are highest in this subject. The key to this is the way that the topics are revisited at regular intervals so that learning is consolidated and reinforced.

- 31 Overall, the provision for the many pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. Within literacy and numeracy the systems provide good support. For example:
- the grouping according to prior levels of attainment in mathematics;
 - the withdrawal of pupils with special educational needs into small groups in literacy.
- However, there are insufficient support staff to meet the learning needs of these pupils at other times. Too few pupils with specific learning difficulties such as dyslexia, are on specific programmes for their needs. In difficult and restricted circumstances, the school manages to find spaces for the small groups to take place, but they are places that are noisy and have distractions. Too few resources for pupils with special educational needs were seen being used during the inspection.
- 32 The school provides satisfactory support for learning outside the school day. Opportunities for the pupils to participate in sport, musical activities and other activities are good. Enrichment opportunities within the curriculum, such as a whole school focus upon the work of Degas, are very good. The school offers two residential experiences.

Care, guidance and support

The school makes good provision for ensuring pupils' care, welfare, health and safety. It provides pupils with sound support and guidance. The school effectively involves pupils in the work of the school and its development.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils feel secure and work in a caring, healthy and safe environment.
- Staff know the pupils and their families well and relationships are good.
- Arrangements for helping pupils on entry to the school are very good.
- The school council is effective and gives pupils a good say in the running of the school.

Commentary

- 33 Overall, the school has maintained the strong elements of this aspect and it remains a strength of the school.
- 34 The school provides a happy and friendly environment that is conducive to learning. Close attention is paid to health and safety issues and risk assessments, particularly when planning visits to places of interest. Pupils' health and safe living are well promoted through the personal, social and health education programme, which is enhanced by regular visits from the drug awareness officer and various guest speakers. First aid provision and arrangements for caring for sick children are good. Child protection procedures are good and there is effective liaison with other agencies.
- 35 Teachers and support staff are sensitive to the needs of the pupils and thus able to provide appropriate support and guidance. The good relationships between pupils and staff encourage pupils to raise any concerns they may have, knowing they will

be dealt with sympathetically. Teachers satisfactorily follow and note the progress and personal development of all pupils, including those with special educational needs. The reward system is used to good effect to highlight and encourage pupils' achievements.

- 36 Induction arrangements are very well organised and ensure that children settle happily into school life. These include home visits and several opportunities for parents to visit the school. A sheltered outdoor play area provides a secure base for the younger children. Pupils are well prepared for transfer to secondary education.
- 37 The school recognises that there is great benefit in developing consultation with pupils and has recently set up a school council. Councillors take their responsibilities very seriously and enthusiastically participate in their new roles.
- 38 The views and feelings of the pupils with special educational needs, in relation to how hard they have worked and how well they have achieved, are not recorded when their targets are reviewed. This is a weakness in the review process. A good innovation is the pupils having their own version of their education plans into which they record their goals and who will support them. This makes the pupils more involved and keen to achieve their targets.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Links with parents, the local and wider community and other schools and colleges are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents are well informed about the school and the standards and progress of their children.
- The Parent-Teacher Association provides good support.
- The visits to the homes of pre-nursery children is a strong feature of provision that is appreciated by parents.

Commentary

- 39 Parents are very satisfied with the school. They feel that their children are encouraged to be mature and responsible and they appreciate the wide range of extra-curricular activities. Parents of children entering the nursery receive home visits and good advice on how to help their child to cope with school life. Behavioural problems are a cause for concern for a few parents but these are dealt with effectively.
- 40 The prospectus, regular newsletters and other correspondence provide good information about general school business. Pupils' progress is well presented through consultation evenings, open days and annual reports that are detailed and include suggestions for improvement. Parents are also welcome to discuss concerns at any time and without a formal appointment. Parents judge the school to be approachable and consultative through the opportunities to make a contribution to the school improvement plan and invitations to family assemblies. Home-school diaries are used effectively to enable parents and teachers to monitor progress. All

of these characteristics add up to an improvement on the findings of the last inspection.

- 41 Parents are encouraged to contribute to their children's learning by providing assistance in the classroom and on trips and visits. They also raise significant funds for the school through the Parent-Teacher Association.
- 42 In line with the general good practice, parents of pupils with special educational needs are kept well informed about their children's progress. However, parents are not involved at the time of their child's review and their views are not ascertained. This is a weakness within the provision. Once the review is completed, the school makes every effort to inform parents of the new targets. The school spares no effort in ascertaining parents' views on any new targets and to gain their support in working with their child at home.
- 43 The good links with the community include the local church where Christian festivals are celebrated and participation in many town and county events. Pupils take part in musical events, a residential visit, sporting activities and charity fund raising, and carol singing at a local elderly residents home. Members of the community are invited to join in events, including a summer fair.
- 44 Good working relationships exist with the local schools and the collaboration of staff and resources enhances the teaching and learning of all pupils. The school provides training for students from the local college. All these initiatives contribute positively to the progress and achievements of the pupils.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Overall, leadership and management are satisfactory. Governance is satisfactory. The leadership of the headteacher and key staff is satisfactory. Management is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Monitoring and evaluation are weak.
- School self-evaluation is accurate and leads to sound priorities in the school improvement plan.
- The headteacher and key staff aspire to higher pupil achievement and are ambitious about raising standards.

Commentary

45 Since the last inspection, the school has undergone major changes, particularly in leadership and management. Parts of these changes are attributable to the normal passage of time and events. However, a severe interruption, to the formerly sound practices noted in the last report, occurred around two years ago. In a very short period the headteacher and deputy headteacher left the school and successors were not quickly appointed. This led to a senior teacher leading the school for an extended period. Inevitably, this has had an adverse effect on the rate of improvement and the new senior management team is having to start some initiatives from scratch.

46 The school correctly identifies the following barriers to raising achievement:

- very low attainment on entry to the school, particularly children's literacy and social skills;
- poor accommodation that hinders pupils' achievement, such as the lack of a worthwhile space for some teaching of pupils with special educational needs and a poor library area.

Inspectors agree that the school identifies some important aids to raising achievement, such as the work of an Advanced Skills Teacher. However, there are also some aspects that are less strong, for instance the quality of analysis by the staff because monitoring and evaluation has weaknesses.

47 Overall, governance is satisfactory in relation to ensuring that the school fulfils its statutory duties and understanding the strengths and weaknesses of the school. In fact, governors are acutely aware that their own work needs to improve. To this end they are rightly developing the quality of committee work and recognise that more rigorous monitoring and evaluation is necessary. They rely too heavily on the headteacher and are stronger in the supportive role than they are at challenging what the school is doing. Presently they do not have sufficient strategies to gather information for themselves and act decisively upon it. However, a welcome initiative is their involvement in analysing pupils' work and drawing conclusions from it.

48 The headteacher and key staff have a clear vision of the improvements they wish to make in the school. They recognise, correctly, that the school is stronger in the social and caring aspects of its work and see raising standards as the major goal. In many respects self-evaluation is accurate and strategic planning identifies correctly the areas that need to be developed. However, monitoring and evaluation of teaching, learning and provision lack rigour. As a result:

- the curriculum is not providing enough opportunities for the use and development of literacy and information technology skills in other subjects;

- the programme for Year 1 does not take sufficient account of the needs of many pupils to continue to learn through play;
- there are inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and learning;
- the success criteria in the school improvement plan are not sharp enough to bring about strong development.

- 50 Nevertheless, the high aspirations and ambition have led to important commitments, such as:
- introducing a programme to improve pupils' thinking skills;
 - improving the organisation and practices of the Foundation Stage;
 - strengthening the senior management team and providing subject coordinators with the time and resources to do their job;
 - canvassing parents' views about initiatives for the school improvement plan.
- 51 The leadership of the special educational needs provision is satisfactory. The national Code of Practice is followed, although some pupils' review dates are missed. The co-ordinator has high ambitions, and she is involved with all the reviews to ensure that the targets are specific and well written. However, there are weaknesses within the management of the provision, particularly in relation to monitoring performance. The review statements do not contain sufficiently clear analysis of whether the targets have been met. There is insufficient evaluation of progress and achievement over time. Too much of the co-ordinator's available time is allocated to supporting teachers to use the new computer software for writing review statements rather than focusing upon ensuring that each pupil has appropriate provision and is achieving to the utmost. The co-ordinator does not undertake sufficient monitoring of the learning support assistants who deliver the literacy and numeracy to the pupils with the greatest learning difficulties.
- 52 Management of groups of pupils is satisfactory. The school checks regularly on the progress that is being made by pupils from Traveller and minority ethnic backgrounds to ensure that they are progressing at the correct pace. The school has adequate access to specialist help from local authority officers and they get involved. Financial support is used properly to acquire resources when the need arises.
- 53 There is appropriate deployment of qualified staff and staffing expenditure supports the curricular, pastoral and management objectives of the school. There has been stability in the staff over the past two years. There are insufficient support staff for pupils with special educational needs in the classroom, particularly for pupils in Years 1 and 2.
- 54 The management of the school's finances is sound. Procedures to control, record and maintain expenditure are efficient. Recommendations in the last audit report of 2001 have been implemented. Budgeting is linked to the school improvement plan and governors and management work effectively together to plan ahead and to support educational developments through careful financial planning. Expenditure on learning resources is focused on objectives within a framework of agreed priorities. The experienced school secretary provides effective finance and administration support.
- 55 The budget surplus in 2003/04 was large, but the school had held money back for prudent reasons. For example:
- £38000 for extra staffing to support lower attaining pupils, a classroom assistant and supply cover for the release time of subject coordinators;
 - £5000 for information and communication technology resources;
 - £30000 for improvements to the accommodation;

- £10500 to support further developments in the Foundation Stage.
These elements of substantial expenditure mean that the resultant carry forward figure will be within the 5 per cent target expected. The principles of best value are applied adequately to the acquisition of supplies and services.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	841,844
Total expenditure	737,075
Expenditure per pupil	2,886

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	35,227
Balance carried forward to the next	95,919

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

The provision in the Foundation Stage is good overall. Children achieve well because teaching is good throughout nursery and reception. Attainment on entry to the nursery is very poor, with very weak skills in communication language and literacy, mathematical development and knowledge and understanding of the world. The children's skills when they first start school in personal, social and emotional development, physical and creative development are well below what is normally expected for this age group. Staff are well-informed about the curriculum for young children. However, children are not likely to achieve all the nationally agreed Early Learning Goals by the time they start in Year 1. There is very good teamwork and staff encourage and engage the children very well in their play. They use the available resources and accommodation well, making the best use of space, and organising sessions effectively to benefit children's learning. Staff are well-deployed, particularly to support children with special educational needs in the full range of activities provided. Children learning English as an additional language make good progress and achieve well. Assessment is good and used effectively to plan what children are to learn, based on perceptive and regular observations of learning. The partnership with parents and carers is good, there is a range of activities for the children to take home to share with their parents. There are very good procedures for when the children first come into school to ensure they are very well settled and feel comfortable in their new situation. The Foundation Stage is well led and managed. As a result, the progress since the previous inspection is good. There has been a fundamental change in the organisation and there is a useful and relevant action plan which has identified further areas for development. Initiatives are well-planned and the unit functions effectively. Children in the nursery and Reception Year are organised into three main groups, depending on their age and abilities and work is carefully tailored to meet their needs.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children behave well.
- Good experiences are provided for the children to develop ideas about a variety of cultures.
- Staff promote children's confidence and self-esteem effectively.

Commentary

56 Teaching, learning and achievement are good. However, attainment at the end of reception is likely to be well below average, with the majority of pupils failing to complete the nationally identified Early Learning Goals. The staff ensure there are good opportunities for the children to develop their confidence and self-esteem, valuing their contributions and encouraging them to be active participants in their learning. Children behave well, and those who find sharing and taking turns difficult are reminded by staff to play fairly. Staff participate fully in the activities provided,

for instance wearing traditional dress to support the study of Diwali and reinforce work on the story of Rama and Sita. The children have positive attitudes to their learning, because of the good quality support and very good interaction from staff. This means they are secure and approach adults in the school readily, because they know their suggestions and ideas will be valued. Relationships are good between staff and children, there are good levels of mutual respect and all children are included in the range of activities provided. Children are encouraged to select their own activities for the good range offered, because of this they are able to concentrate and persevere and develop their play which is beneficial to their learning. There is easy access to the outdoor area of the unit for the children, the system whereby children select a coloured band when they go outside means the staff can keep track of the number of children and also offers the children independence and autonomy for their learning.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Staff encourage the children effectively to develop their language through play.
- Good practice in developing ideas about the sounds letters make in words.
- Staff are active participants in children's role-play, helping them to use their imagination.

Commentary

57 The children's skills in communication, language and literacy are developing well, because of the good teaching, learning and achievement. Nevertheless, standards at the end of reception are likely to be well below average because of the very low level of communication and literacy skills with which the children enter the nursery. Staff are well-informed about the elements of the programme for learning, support this work effectively and provide a good range of activities. The children have good opportunities to learn about the sounds letters make in words and to listen to a good variety of tales and stories. For example, to support their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, they listen to stories about Diwali, such as 'Rama and Sita'. There is a well-planned programme of activities to support the children's knowledge and skills acquisition in language and literacy. As part of registration and the daily routines the children copy their own names, when they come into school at the beginning of the session. There is a good-sized role play area and a writing area, which are generally well-equipped, and also a comfortable book area, where the children can look at and share books, either with each other or an adult.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good use is made of play and other incidental activities to promote mathematical

development.

- A good range of activities are provided for the children to solve simple problems in a practical way.

Commentary

58 Achievement is good in mathematical development, and the children are progressing well, from a very low base when they first start school, because teaching and learning are good. However, it is likely that the majority of children will not achieve all the Early Learning Goals, and standards will be well below average at the end of reception. Opportunities for the children to talk about numbers and make comparisons about quantity and size occur frequently, for example counting the number of children present at the beginning of the session. Activities are well-planned to provide a range of experiences for the children to solve simple problems in a practical setting, for instance filling and emptying containers with sand and water. Counting, recognising and recording numerals are reinforced effectively and when children are involved in designing and making models their skills in comparing measurement and numbers are very well-promoted. This type of work also links effectively to recognising and understanding the properties of two and three-dimensional shapes. Work on nature study promotes the development of the children's ideas about patterns and symmetry.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good work is produced by the children in designing and making their own models, using recycled materials.
- Good experiences are provided for the children to develop their investigative skills.
- Good emphasis is given to this area of learning.

Commentary

59 Children's knowledge and understanding of the world when they first start in the nursery is very low, but due to the good teaching they make good progress and their achievement is good. The staff plan effectively to provide opportunities for the children to create their own three-dimensional models for construction equipment and using paper and other materials. The quality of this work is very good and benefits the children's understanding in other areas of learning. There is some use of technology to support the children's learning, for example using tape recorders, computers, and keyboards, but this type of work tends to be underdeveloped throughout the school. Natural materials are used to extend the children's ideas about the natural environment, and to explore and examine these for similarities, differences and to observe patterns in nature. By the end of reception, it is likely that most children will not have reached the Early Learning Goals and standards will be well below average.

60 There are no overall judgements on physical development and creative development

as few sessions were observed in these areas.

- 61 In **physical development**, sessions in the hall to promote an awareness of space, obstacles and other children are well-planned, and staff interact well with the children participating in activities and encouraging them to try to develop their bodily control and co-ordination. The outdoor area is sheltered against the elements and provides a good location for the children to practise physical skills, although there is no climbing frame of the appropriate size for the older children to use to develop and extend their skills.
- 62 In **creative development**, children's skills when using their hands are weak when they first come to school, but the staff provide a good range of activities to strengthen small hand muscles and to practise using a good range of tools and implements to draw, write and paint. Children's art work is valued, for example, when displayed as the 'Foundation Stage art gallery' and indicates the good range of media and materials the children use in their creative work. Imaginative play and exploring a variety of materials and media are encouraged, and all combine to promote the children's creativity.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Attitudes to reading are good.
- Many pupils have weaknesses in spelling and punctuation.
- Pupils have good knowledge of letter sounds.
- Teaching and learning in Years 5 and 6 are good.
- Monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning are weak.
- There is insufficient use and development of literacy skills in other subjects.

Commentary

- 63 Overall, standards are well below average by Year 2 and Year 6. These judgements are reflected in the 2004 national test results. The results in Year 6 are showing a decline since 2001 and this is due to:
- increasing numbers of pupils who have special educational needs in literacy;
 - the problems faced by the school in relation to leadership and management that have led to inconsistencies in teaching and learning.
- 64 However, achievement overall is satisfactory for all groups in the school. This is because of the progress pupils make from the extremely low standards on entering the school. There are particular difficulties in speaking and listening and a large proportion of the young children have difficulty with handling books and following text. The above average proportion of pupils with special educational needs and those from other groups also make satisfactory progress towards their individual targets. In 2004, the very low level of pupils achieving the higher than average

Level 5 (3 per cent), compares unfavourably with results in mathematics (30 per cent) and science (30 per cent). However, the school was able to assist these pupils by having questions read out to them, thus pupils were not disadvantaged by weaker reading skills.

- 65 By Year 2, standards in speaking, listening, reading and writing are well below average. There are no significant differences in the attainment of boys and girls. Achievement is satisfactory. The majority of pupils make relevant verbal contributions to lessons and they are making good progress in handwriting and learning letter sounds. Higher attaining pupils benefit from their small group work with the special educational needs coordinator. Their basic speaking, reading and writing skills are progressing well, particularly their ability to write independently and the good accuracy, fluency and understanding they show in reading. Attitudes to reading are good.
- 66 By Year 6, standards in speaking, listening, reading and writing are well below average. There is no significant difference in the attainment of boys and girls. Overall, achievement is satisfactory, but pupils progress most in Years 5 and 6, where the best teaching takes place. Most Year 6 pupils talk competently and express their ideas in an interesting way. They have good attitudes to reading and the highest attaining pupils show very good accuracy, fluency and understanding of challenging books. Only these pupils have good knowledge of how the library works and where to find information. In writing, there is a big gap between the basic skills of the highest and average attaining pupils, particularly in spelling and punctuation. Nevertheless, all pupils are ambitious in the range of vocabulary they use in their writing.
- 67 Overall, teaching and learning are satisfactory. The best work observed was in Years 3 to 6 and particularly in Years 5 and 6. The main strengths are:
- very good guidance for pupils in how to develop the quality of their writing by using an ever widening vocabulary. Pupils learn to trust their senses for ideas and ask questions about what they write, for example 'how?', 'why?' and 'when?' the leaves rustled;
 - good pace in lessons keeps pupils interested and wanting to know more;
 - good subject knowledge helps teachers to bring their enthusiasm to the lesson, for instance in work on poetry. Pupils responded well and confidently joined in with choral speaking.

- 68 Although teaching and learning are satisfactory in Years 1 and 2, there was evidence of unsatisfactory work in Year 1. The main causes of this were:
- inappropriate lesson content that led to pupils' inattention and weak behaviour;
 - insufficient challenge for higher attaining pupils;
 - ineffective use of the classroom assistant to support pupils.

Overall, marking is sound but there are inconsistencies in the use of individual pupils' targets and the relevance of comments in relation to these priorities.

- 69 Overall, leadership and management are satisfactory. Strengths include:
- the monitoring and evaluation of national and other test data that leads to the tracking of individual pupils' achievement;
 - the development of a unified and successful approach to guided reading in Years 3 to 6.

However, other forms of monitoring and evaluation, such as the analysis of pupils' work in books and lesson observations, have shortcomings. Consequently, there are weaknesses in marking and in the overall quality of teaching.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

- 70 Overall, this is an area in need of improvement. The majority of pupils have sufficient competence in literacy to use and further develop their skills in other subjects. However, only in Years 5 and 6 is this done well enough. There is too little use made of the library and too little written work in subjects such as religious education, geography and history.

MATHEMATICS

The provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good decisions to improve the provision have been made that have consolidated the learning and raised standards.
- The teaching for the higher ability groups in the years 5 and 6 is very good and the pupils make very good progress in these classes.

Commentary

- 71 By Year 2, standards are well below average, but achievement is satisfactory for all groups because of the low attainment pupils show on entry to Year 1. In Year 6, standards are below average and pupils in all groups achieve well. Standards in the Year 6 national tests fluctuate from year to year. In 2004, the unvalidated results were well below the national average. However, the proportion of pupils who achieved the higher Level 5 equalled the national average. This is a good improvement and evidence of the successful teaching of the higher attaining pupils. There is no significant difference in the attainment of boys and girls. Standards are lower than at the time of the previous inspection. In the year following that inspection the standards dropped considerably and they have risen from that low base.

- 72 In Years 1 and 2, the teaching and learning are satisfactory. Number bonds and mental addition are taught and learned effectively. Workbooks from a commercial scheme are used to consolidate the direct teaching and to give the pupils practice in recording their work. As a result, the pupils make satisfactory progress and in the Year 2 lesson seen, they achieved

well. Teachers frequently expect the pupils to sit for too long during the introductory part of the lesson and as a consequence the pupils lose concentration. Their planning and teaching methods take insufficient account of these young pupils' need to use mathematical apparatus and to learn through practical activities and this restricts achievement over time. Higher attaining pupils from Year 2 do not make sufficient progress.

- 73 The numeracy strategy is implemented well in Years 3 to 6. In a drive to raise standards the pupils are taught in groups that match their prior levels of attainment. The achievement of the pupils varies and reflects the quality of the teaching. In Years 5 and 6, teaching and learning are very good and the higher and average attaining pupils achieve very well and they make very good progress. These teachers have very high expectations, the pace of the lessons is very quick and they provide very clear explanations. They use assessment very well to inform the planning of lessons and all the pupils are constantly challenged. In Years 3 and 4, the average attaining pupils achieve well, the lower attaining and special needs pupils achieve satisfactorily.
- 74 Leadership and management are good. Assessment information is used well and the co-ordinator monitors pupils' progress carefully. The priorities for future development are sound. Providing the pupils with targets will be an added incentive and should raise standards. Some monitoring of the teaching has taken place.

Mathematics across the curriculum

- 75 This is a satisfactory feature. Pupils are starting to use their mathematical skills in other areas of the curriculum, such as drawing line graphs in science and in design and technology.

SCIENCE

The provision for science is **good** overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a good emphasis on practical activities.
- Work in lessons is well-matched to the wide range of pupils' abilities.
- Worksheets are used too often in Years 1 and 2, which restrict the opportunities to develop pupils' skills in literacy.

Commentary

- 76 By Year 2, standards are below average. Achievement is good because the pupils' knowledge and understanding of the world are very weak when they first start at school. In Year 6, standards are average and achievement is good. Pupils' lack of good literacy skills inhibits their progress. Overall, national tests confirm this picture of attainment. There is no significant difference in the attainment of boys and girls. The pupils identified as having special educational needs and those in all groups also make good progress and achieve well. Pupils are usually well-behaved, attentive, interested and keen to be involved.
- 77 Teaching and learning are good overall. In the lessons observed, work was well-matched to the needs of pupils, with good practical activities that promote learning. Pupils are encouraged to note their own ideas. For example, in Year 6, the pupils are learning about how sound travels, and make relevant comparisons to their recent

work on light, by accurately explaining that light travels in straight lines, and that sound causes vibrations. However, the use of wipeable whiteboards means sometimes there is no permanent record of pupils' observations. This reduces the pupils' chances to revisit and compare their predictions and initial thoughts with their conclusions. Furthermore, there are missed opportunities to use and reinforce pupils' literacy skills. Teachers' planning is usually effective in providing for all groups of pupils. For instance, in Year 2, the lesson observed was well-matched to the range of needs within the class and pupils made good progress as a result and were well-supported in their learning. However, in Years 1 and 2 prepared worksheets are used too often, and, again, inhibit the pupils' use of literacy. Assessment procedures are satisfactory and observations are used appropriately to plan what pupils are to learn next. Work is marked regularly with positive comments from staff, but there is not enough evaluation to give pupils guidance on how to improve.

- 78 Leadership and management are good. The review of the curriculum has had a beneficial effect on standards because the pupils now study topics more frequently, especially towards the end of Year 6, which means their knowledge and understanding are consolidated and reinforced. There has been good progress since the previous inspection, with a good emphasis in promoting the pupils' skills in scientific enquiry and creating young scientists. The use of information technology is underdeveloped to support work in science.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Poor decisions have been made in relation to developing the hardware infrastructure and these have restricted the range and depth to which the subject is studied.
- The use of information and communication technology across the curriculum is unsatisfactory.

Commentary

- 79 Development and improvement since the last inspection are unsatisfactory. This is mainly due to the difficulties that the school is facing with its equipment. The school uses laptop computers and this is a suitable system. However, the school purchased an infrared facility to network these computers and it is incompatible with the metal infrastructure of the building. As a result, the laptop computers frequently stop working and the pupils need to repeat their work. Saved work has been wiped clean in an attempt to improve the situation.
- 80 It is not possible to make a judgement about standards and achievement in Year 2 because of insufficient evidence. By Year 6, standards of work seen are below average, but achievement, overall, is unsatisfactory for all groups of pupils. Pupils are attaining standards that are around the levels expected in using spreadsheets, creating multimedia presentations and controlling devices. They know how to frame suitable questions, to modify saved work and to sense physical data. Pupils are not progressing as well as they could and they are not reaching the higher levels of attainment. In particular, the pupils have insufficient experience of accessing information from the internet or of sending messages. Boys and girls have similar standards.
- 81 Overall, teaching is satisfactory but learning is unsatisfactory. The main reasons for this are:

- teachers are frequently limited in their planning because they need to modify their lessons, due to hardware failures;
- teachers make insufficient use of the static computers in the classrooms, to compensate for the lack of access to the internet or of CD ROMs to enable the pupils to develop research skills.

82 In the Year 3 and 5 lessons observed, teaching and learning were good and pupils' attitudes were very good. The teachers showed good planning and a lot of enthusiasm and interest in the work. The lessons were brisk and the pupils were expected to show high standards of behaviour. As a result, pupils were interested in what they were doing, applied themselves well to the tasks and produced good work. However, in the single lesson observed in Years 1 and 2, the teaching and learning were unsatisfactory. The main difficulties were:

- insufficient challenge for pupils meant that learning was slow;
- inadequate resources hindered pupils' progress;
- class management was unsatisfactory and meant that pupils were not always working to full capacity.

Only those teachers who are secure and who have good skills can overcome the difficulties the school is facing with the hardware.

83 Overall, leadership and management are unsatisfactory. The co-ordinator provides a good model of classroom practice. Opportunities to monitor the subject and to support staff are taken, but there is no evaluation of the impact of these actions. The curriculum is fully planned, but due to difficulties with the resources the pupils have insufficient opportunity to develop their skills.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

84 Computer technology is insufficiently used to support the other subjects of the curriculum, and this is partially due to the hardware difficulties. Some good uses of information and communication are made, such as a program to support personal, social and health education and for some pupils with special educational needs.

HUMANITIES

In **geography**, there is insufficient evidence to make secure judgements about provision, standards, teaching and learning and leadership and management. However, the sampling of pupils' work and very brief discussions with pupils indicate that by Year 6:

- pupils have a sound knowledge of using an atlas and using coordinates to locate places;
- pupils know about their local area and make comparisons with the coast;
- pupils understand some of the issues relating to the environment and conservation;
- there are too few opportunities to use and develop literacy and information and communication technology skills.

History

Provision in history is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- In the best lessons, teachers' knowledge and enthusiasm are strong role-models for pupils.
- There are too few opportunities to use and develop literacy and information and communication technology skills.

Commentary

- 85 Since the previous inspection, there has been a satisfactory improvement in the provision for this subject. The strengths identified in the last report have been maintained and there has been a small improvement in the use of writing and oral work for different audiences. There is still some way to go to make this an effective way of using and developing literacy and information and communication technology skills. Overall, standards are well below average by Year 2 and below average in Year 6. Pupils achieve satisfactorily, including all groups. There is no significant difference between the attainment of boys and girls.
- 86 By Year 2, most pupils have a clear view of similarities and differences between today and previous eras, for example looking at pictures from Victorian times to find information. By Year 6, pupils have a sound appreciation of Victorian and Tudor lifestyles. They know that improvements in methods of transportation were a very important part of Victorian life and led to improvements in peoples' lives. They know that Tudor times were dominated by overseas exploration and they have some useful insights into a sailor's life. The present work on World War II has good links with religious education and the plight of the Jews. However, pupils are also learning about the privations brought about by the blitz and they are finding out more information for themselves through reading and listening.
- 87 Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. In the lessons observed, the strongest work was in Years 3 and 6. The main strengths include:
- stimulating, enthusiastic and knowledgeable teaching in Year 3 that brought good learning about the Egyptians;
 - good planning in the Year 6 lesson that linked ample opportunities for developing historical knowledge to increasing pupils' literacy and oracy skills;
 - good questioning that challenges pupils and also draws in the pupils who are most reticent.
- 88 Overall, leadership and management are satisfactory. The curriculum meets the needs of pupils. Resources are being improved to give further support to learning. Action planning adequately identifies issues for development.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The improvement in provision, standards and achievement.
- Opportunities to reflect on religious matters relating to spiritual, moral, social and cultural issues.
- There is unsatisfactory use of literacy and information and communication technology skills.

Commentary

- 89 By Years 2 and 6, standards meet the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus and achievement is satisfactory. This is a good improvement on the findings of the previous inspection, most particularly:
- higher standards and pupils are achieving more;
 - the approach to the subject is more systematic and challenging;
 - greater opportunities to reflect on wider issues.
- 90 In Year 2, pupils know and understand Christian festivals, such as Easter and Christmas. They talk about harvest and explain that the foods we eat are gifts from God and that it is good to share them. Approaching Christmas, they were able to reflect on the birth of babies in their family and make comparisons with the baby Jesus. They could give good examples of gifts for the baby and the reasons for giving them. In Year 6, pupils have a sound appreciation of Christianity and other factors, such as Islam and Judaism. Importantly, they also have highly relevant insights into issues that have been faced by people in these faiths, for instance, persecution and racism. So, the pupils are aware of the effect of positive and negative role-models, such as Churchill and Hitler. Furthermore, higher attaining pupils provide a useful commentary on their agreement, or otherwise, with the views of Gandhi. Most pupils have a sound knowledge of the important characters, symbols and festivals of several religions.
- 91 Overall, teaching and learning are satisfactory. The strongest work was observed in Year 6. In this very good lesson, achievement was particularly strong and the strengths were:
- the highly challenging context for explaining and exploring discrimination against Jews in Nazi Germany. The effective plan covered aspects of religion, citizenship and spoken language through role-play;
 - very strong development of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. For example, reflecting on the views of Jews and other German people; discussing the occurrence and effects of discrimination and analysing the ways that discrimination shows itself in many societies;
 - prolonged and direct contact for lower attaining pupils with the class teacher, which ensured that these pupils progressed really well.
- 92 Leadership and management are satisfactory. Apart from the improvement since the last inspection there have been adequate developments in resources, such as artefacts for the faiths taught. Insufficient attention is given to using literacy and information and communication skills to find information and present findings.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Art and design, design and technology, music and physical education were sampled during the inspection, few lessons were observed in art and design and physical education and none in design and technology and music.

In **art and design**, the work in pupils' sketchbooks and wall displays shows standards are good by Year 6, and at the expected level by Year 2. The school promotes the pupils' creativity very well, with visits to art galleries, and the topic on the work of Degas inspired the pupils and enabled them to produce good quality work. Given that children come into school with poor hand control skills, their level of achievement is very good and good

quality work is produced. Skills and techniques are taught carefully, for example including printing, portrait and figure drawing and when recording observations, for example of Tudor buildings linked to the history topic.

In **design and technology**, many aspects of the full design process are covered. In Year 3 the pupils learn about pneumatic systems. In Year 4 they evaluate biscuits and consider their appearance, taste and value. To link with their history topic, the pupils in Year 6 make Anderson shelters. Using their mathematical skills, they have estimated the comfort, safety and other factors of these and other types of shelters onto a graph. They use saws to cut wooden frames, some with mitre joins. The pupils, boys in particular, enjoy these activities. These pupils have also made World War 2 recipes, such as potato cakes without eggs and they have evaluated their taste. These activities extend the pupils' understanding of the conditions for people at this time. The subject makes a good contribution to the pupils' social and cultural development.

Physical education is given good emphasis within the school curriculum with a very good range of sporting activities and events, which enable the pupils to be involved and active participants. Lessons are taught imaginatively, for example the pupils use hand held streamers to guide their movements to music.

In **music**, it is not possible to come to a firm judgement on standards in Year 2 and Year 6. However, in assemblies pupils sing sensitively and tunefully, sometimes to a guitar accompaniment.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Insufficient teaching was seen to make a judgement on provision, but the overall impact on the pupils' behaviour and social development is good. There are some good elements within the provision, such as the programme in Year 6 to help pupils understand the harmful effects of drugs and anti-social behaviour. The school council has a prominent role within the school and this process provides pupils with a good example of citizenship. Members of the council went to London to the Houses of Parliament. In the younger year groups the pupils are helped to consider friendships and helping others. In Year 3, the pupils use a computer program to help them understand the importance of not talking to strangers or accepting a lift, and through the program they can see the consequences of their actions. Not all classes have a timetabled session and this is a weakness within the provision.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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