

INSPECTION REPORT

**HATHERN CHURCH OF ENGLAND (VC) PRIMARY
SCHOOL**

Hathern, Loughborough

LEA area: Leicestershire

Unique reference number: 120175

Headteacher: Mrs Cherry Stephenson

Lead inspector: Mrs Patricia Davies

Dates of inspection: 7th – 9th March 2005

Inspection number: 266969

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

© Crown copyright 2005

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:	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	103
School address:	Pasture Lane Hathern Loughborough Leicestershire
Postcode:	LE12 5LJ
Telephone number:	01509 842569
Fax number:	01509 843913
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Claire Roden
Date of previous inspection:	11 th January 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- Hathern is a small primary school with 103 pupils. It is situated in a village close to Loughborough and occupies two sites which are a short walk's distance apart. The more modern of the two sites also contains a local community centre.
- Year groups vary considerably in size; Year 1, for example, has seven pupils, while Year 2 has 20. Most classes contain pupils from two year groups, with the exception of the present Year 2. There is some movement of pupils in and out of the school in the course of their education, particularly affecting the present Year 6 group, although this factor has not had a significant impact on the overall attainment of this year group.
- There has been a significant level of change to the teaching staff since the last inspection and, after a period of some disruption, staffing stabilised at the beginning of this school year.
- All but one pupil have a White UK background, and no pupil has English as an additional language.
- At the moment, the proportion of pupils with special educational needs is above the national average (29 per cent). The range of needs within the school includes dyslexia and moderate learning difficulties, as well as severe learning, and social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. The school also points to a significant proportion of pupils whose needs do not fall into the special educational needs spectrum, but are of lower attainment. The proportion of pupils with a statement of educational need is well above the national average.
- Despite the fact that the proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals places the school in the lowest national benchmark group, the school's social and economic context is broadly average. A very small percentage of pupils are in public care.
- On entry to the Reception class, children's attainment is just below that of children of a similar age.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
22460	Patricia Davies	<i>Lead inspector</i>	English; Art and design; Foundation Stage.
9652	Colin Herbert	<i>Lay inspector</i>	
23262	Philip Martin	<i>Team inspector</i>	Mathematics; Science; Design and technology; Physical education;
32475	Nicholas Butt	<i>Team inspector</i>	Information and communication technology; Geography; History; Music; Religious education; Special educational needs.

The inspection contractor was:

VT Education Ltd
Old Garden House
The Lanterns
Bridge Lane
London
SW11 3AD

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	1
PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS	
STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS	4
Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL	7
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	12
PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	14
AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE	
SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2	
PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS	24

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Hathern is a **satisfactory** school with an increasingly effective standard of education, particularly in Years 3 to 6. The school's ethos and pastoral care of pupils are very strong, and its links with the community are of a very high quality. Teaching and learning are good as a whole, but improvements are too recent to have had a full effect on achievement or standards. Consequently, achievement overall is satisfactory. Pupils in Year 6 are on course to meet national expectations in mathematics, science, and information and communication technology (ICT), but below national expectations in English. Leadership and management are sound, and the school gives satisfactory value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Good teaching of pupils in Years 3 to 6, of pupils with special educational needs (SEN) and of children in the Reception group.
- Standards in writing, which are well below national expectations in the current Year 6.
- Not enough monitoring of teaching and learning by key staff and governors, to ensure that the school's work is consistently good across all year groups and subjects.
- Excellent and mutually beneficial relationships with the community.
- Very good pastoral care, including the attention given to pupils' social and moral development.

The level of improvement is satisfactory from the time of the school's last inspection in January 1999. Since then the school has gone through a period of disruption, as a result of staff changes; this has inhibited the school's improvement and, as a result, its academic performance. However, staffing has now stabilised, and the present good teaching reflects the judgement of the last inspection. Rising trends in national test results for Year 6 pupils, and significant areas of good achievement, particularly in Years 3 to 6, illustrate the increasing success of the school's commitment and action to bring about improvement. The school has retained its very good ethos and strengths in pastoral care, personal development, the support for pupils with SEN, and links with parents. Links with the community are now excellent, and there has been much improvement to attendance and punctuality. Assessment practices and evaluation strategies have been valuably strengthened, but many key staff are new to their leadership roles and monitoring activities are underdeveloped. The key issue relating to religious education has been satisfactorily addressed, and progress in Years 3 and 4 has accelerated.

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	C	D	D
mathematics	E	D	C	B
science	E	D	B	B

*Key: A – well above average; B – above average; C – average; D – below average; E – well below average
Similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 2.*

Assessments of children when they first join the Reception group show attainment to be just below that of children of a similar age. The present group are generally progressing well, and their attainment is likely to be broadly similar to the expectations of Early Learning Goals by the time they enter Year 1. However, variations in children's attainment on starting school have a significant impact on the overall attainment of each group, largely because groups tend to be small. For this reason, it is also necessary to take caution when comparing one year's national

test results with another. Other influential factors affecting standards have been the disturbance caused by staff changes, and the proportion of pupils with SEN: the current Year 6, for example, has a high proportion. Some positive gains have been made in performance in the Year 6 tests over recent years, to the extent that the school's trend is now above the national trend, although boys do not perform as well as girls. In the table above, the comparisons made with the results of similar schools indicate that last year's Year 6 made good progress in mathematics and science. The school has been less successful in English, particularly in writing, and this aspect of the subject is therefore a priority for attention. Improvement is also more modest in the Year 2 tests: small improvements each year have not been enough to lift results from below the national trend.

Inspection evidence shows **achievement as a whole to be satisfactory**, with some significant areas of good achievement, particularly in Years 3 to 6, and also for pupils with SEN. Stimulating teaching has increased the rate of progress in the older classes, including that of boys, but has not yet fully affected standards, which are also adversely influenced by the group's high proportion of pupils with SEN. Standards in Year 6 are on track to meet national expectations in mathematics, science and ICT, and in speaking and listening skills, but are on course to be just below national expectations in reading, and well below them for writing. Achievement in Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory. The present Year 2 group, with a smaller proportion of pupils with SEN, is on course to meet national expectations for reading, writing, mathematics, science and ICT. Pupils in both Years 2 and 6 are reaching standards in line with the locally Agreed Syllabus for religious education. Not enough evidence was gathered to enable judgements to be made about standards and achievement in other subjects.

Pupils' personal qualities are **very good**. Pupils are very well mannered and enthusiasm is widespread. Indeed, pupils' enjoyment of school life is reflected in their attendance, which is well above the national average. Relationships throughout the school community are also very good, fostered by very strong provision for social and moral development. The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, as a whole, is **good**. Opportunities for developing cultural awareness and understanding are good, and are satisfactory for promoting spiritual development.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is good, and pupils' experience is enriched by a wide variety of additional experiences. **Teaching and learning are good**, and significantly so in Years 3 to 6, where activities are lively and imaginative and enhanced by some very good teaching. Good teaching takes place elsewhere in the school, but not with the same consistency. Assessment practices are satisfactory, but not fully developed for religious education.

The curriculum is satisfactory, and enhanced by good provision in the Reception class and for pupils with SEN. There is a very good level of care for pupils' physical and emotional needs; staff know individual pupils well and give much attention to seeking their views. Community links are excellent, with the school holding a central place in village life. Links with parents and other schools are good. Resources and accommodation are satisfactory and the school manages the challenges of its split site well.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are satisfactory, as is governance. All statutory requirements are met. The headteacher and governors have worked hard to create a stable staff, and their strong commitment to improvement is gradually proving to be successful. Key staff and governors are beginning to monitor the school's work more closely, but they are not yet evaluating its quality to the extent that they can identify and challenge weaknesses and inconsistencies in teaching and learning, or spread good practice.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents' satisfaction with the school is good. Pupils think very well of the school. In particular, they feel secure in having someone to turn to should they be worried.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Raise standards in writing, particularly within Years 3 to 6.
- Develop the opportunities for key staff and governors to monitor the quality of provision, in order to ensure that the school's work and pupils' performance are consistently good across all year groups and in all subjects.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Pupils' **achievement is satisfactory**, with areas of good achievement, particularly in Years 3 to 6, and also in the Reception class and for pupils with SEN. Standards in the current Year 6 are on course to meet national expectations for mathematics, science, ICT and religious education, and to be below national expectations overall in English. Not enough evidence was gathered to enable overarching judgements to be made about standards and achievement in other subjects.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good achievement in Years 3 to 6, particularly in English and mathematics.
- Improvements, over recent years, in national tests results for Year 6 pupils.
- The good progress of pupils with SEN, and of children in the Reception class.
- Standards in writing in the current Year 6, which are well below national expectations.

Commentary

1. The impact of small year groups means that the overall attainment of children when they first enter the Reception class can vary from year to year; the general trend tends to be just below the attainment of children of a similar age. This finding reflects the evidence of the last inspection and the school's more recent early assessments of Reception age children. Children in this group are making good progress over time, and most are likely to reach the Early Learning Goals expected of them by the time they enter Year 1. Some are likely to exceed these expectations.

STANDARDS IN NATIONAL TESTS AT THE END OF YEAR 6 – AVERAGE POINT SCORES IN 2004

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	26.1 (27.4)	26.9 (26.8)
mathematics	27.4 (26.1)	27.0 (26.8)
science	29.6 (28.3)	28.6 (28.6)

There were 14 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

2. National test results, and the findings of this inspection, indicate that standards are not as high as they were when the school was last inspected, about six years ago. At that time attainment in English, mathematics, science and ICT were all found to be above national expectations and overall progress was good. Some caution should be exercised, however, in making comparisons, for several reasons. Since that time, pupils' learning and the school's development has been hindered by many changes in the teaching staff. The greatest impact was on pupils currently in the oldest year groups and on the last year's Year 6 group who took the national tests in 2004. In addition, year groups are small, and results can therefore vary each year. These changes are further exacerbated by the proportions of pupils with SEN. In the case of the present Year 6 group, for example, this proportion is almost 40 per cent.

3. Despite its staffing difficulties, there are signs in the national test results of the school's conscientious efforts to improve standards. The greatest level of success is to be seen in the test results for Year 6 pupils. Here, results have risen over time in all three subjects, and the trend is above the national test trend, although boys are not performing as well as girls. This upward trend is most marked in mathematics and science; in last summer's tests, and for the first time in the last four years, comparisons with the results of similar schools (based on prior attainment in the tests in Year 2) indicated that pupils had made good progress in these two subjects. The rise in English

has been slower. The school has identified writing to be the area of weakness, and this aspect of English is therefore a major focus of attention. The school has also been less successful with the test and assessment results for Year 2 pupils. In these there has also been a very small yearly improvement since 2001 across the three subjects of reading, writing and mathematics, but not enough to save the trend from falling below the national trend.

4. Inspection evidence shows that, overall, current **achievement is satisfactory**; it is good in some year groups and subjects, and satisfactory in others. Pupils with SEN, for example, progress well because of closely focused support in small groups and good management of provision by the SEN teacher. The improvements to the national test results in Year 6 are reflected in the good progress of pupils in Years 3 to 6 in English and mathematics, largely brought about by imaginative and stimulating teaching. For example, Year 3 pupils, whose national test results last year were below the national average for reading and writing, are now close to reaching standards that are broadly in line with national expectations in English. Strategies to motivate boys in these classes are also proving successful, with the result that they are also achieving well, alongside the girls. However, the good achievement of the current Year 6 group is too recent to have made a conspicuous impact on standards. This factor, taken together with this group's high proportion of pupils with SEN, and the impact of earlier disruption caused by changes to staff, means that the school will be challenged to meet targets set during the previous school year. While standards in speaking and listening skills and mathematics are on course to meet national expectations, they are on track to be just below expectations in reading, and well below in writing.

5. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 achieve satisfactorily in response to teaching which is competent and steady, with some good features. The current Year 2, with a smaller proportion of pupils with SEN, is on course to meet national expectations in reading and writing, speaking and listening, and mathematics by the end of the school year. Progress as a whole in science and in ICT is satisfactory, and standards are broadly in line with national expectations in these subjects for pupils in Years 2 and 6. The locally agreed expectations for religious education are also met by pupils in these year groups. Too little evidence was gathered to enable judgements to be made about standards and achievement in other subjects.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

This is a particularly effective area of the school's work and, as a result, the school's ethos is very strong. Pupils' personal development, attitudes and behaviour are all **very good**. Attendance and punctuality are also **very good**. The school **provides well** for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development as a whole, with very effective provision for social and moral development.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good relationships throughout the school community.
- Pupils' well-developed confidence and self-esteem.
- Very good behaviour and attitudes to school life as a whole.
- Very good provision for moral and social development.
- High attendance rates and very good punctuality, which demonstrate the keenness of pupils to come to school.

Commentary

6. The strongest elements of this aspect of the school, relating to behaviour, relationships and moral and social development, have all been preserved since the last inspection. In addition, pupils' attitudes to school life are now more enthusiastic, and attendance and punctuality have substantially improved since the satisfactory judgement of the last report. Pupils' enthusiasm is widespread and extends into the classroom, where they take a great interest in what they are doing. Pupils are very polite and well mannered towards visitors. Their behaviour is very good in

the classroom and the playground, and in the dining hall at lunchtime. Despite some concern about behaviour, expressed through the questionnaires for pupils and parents, there was no indication of any unacceptable or unsociable behaviour during the inspection. There were three exclusions during the last reporting period but they were for appropriate reasons and had been properly documented and handled. There have been none since. Indeed, there has been much success in gaining the co-operation and commitment of pupils whose behaviour has been challenging in the past.

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	93	3	0
Mixed – White and Asian	1	0	0

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

7. Relationships within the school community are very good and all pupils respond very well to the guidance that adults give them. The impact of these high quality relationships is that all pupils are fully included in all school activities and are offered many good opportunities to take responsibility for various aspects of school life. For example, teachers encourage discussion, and value the contribution of pupils through such activities as the school forum and the Eco Group; this raises the confidence and self-esteem of pupils to such high levels. The example set by staff is modelled by older pupils when they talk with pride about the skills and achievements of others. One or two of the oldest pupils need extra encouragement to take part in activities where they lack confidence, and they are given sensitive support.

8. The provision for moral and social development is very good. All pupils have a very clear idea of right and wrong and they are encouraged to become mature, responsible and active members of the school and local community. They are given very good opportunities for social development through such activities as the school forum, where pupils gain an understanding of democratic procedures and experience of listening and speaking to each other. Similar very good opportunities exist when pupils collect money for those who are less fortunate than themselves. They deliver harvest festival contributions to senior citizens in the village, and recently collected and made a generous donation to the Tsunami Appeal Fund. The provision for cultural development is good and pupils have many opportunities to make visits into the community to enhance their learning; pupils value their village heritage. The school is also at pains to ensure that pupils are developing an awareness of the multicultural dimension of society. The spiritual development of pupils is satisfactory, but there are occasions when opportunities are lost for them to reflect. For example, in one assembly there was no reference to the candle which had been lit before pupils arrived in the hall, and there was no focus on its significance in worship.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	4.3	School data	0.0
National data	5.4	National data	0.4

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

9. The attendance rate is now consistently high, and is well above the national average. The school and its parents work hard to maintain this level of attendance. Punctuality to school is also very good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is **good** as a whole. Teaching and learning are good, but are stronger in some classes and subjects than others. Pastoral care is good, with some very good elements, and other effective areas include links with parents and with other schools and colleges. Links with the community are excellent. The curriculum is satisfactory, with strengths in enrichment activities and the provision for pupils with SEN.

Teaching and learning

The overall quality of teaching and learning is **good**, but this is not consistently so in all year groups and subjects. Assessment is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good and, sometimes, very good teaching in Years 3 to 6.
- Good support for pupils with SEN.
- Inconsistencies in the use of learning support assistants.
- Limited assessment of standards and achievement in religious education.

Commentary

10. Teaching and learning as a whole are good, as illustrated in the proportion of good and better teaching shown in the table below. Most of the teaching staff has changed since the school's last inspection, but this finding reflects the previous inspection judgement about teaching and learning. Stabilised staffing has had a positive effect, as has a readiness to respond to trends in pupils' results in national tests and to points arising from monitoring by the local education authority (LEA). Nevertheless, because improvements are relatively recent, their impact is not yet fully affecting all classes and subjects. Teaching in Years 3 to 6 is, almost without exception, good, with some very good practice. Good quality teaching also takes place in other year groups, but not with the same consistency. This is particularly true for Years 1 and 2, where teaching and learning are satisfactory. English and mathematics are well taught as a whole, but are stronger in Years 3 to 6. Some good examples and features of teaching were found in science, ICT and religious education, but these subjects are satisfactorily taught overall. Too little evidence was gathered to make judgements about teaching and learning in other subjects.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 12 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0	2	7	3	0	0	0

The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons.

11. Teaching in Years 3 to 6 is successful because it is imaginative, exciting and fast moving. Pupils in these year groups are now making good progress because they are constantly exposed to activities of this calibre. At all times staff are doing everything they can to motivate pupils, including those who are not always interested in academic work, lack confidence, or are slow to develop skills. Teachers are lively in their approach and alert to the need to use a range of strategies to illustrate a point powerfully, or gain and maintain pupils' interest. The use of role play in English lessons, for example, engages pupils, builds confidence and helps to generate original ideas and thoughtful and relevant language. Expectations of all ability groups are high, both in relation to their work and to their behaviour. Where pupils need more focused and systematic support, this is well planned for and effectively delivered in small groups. Most pupils respond to this stimulating input with very good levels of effort and productivity; this includes the boys, and the older pupils who have been affected most in the past by changes to staff.

12. Lessons of a similar quality take place in other year groups, but not with such uniformity. Children in the Reception class also respond with much attention and enjoyment to energetic teaching. This approach is particularly apparent in imaginative games, such as those to encourage language and literacy skills. These children progress well over time because the greater part of teaching is good, which makes teaching good overall. However, some activities do not give these children enough opportunities to explore ideas for themselves, for example in developing mathematical knowledge and understanding. Within Years 1 and 2 the teaching is largely satisfactory. Activities are suitably matched to pupils of different abilities and are well organised, though they often lack the imagination and pace described above. As a result, pupils make sound progress. In all year groups, homework activities are varied and well linked to work in school.

13. Pupils with SEN are well taught. Supporting adults quickly snap into action when lessons move to working in small groups. They are well briefed about their tasks and give a good level of individual support. Discussion often draws out and enhances pupils' ideas so that they can make a full contribution, although despite thoughtful and caring encouragement a few of the oldest pupils are not always willing to respond. In some lessons, learning support assistants also readily contribute during whole-class sessions; this was a particular feature of the staff team in the class with Reception children and Year 1 pupils. However, this is not always the case.

14. Assessment strategies have been strengthened of late, and are satisfactory. There is now a much closer analysis of test information, and everyday assessment is sometimes used effectively to change lesson planning. More closely focused and regular tracking of pupils' progress now takes place. This monitoring focuses well on individual performance, but trends in progress are not yet checked. In addition, teachers adopt their own methods for recording data and there is therefore no common approach to ensure easy access to information. Assessment of pupils with SEN is good. The SEN teacher writes detailed IEPs in liaison with class teachers, and these set out exactly what is required to enable pupils to succeed. A range of effective methods is employed to involve and engage pupils who have specific funding, with learning broken down into manageable steps. Pupils know their targets for improvement and are involved in reviewing their progress. Science, ICT and other subjects also have sound assessment systems, with the exception of religious education, where assessment is underdeveloped.

The curriculum

The school offers a **satisfactory** range of curriculum opportunities. Pupils' experience is enriched by a **good** range of extra activities. The school's accommodation and resources are **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The good effort made by the school to ensure that the needs of all pupils are met.
- A good range of enrichment activities, which add interest and variety to the curriculum.
- Missed opportunities for promoting writing and independent recording in some year groups and subjects.

Commentary

15. The overall quality of the curriculum is not as good as it was judged to be when the school was last inspected, and this reflects the constraints on development caused by the disruption to staffing since that time. However, the curriculum continues to meet all requirements, including those for collective worship and the locally agreed requirements for religious education, and it gives a soundly balanced education across the range of National Curriculum subjects. The good provision for pupils with SEN and for children in the Reception class, and the extra-curricular opportunities, has been maintained since the last inspection. Arrangements for personal, social and health education (PSHE) are good, and are much enhanced by the school's thoughtful response to matters of importance to pupils. These activities include due attention to sex education and the dangers of drugs, and the school is at the point of introducing systematic

planning to give this provision greater cohesion. The school places enough emphasis on English and mathematics, and has made some valuable changes to planning and organisation to bring about greater success in these subjects. Pupils have satisfactory opportunities to practise literacy and numeracy and ICT skills in other subjects, but there are missed chances to extend writing and independent recording skills in some year groups in science, history and geography.

16. The school has a strong commitment to ensuring that all pupils, irrespective of ability, background, ethnicity or gender, have opportunities to succeed. Children with SEN, for example, have full access to the curriculum, and work is well matched to their abilities. In response to particular needs, innovative programmes, such as those involving 'meaningful movement', have been introduced to develop children's and pupils' motor skills and to improve co-ordination. The school was also quick to address the decline in boys' performance in the Year 6 national tests as soon as this trend was identified.

17. The school places considerable value on offering pupils a rich variety of additional experiences. As a result, the curriculum is enriched by a good range of activities both within and outside lesson time. These opportunities allow individuals to find an area in which they achieve well, and pupils talk enthusiastically about the chances the school has given them to learn new skills and to find something they enjoy and are good at doing. There are also very good opportunities for pupils to watch and take part in productions, and to put on their own performances. For example, younger pupils developed their design and technology skills in this way when they made sock puppets and performed a puppet show for other pupils. This positively influenced their personal development as well as their academic learning. Visitors to the school, such as performance troupes and theatre groups, add variety and interest to the curriculum. There is a good range of clubs, and these change from term to term. Pupils take part keenly in sporting and artistic activities, sometimes in partnership with other local schools. Year 5 and 6 pupils benefit from an annual residential visit, when they take part in adventurous outdoor activities as well as in other subjects.

18. The school now has a stable complement of teachers and also benefits from a good number of supporting adults. Learning support staff are willing and flexible, and make a valuable, and much valued, contribution to school life. Good use is made of part-time teachers and support staff to create smaller teaching groups in Years 3 to 6 and to help pupils who have SEN. Administrative staff are efficient and effective in the day-to-day running of the school, and the caretaker and cleaning staff maintain the buildings well. However, there are some issues with deployment. For example, the school has not yet settled on an appropriate delegation of responsibilities between the SEN teacher and the special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO).

19. The school's accommodation is satisfactory. Classrooms in the more modern of the two sites are spacious, while those in the older building are adequate. Display brightens up the environment, and space has been used well to provide computer suites and libraries on both sites. A new building project will also create better office space and a quiet room, and the completion of this programme has now been restarted following some recent delays. There are good-sized playing fields at the main site, as well as enough hard-surfaced playgrounds at both sites. Learning resources are also satisfactory. Those for the Reception children are very good, and are plentiful, stimulating, and of good quality. However, much of the gymnastics equipment is too large and heavy to be moved safely by younger pupils, and there is a limited variety, which inhibits learning for the pupils in Years 1 and 2.

Care, guidance and support

The school continues to give a **very good** level of care for the physical and emotional needs of its pupils and provides them with good support, advice and guidance. The school makes **good** provision to involve its pupils in school life by seeking, valuing and acting on their views.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very effective strategies for pastoral care, and for health and safety, including the close involvement of the governing body in these aspects of school life.
- Good arrangements to ensure that pupils have confidence that the school listens to their concerns.

Commentary

20. The school has maintained its high level of pastoral care since it was last inspected, despite the changes in staff and accompanying disruptions. It looks after the emotional and physical needs of its pupils very well. This quality of care is underpinned by the very good relationships that exist in school and the very good knowledge that all members of staff have of each pupil. Pupils acknowledged these strengths in their questionnaire; there was an almost unanimous agreement that they would have no difficulty in turning to an adult they could trust if they had a problem at school. The availability of breakfast and after-school clubs also extends the school's care beyond the school day.

21. The school takes very seriously its responsibility for all health and safety and child protection matters. Appropriate records are maintained for risk assessment, first aid and fire drills; the recording of accidents and the procedures for child protection are very effective. Similarly, the governing body assiduously fulfils its responsibilities for this aspect of school life, and carries out regular inspections of both sites. The inspection team is aware of the concerns of some parents about the movement of their children between the two buildings, but it considers that the school is doing all it can to minimise any dangers. Governors are also keenly pursuing outstanding health and safety concerns about the condition of footpaths and the use of the stream near the entrance to the school's main site.

22. The provision of pastoral support and advice to pupils is stronger than that provided for their academic support. This latter support is satisfactory, but it is not sufficiently based on information gained by rigorously monitoring teaching and learning. Academic assessment is developing and improving. At its best, marking gives clear and detailed feedback and guidance on why a piece of work is successful and how it can be made better, but the use of marking for feedback is not yet effectively established across the school.

23. Pupils know that the school will listen to their concerns, particularly through the School Forum and the Eco Group, and they endorsed this view in their questionnaire. These forums offer good opportunities for pupils to give their views about many aspects of school life, and to demonstrate their concerns for the health of the planet; they also exemplify the inclusive way in which the school operates. Good arrangements are in place to ensure that children are happy when they first start full-time education, and to welcome newcomers at other times.

24. Support for pupils with SEN, and those with specific funding, is generally good. Individual education plans (IEPs) have clear targets with appropriate actions and success criteria. Reception-aged children, and pupils in Year 1, are closely monitored and given additional help where appropriate, and are then added to the SEN list when they enter Year 2. This means these pupils do not benefit early on from the identification of their particular needs through IEPs, or from the targeting of extra support.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has now developed **excellent** links with the community. The partnership between the school and its parents continues to be **good**. **Good** links have been established with other schools.

MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- Outstanding and mutually beneficial links between the school and the village.
- The enthusiasm and business-like approach of the friends, parents and teachers association.
- Good information for parents, and their good involvement with the school.
- Good links with other schools.

COMMENTARY

25. The strength in this area of the school's work has been well maintained since the school's last inspection, and links with the community have been enhanced further. The school promotes itself well to its parents, and this makes a valuable contribution to the good level of satisfaction that parents express of the school. Those who responded to the questionnaire, or who attended the pre-inspection meeting, had positive views about the majority of aspects of school life.

26. A good number of parents help out in school on a regular basis. Additionally, the school makes very effective use of parents and other family members who have special skills to offer. For example, one parent is a Husky breeder and pupils benefit from seeing these dogs in school on occasions. There are also useful guidelines for parents who help out in school, made easily available on the school's website. A very active and hard-working friends, parents and teachers association (FPTA) extends excellent support to the school; its work is backed up by very high quality guidance and by evaluation procedures for all its events. The activities organised by the FPTA raise considerable sums of money to enhance and improve resources in school. The school also gives good support to any of its parents who want to help their children learn, and has organised workshops to extend their understanding of literacy and numeracy. All these activities have a major impact on pupils' learning and, in turn, the school values the contribution that all the parents make to its life.

27. The quality of information given to parents continues to be good. Newsletters are informative and attractive to read, annual reports on progress are personalised, and parents are made aware of curriculum topics and targets for their children. The school is developing its own website and is starting to use new technology to enhance communication with parents and the community. Good liaison is maintained with parents whose children have SEN. The school is aware that some of its parents seek more opportunities for formal consultation about their views and is taking steps to improve the situation. Similarly, the school has taken prompt action to address the concerns expressed by some parents about whom to contact should the headteacher not be available, and has recently appointed key stage leaders.

28. Community links are now excellent. The school greatly values its central place in the village, and pupils play an important role in village life, taking part in many events in the village itself and within the local area. This relationship is mutually beneficial, as the village makes considerable use of the school and its community centre. These community facilities are well managed by the headteacher and considerably enhanced by the contribution of the community development worker. Highlights of this relationship are the school's substantial participation in the annual carnival procession; the firework display; the school fairs; the playgroup and toddlers' club; the use of the school for adult education classes and local groups; and visits to local industries, such as the sock factory. Local businesses contribute to the school's work and are visited by pupils to give them a sense of the area's past and present heritage. There is also much involvement from local clergy, and pupils take part in church celebrations, such as Harvest Festival. Additionally, the school welcomes many visitors, for example storytellers, artists and poets, and pupils benefit from visits to such places as the Theatre Royal, a mosque and a local farm. Good links exist with partner primary and secondary schools through a partnership development group. These ensure that pupils in Year 6 are able to make the move into the next stage of their education without any concerns. They also give staff the opportunity to share professional training, and for pupils to work with other schools on joint events and performances.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The overall quality of leadership and management is **satisfactory**. Governance is also satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Too little monitoring and evaluation of provision, standards and achievement by key staff and governors.
- The commitment to bringing about improvement, and to fostering the school's pastoral care of its pupils and its central place in the community.
- Very good support from governors for the school's building project, and for health and safety issues.

Commentary

29. The headteacher has a strong commitment to fostering the school's place at the heart of village life, and her effective development of the community centre and its activities is central to this philosophy. She is also keen to give pupils a rich variety of experiences beyond the everyday curriculum, and this has been achieved well. The school's overall ethos is very good. Pupils are well known as individuals and looked after with care. Parents and pupils appreciate what the school offers. Parents' responses to their questionnaire show a stronger level of satisfaction with the school than the results of the last inspection's questionnaire, and pupils' enthusiasm indicates very good levels of satisfaction.

30. The management of staffing difficulties has occupied quite a lot of time since the last inspection. These issues have inhibited the development of key roles and responsibilities, and therefore the extent to which the school has thoroughly checked and influenced its performance. First and foremost, the headteacher and governors have worked hard to create a stable staff, a situation which has been achieved this school year. Among staff and governors there is a strong commitment to academic improvement. Advice and guidance from the LEA have been readily sought and swiftly implemented. The most successful illustration of this rapid action is in the re-organisation of teaching groups for English and mathematics in Years 3 to 6, with the result that pupils in these year groups are now achieving well. However, these are early days. Some key staff members have been appointed to full-time positions only within the last 12 months, and have yet to fully take up their wider responsibilities beyond those of class teacher. Among these new roles are members of the senior management team. While the headteacher formally checks lessons, other subject leaders are only beginning to take on a monitoring role and are not yet evaluating the quality of teaching and learning across the school in the same way. Because of these limitations, they are not yet in a position to pick up inconsistencies and weaknesses in provision, or to spread good practice into lessons in Years 1 and 2. Particular strengths in leadership and management include the leadership of ICT and the everyday management of SEN provision by the SEN teacher, who fulfils many of the responsibilities of the co-ordinator role.

31. The governing body, including several new members, has also responded well to suggestions about how it can become more effective. For instance, it has changed its way of liaising with key staff and has increased the information it receives about pupils' academic progress. These steps have been taken so that it can play a greater role in holding the school to account and challenging it to do better. Governors are very supportive of the school. Individual governors, for example, are playing substantial roles in bringing about the completion of delayed building work, and in pursuing issues to do with health and safety. Financial management is good, as recognised in the recent auditor's report from the LEA, but governors have yet to fully check the impact of their spending decisions on provision and pupils' progress. All statutory requirements are fulfilled.

32. The challenges of managing two sites and creating a whole-school team are handled well. Joint staff meetings help with liaison and team work, and the headteacher ensures that she shares her time between both sites. The appointment of new staff has also enabled the very recent creation of key stage leaders to form a senior staff team. In response to concerns expressed by parents, this gives parents and carers a point of contact in each building, should the headteacher not be available.

Financial information for the year April 2004 to March 2005

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	429,882.00
Total expenditure	415,889.00
Expenditure per pupil	4,038.00

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	96,661.00
Balance carried forward to the next	13,993.00

33. As this is a small school, the expenditure for each pupil is fairly high. In this school, funding is increased further by extra money to manage two sites; expenditure is also greater this year because of the cost of the current building project. When these factors are taken into account, together with all aspects of the school's performance, the school gives satisfactory value for money.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Provision for children in the Reception group is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Lively and imaginative teaching strategies.
- Effective support for the development of personal and social skills.
- Good team work.
- Some inconsistencies in the extent of opportunities for independent learning.

Commentary

34. At the moment there are 19 children in the Reception group, but numbers vary greatly from year to year. Children join the class in September or January, depending on where their fifth birthday falls, and attend full time. In order to become accustomed to school life the children also spend time in the class the term before they join; most are also familiar with the school because they have attended the local playgroup, which is housed on the same site. Children benefit from a spacious teaching area, with easy access to the computer suite, library and outdoor area. Although they do not have a space outside that is exclusively set aside for their use, they make good use of all the outdoor facilities to extend their learning. The class is also very well resourced with a wide range of high quality equipment and a good number of supporting adults.

35. The present Reception group is part of a mixed age class with pupils in Year 1; this is because the Year 1 group this year is too small to form a separate class. Activities are suitably planned to meet the expectations of both year groups, and staff work closely as a team to meet the needs of all. When children first join the class, early assessments indicate that attainment is just below that reached by children of a similar age, although the picture varies with each group. In response to energetic, stimulating teaching, children's interest and motivation are gained and, as a result, they achieve well. Most of the current Reception group are on course to meet Early Learning Goals for language, literacy, personal and social skills, and mathematical development by the end of the school year, and a minority are likely to exceed them. Teaching and learning are good in the areas of communication, language and literacy, and personal and social skills; mathematical development is satisfactorily taught because children are not consistently given the opportunity to independently explore mathematical ideas and possibilities. Assessment is satisfactory. All adult members of the team contribute to ongoing records of children's progress and achievements, but there is little analysis of information to look for patterns or trends. Not enough evidence was gathered to enable comprehensive judgements to be made about standards, achievement, or teaching and learning in the other three areas of learning.

36. **Personal, social and emotional** development is given a good level of attention. Children work happily together in range of different sized groupings, and have constant interaction with adults. This contact is extended to whole-class sessions, when supporting adults play a full part in activities. Of particular note are the strategies to nurture children's thoughtfulness and sensitivity to others. Quiet sessions after break allow for staff and children to explore thoughts and ideas, about difficulties that may have arisen with others during play time, for example. Routines and expectations are familiar and understood, so that children willingly sit in a circle during this time to share and eat fruit while they talk together. The chance to create reading and writing 'dens' outside and under tables had captured the children's interest, and successfully illustrated the notion and importance of private space and special places. Movement activities in the hall require children to co-operate and to take turns, and generate a corporate experience of fun and wonder.

37. **Communication, language and literacy** are promoted well. There are many opportunities for developing speaking and listening skills, and children speak confidently with adults and one another. Children are encouraged to talk through ideas with a partner, and staff readily plump down alongside them to join in, or they talk quietly with individual children during whole-class discussion to encourage ideas. Imaginative games are used to develop and reinforce the names and sounds of letters, and children really enjoy these activities because they are lively and often have a good element of challenge. Writing skills are also usefully developed at the same time. In one game, for example, the 'recorders' had to write down the names of objects as they were selected, but they had to do this quickly because the game moved at a fairly fast pace. Children kept up well, with good encouragement from the learning support assistant. Those with higher attainment accurately spelt out some of the simple words, while others recorded some letters, although these were not always formed correctly. Children also enjoy stories, and are familiar with traditional tales. They listen attentively, enjoy the humour of traditional stories retold with a twist, and are spurred on to discuss differences between the different versions of the same story. Sometimes, however, opportunities are lost to share these ideas fully. The joy and fun of reading are also promoted by attractive and interesting 'story sacks' (many donated by parents), and the chance to listen to story tapes.

38. The promotion of **mathematical development** is satisfactory. The knowledge and understanding of number is largely well taught, but not always taken that one step further by allowing children to explore mathematical ideas for themselves. For example, children's interest was enlivened by an imaginative number game, this time a variation on 'Twenty Questions'. They were successfully encouraged, not just to guess the chosen number between 0 and 20, but to narrow down the field of possibilities. As a result, children asked such thoughtful questions as: 'Is it an odd number?' and 'Is it less than 10?' The task was subsequently made more difficult by reducing the number of questions that could be asked. The children were thoroughly engaged in the game and keen to contribute, but this high level of interest was not maintained in the following group activities. This was because they were too closely directed by adults, with little opportunity to move beyond reinforcing work they had already covered with numbers to six and, for the higher attaining children, to 10.

39. The current topic for encouraging children's **knowledge and understanding of the world** is about houses and buildings, but other areas of learning are also being used to promote children's knowledge about this topic. For example, children are finding out about bricks and, in doing this, they are making rubbings of building materials. There was great excitement when the teacher rubbed a child's hair with material so that the hair stood on end; the children knew that this was static electricity. The children are creating dens outside around the grounds, and the playhouse has been transformed into a church. Information and communication technology (ICT) is also linked with other studies, so that, currently, children use the mouse carefully to locate words and create sentences about the story of 'Little Red Riding Hood'. Higher attaining children delete their mistakes without the help of an adult.

40. The many opportunities children have to handle resources, and make things, contribute well to their **physical development**. They handle small tools, such as paintbrushes and scissors, confidently. There is plenty of space outside to use the wheeled toys. Children particularly enjoy the energetic and entertaining weekly 'movement' sessions in the hall, which are intended to improve general co-ordination.

41. The story sacks described above act as a stimulus for children to imagine the characters they have heard about in stories, and they therefore play a valuable role in children's **creative development**. There is a wide range of opportunities for children to print, paint and use different materials, and examples of completed work, such as clay models and monster masks, are individual and well-made.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision for English is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching in Years 3 to 6, with the result that these pupils are now achieving well.
- Missed opportunities for encouraging pupils to write in science, history and geography.

Commentary

42. Changes to key staff have caused some disruption to the development of English since the school's last inspection, and to standards in the subject, which were at that time found to be above national expectations. The subject now has a temporary subject leader, pending the induction of a new member of staff, and is satisfactorily led and managed. Careful analysis of national test information, and improvements to assessment and monitoring, has helped the school to focus its attention on improving weaker aspects of the subject. Greater emphasis is also being given to the achievement of particular groups of pupils who do not perform as well as others. Very early indications of the school's efforts are evident in modest upward trends in the national tests for English at Year 6, and in writing tests and assessments in Year 2, but the school is aware that it must do more to raise standards and increase achievement. This school year, the appointment of new teachers, and the re-organisation of teaching groups in Years 3 to 6, is having a significant impact on the rate of pupils' progress. Achievement as a whole is now good, reflecting the findings of the last inspection, although this success is not yet consistent right across the school; while achievement is good in Years 3 to 6, the picture is more mixed in Years 1 and 2, and achievement in these classes is therefore satisfactory overall.

43. Effective additional support is given in small groups within lessons, or in larger year or 'booster' groups. As a result:

- most pupils with SEN make good progress; one or two of the oldest of these pupils, however, continue to need a lot of sensitive encouragement for them to write, because they lack confidence;
- standards in the present Year 3 (taught as a separate year group) have also been positively influenced. This group's attainment is now close to national expectations, having been below the national averages in national tests for reading and writing taken last year, when the pupils were in Year 2;
- the calm and closely focused atmosphere of the Year 5 'booster' group is helping these pupils to prepare well for completing pieces of sustained writing.

44. Writing continues to be a major priority for development, and the school is also working hard to gain the interest and commitment of boys in Years 3 to 6. Variations have been made to the curriculum to tackle both issues, as well as making improvements to the provision for reading. Guided reading sessions, for example, are taking place outside literacy lessons so that more time can be given to writing, and book resources have been extended and improved. Most importantly, teaching strategies and selected texts have been deliberately varied to engage the interest of boys as well as girls.

45. As all these improvements are relatively new, however, they have yet to make a substantial impact on standards, particularly in the current Year 6, where there is a large proportion of pupils with SEN. Inspection evidence indicates that, as a result of these factors, standards in this year group are on course to be just below national expectations for reading by the end of the academic

year, and well below for writing. One or two pupils are on track to gain the higher Level 5 in writing, and a slightly greater proportion in reading. Standards in the present Year 2 are on course to be broadly similar to national expectations for reading, and just in line with expectations for writing, with some pupils likely to reach the higher Level 3 in both subjects.

46. The standard of speaking and listening skills, however, meets national expectations in both year groups. This aspect of English has been another area the school has been keen to develop, so that it acts as a foundation for other literacy skills. A common feature of lessons is the opportunity for pupils to talk about ideas with others, and subject-related vocabulary is also widely promoted. Drama techniques, such as 'freeze frame' and role play, are having a marked impact in Years 3 to 6. Most pupils speak confidently and listen attentively as a result of strategies employed in an environment where pupils' contributions are readily appreciated. Pupils enjoy books, even though some are not familiar with a wide range of genre. New book resources are helping to increase their experience, and the profile of reading (and writing) is being promoted by opportunities to read with pupils in other year groups, and to write stories which are then placed in the library. The knowledge of phonics is well taught, sometimes through the use of imaginative games. Books, too, are generally well matched to ability so that most pupils read confidently and accurately. Just sometimes, however, higher attaining Year 2 pupils could tackle a more challenging text than the one they have chosen. On the whole, there are enough opportunities for independent work in English lessons and there is a fair balance across different types of writing, but the quality of writing depends on the topic. When imaginative themes are selected, such as poetry work on exploding fireworks, writing is lively and interesting, but the content of other Year 2 work tends to be mundane. Homework is generally well used to extend pupils' learning and build on work in lessons. For example, a particularly well-matched task was given to Year 6 pupils, who were asked to complete short phrases of description to capture feelings of fear and suspense, in preparation for writing the following day.

47. The overall quality of teaching and learning is good, but not consistently so right across the school. The differences occur because, while teaching as a whole is competent and secure in Years 1 and 2, it lacks the excitement and imagination which marks out the good and, sometimes, very effective, teaching and learning in Years 3 to 6. There is evidence of some lively teaching in Years 1 and 2, but this approach is not common. Therefore, teaching and learning across these two year groups is satisfactory rather than good. Assessment is also satisfactory. Improvements to the tracking of pupils' progress now include regular moderation of writing samples. There is also more focus on areas where individual pupils need to improve; personal targets are identified in Year 2, for example. Marking often includes pointers for improvement, and this approach is of a high quality for pupils in Year 6. There is also evidence that assessments during lessons are sometimes used to good effect to fine-tune planning for the next day.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

48. The use of language and literacy skills across the curriculum is satisfactory. There are many opportunities for pupils to discuss topics and ideas in lessons, and in formalised groups such as the Eco committee. Whole-school productions considerably raise the profile of drama. Personal projects, sometimes completed out of school, also encourage a wide range of information gathering and written work, while there are also examples of encouraging technical vocabulary in other subjects, such as science. In mathematics, too, pupils read and answer problems expressed in words as well as by number. Word-processing is also a common feature of written tasks. However, the school does not make full use of all subjects to encourage pupils to write. For example, while there are some chances for pupils to write in history and geography, these instances are not systematically planned for, and in science they do not allow enough opportunity for pupils to choose their own methods of recording their work. These weaknesses are most marked within Years 1 and 2, and in Year 5 in the case of science.

MATHEMATICS

Provision for mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good pace and interesting lessons in Years 3 to 6.
- Too little monitoring and evaluation to develop provision further.

Commentary

49. The rate of improvement in this subject has been satisfactory. Following a fall in 2002, the school has steadily improved its performance in the Year 6 tests for mathematics. Trends suggest that boys have not been performing as well as girls, but no differences were noted during the inspection. New staff and recent changes to the organisation of teaching groups in Years 3 to 6 have had a positive effect on the quality of teaching and learning in these year groups. Achievement for all pupils is good overall; it is good in Years 3 to 6 and satisfactory in Years 1 and 2; pupils with SEN achieve as well as others in their class. As a high proportion of pupils in Year 6 have SEN this means that, although pupils in Year 6 as a whole are achieving well, standards are on course to meet national expectations by the end of the year. Inspection findings show standards in the current Year 2 to be broadly in line with national expectations, in keeping with the findings of the last inspection.

50. Teaching and learning are good as whole. They are satisfactory in Years 1 and 2, and good in Years 3 to 6, where teaching has some very effective features. Common strengths include well organised lessons, with work that is well-matched to pupils' previous knowledge. A Year 6 lesson, planned to extend pupils' knowledge and understanding about angles and triangles, was very skilfully taught. The teacher moved the lesson along at a brisk pace, dividing it into chunks of explanation, discussion and practice. Consequently, pupils' learning was enhanced and they worked hard to complete each task, carefully consolidating one key idea before moving on to the next. Having recognised that boys' performance in the national tests does not match that of girls, the school is working hard to improve this situation; teachers offer pupils a good level of challenge and this helps to engage boys' interest. Year 6 boys, for instance, worked conscientiously to calculate the different angles in a complex figure, and Year 4 boys worked well together when consolidating their understanding of strategies to add and subtract numbers in their head. Teachers also set useful homework that helps pupils consolidate the work they have been doing in class.

51. The SEN teacher and learning support assistants provide effective support for pupils with SEN, so they learn as well as their classmates. Supporting adults offer good guidance during group activities but, in some instances, are not fully involved in supporting learning during all parts of the lesson. For example, during the introduction to a Year 2 lesson, learning support assistants took little part in the discussion.

52. The quality of assessment is satisfactory. Teachers keep detailed records of pupils' progress, and these are useful in providing information for setting targets for pupils' learning. Pupils understand their targets; older pupils, in particular, are aware of how well they are progressing and what they need to do to improve their learning. However, although assessments are effectively used in this way, they are not always analysed closely enough to identify strengths and weaknesses in learning across the school. The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The subject leader's policy of formally discussing pupils' work with them has helped to identify possible weaknesses. However, she does not yet observe lessons, so she has not been able to identify particular strengths in teaching with a view to sharing these throughout the school, or to identify potential weaknesses.

Mathematics across the curriculum

53. Pupils make satisfactory use of mathematics across the curriculum. In science, for example, pupils record numerical results such as the time it takes for parachutes to fall. They also use instruments to measure quantities, for example the force needed to stretch elastic bands.

SCIENCE

Provision for science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in the end-of-year tests in Year 6, which are improving.
- Too little monitoring and evaluation of provision and pupils' work to identify weaknesses.
- The enjoyment pupils bring to learning about science, which aids their progress.
- Inconsistencies in the attention given to extending pupils' understanding of scientific enquiry.

Commentary

54. Results in the Year 6 tests have improved as a whole over the last four years, reaching a level above the national average in 2004 when compared with the results of all schools nationally. This comparison reflects the findings of the last inspection report and illustrates the school's efforts to raising standards in this subject. The comparison with schools attaining similar results in Year 2 assessments indicates that last year's Year 6 had made good progress in this subject; this positive picture, however, is not yet fully replicated in science throughout the school or in all aspects of the subject. Leadership and management are satisfactory. When given the opportunity, the subject leader is a good role model for improving teaching, and his influence has already been important in helping to raise test standards over the last three years. However, he does not yet have the opportunity to share his skills or fully monitor and evaluate teaching and learning and is therefore is not well placed to identify weaknesses and inconsistencies in provision. Achievement is satisfactory, rather than good, because of these inconsistencies. Boys and girls achieve as well as each other, and pupils with SEN achieve as well as their classmates.

55. Standards in science are on course to meet national expectations for pupils in Year 2. Over the course of the year they cover all the required work, so that they have a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of science, including the importance of staying healthy and eating a balanced diet. Standards are also broadly in line with national expectations for pupils in the current Year 6, when account is taken of the large proportion of pupils in this group with SEN. This is substantiated by discussions with Year 6 pupils, who, as well as expressing a good level of interest and enjoyment in the subject, talk with understanding about the work they have done. They are clear about how to make sure a test is fair, for example explaining that when testing the efficacy of parachutes they should change only the factor being tested. The school also ensures that these oldest pupils benefit from good preparation for taking the national tests, and the use and understanding of scientific vocabulary is substantially promoted. However, inconsistencies arise in the degree of attention given to developing independent scientific enquiry, which is greater in some classes than in others. Pupils in Years 2 and 5, for instance, are not given the chance to regularly investigate for themselves or devise their own methods of explaining and recording their findings. Assessment procedures are satisfactory, but everyday guidance through marking and feedback is also not routine in all classes.

56. Because of timetabled arrangements during the inspection, only one lesson was seen, with pupils in Year 3, and this was well taught. Evidence from this lesson, and from pupils' work, indicates teaching and learning to be satisfactory overall. In the lesson seen, teaching was effective because practical, stimulating approaches were used to engage the pupils' interest. Their learning was enhanced as they investigated and recorded the features of different soils,

thoughtfully analysing where a 'mystery soil' may have come from. Information and communication technology (ICT) was also skilfully used to show a soil profile, so enabling pupils to understand how the underlying rock affected the nature of the soil. In other contexts, satisfactory use is made of pupils' mathematical skills. For example, pupils use instruments such as force-meters, and record and present their findings in tables and charts, sometimes using ICT to do so.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision for ICT is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The effective leadership of the new subject leader.
- Limited challenge and extension for higher attaining pupils.
- The good use made of the two computer suites, and of the visiting technician.
- Assessment, because it is not currently linked to National Curriculum Levels.

Commentary

57. The school has maintained a satisfactory rate of improvement in keeping up with the national development of the subject since the last inspection. The standards of pupils in Years 2 and 6 are in line with national expectations, aided by good coverage of the different aspects of the curriculum, and achievement is satisfactory. Pupils' achievement is aided by regular and easy access to the two computer suites, and by their very good attitudes to, and enjoyment of, ICT.

58. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Lessons are carefully planned to be relevant and interesting. Pupils with SEN receive appropriate support, and they make good progress. Effective support is given by a technician, who is shared between schools and who also teaches some classes. He taught a good lesson in which Year 2 pupils were introduced to the on-screen roamer, enabling all the pupils to control the turtle and program it to draw squares. They learnt how important it is for instructions to be clear and in the correct order, and were able to relate this to everyday appliances, such as video recorders and washing machines. However, in some lessons work is not always challenging enough for higher-attaining pupils and, sometimes, the whole class is given the same task to do rather than varied tasks to match pupils' abilities. For example, Year 6 pupils all worked through the same set of instructions on a spreadsheet when creating designs for a school tuck shop.

59. Leadership is effective, with the new subject leader giving the development of the subject a strong sense of direction. The professional needs of staff (including support staff) have been reviewed and addressed, and a comprehensive action plan has been drawn up which clearly identifies areas for development. One of these areas is assessment. At present a tick chart is used, but this does not fully record pupils' progress, or yet link their attainment with National Curriculum Level descriptors. A start has also been made in monitoring the quality of provision. A useful record is kept of every lesson, with an evaluation by the teacher and examples of pupils' work. This portfolio builds up into a helpful whole-school resource, and allows the subject leader to have an overview of what is happening; as yet there has not been an opportunity to monitor teaching and learning in lessons.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

60. There is increasing use of ICT in other subjects, including mathematics, where, for example, graphs are constructed on the computer. Year 2 pupils have been using the internet to find out about the Great Fire of London and places of Christian worship. Year 6 pupils used a spreadsheet to work out their relative weight on the different planets and on the moon. Plenty of word-processing takes place, and pupils design posters and create PowerPoint presentations in order to develop their communication skills. Some use is also made of digital cameras.

HUMANITIES

61. Not enough evidence was collected for overall judgements to be made about provision, standards or pupils' achievement in history and geography. The following information is based on evidence from pupils' work and from planning.

Commentary

62. During their studies of **history**, Year 2 pupils have learned about famous people, including Florence Nightingale, and major historical events such as the Great Fire of London. They have also conducted some personal exploration by searching the internet for information. Year 6 pupils have studied the Indus Valley Civilisation and looked at artefacts. However, pupils' standards of presentation vary across the school, work is not always marked, and opportunities to write are not routinely taken.

63. In **geography**, Year 2 pupils have studied the local area and created a big plan of the village, showing where they all live. Year 6 pupils have studied rivers and the water cycle. As with history, pupils do not have enough opportunities to write about what they learn.

Religious education

Provision for religious education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Imaginative treatment of topics, with good opportunities for discussion.
- Limited formal monitoring or assessment of provision, pupils' attainment and achievement.

Commentary

64. There has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection, when many weaknesses in provision were identified. Standards were then below expectations in Year 2 and progress was unsatisfactory in Years 1 to 4. Coverage is now broader than at the time of the last inspection, so that pupils have a better understanding of Christianity and other world religions and, as a result, they now make sound progress. Evidence from this inspection found standards to be in line with the expectations of the locally Agreed Syllabus in Years 2 and 6. However, there remain some inconsistencies in provision, and assessment systems have yet to be fully developed.

65. Teaching is satisfactory overall, but there is evidence of good teaching in Years 3 to 6, and valuable opportunities for pupils to explore ideas and feelings. Themes are tackled with sensitivity and imagination, and pupils are helped to understand the points of view of others. For example, in a discussion during a good lesson seen in Years 3 and 4, the events of Palm Sunday were presented from Jesus' point of view, and that of the crowd. This discussion led on to another about feelings of disappointment, during which pupils discussed their own experiences with a good level

of maturity and empathy. There are good examples of extended writing in Year 2, but valuable discussions are not followed through into written work with the same effectiveness in all classes. The local church is used as a resource, and pupils' knowledge of other faiths is also enriched through some of their multicultural activities, and by a visit to a local mosque.

66. The subject's leadership and management are satisfactory overall. The new subject leader has a clear understanding of where development is needed, but monitoring is limited at present to looking at pupils' work and she has not yet had a chance to visit lessons.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Not enough evidence was collected to make judgements about provision, standards or achievement in each of the subjects of art and design, design and technology, music and physical education. Evidence for the commentary below is taken from pupils' work, a small sample of teaching, discussion with pupils and teachers, and planning.

Commentary

67. A number of sources are used for planning **art and design** activities, including national guidance. Pupils have a satisfactory range of two- and three-dimensional activities, sometimes linked to topics being studied in other subjects. These activities include the learning of skills and the study of work by other artists. A very small sample of teaching was seen during the inspection, taking place in Year 2. A painting by Dürer was used as a stimulus for creating simple press-prints of patterns. Printing skills were clearly demonstrated, and the disciplined use of tools was emphasised. As a result, completed prints were carefully placed so that the patterns stood out clearly against boldly coloured, contrasting backgrounds. Studies of aboriginal art have been used as a stimulus in Year 6, and these pupils have created designs to express words of emotion.

68. No **design and technology** lessons were seen during the inspection. Discussions with pupils and teachers, and a scrutiny of work, show that pupils learn appropriately to plan, design, make and evaluate artefacts. Year 6 pupils followed this process carefully as they examined slippers and prepared patterns to make their own. Year 2 pupils create attractive pictures using cross-stitching techniques. In an annual event, pupils enjoy making racing cars, using construction kits and motors, and racing these at the end of the day.

69. **Music** is clearly popular with pupils. They are eager to sing their favourite songs to visitors and enjoy performing. Musical opportunities arise from strong links with other schools: for example, a rehearsal for a concert being staged by local schools was held during this inspection. Pupils in Years 5 and 6, who were taking part, sang enthusiastically, with good expression and clear intonation, and knew all the words by heart. A specialist teacher helps to support the subject and, on this occasion, pupils had benefited from some specialist singing teaching as part of the project. The learning support assistant taking the session reminded the pupils of techniques they had learned, and reinforced musical terms. Some pupils learn to play the guitar in school and other instruments outside it, and use them to perform in assemblies.

70. Several short observations of **physical education** lessons took place during the inspection. Pupils experience a sufficiently wide range of physical education activities, including outdoor adventurous activities for Years 5 and 6 during their annual residential visit. Resources are satisfactory, but gymnastic equipment is too large for younger pupils to move safely by themselves. Adults therefore have to set out the equipment, and this preparation sometimes reduces the pupils' physical activity time because they have to wait. The school offers a good range of activities outside lesson time, including sporting activities with other schools, and pupils speak proudly of their sporting achievements. A visiting teacher takes games lessons, usefully providing time for teachers to carry out non-teaching duties.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Not enough evidence was collected to make judgements about the quality of provision in this area. Evidence is taken from a small sample of teaching, from a scrutiny of pupils' work, and through talking with staff.

Commentary

71. Pupils have many opportunities to develop and demonstrate the values held dear by the school. There are timetabled lessons, and also spontaneous moments during the day taken when a pupil needs to share something important; these occasions are sensitively handled. The long-standing School Forum (school council) gives pupils a say in improving aspects of school life. This has been extended to include taking part in an inter-school council that meets at the town hall. Sex education and the awareness of the danger of drugs are taught in accordance with the school's policies.

72. Recent initiatives have included a healthy eating day, a bullying awareness week, harvest gifts for the elderly, and fund-raising for the recent tsunami disaster and for wildlife in danger. A group of eco-reps monitors energy consumption and recycling, and a fascinating video link transmits live pictures of the inside of a nesting box placed on a wall outside the school. Pupils were also involved in designing the glass window for the new quiet room. Such innovations contribute to the very positive ethos of the school and help pupils to value one another and the world around them.

73. Pupils treat one another with respect and listen attentively during shared times. For example, Year 2 pupils were very interested in the photographs of one another's pets, which they shared and talked about. Themes are made more real because there is an emphasis on talking, drama and role play. At present, however, such occasions rely on individual teachers planning their own work for their class. The school is soon to introduce a programme of study in order to give greater structure to the work in this area, and to ensure that pupils' knowledge and understanding is systematically developed.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	Grade
The overall effectiveness of the school	4
How inclusive the school is	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	4
Value for money provided by the school	4
Overall standards achieved	4
Pupils' achievement	4
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	2
Attendance	2
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The quality of education provided by the school	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	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	1
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).