

INSPECTION REPORT

LARKFIELD INFANT SCHOOL

Gloucester

LEA area: Gloucestershire

Unique reference number: 115580

Headteacher: Ms A Crooks

Lead inspector: Ms S Billington

Dates of inspection: 15 – 17 November 2004

Inspection number: 267187

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 – 7 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	152
School address:	Luke Lane Innsworth Gloucester Gloucestershire
Postcode:	GL3 1HJ
Telephone number:	01452 730780
Fax number:	01452 730780
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr G Sterry
Date of previous inspection:	5 October 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The school is smaller than the average and currently has six classes. There are more boys than girls on roll, with a slight imbalance in each year group. There are very few pupils from minority ethnic groups and all speak English as their first language. Around fifty per cent of the children are from the nearby RAF base and the number of pupils that enter and leave the school each year is high. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is also below average. Most of these have learning difficulties or speech and communication difficulties. Three pupils have statements of special educational need.

The vast majority of pupils who join the reception classes have pre-school experience in nearby playgroups. Their attainment on entry to school is broadly average.

A new headteacher took up post in September 2004.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
4343	Ms S Billington	Lead inspector	English Science Art and design Design and technology Special educational needs English as an additional language
33673	Mr N Gallichan	Lay inspector	
4341	Mr D Clegg	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Geography History Physical education
25019	Mrs D Butterworth	Team inspector	The Foundation Stage Music Religious education

The inspection contractor was:

Wessex Education Limited

3 Greenacres
Puddletown
Dorchester
Dorset
DT2 8GF

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a **good** school. Pupils achieve well in literacy and numeracy. Results of national tests in reading, writing and mathematics are often well above the national average. Teaching is good overall. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The school has a very high level of staffing but provides good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Pupils achieve well in English and mathematics and standards are above average
- Teaching in literacy and numeracy is good, but not enough attention is given to planning and teaching in other subjects
- Pupils have very good attitudes to learning and work hard in lessons
- Links with parents, the community and local schools are good
- The new headteacher provides good leadership and has a clear sense of direction that is shared by staff and governors
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good
- There are weaknesses in the way the curriculum is planned and managed
- The leadership roles of subject co-ordinators are under-developed

The school has made satisfactory improvement since the last inspection. Pupils' performance in national tests has improved and standards have risen in English and mathematics. The overall quality of teaching remains good.

Some progress has been made in relation to the key issues, but there are still some outstanding weaknesses. Specifically, the role of subject co-ordinators is still limited. Planning for science remains weak and there are still too few opportunities for pupils to apply their literacy and numeracy skills in subjects across the curriculum.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2 , compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2002	2003	2004	2004
reading	A	A	A	A*
writing	B	B	A	A
mathematics	B	A*	A	A*

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

Pupils' achievement in English and mathematics is **good**; boys and girls do equally well. Results of national tests are consistently above and often well above average; in reading and mathematics the most recent results were in the top five per cent of schools nationally.

Reception children get a good start and develop a good base of skills in literacy and numeracy. This is successfully built on and current year 1 and 2 pupils are attaining above average standards in English and mathematics. Standards in science and information and communication technology (ICT) are broadly in line with expectations but, as with literacy and numeracy, more opportunities could be provided for pupils to use their ICT skills to support learning in other subjects.

Pupils with special educational needs achieve well. Those with short-term difficulties often achieve average levels in national tests.

Pupils' personal development is good. The school prepares them well for the next stage in their learning.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The overall quality of education is **satisfactory**. Teaching is **good** overall, but the quality varies between subjects. Skills in literacy and numeracy are well taught, mainly due to teachers' high expectations. However, there are weaknesses in provision for other subjects and overall the curriculum is unsatisfactory. There is too much variation in pupils' experiences and in the amount of work that they cover in subjects such as science and history.

In lessons throughout the school, learning support workers provide effective support, particularly for pupils with learning difficulties. Resources are well used, particularly the interactive whiteboards that are available in each classroom.

The curriculum is enriched through good opportunities for visits and a variety of visitors to school. Good links with parents and the community support learning well.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The overall quality of leadership and management is **satisfactory**. The headteacher has a clear view of areas for development and staff and governors share her aspirations to build on the school's successes. Co-ordinators have very little opportunity to check up on the quality of work in the areas for which they are responsible and this is restricting curriculum development. Governance is satisfactory. Governors are supportive of the school and are seeking ways of becoming more proactive in planning for its development. There are some gaps in meeting statutory requirements.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are very positive about the school and feel that their children do well. They receive good information and are confident that they can approach the staff with any concerns. Pupils enjoy school.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Improve the consistency of planning and extend opportunities for pupils to use their literacy, numeracy and ICT skills across the curriculum
- Improve the opportunities for co-ordinators to monitor and develop the quality of work in the subjects for which they are responsible

and, to meet statutory requirements:

- Inform parents of
 - the right to withdraw their children from religious education and collective worship
 - the policy for special educational needs
 - the progress made in improving accessibility
- Monitor and report on the outcomes of the race equality policy
- Arrange updated training for all staff on child protection issues.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Overall, pupils achieve well. Standards in English and mathematics are above average. Boys and girls attain similar standards, with boys achieving particularly well compared to boys nationally.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school has a good track record of performance in national tests at the end of year 2
- Pupils have good skills in literacy and numeracy, but do not make enough use of these in subjects across the curriculum
- Pupils with special educational needs achieve well

Commentary

1. Over the past four years, results of national tests in reading, writing and mathematics have been above and often well above average. Results have improved at a faster rate than in most schools. In the last two years, there has been particular improvement in writing and mathematics, particularly in the proportion of pupils that attain the higher levels in the tests.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 – average point scores in 2004¹

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	18.7 (18.2)	15.8 (15.7)
writing	17.1 (16.6)	14.6 (14.6)
mathematics	18.7 (17.7)	16.2 (16.3)

There were 65 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

2. Reception children get a good start in learning basic skills, particularly in literacy. By the time they start year 1, most are well into the early levels of the national curriculum. Pupils continue to make good progress in years 1 and 2. The inspection found that standards attained by current year 2 pupils in English and mathematics are above average. However, they do not make enough use of their good literacy and numeracy skills in subjects such as science and history. Consequently, standards in science are broadly average. In information and communication technology (ICT) standards are in line with expectations but, again, pupils do not make enough use of their skills to support learning across the curriculum. It was not possible to make judgements on standards in other subjects.
3. Pupils with special educational needs benefit from good quality support and achieve well. Those with short-term or minor learning difficulties often attain average standards at the end of year 2. For those with more significant difficulties progress against the targets set in their individual education plans (IEPs) is generally good.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

This aspect is a strong feature, as it was in the last inspection. Pupils' attitudes to school are very good and their behaviour is good. Attendance levels are very high and punctuality very good. The provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is good overall.

¹ Unvalidated data.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils enjoy school and are very keen to come to learn
- The school establishes very good work habits and the pupils apply themselves well
- Pupils behave well in lessons, but there is some boisterous play at break times
- Good provision for social and moral development leads to good relationships
- There is a strong appreciation of British tradition, but limited opportunities to learn about other cultures or countries

Commentary

4. Throughout the school, pupils' attitudes towards learning are very good. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, listen attentively to their teachers and carefully follow instructions. They are eager to answer questions, settle down to work quickly and maintain interest in what they are doing. Relationships are good, teachers manage pupils' behaviour well, and pupils, in their turn, respond well in lessons. Whilst there are some young children who present challenging behaviour in the reception classes, the high number of staff means that there is little disruption to the activities of other children.
5. The development of pupils' social skills is good. Lunchtimes are pleasant social occasions that are well supervised. At playtimes, pupils of all ages play together, but there is a lack of structured activities or equipment. This results in boisterous play, which involves too much pushing and jostling, and goes unchecked by the supervisory staff. Older pupils carry out a range of responsibilities such as acting as buddies to take the reception children to assembly but they could take on more. Pupils develop awareness of the wider community in which they live. They collect harvest festival gifts for a local refuge and meet visitors to the school, such as representatives from the local churches, at regular assemblies.
6. Pupils' moral development is good. They have a good understanding of what is right and wrong; even the youngest children understood that it was naughty of Goldilocks to break baby bear's chair. Children are well mannered and polite and welcoming to visitors. A few year 2 pupils mentioned some kicking and scratching at playtime, but they understood that it was one or two children from the reception classes who had not yet learned what was expected of them.
7. Pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory. Assemblies help pupils to feel part of the school community and celebrate the contributions and achievements of others, and this raises pupils' self esteem. There is a brief time for reflection, but a number of pupils talk and whisper throughout the assemblies which detracts from the spiritual nature of the gathering.
8. Pupils' cultural development is satisfactory. There is a strong emphasis on British heritage, through, for example, learning nursery rhymes, fairy tales and stories. Pupils in years 1 and 2 study the work of some famous Western artists and produce work in similar styles. The school recognises that there are very few opportunities to meet people representing our multicultural society or to study non-European cultures and that pupils' understanding could be developed further.

Attendance

9. High levels of attendance have been successfully maintained. There are effective arrangements in place to monitor punctuality and the great majority of pupils arrive punctually and lessons start promptly. No pupils were excluded during the past year.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence	
School data	3.8
National data	5.5

Unauthorised absence	
School data	0.0
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

The overall quality of education is satisfactory. Teaching and learning are good, but there are some weaknesses in curriculum provision.

Teaching and learning

The overall quality of teaching and learning is good, although there is some variation in different subjects and different parts of the school. Assessment is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers use good strategies to encourage and engage pupils
- Support staff make a significant contribution in lessons
- Teachers have high expectations of what pupils might achieve in English and mathematics lessons
- Pupils work hard and apply themselves well to the tasks set
- There are some good arrangements for assessment, but some aspects are weak

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 26 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	1	13	12	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.

10. Teachers and support staff have very good relationships with their pupils and high expectations of their behaviour in lessons. The use of interactive whiteboards in introductory sessions is often very helpful in engaging pupils' attention and illustrating teaching points. In some lessons, imaginative activities generate an atmosphere of excitement; in a science lesson, for example, a 'letter from a giant' asking for help gave pupils a real sense of purpose as they sorted materials that might be suitable for his glasses or curtains. However, opportunities are sometimes missed to involve all pupils in introductions by, for example, using small whiteboards or talking partners to discuss ideas. As a result, the pace of introductions slows as individual pupils answer teachers' questions whilst the rest of the class listens.

11. Learning support workers (LSWs) play a key role in supporting groups and individual pupils in lessons. They usually work alongside individuals in whole class sessions, helping them to concentrate and to follow the teacher's explanations and instructions. Occasionally, their good skills in introductory sessions could be used to better effect through more active involvement, for example, through noting key vocabulary to be used in later written work. During group activities they are very well used, for example, to discuss ideas with pupils and help them with recording or organising their work. Some LSWs have a specific role in supporting pupils with learning difficulties; they work hard to ensure that these pupils are included and benefit from the activities in which they are involved.

12. High expectations are a key factor in the good standards attained in literacy and numeracy. In a literacy lesson with years 1 and 2, for example, the teacher encouraged pupils to use and explain terms such as 'setting' and 'resolve' as they discussed how a story might be structured. In subjects such as science and history, high expectations are less evident and more could be expected of pupils given their good skills in English and mathematics.
13. Throughout the school, pupils show a high level of interest in learning. In reception classes, children listen well, are keen to respond to questions and concentrate well on their tasks. Opportunities for them to make choices about the activities they will undertake and to think about how to organise them are limited and this has an impact on their achievement in some areas of learning. In years 1 and 2, pupils often work with good concentration. They are keen to succeed and this contributes to the good quality of learning.
14. Assessment arrangements in some areas are very good. In the reception classes, thorough assessment is used well to plan for future learning in literacy. In years 1 and 2, assessment of pupils' achievement in a particular aspect of mathematics informs the next stage of planning and teaching. Progress in reading and writing is tracked, although there is some variation in the way in which this is done. However, there is no assessment of what pupils are achieving in subjects other than English and mathematics and, as a result, there are some weaknesses in planning work for pupils of different levels of ability. The quality of marking is variable, ranging from good evaluative comments to a brief and generalised response. Targets in literacy for individual pupils have recently been introduced, but it is too early to see the impact of these.

The curriculum

Overall the taught curriculum is unsatisfactory because it lacks balance; too little attention is given to some subjects. There is good enrichment through a range of activities. Accommodation and resources are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good attention is paid to developing basic skills, but there is too much variation in the amount of work covered in some subjects
- Some good links are being made between subjects, although there is also some confusion between them
- There is very good provision for pupils with special educational needs

Commentary

15. The curriculum is particularly strong on teaching basic skills in literacy and numeracy but there is not enough attention given to some subjects and this affects the balance of pupils' experiences. Despite providing a broad range of activities, there are weaknesses in how some subjects are managed. In subjects such as history and geography, there is no system that ensures that all children learn the same things as they move through the school. It is noticeable that some classes do much more work in subjects such as science, history and geography than others. There is also some confusion between subjects such as history and RE and science and geography. For instance, the story of the festival of Diwali is part of history rather than RE. There are some differences in the way in which the curriculum is planned. Some teachers are very clear about what children will learn, but others are more focused on what they will do. This lack of consistency in planning makes it difficult to check up on what has been covered and how much progress children have made. There are instances where teachers make good links between subjects, for instance, combining art, history and ICT. The curriculum is significantly enhanced by a good range of visits and visitors.
16. Support for pupils with special educational needs is well organised and well targeted. The work that pupils are given is generally carefully focused on their learning targets and they benefit from the help they receive from the LSWs.

17. The curriculum for the Foundation Stage takes account of the national guidance and is generally meeting children's needs, although there is scope to increase the amount of choice children have about what they will work on and to extend provision for creative and physical development.

18. Provision is satisfactory for personal, social and health education (PSHE). There are regular timetabled sessions and activities that focus on a range of issues such as keeping safe. The school is planning to implement a structured programme to support planning for PSHE in all year groups.

Care, guidance and support

Provision for pupils' care, welfare and health and safety is satisfactory. Pupils receive good support, advice and guidance based on teachers' monitoring. Arrangements to seek, value and act upon pupils' views are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Induction into the reception classes is very good and arrangements for transfer to the junior school are good
- There are regular health and safety checks but some gaps in the arrangements for training in child protection issues

Commentary

19. Children are sensitively introduced to reception classes. Induction processes are well developed so that staff, parents and children can get to know one another and start to plan the child's next steps in learning. Parents receive good information and are encouraged to ask any questions so they can prepare their children for their first days in school. Transfer to the junior school is successfully managed through a close partnership that includes opportunities for pupils to visit their next school to participate in a variety of activities. Year 2 pupils become familiar with the junior school and get to know some of the staff before transfer to help them to commence their next stage of learning with confidence.

20. Adults take time to talk with pupils and listen to their views and concerns. The school is in the process of introducing 'Participation Plus', a scheme to encourage pupils to have a voice in their school and plan play activities. There is a systematic approach to ensuring a safe environment; potential hazards are identified through regular checks of the premises. However, the playgrounds used by reception pupils and the rest of the school are not separated from each other, resulting in overcrowding and a risk of injury in the main play area. Supervision is not always as vigilant as it should be and there is a lack of fencing to ensure that pupils cannot wander off from the playground areas. A number of members of staff have been trained appropriately in first aid procedures, but there is a need for formal child protection training for key staff and awareness training for others. The school is committed to participating in a sponsored 'healthy living' programme starting next term, although currently there is little emphasis in this area.

21. Careful monitoring of pupils with special educational needs helps staff to respond to their individual needs in the most appropriate way. Their learning is aided by the LSWs who encourage and assist individuals and small groups throughout most lessons.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The partnership with parents is good. Links with the community and other schools are also good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents are comfortable approaching the school and receive good information, but their views are not systematically sought
- Pupils benefit from the good links established with the local community and other schools

Commentary

22. Parents are very positive about the school and the support their children receive. They are provided with guidance on helping their children through 'Parentline Plus'. Communication from the school to parents is good; many parents talk to staff before and after school. Regular newsletters and notices keep parents informed about school activities and encourage their involvement. Weaknesses in the pupils' annual reports have now been remedied and parents receive an informative summary of achievement in every aspect of their child's learning and development. There is currently no systematic way to gather and respond to parents' views and suggestions; the school recognises that this is an area for development.

23. Pupils' learning is extended through the after school club, links with the junior school and a developing sports partnership being forged with the local secondary school. Pupils enjoy visits from a variety of members of the wider community. Adults from GCHQ and the local RAF base support pupils' reading. Pupils raise funds for various charities including Children in Need, Barnardo's and a local women's refuge.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership of the headteacher is good. The leadership of other key staff and management are satisfactory. Governance is also satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher provides a clear sense of direction for the next phase in the school's development
- Systems for monitoring and evaluation are very limited in some subjects
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is well managed
- Governors are developing a more strategic role in planning for school improvement

Commentary

24. Since taking up her appointment the headteacher has carried out an initial appraisal of the school's areas for development and shared this with staff and governors. She has rightly identified the importance of ensuring that good standards in English and mathematics are maintained whilst extending opportunities for pupils to use their skills in subjects across the curriculum.

25. Information from national tests has been analysed and used to inform areas for improvement. In mathematics, for example, the need to increase the proportion of pupils that attained the higher levels in tests formed the basis of an action plan in 2003-4. This resulted in a significant improvement in the most recent national tests. However, other strategies for checking up on standards and the quality of provision are very limited. There is very little observation of teaching or scrutiny of pupils' work and this means that most co-ordinators have a limited view of what is happening in the areas for which they are responsible. While all co-ordinators take their responsibilities seriously and offer good informal support to their colleagues, their roles are

under-developed. As a result, teachers are not in a position to share expertise and good practice across the school.

26. There is a clear structure for identifying and supporting pupils with special educational needs. IEPs include specific targets that form the basis of regular reviews, although these do not always take place at the designated time. Parents are invited to contribute to the review and to support their children's progress and, for those who cannot attend, new IEPs are sent home. LSWs with particular expertise in supporting pupils with special educational needs are deployed well to enable these pupils to fully participate in all aspects of the curriculum. There are good links with outside agencies, such as the educational psychologist and behaviour support service, and their advice helps to inform staff about strategies to support individual pupils.
27. Governors are currently reviewing their constitution and committee structure to increase their effectiveness. They have taken quick action to address the weaknesses in fulfilling statutory responsibilities; for example, there has recently been a very thorough health and safety check and action taken on areas that needed improvement. They are supportive of the school and aware of areas for development. In particular, they have recognised the need for a strategic plan to address the implications for school organisation and financial planning in the light of a falling roll and shortfalls in the budget.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	512,040	Balance from previous year	81,783
Total expenditure	567,618	Balance carried forward to the next	26,205
Expenditure per pupil	3,119		

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 Foundation Stage is good overall and has been maintained successfully since the last inspection. By the time children transfer to year 1 their attainment overall is above average and they are well prepared to work within the national curriculum.

Teaching and learning are good overall and some very good teaching was seen during the inspection. Children's achievements are assessed and recorded regularly so that their progress is carefully tracked and some use is made of the information to plan the next stage in learning. Overall, effective learning opportunities are provided, particularly in communication, language and literacy and knowledge and understanding of the world. A wide range of interesting activities is planned by the teachers to link into a chosen topic. However, there are too few opportunities for the children to initiate their own play or plan for themselves, because they are over-directed and organised by the teachers.

Accommodation and learning resources are good, but the outdoor area is not secure. This restricts the opportunities for spontaneous movement between indoor and outdoor play and the area is not used as often as it could be.

The co-ordinator is enthusiastic about the direction provided by the new headteacher and recognises the need to plan more play opportunities.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

- Teachers have high expectations for children's personal development and children respond positively and achieve well
- Staff are encouraging and provide interesting experiences but there is little opportunity for the children to initiate their own ideas

Commentary

28. The staff know the children well and provide good role models and well established routines. As a result, the children achieve well and the majority are likely to achieve the early learning goals² and to exceed these in many aspects of their personal development. Teaching and learning are good. The staff are patient and consistent, managing and supporting a small number of challenging children to ensure the minimum disruption to the school day.

29. The children are always directed and the planning does not allow for them to follow their own interests or to choose for themselves from a range of materials. This limits the development of their skills in making decisions and working independently.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

² Early learning goals refer to the standards in all areas of learning that the majority of children should achieve at the start of year 1.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching helps children develop their skills effectively
- The majority of children make good progress in literacy

Commentary

30. Teaching and learning are good. Children achieve well and are on course to reach standards that are above average in speaking, listening, reading and writing by the end of their time in the reception classes.
31. Children are learning letter sounds very quickly; work in school is well supported by parents at home. This enables the children to make good progress with their early reading and writing skills. Children are enthusiastic about reading because the teachers introduce well-known stories such as Goldilocks and the Three Bears. This was read well and gave the opportunity for the children to use different voices as they joined in with the story. Reading is given a high priority; during the inspection the children were naturally drawn to the dark 'bear cave' to read books about bears with the aid of torches.
32. The majority of children write their name unaided and write simple stories, using the sounds they know to represent the first letter of a word. The few lower attaining children receive high levels of support and make steady progress. Teachers and support staff make good use of every opportunity to promote language and literacy in all activities.
33. High expectations in this area contribute to children's good progress. Teachers assess children's achievements in this area very regularly and keep good records of their progress.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision for mathematical development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Sometimes planning lacks clarity and focus about what is to be learned and activities are not well matched to children's levels of understanding
- Learning support workers develop mathematical language well through practical activities

Commentary

34. Overall, teaching and learning are satisfactory. However, activities are not always well matched to children's levels of understanding. During one lesson, for example, children successfully counted to twenty and back from ten, but the majority found it difficult when asked to add and subtract using a number dice and a second dice with '1 more' and '1 less' on it. They were unable to read the dice, found the counting difficult and struggled to complete the calculation. Because there was so much information to process, many lost interest and concentration. The children were more confident when comparing the sizes of bowls, beds and spoons for the three bears and were quick to point out the differences once they realised that this was the objective of the lesson.
35. There is good support for lower attainers from the LSWs, who quietly repeat the teacher's instructions and help the children to concentrate. In one lesson, for instance, the LSW developed the children's use and understanding of language related to size by appropriate questions that reinforced the teaching points. The majority of children make steady progress and achieve satisfactorily. They count confidently and order numbers and objects by size; it is likely that almost all will reach, and some exceed, the early learning goals by the end of the reception year.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers choose attractive resources and ask questions effectively to help develop key skills
36. Teaching and learning are good and children understand clearly what is being taught. Good, and sometimes very good, teaching means that most children are on course to reach, and many to exceed, the standards expected by the time they start in year 1. The children achieve well because of the many opportunities provided to extend their knowledge and stimulate their interest and enthusiasm in the world around them. In a very well planned lesson, the children were keen to use their problem solving skills to find out how a range of attractive toys works. They were prepared to listen to the ideas of others and responded to the teacher's challenge of trying out a toy, identifying its function and classifying it by whether it is pushed or pulled. The children display good levels of skill and confidence when using computers. They support each other well and control the mouse well, successfully clicking on and dragging objects around the screen.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

37. It was not possible to make a judgement about provision for this area of learning. Children seen handling small objects such as small world toys, construction kits and art and craft materials showed good control. There are regular lessons in physical education. However, the use of the outside learning area is restricted because it is not secure and the children are unable to move freely from the indoor classroom to the outside freely.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

38. It was not possible to make judgements about this area of learning. The work seen in drawing, painting and collage was good although there are limited opportunities for children to make choices about the techniques and materials they will use. Children enjoyed playing in the 'bear caves' for creative role-play. They re-enacted the story of Goldilocks and the Three Bears and developed some dialogue of their own. During a singing session for all of the children in the reception year, they learned to sing a simple song from memory; however, opportunities were missed to encourage creativity by introducing musical instruments and allowing children to make their own music.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGE 1

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well in all aspects of the subject
- Teaching is good, although there is scope for further improvement
- The quality of marking and assessment varies

Commentary

39. Standards overall are above average and pupils make good progress in all aspects of the subject. Almost all pupils have good skills in speaking and listening. They listen carefully in lessons and show good understanding in their responses, for example, when they comment on the events in a story. Many year 2 pupils have a good vocabulary and clearly explain their ideas, often using complex sentences. Pupils learn to apply a variety of strategies to help with their reading, including using the pictures, 'sounding out' words and making reasoned guesses about what would make sense. Almost all year 2 pupils read accurately and show good enjoyment and understanding of stories, for example, appreciating the humour or the reasons for a character's actions. Some read with good expression. A range of written work, including lists, stories and accounts shows good improvement in structuring written work and using words for effect. A group of year 2 pupils achieved well in a first attempt at writing extended stories; they sustained their ideas well and used a variety of strategies to vary the structure of sentences.
40. There is a good programme for the teaching of basic literacy skills, including knowledge of sounds and recognition of commonly used words. Resources are used well, for instance, extracts from stories displayed on the interactive whiteboards enable teachers to draw pupils' attention to the author's use of language and discuss how punctuation helps the reader to develop the right expression. Lessons have a clear structure, but time is not always used in the most effective way; introductions are sometimes lengthy or include too many different teaching points and this reduces the focus of the lesson and the time that pupils have to complete individual and group tasks.
41. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The co-ordinator has had limited opportunities to observe lessons and has identified some areas for development. However, there has been no opportunity to scrutinise pupils' work and check on assessment procedures. As a result, some variations in practice have not been identified. Approaches to the marking of pupils' work are inconsistent. There are good examples of clear evaluative comments that help pupils to understand what they have achieved and what they need to do to improve. However, there are also instances of very generalised comments, sometimes not very clearly written, that are not helpful to the pupils. There are also inconsistencies in the correction of spelling errors and in some instances there is not enough attention paid to drawing pupils' attention to errors in commonly used words. As a result, mistakes persist in writing words such as 'were' and 'saw'. Samples of individual pupils' written work are assessed regularly but the frequency and thoroughness with which this is done is varied. In some classes, work is annotated, discussed with the pupil and assessed against national curriculum criteria. In other instances, there is no annotation or indication of what pupils have achieved. Assessment is not always accurate and sometimes over-estimates the standard of the work.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

42. Pupils' good skills in speaking and listening are applied well in a range of subjects. This was apparent, for example, in a science lesson in which groups of pupils discussed which types of materials might be appropriate for different purposes. Not enough use is made of pupils' literacy

skills in subjects across the curriculum. While there are some opportunities for pupils to apply their skills, the quality of the work varies considerably. On occasions, pupils' skills are extended as they write independent accounts, for instance, of their observations in science. At other times, for example, in religious education, written work is almost identical for pupils across the age and ability range and does not make the most of a good base of literacy skills.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good and teachers have high expectations
- Good analysis of test results informs what is taught
- Children's progress is not tracked carefully enough as they move through the school

Commentary

43. High standards are achieved through good teaching that challenges pupils and expects them to do well. By the time pupils leave the school they are well equipped for the next stage of education. They have a good understanding of how numbers work, are very familiar with adding and subtracting and particularly strong on using what they know to solve mathematical problems. This latter skill represents an important improvement since the last inspection. All pupils achieve well in mathematics; the lower attaining pupils often reach average levels in national tests.

44. Lessons are well planned. Teachers take full account of the range of ages and abilities making sure that work meets the needs of all pupils. The LSWs are particularly effective in giving support to individuals and groups of pupils. They reinforce what the teacher is saying at the start of lessons and, in one good example, worked with a particular age range on practising mental calculations for the first ten minutes in the lesson. Lessons are also benefiting from the impact of ICT. The use of the interactive whiteboards ensures that all pupils have easy access to the demonstrations and the boards help teachers to go back to key teaching points when they wish to reinforce or remind pupils of earlier work.

45. There are a number of good features to how the subject is managed and led. There is a sharp analysis of the results of national tests and this is resulting in adaptations to what is taught to address areas of weakness. There is also a very clear vision of what more needs to be done. This is particularly evident in the appreciation of the need to track more carefully how well pupils are doing as they move through the school. The school is currently exploring the use of homework; the recent initiative of sending home number games is being sensibly introduced and the impact is being evaluated to make sure that it is a worthwhile activity.

Mathematics across the curriculum

46. There is limited evidence of numeracy across the curriculum. Occasional use is made in some classes of pupils' numeracy skills in science, but there is little evidence of work in other subjects. Work in a mathematics lesson linked with design and technology as pupils measured carefully to fit a pair of curtains for the 'giant's castle'. In ICT, pupils have used data handling programs to create pictograms.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is too much variation in the work covered in different classes
- There are weaknesses in the way the curriculum is planned
- There are no procedures for assessment

Commentary

47. Standards overall are broadly average, although pupils' knowledge of key aspects of science is better than their skills in the investigative aspects of the subject. Pupils cover a range of work related to study of materials, the environment and characteristics of living things. However, the quality of the work that they do and the amount that they cover varies considerably. The work of year 2 pupils in one class is up to a good standard and includes, for example, well presented information on the properties of materials and methods of seed dispersal. In another class, there is almost no recorded work for this term and what there is does not demonstrate pupils' knowledge; for example, information on minibeasts has been downloaded from the Internet and stuck into books.
48. The subject is planned as part of a topic. However, the topic differs in different classes and this makes coverage very difficult to track. There is no clear structure for the development of skills and, as in the last inspection, there are weaknesses in planning for different age groups and different levels of ability. In some classes, higher attaining year 2 pupils have the opportunity to record their findings independently, making good use of diagrams and tables, while year 1 pupils have useful pro-formas to help to organise their recording. In other classes, work is almost identical for all pupils and rarely shows what they have learned. The amount of time allocated for the teaching of science varies and in some classes is less than an hour a week.
49. The co-ordinator has recently carried out an audit of planning that identified the weaknesses in provision for investigation. She has had very little opportunity to monitor teaching or to check on pupils' work but is keen to do this and to plan for the improvements needed. There is no system for checking on pupils' progress to inform the teacher assessments that need to be made at the end of year 2 and this is a weakness.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

50. No ICT lessons were seen during the inspection so there is not enough evidence to make an overall judgement about the quality of the provision. However, discussions with pupils and scrutiny of pupils' work and assessments indicate that pupils are broadly meeting the expected levels. The school follows national guidance for planning ICT and this makes sure that pupils experience the full range of the curriculum, although they have very limited 'hands-on' experience. During the inspection, the computer banks were seldom used.
51. The curriculum has been tightened up and assessment arrangements are improving, although the co-ordinators recognise there is still some work to do to ensure consistency across the school.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

52. During the inspection, there was some evidence of ICT being used to support other subjects. For example, in one class the use of the Internet was very effective in enabling pupils to research information to produce a leaflet about a famous artist. Displays showed that ICT has been used in art to create pictures using specific programs. Overall, however, ICT makes a limited impact on learning across the curriculum.

HUMANITIES

Commentary

53. No lessons in **religious education (RE)** were seen during the inspection and it was not possible to make a judgement on standards or teaching and learning. Discussion with the subject co-ordinator indicates that the school follows the locally agreed syllabus and has designed a programme of regular topics. There is a daily act of collective worship, with a list of themes appropriate to the age of the children.
54. Only one **history** lesson and no **geography** lessons were seen during the inspection. There is not enough evidence to make an overall judgement about the quality of provision in either subject. However, scrutiny of pupils' work, discussion with the subject manager and scrutiny of planning documents indicates that there are some weaknesses in how the subjects are planned and taught.
55. Pupils' work shows a considerable variation in the amount covered within each topic. In some classes, the children cover much more work than in others. In some books, a half term's work is represented by just one piece of recorded work. The way the subjects are planned means that it is very difficult for the co-ordinators to check up on what children are being taught. There is no secure way in which the school can make sure that, as children move through the school, what they learn builds on what has been learned previously and that all children are given the same opportunities for learning in both subjects.
56. There is also some confusion between different aspects of humanities. There are occasions when there is too little distinction between history and RE and geography and science. Overall, the work in pupils' books does not reflect the high standards in literacy and numeracy evident in other work.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Physical Education

Provision in physical education (PE) is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children are kept active but there is not enough evaluation during lessons
57. Only a limited number of PE lessons were seen during the inspection and these focused essentially on gymnastics. There was not enough evidence to make a judgement about standards in dance or games, although these aspects of PE are planned throughout the school. Standards in gymnastics are in line with expectations. The majority of pupils have a growing awareness of how to use space effectively and are learning to control their bodies when undertaking particular movements, such as jumping. In one lesson, pupils successfully jumped in and out of a hoop in a variety of ways, for instance, keeping low, wide or high. Some pupils put together a number of jumps to create a small sequence of movements. The girls are often tighter in their control than the boys.
58. The teaching seen was satisfactory overall. Teachers are particularly keen to keep pupils moving and ensure that they have plenty of activity. This is often very evident at the start of lessons when children are warming up. Lessons often move on at a good pace. Teachers give very clear explanations of what to do and they provide examples either by demonstration or by using individual pupils. However, there is not enough evaluation of pupils' performances and not enough follow up teaching about how to make movements better. This results in pupils making only limited improvements in what they do as the lesson progresses. Teachers manage pupils well; they reinforce good behaviour giving praise and encouragement to pupils who work hard.

59. There is a good view of how the subject can develop further through the impending partnership with a local school; this has the potential to raise the profile of the subject even further and provide training for teachers in all aspects of PE.
60. No lessons were seen in **art and design** or **design and technology** and it is not possible to judge the quality of provision. Incidental observation, scrutiny of displays and photographs of recent work and discussions with the art co-ordinator indicate that pupils have a range of experiences in using a variety of media and learning about the work of artists. However, the quality of these experiences varies in different classes because there is no clear structure to guide planning for the development of skills. Samples of pupils' work show that many pay close attention to detail, for example, in representing the movement of 'stick people' in the style of Lowry or replicating Picasso's abstract style and bold colours in self-portraits. In one class, pupils showed good skills in colour mixing as they blended paints carefully to make eye-catching patterns in the style of William Morris. In the same class, landscapes also showed good detail and attention to shape and colour. The curriculum is enhanced by opportunities to work with artists and to visit the nearby 'nature in art' centre to see exhibitions.
61. Limited evidence of design and technology shows that pupils have experiences of planning and making products such as models and books. Construction equipment is used, for example, in making models of bridges, and pupils have designed and made 'play equipment', thinking about the materials and any help that they will need. They learn to cut, shape and join materials in a variety of ways, for example, using split pins.
62. Not enough evidence was gathered during the inspection to form an overall judgement in **music**. One good singing lesson was seen and a discussion was held with the subject co-ordinator. Music is taught regularly through the school. Pupils enjoy singing. They sing tunefully and with expression, and particularly enjoy singing songs divided into two groups, rising to the challenge of performing well together.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

63. There is no specific programme for the teaching of personal, social and health education (PSHE) but good attention is paid to this area, with further developments planned. Circle time is used regularly to encourage pupils to reflect on their actions and to consider the needs of others. Pupils are encouraged to work together and to develop their skills through well-planned collaborative tasks. There is planning to raise the profile of the importance of healthy eating and to involve pupils more in discussing and making decisions about aspects of the school's work that affect them.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	3
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	4
Value for money provided by the school	4
Overall standards achieved	3
Pupils' achievement	3
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	3
Attendance	2
Attitudes	2
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	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	5
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	4
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	4
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	3
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).