

INSPECTION REPORT

LOWER FARM PRIMARY SCHOOL

Bloxwich

LEA area: Walsall

Unique reference number: 104169

Headteacher: Mr J Baker

Lead inspector: Anne Elizabeth Kounnou

Dates of inspection: 28th February – 3rd March 2005

Inspection number: 267249

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:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 – 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	422
School address:	Bakewell Close Bloxwich Walsall West Midlands
Postcode:	WS3 3QH
Telephone number:	01922 710479
Fax number:	01922 491939
Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr E Sutton
Date of previous inspection:	22 nd February 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Lower Farm is a larger than average primary school situated in Bloxwich, near Walsall. The 15 classes are mainly organised in 'phase-groups'. This means that pupils from Years 1 and 2 are taught together in four mixed age and ability classes, as are pupils in Years 3 and 4, and Years 5 and 6. There are two separate reception classes and a nursery unit that caters for two groups of children, one in the morning and another in the afternoon. Despite the school serving an area of social deprivation only three per cent of parents claim free school meals for their children, and this is much lower than average. When children start school in the nursery there is a wide range of ability but the majority achieve lower than expected levels for their age in all areas of learning. Less than two per cent of pupils are learning to speak English as an additional language, or are from minority ethnic backgrounds; this is lower than average. The school is popular and oversubscribed. The proportion of pupils joining or leaving the school during the year is below that normally found in primary schools. Around nine per cent of pupils have special educational needs; five of these pupils have a special statement. This is a lower than average proportion. Pupils needs include moderate learning or behaviour difficulties; a few pupils have specific needs including hearing impairment and autism.

Unusually for a primary school French is taught from the nursery to Year 6. The prestigious Investors in People award has been gained for a third time. Other awards include the Basic Skills Quality Mark, a Healthy Schools award, and an award for leadership and management in information and communication technology (ICT) from the National Association of Advisors for Computers in Education (NAACE). The school is actively involved in the Leadership Development Strategy in

Primary Schools, with both the headteacher and deputy headteacher playing a leading role in the local area.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
30810	Liz Kounnou	Lead inspector	Areas of learning for children in the Foundation Stage Religious education History Geography Provision for special educational needs Provision for pupils who speak English as an additional language
9981	Saleem Hussain	Lay inspector	
32827	Jacqueline Marshall	Team inspector	English Information and communication technology Art and design Design and technology Music Physical education
20010	John Sangster	Team inspector	Mathematics Science French Personal, social and health education and citizenship

The inspection contractor was:

peakschoolhaus ltd
BPS Business Centre
Brake Lane
Boughton
Newark
Nottinghamshire
NG22 9HQ

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	7
PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS	
STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS	9
Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL	12
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	16
PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECTS	18
AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE	
SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2	
PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS	30

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Lower Farm Primary continues to be a very effective school. Many children start school with below average attainment. Pupils achieve very well from Years 1 to 6, particularly in English. Teaching and learning are good overall. Very good leadership and management constantly seek to improve the quality of education provided. Very good teamwork is a strong feature of the school's very successful ethos. Children in the nursery and reception classes make satisfactory progress, but many do not reach the goals expected for children at the end of the reception year. The headteacher provides very good leadership, and governance is good. The school provides very good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Standards in English are well above average due to very good teaching and learning.
- Very good enrichment of the curriculum motivates pupils very well, so that they behave very well and are very keen to learn.
- Very good provision for pupils' personal development enables pupils to achieve very well.
- Teaching and learning are good overall and much is very good due to the very good relationships that exist throughout the school.
- Staff value pupils' opinions and contributions very well so that they are confident in lessons.
- Curriculum development in the nursery and reception classes has not kept up with national improvements and this limits the progress that children make in these classes.
- Cultural development is good overall due to the good opportunities provided across the curriculum, but pupils' understanding of the rich contribution of other cultures to British society is underdeveloped.

Improvement since the last inspection is good overall. Pupils continue to achieve very well from Year 1 to Year 6. Leadership and management remain very strong. The high expectations of senior staff mean that teaching and learning continue to be good, with much very good teaching seen, particularly in Years 3 to 6. Provision in the nursery and reception classes is not as good as it was at the time of the last inspection.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

Pupils' achievement is very good overall. In the nursery and reception classes children make satisfactory progress but do not reach the goals expected by the end of reception. Year 2 pupils achieve very high standards in mathematics tests when compared to those in similar schools. In reading tests standards are well above average, and in writing pupils reach average standards. During the inspection, standards seen in writing were above average because teaching and learning of English are now very good throughout the school. This helps the few pupils who are learning to

speaking English as an additional language to make good progress in all lessons. In Year 6, standards in the national tests are well above average in English, and similar standards were seen during the inspection. Pupils make very good progress from Year 3 to Year 6 in English, building very well on their prior attainment. Over time, boys have done particularly well in English tests. Year 6 pupils reached average standards in the mathematics tests last year, but are likely to do better this year. In science standards remain above average, as they were in the national tests. Pupils also achieve very well in ICT and religious education, reaching above average standards throughout the school.

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is very good overall. From Years 1 to 6 pupils achieve very well due to the very good and sometimes excellent relationships with teachers, who encourage the pupils at every stage and give them the confidence to do very well. Currently, although pupils learn a great deal about their own culture and other cultures around the world, there are not enough opportunities for pupils to learn about the contribution of all cultures to British society. Attendance is good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is good. Teaching and learning are good overall, and very good in Years 3 to 6. In English lessons teaching and learning are very good throughout the school. The curriculum is good overall and enriched very well, for example by French lessons from the nursery to Year 6. In Years 1 to 6 it is very good and often provides exciting and challenging activities that help pupils to learn. In the nursery and reception classes it is satisfactory. Teachers in these classes plan lessons carefully to help children learn basic skills but the way the curriculum is currently planned limits the number of opportunities for children to learn through play in activities they select for themselves.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are very good. The headteacher provides very good leadership working in strong partnership with a very experienced deputy headteacher. Together they have created a very skilful team of staff, who strive for excellence. Other key staff provide very good leadership that ensures the good standards are maintained. Governance is good and ensures that all statutory requirements are fully met.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are satisfied with the school. Many provide good support in lessons. Pupils are highly satisfied with the school. They are very proud of their achievements, which are shown at their best in the high quality assemblies they lead themselves. Many parents enjoy attending these.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Improve the quality of the curriculum provided for children in the nursery and reception classes.
- Provide greater opportunities for pupils to deepen their understanding of the contribution of all cultures to British society.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Achievement overall is very good due to the school's consistent focus on raising standards and very good relationships with pupils that inspire them with the confidence to achieve very well. In the nursery and reception classes children's achievement is satisfactory, but most do not reach the goals expected for their age. Pupils achieve very well from Years 1 to 6. In Year 2, pupils achieved well above average standards in reading and mathematics in the 2004 national tests. They achieved average standards in writing. In the Year 6 national tests, pupils reached well above average standards in English, above average standards in science and average standards in mathematics.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well above average standards in English by the end of Year 6 as a result of very effective leadership and management in this subject, and very good teaching.
- Pupils achieve very well in all the core subjects of English, mathematics, science, ICT and religious education, due to very good enrichment of the curriculum, and very good relationships between teachers and pupils.
- The lack of well-planned opportunities for children to learn through play in the nursery and reception classes limits children's progress.

Commentary

1. Children start school in the nursery with a wide spread of ability that varies from year to year. Overall their attainment is below that expected for their age. By the time they leave the reception class most have not achieved the goals expected at this age in each of the areas of learning, and their attainment remains below average. Children make satisfactory progress due to the emphasis given to learning basic skills in English and mathematics. However, the way the curriculum is planned is too often more suited to older pupils, such as those in Years 1 and 2, and this limits children's achievement. Overall achievement is satisfactory in these classes.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	16.9 (17.2)	15.8 (15.7)
Writing	15.0 (15.8)	14.6 (14.6)
Mathematics	18.4 (18.0)	16.3 (16.3)

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

2. In Years 1 and 2 pupils achieve very well because they enjoy their lessons and are confident in their work. Standards in the Year 2 national tests in 2004 were well above the national average in mathematics and reading, and average in writing. When compared to those in similar schools, the same good standards were achieved with even higher achievement in mathematics. This is because higher attaining pupils did particularly well in mathematics, with a much greater proportion reaching the higher levels than in most schools. Pupils achieved higher standards in reading than in writing due to the systematic teaching of basic reading skills. During the inspection comparable standards were seen in these subjects and pupils continue to achieve very well.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	28.4 (29.1)	26.8 (26.8)
mathematics	27.3 (29.2)	27.0 (26.8)
science	29.6 (30.3)	28.7 (28.6)

There were 47 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

3. In Years 3 to 6 pupils achieve very well as a result of very good teaching and learning across the curriculum. In the 2004 national tests Year 6 pupils reached well above average standards in English; boys did particularly well when compared to those in other schools. This is mainly due to the interesting activities planned for them. In science standards were above average, and in mathematics standards were average. When compared to pupils whose prior attainment is similar, pupils in Year 6 in 2004 achieved very well in English. In science they made better progress than most pupils, and in mathematics their progress was about average. Pupils continue to achieve particularly well in English. A very large proportion of Year 6 pupils are expected to achieve the higher level in English and mathematics tests this year. In science a good focus on teaching pupils key facts means that standards seen continue to be above average.
4. Over the last few years, pupils have consistently achieved very well in the school and the good standards seen at the last inspection have been maintained. This is partly due to very good leadership and management that ensure teachers and senior staff constantly review pupils' achievements. In this way they can intervene to maintain or raise the standards achieved. For example, a clear focus on raising mathematics standards from Years 3 to 6 means those standards are improving. During the inspection pupils were seen to be now achieving very well in mathematics, to reach above average standards. The very good and sometimes excellent relationships that teachers have developed with their pupils are a key factor in pupils' very good achievement from Years 1 to 6. These result in very positive attitudes to learning, allowing the majority of pupils to fulfil their potential. Pupils' positive attitudes are further encouraged by the very good range of experiences provided to enrich the curriculum in all of the core subjects. Consequently in English, mathematics, science, ICT and religious education, almost all pupils enjoy their lessons.
5. Pupils' enjoyment of lessons contributes well to their very good achievement in ICT and religious education. In these subjects pupils reach above average standards throughout the school. Class teachers and skilled teaching assistants support pupils with special educational needs very effectively, in small groups and individually. As a result pupils achieve very well and make progress towards their individual targets at a very good rate. The few pupils learning to speak English as an additional language achieve well due to the consistent focus throughout the school on developing pupils' vocabulary in all subjects.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development are **very good**. Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is **very good** overall; cultural development is **good**. Pupils' attendance and punctuality are **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' very positive attitudes and very good behaviour make a very significant contribution to their achievement in lessons.
- Pupils are excited about things they learn and achieve a very high level of empathy with others because provision for spiritual development is so good.
- Relationships are very good and help pupils to achieve very well.
- Pupils' understanding of the contribution of different cultures to British society is underdeveloped.

Commentary

6. Pupils show very high levels of interest and enthusiasm in lessons and other activities. For instance, during a Year 3 and 4 ICT lesson, pupils were on the edge of their seats as they watched how sound levels could be measured and shown on a computer as a graph. This is typical of how they concentrate very well in lessons and take pride in their achievements. Pupils are polite and well mannered, as they were at the last inspection. They behave very well in classrooms, at assembly, in the playground and in the dining hall. All pupils are aware of the school rules and there are very high expectations regarding conduct, mainly because staff use praise and rewards very effectively to encourage pupils to behave well. There were no incidents of exclusion in the last school year. The calm atmosphere in the school contributes very well to pupils' very good achievement.
7. About 15 per cent of parents responding to the questionnaire are concerned about bullying, and almost a quarter of pupils say that other children do not behave well. This was not borne out in observations during the inspection, when pupils were seen to behave very well most of the time. Further discussions with parents and pupils, and checks of school records, suggest that bullying is not a significant issue. Pupils and parents say that staff always act quickly and effectively to resolve any incidents. Misunderstandings arise due to some weaknesses in communication with a small group of parents that the school is working hard to address. The school has a very effective race equality policy and promotes good relationships, including racial harmony, very effectively. Consequently, pupils play and work together very well. It is common to see pupils helping each other in lessons; for instance, Year 1 and 2 pupils worked effectively in pairs as they investigated how friction affects objects.
8. The school has made very good improvement to spiritual development and good improvement to moral and social development since the last inspection. Pupils have a very good sense of right and wrong because there are many opportunities for them to consider issues such as discrimination, bullying, rules and human rights in a moral context. Many chances to take responsibility lead to very good social development. For example, the buddy scheme – where older pupils regularly help younger ones with their work – is working very effectively. Assemblies and lessons in subjects such as science, art and history regularly allow pupils to marvel at the beauty of the world around them and the inspirational nature of human achievement. Pupils frequently reflect on people's feelings. This is why they are able to relate to others very well, such as during an assembly when pupils discussed the plight of people suffering natural disasters. The excitement and enthusiasm generated in many lessons are a positive feature of pupils' very good achievement. However, the very good and sometimes excellent relationships between pupils and teachers make the most significant contribution to pupils' achievement. Staff instil confidence in pupils and encourage them to question what they do not understand. This results in a very good climate for learning.
9. Cultural development is good overall. Pupils' appreciation of their own culture is very good with school trips making a significant contribution. Pupils are keen to learn about different cultures, and say that they want to make sure they never disrespect people through ignorance.

Although pupils' awareness of other's cultural traditions is satisfactory, there are not enough experiences to help them learn about cultural diversity in Britain.

Attendance

10. The school has made good improvement to attendance since the last inspection. Attendance is now above average and there is no unauthorised absence. There is a healthy spirit of competition for end of term certificates for good attendance. Telephone calls are made home promptly regarding any unexplained absence – a reflection of the school's very good monitoring and promotion of attendance.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence	
School data	4.5
National data	5.1

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 quality of education is good. Teaching and learning are good overall and very good in Years 3 to 6, where some excellent teaching was seen. The curriculum is good overall, and is enriched very well to provide interesting activities that motivate pupils well. Provision for pupils' personal development is very good. Pupils' relationships with their teachers are very good and sometimes excellent and contribute very well to their very good achievement. There are good links with parents, the local community and other schools.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are **good** overall. From Years 3 to 6 they are very good, and in the nursery and reception classes they are satisfactory. Some very good teaching and learning was seen in all stages of the school. Assessment is **good** and used well.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is imaginative and captures pupils' interest so that pupils have very positive attitudes to learning because of high teacher expectations.
- The way that teachers plan together means that lessons are well tailored to meet the needs of all pupils.
- Pupils know how they can improve because teachers explain clearly what they need to improve to reach the next target.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 64 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
1 (2%)	19 (30%)	30 (47%)	14 (22%)	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.

11. Teaching and learning have improved since the last inspection. Many very good lessons were seen during the inspection, especially in Years 3 to 6, where teaching overall is very good. English is taught very well from Years 1 to 6, so that pupils improve their literacy skills very well. In the most successful lessons, pupils are highly motivated by the tasks that teachers have planned and find their lessons really exciting and fun. Boys are highly motivated by the wide range of activities provided. Pupils' energy and enthusiasm are used to inspire a desire to learn. Because pupils' ideas are valued, and all are expected to play a part in lessons, they are keen to do their best. Purposeful links are made between different subjects so that pupils practise and use skills they have learnt in one lesson to support their learning in another. Well-judged praise, carefully targeted questioning, and appreciation of pupils' ideas, such as is shown through using talk partners, motivate pupils and help them achieve very well. There is a very positive

climate for learning. High expectations mean pupils constantly try to do their best and are actively involved in lessons, where every pupil is expected to fulfil their potential. For example in an excellent lesson in Years 5 and 6, pupils were engrossed as they formed a business and worked in teams to produce a range of shoes. They were expected to fulfil several business roles, from accountancy to advertising; and worked competitively with other businesses to make the greatest profit by the end of the lesson. They learned many skills, not least the importance of quality in all their work.

12. Staff work very well together throughout the school. Senior staff have devised a well-established system whereby teachers and teaching assistants plan lessons with colleagues who teach in the same phase of the school. For example, those teaching the mixed age classes Years 3 and 4 all confer. At these meetings teachers are particularly careful to adapt the work to meet the different needs of the pupils, so that those of all abilities make good progress. Pupils with special educational needs are supported very well by this approach because work planned matches their needs. Teachers use the skilled teaching assistants well to support different groups of children and individuals. In the nursery and reception classes teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. When teaching and learning are very good in these classes children learn very effectively as they play, due to the very good intervention of teachers. However, too many lessons do not provide children with enough opportunities to be active as they learn, and this limits their overall achievement. Good improvement was seen during the inspection due to the encouragement of senior staff, which enabled the teaching team in the nursery and reception classes to make effective changes to their teaching styles.
13. Assessment is good because the systems for checking the standards pupils reach in English, mathematics, science and ICT play a significant part in the effective planning for lessons. The strong focus on developing pupils' vocabulary in all subjects supports effectively the few pupils learning to speak English as an additional language. Teachers set realistic targets for all pupils to reach next, and explain carefully to pupils how to reach them. Consequently pupils are clear about what they need to do to improve, especially in Years 3 to 6. Senior staff have recently extended this system to other subjects. Pupils have begun to play a positive part in assessing their own achievements across the curriculum by marking target sheets in their workbooks with a coloured pencil. The 'traffic light' system encourages pupils to colour a square with a red, orange or green pen to show how well they think they understand the work. Self-assessment is used throughout the school, and very effectively in Years 3 to 6. For example, pupils assess their own learning by indicating with thumbs up or down at the end of a lesson, so that the teacher knows how to plan to help them move on. Some pupils use their own evaluations to set personal targets for improvement. Pupils' full involvement gives them a great deal of confidence and plays a significant part in their overall very good achievement.

The curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is **good** overall. There is a satisfactory curriculum for children in the nursery and reception classes. The curriculum for pupils in Years 1 to 6 is very good. Opportunities for enrichment of the curriculum are **very good** because there is a high priority on providing pupils with good experiences. The quality of resources and accommodation is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum for nursery and reception classes lacks opportunities for children to learn through play.
- Very good planning ensures that pupils have a very good range of exciting learning opportunities, and a very good range of activities enriches the curriculum.

- Very good links are made between different curriculum areas so that pupils learn more effectively.
- A very good number of well-qualified teachers makes a very good contribution to pupils' learning.
- There are shortcomings in accommodation in the temporary classrooms and the hall, and in the use of the outdoor area for the nursery class.

Commentary

14. The curriculum is good but not as strong as it was at the time of the last inspection. This is because the curriculum for children in the nursery and reception classes is now only satisfactory. The way that much of their curriculum is organised is now more suited to older pupils, for example those in Years 1 and 2. This is because there are too few opportunities for children to learn through high quality play experiences. Senior staff encouraged a more active approach to the curriculum during the inspection that was much more successful.
15. In Years 1 to 6 the curriculum is very good because many activities are interesting and exciting for pupils. Teachers plan very effectively together in phase groups, for example Years 5 and 6, and Years 1 and 2. Senior staff ensure that teachers use their subject knowledge effectively, so that one teacher will plan ICT work for a phase group for example, whilst another will plan the work for art and design. A two-year planning cycle ensures that pupils do not repeat work unnecessarily and this helps maintain the high level of interest they show in their work. A very wide range of extra-curricular activities, including sporting competitions, enriches the curriculum very well from Years 1 to 6 and contributes very well to pupils' very good achievement. A recent health and safety week is typical of many themes, which motivate the whole school. A good range of visitors to the school and visits to places of interest, including a regular residential visit to France, provides pupils with many varied experiences. French is taught from the nursery to Year 6 and contributes very well to pupils' understanding of language and their appreciation of a different culture. Very good links are made between different subjects; for instance, an excellent lesson in Years 5 and 6 enabled pupils to apply skills learned in mathematics, design and technology and English, among many others. Religious education is used particularly well to provide pupils with opportunities to take part in drama, and to develop deeper understanding of art and music.
16. A very good number of teachers, with expertise and experience in all areas of the curriculum, provide very good support to pupils. For example, in ICT and mathematics another teacher brought higher attaining pupils from different classes together to carry out a very challenging task. Well-qualified teaching assistants are actively involved in all parts of lessons; for example, they support pupils with special educational needs very well. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good, because in addition to the very good support they receive in lessons, targets in their individual plans are realistic and reviewed regularly.
17. Accommodation is satisfactory overall. The newly-built reception classrooms and administration block are of very good quality. The nursery class has access to an outdoor classroom, but this is rarely used as it serves as a walkway to the temporary classrooms for Years 3 and 4. The area lacks resources and is underdeveloped. Three Year 3 and 4 classes are taught in poor quality temporary classrooms. A flimsy sliding partition between two of these means there is interference in lessons from unavoidable noise in the other classroom. The hall serves a number of purposes, but is not large enough for some physical education lessons for older pupils. Fifteen classes use the hall on a rota basis and this restricts the number of opportunities for each class to make use of the facilities each week. Well-advanced plans are in place for a new hall. Resources for learning are good. They include a new suite of computers, and projectors linked to a computer in most classes, that contribute well to pupils' very good achievement in ICT.

Care, guidance and support

The school's arrangements for care, welfare, health and safety are **very good** and ensure that pupils are able to work in a safe environment. The school provides **good** support and guidance for all pupils. The school seeks to involve pupils in the work of the school and does so **very effectively**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good relationships between pupils and adults contribute very well to the family ethos.
- Pupils feel highly valued because their views are taken very seriously.
- New children settle in quickly because of very effective procedures to make them feel welcome when they start school.

Commentary

18. Very effective and formal health and safety procedures were established after the last inspection so that there has been good improvement. For example, the designated officer for child protection is very well trained, staff are very vigilant regarding any issues, and governors are now well involved in risk assessments related to school premises. The school has further developed the very positive family ethos, which is underpinned by very good, trusting relationships between pupils and staff. Pupils are very confident that staff will always resolve any concerns or worries they may have, for instance if they feel bullied. Staff know pupils well and give good support, advice and guidance to all pupils that help them achieve very well. An 'assessment week' is held each term and the information gained enables staff to check pupils' progress in English, mathematics and science accurately. Pupils are well aware of what they need to do to improve their work because teachers set them clear targets that they know and understand.
19. There are many chances for pupils to make their views known to staff and become involved in the life of the school. Pupils complete questionnaires periodically and this helps staff to identify significant issues. There is also a suggestions box for use at any time. The school council provides very good experiences for pupils to develop citizenship skills and learn about democracy and decision-making. It is pleasing to see how many positive changes have arisen through the council, for instance regarding 'friendship benches', cycle shed rules and curriculum topic weeks.
20. New children are gradually and sensitively welcomed into school. Staff offer to visit all prospective nursery children at home, so that they know an adult when they first arrive at school. There are very good opportunities for nursery children to become familiar with the rest of the school once they start. Pupils transferring from other schools are helped to settle down very well too; for instance, they are allocated with a 'buddy' to help them settle in.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school's links with parents are **good**. Links with the local community and with other schools and colleges are **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are very good procedures to deal with parents' concerns and complaints, leading to satisfaction for the majority of parents, although a small minority is less satisfied.
- Parents are well involved with the school and with children's learning.
- Wider community links help to enrich the curriculum.
- The good links with local secondary schools ease pupils' transfer to the next stage of their education.

Commentary

21. Parents are welcomed as partners in the education of their children. The headteacher and staff are approachable and always pleased to discuss any concerns or complaints. General and specific questionnaires are sent to parents regularly. This helps to identify issues and enables parents to influence the school. The school has taken up parents' ideas about the accommodation, arrangements for consultation evenings and school productions following parents' concerns in recent times. The school recognises that a small number of parents are concerned about certain areas of its work and plans are being developed to address this.

22. Parents, staff and governors formed an impressive partnership and pulled together when issues arose regarding development of the school site and planning permission. A specially formed support group of parents worked very closely and successfully with staff and governors. The parents' and teachers' association supports the school well by organising many social and fund-raising events that benefit the pupils. Many parents give their time generously to work in the school. For instance, they listen to readers, help in lessons and accompany swimming. Many others regularly attend school assemblies, which are often joyous occasions for the pupils. Parents are well informed about the school so that they know about events and the curriculum, and how well their children are doing.
23. Community links with local churches and other organisations support pupils' personal development well. Ties with the local police and fire service help promote pupils' health and safety. For instance, the police regularly give talks for pupils on personal safety, bullying and citizenship. A 'life education caravan' and theatre group support drugs education positively. Education Business Partnership links enable pupils to take part in very exciting projects, such as when groups of Year 5 and 6 pupils formed mini-companies to make shoes. The school puts much back into the community; for instance, the choir regularly performs at various venues. Efforts in fund-raising for charities and good causes are outstanding and contribute very well to pupils' social development.
24. At the end of Year 6, pupils transfer to a number of different secondary schools. Well-established partnerships with the most popular secondary school are particularly helpful to pupils. There are plenty of opportunities for them to get to know about the school and they have the chance to start work on a project in Year 6 that they will finish in their new school in Year 7.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are **very good** overall. The headteacher provides **very good** leadership. Leadership of other key staff is **very good**. Governance is **good** and the overall management provided by key staff is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good partnership between the headteacher and the deputy headteacher provides the school with very clear leadership.
- The staff are a strong team who strive for excellence in all aspects of the school's work.
- The senior management team is very effective in raising standards, particularly in English and mathematics.

Commentary

25. Very good leadership and management have been maintained since the last inspection due to the commitment and very good working partnership of the headteacher and the deputy headteacher. They have used their combined very long service at the school to develop an ethos of working towards continuous improvement. Both aspire to excellence, and as a result pupils at the school achieve very well to reach good standards by the time they leave the school. The headteacher provides very good leadership that is actively sought by other local schools. His work as a consultant headteacher supports local headteachers in their work, and has provided a source of further inspiration for school improvement through sharing ideas gained from other

schools. The deputy headteacher has a similar role as a leading literacy co-ordinator that has equally served the school very well.

26. The most significant achievement of this partnership is the very strong teamwork that exists within the school. Staff are supported very well and work very hard to put into practice the drive for school improvement. During the inspection this was seen most dramatically in the transformation of provision in the nursery and reception classes. Senior staff responded very well to feedback on the quality of the curriculum and supported staff enthusiastically as they changed the way activities were planned. As a result of this open approach the quality of teaching and learning in these classes improved significantly during the inspection. Staff were quick to check the impact of the changes on children's learning so that they are well placed to continue these improvements.
27. The senior management team is very effective. A number of the staff do not have a full-time class commitment and this means they are well placed to provide practical support for teachers. They do this by modelling good practice throughout the school, and supporting pupils in small or specific ability groups. The expertise among the senior staff has been a strong factor in the school's very good provision for English over the past few years. The weekly phase-group planning meetings are a powerful management tool and ensure that lessons are planned at a high quality in all classes. In addition to ensuring equality of provision for pupils, the meetings are a very good source of professional support for teaching and non-teaching staff. Open discussions at these meetings led the school to try out a new approach to planning the mathematics curriculum, which is already beginning to raise standards. Senior staff and governors are well aware of pupils' achievement in the core subjects and constantly strive to improve standards. Governance is good because governors consider the effect of their decisions on pupils' learning. This has been a considerable feature of success in strategic planning that lay behind the recent new building work, and the planned further building development at the school. Governors ensure that all statutory requirements are met.

Financial information

28. The funds carried forward are much higher than in most schools. The surplus has arisen partly due to staff changes that have considerably reduced ongoing costs, and a rise in the number of pupils on roll that has increased the overall income. The school intends to use the surplus to provide a much needed sports hall of a suitable size for the school. Planning permission has recently been granted for the project, which should begin soon. Many members of the school community have worked hard to secure this permission. This means that expenditure per pupil is considerably lower than average. However, this has not affected the standards that pupils achieve due to the good systems for checking the quality of education.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	916598
Total expenditure	869382
Expenditure per pupil	2090

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	200186
Balance carried forward to the next	247402

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

29. Leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are satisfactory overall. Overall improvement has not been sufficient. The curriculum provided for children is not as good as it was at the time of the last inspection because it has not kept pace with national improvements. The co-ordinator carried out a substantial project last year. She worked in partnership with the local education authority to check and report on the quality of provision in the nursery and reception classes. The project identified several areas for the school to improve, in particular to ensure that the curriculum was appropriate for the children. It identified the need for children to be less controlled in lessons, and to have more opportunities to initiate their own activities. Although the project was completed about a year ago very little was done to make the changes necessary until the inspection began. This was partly because the report was not received in school until the week before the inspection. Senior staff did not use the knowledge gained immediately after the project was completed, so that weaknesses in the curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage have not yet been addressed rigorously. Nonetheless, senior staff wholeheartedly set about making changes during the inspection week that made a significant difference to the quality of education. This open and supportive approach is typical of the school and a key factor of the very good overall leadership.
30. The nursery class is sited at some distance from the newly-built reception classrooms. The poor quality of the outdoor area attached to the nursery class is in sharp contrast to the excellent facilities of the new block. Staff try to overcome this inequality by taking nursery children to work in the reception classes at specific times each week. This is not always successful because the activities planned are not suitable for very young children. Children start school in the nursery with a broad spread of ability that varies from year to year. Overall the majority of children do not achieve the expected levels for their age in each of the areas of learning when they start school.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children do not have enough opportunities to initiate learning by themselves.
- Children behave very well due to the positive way that adults encourage them to do so.

Commentary

31. Children's achievement is satisfactory, but they are unlikely to reach the goals expected for their age at the end of the reception year. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. All adults are positive and supportive of the children so that they gain confidence. Children are very well behaved, even when activities are uninspiring. For example, children walk through school corridors from the nursery classroom to the reception classrooms in an orderly line following the school rules about staying on the left very carefully. Nursery children have contrasting experiences when they visit the reception classes. On some days they join in with a whole class as a very large group of 42 children, and this is not successful as there are far too few opportunities for the children to be active. On other days the children are fully integrated with

the reception classes, such as when they took part in a Giant's day that provided many exciting activities to choose from, inside and out. The way that teachers carefully led children's play in small groups helped them to make good progress in several areas of learning. Children from all three classes were responsible for selecting their own tasks; for example, they could use the sensory room that was filled with interesting things to explore. They were very good about keeping to the rule of only four children at one time at each activity and made good progress in their personal development.

32. Too many activities do not provide children with enough opportunity to play a part and this limits the progress they make over time. Adults lead very many activities and this restricts the number of opportunities for children to direct their own learning. Some groups are too large so that children spend a lot of time watching others rather than participating in learning. During the inspection some significant changes were made to the activities planned to provide children with much more independence. This was very successful so that children began to learn how to manage their own time, and how to work and play with other children successfully.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching basic skills in reading and writing has a high priority but there are not enough opportunities for children to learn language skills as they play.
- There are not enough opportunities for children to talk about their learning and this limits the development of their spoken language.

Commentary

33. Teaching and learning are satisfactory so that children make satisfactory progress. The majority are unlikely to reach the goals expected at the end of the reception year, but their achievement overall is satisfactory. This is because teachers focus heavily on teaching children basic skills in reading and writing. In the reception class they do this by organising lessons that are similar to a literacy hour for pupils in Years 1 and 2. The lessons are too long for many of the children, who find it difficult to concentrate for a whole hour. The activities are designed to help children learn the names and shapes of letters and how to read books together by guessing what will come next. In this area of learning and all others teachers in all the classes make good use of assessment; they make and record careful observations regularly so that they know how well each child is doing.
34. However, too many of the activities are planned for large groups of children so that often they are not fully involved. Although the classrooms are neat and well organised there are too few opportunities for children to write as they play. During the inspection many changes were made that increased these opportunities rapidly. For example, children making giants from construction kits were encouraged to draw pictures of their models and write captions. This was successful and children enthusiastically tried to write 'giant', making good use of their knowledge of letter sounds.
35. Many children begin school with poor speech; they are unable to form sounds correctly and unused to speaking in full sentences. The way that many lessons are organised limits the number of opportunities for children to develop these vital skills. For example, working together in a large group severely limits the number of opportunities for children to make a

contribution. Not enough use is made of strategies such as talk partners to encourage children to talk to one another about their work. During the inspection the change in emphasis provided children with many more opportunities to talk to one another as they played with each other and the staff, inside and out.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching basic mathematical skills has a high priority, particularly in the reception classes.
- There are not enough opportunities for children to learn mathematical skills as they play.

Commentary

36. Most children can count accurately to ten when they leave the reception class, but many will not reach all the mathematical goals expected at this age. They achieve satisfactorily due to satisfactory teaching and learning that place a high priority on developing basic mathematics skills. However, as in other curriculum areas, groups are often too large and the mathematical activity undemanding. Some areas of the classrooms are organised well to promote mathematical development; for example, the garden centres include tills and money for children to play with.
37. During the inspection children thoroughly enjoyed playing outside, making a very tall beanstalk with the teacher, and had huge fun stamping patterns in the snow. These activities are a new experience for most of the children and part of the newly revised curriculum, which is designed to provide more opportunities for children to include mathematics in their games. In a very good lesson in the nursery class, children were enthralled to pass around a bag of 'giant's' clothes as they chanted "fee-fi-fo-fum", taking the clothes out one at a time when the bag stopped in front of them. Many laughed delightedly when they tried on the huge garments, and those that were too shy to dress up were cared for sensitively; for example, sometimes the teacher put the clothes on instead. Consequently they learned a lot of new mathematical vocabulary.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum is designed to help children learn about the world.
- There are not enough opportunities for children to learn about the world as they play.

Commentary

38. Children's achievement is satisfactory due to satisfactory teaching and learning; the majority of children will not reach the goals expected by the time they leave the reception class. The curriculum is planned to provide children with good experiences. During the inspection children were working on a theme of 'growing' which included planting beans and looking at cress seeds sown previously to see how well they had grown. These activities are typical of those planned to help children learn about the world. However, too often the way the activities are organised limits learning; for example, children sowed their beans in groups of eight or nine, so that they spent a great deal of time watching others rather than being active themselves.
39. Children have a lot of opportunities to use computers in pairs and successfully navigate their way through familiar games. Snow showers during the inspection provided an ideal opportunity

for children to get out and explore the wonders of the British weather. Children do not routinely use the outdoor areas to develop their skills and this limits the rate of progress. Changes to the curriculum introduced a better range of activities for children to take part in outside. In the nursery class the poor quality of the outdoor area limits the opportunities for children to learn about the world outside.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are very good opportunities for children to learn together in the hall.
- Not enough use is made of the outdoor areas for children to learn as they play.

Commentary

40. Children's achievement is satisfactory overall due to satisfactory teaching and learning. Some very good lessons were seen and nursery children made very good progress in a special lesson in the hall. They learned to stretch and follow instructions very well, controlling their bodies with a lot of skill and having a lot of fun. Good use was made of assessment in this lesson so that staff knew how confident all the children were, for example when they balanced. Children have some opportunities to develop more control of their hands, such as when cutting and drawing, but often these activities are not sufficiently challenging so that children's development is limited.
41. The area outside the reception classes is exceptionally well resourced with high quality climbing equipment. Over time, children have not had enough opportunities to use this throughout the year; it has tended to be a summer activity. These shortcomings have been addressed by the curriculum review and much better use was made of the area during the inspection. Children were thoroughly involved in a number of activities outside, linked to the theme of giants. They stamped around on stilts, making themselves very tall and climbed as high as they could to hang a giant beanstalk from the climbing tower.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Classrooms are well organised to include role-play areas for children to make up games together.
- Some activities lack imagination so that children's creativity is limited.

Commentary

42. Teaching and learning are satisfactory so that children make satisfactory progress. Their achievement is satisfactory over time but the majority will not reach the goals expected in this area when they leave the reception class. Children thoroughly enjoyed playing outside with the teacher to create a world of fantasy with giant beanstalks, acting out many parts from well-known stories and making up their own ideas. They played enthusiastically in the garden centre in one classroom, clearly enjoying dressing up in gardening gloves to do some work. Many

children are not confident in initiating their play together and often play individually rather than co-operating with one another.

43. Teachers plan a range of activities to promote creative learning each week, but often these lack imagination. This is usually because they are too directed by teachers, who expect children to make something specific rather than letting children use their imagination to create their own work. Children are very used to being directed; this was seen when they were given materials to make a moving beanstalk picture. Few could begin the activity without clear direction, as they were reliant on adults to tell them what to do next.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH AND FRENCH

English

Provision in English is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils make very good progress in English throughout the school as a result of very good teaching and learning.
- Rigorous checks on how well pupils are doing are central to the very effective leadership and management of English and their drive to raise standards.
- English is very well promoted through other subjects, enabling pupils to practise the skills they have learnt.

Commentary

44. Good improvement in the overall provision for English has been made since the last inspection with the school maintaining high standards and raising the quality of teaching from good to very good. Standards seen during the inspection were well above average by the end of Year 6. By the end of Year 2 standards seen in reading were well above average, and average in writing. Pupils throughout the school achieve very well because of the very effective teaching observed throughout the school. This is reflected in the very high expectations evident in pupils' books.
45. Very good teaching and learning are characterised by high quality planning that provides well-matched and interesting activities ensuring that pupils are motivated and keen to produce their best work. Teachers use very effective questioning to target different groups, extending and challenging them, and sharing their high expectations with pupils. Specific opportunities for pupils to practise and develop their writing skills for a longer, more sustained period, are regularly planned. This has been a key factor in raising the standards of writing for pupils in Year 2 from below average at the end of Year 1. Assessment is used effectively to plan these well-matched lessons. Pupils are very clear about the next steps needed to improve their work, and confidently explain what they need to include to reach the next level, particularly in writing. Pupils with special educational needs and higher attaining pupils are very well catered for because their needs are precisely identified. Teaching assistants work very effectively with small groups or individuals, focusing closely on the small steps needed to help these pupils improve.
46. Leadership and management in English are very good. The co-ordinator works closely in partnership with an inspirational deputy headteacher with many years experience leading the subject. Regular checks are made through observations of teaching, scrutiny of teachers' planning, looking at pupils' work and analysing pupil assessments. As a result of this rigorous checking, areas for development, such as the recent dip in writing at Year 1, have been quickly identified, actions put in place for improvement and opportunities identified to check that this is improving pupils' learning.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

47. Pupils' literacy skills are developed very effectively throughout other subjects. This is a result of the purposeful links teachers make in their planning. Speaking and listening are supported effectively through the use of talk partners in many lessons and the school's promotion of drama and performance. Opportunities for pupils to transfer the skills learned in English to writing in other subjects are regularly identified in teachers' plans. The few pupils learning to speak English as an additional language do well, due to the clear strategy to help all pupils improve their vocabulary across the curriculum.

French

Provision in French is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Class teachers throughout the school teach French well, so that pupils make good progress.
- Pupils have very positive attitudes to the language and achieve good standards of spoken French.
- The subject is led and promoted well by the co-ordinator who provides good support for other staff, so that they teach effectively.

Commentary

48. The school teaches French to all pupils from the nursery to Year 6, as it did at the time of the last inspection. This is unusual in primary schools and this continues to be an innovative feature of the curriculum. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers use CD-ROMs and other recorded material well to ensure that pupils hear and can imitate native speakers of the language. As a result, pupils speak French with a good accent. A wide range of songs and games is used well to practise the language. Consequently, pupils learn well and with great enjoyment, gaining positive attitudes to a different language and culture. Lessons are planned very well so that pupils build on previous learning. For example, the same topics, such as food and drink, are revisited each year. Pupils are enthusiastic about their learning because of the very good relationships with their teachers. There are plenty of opportunities to practise speaking French at other times during the week' for example at registration when many teachers use a range of different languages. This helps pupils achieve well.
49. Teachers make good use of role-play activities; for instance, pupils act out café scenes, to develop their fluency in the spoken word. In a very good lesson during the inspection, pair work was used well to enable all pupils to practise a dialogue, before some groups were selected to provide a model for the rest of the class. Sometimes, the opportunity to allow all pupils to participate by practising in this way is missed and only a small number have the opportunity to speak. In the best lessons French is used well for everyday classroom directions, such as 'stand up', 'sit down', 'look at me'.
50. There is good leadership in the subject. The co-ordinator writes longer-term plans for teaching French very well and provides many good teaching resources. Other teachers appreciate the support she has given, such as in modelling lessons for them. A visit to France is planned and managed each year, which makes an important contribution to pupils' social and cultural development, as well as giving them the opportunity to use the language they have learned in real situations. Learning French in their primary school gives pupils a good, confident start when they move to their secondary schools, which they appreciate. It is not possible to make a judgement on improvement since the last inspection, as French was not reported on at that time.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching throughout the school is good, with some very good teaching in Years 5 and 6, so that pupils achieve very well and make very good progress as they move through the school.
- The subject is led very well and effective action is taken to remedy any weaknesses.
- Very good opportunities are provided for pupils to develop their numeracy skills in other subjects.

Commentary

51. Standards seen during the inspection were above average throughout the school and improving due to a new system for planning the mathematics curriculum. This ensures that pupils work at sufficiently challenging levels during lessons to enable them to achieve higher standards. As a result, almost half of the Year 6 pupils are expected to reach the higher levels in the national tests this year. Standards have remained above average since the last inspection and improvement overall has been good. Pupils throughout the school achieve very well in reaching these standards.
52. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers plan lessons very well, with a range of interesting activities. For instance, in a very good lesson, pupils in Years 5 and 6 were set the problem of working out which of two children's authors used longer words. Higher attaining pupils worked in the computer suite and used a spreadsheet to calculate the mode, mean and range of word length. Other pupils used graphs to reach their conclusion, lower attaining pupils needed support to achieve their target of finding the mode, but all made good progress due to the level of challenge and support provided. Activities such as these are well designed to hold pupils' interests. For example, the authors were selected to appeal to both boys and girls. Teachers make good use of opportunities to develop pupils' speaking skills, as they ask them to explain their strategies, for instance in solving mental mathematics problems. Lessons are conducted at a good pace, which helps to maintain pupils' interest in, and enthusiasm for, their learning. Teachers set pupils clear targets, so that they know how they can improve. In addition, at the start of lessons, teachers share with pupils an outline of what they are expected to learn each day in clear language that they can understand. This helps pupils to understand and make a personal judgement about how well they are doing.
53. The subject is led and managed very well. The co-ordinator and senior staff check the progress that pupils make throughout the school very well. Senior managers are very good at analysing data, and quick to identify areas of weakness and take appropriate action. A significant feature of successful planning is the way that staff plan together in phase group teams, with a teacher who is confident in teaching mathematics guiding other staff. This results in very effective plans that are very well matched to pupils' abilities in all classes.

Mathematics across the curriculum

54. Mathematical skills are developed very well in other curriculum subjects. For instance, in geography pupils carried out and recorded a survey of parents' shopping habits in the local area. In science pupils used a graph to plot successfully the boiling point of water. Data-handling skills are used and developed widely in ICT, and in Years 1 and 2 pupils developed their understanding of angles by plotting the course of a programmable toy. These and other activities bring the mathematics' curriculum to life for pupils and contribute well to their very good achievement.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' achievement is very good and standards are above average in Year 2 and in Year 6 because pupils learn scientific facts very well.
- Teaching and learning are good throughout the school and motivate pupils very well.

- The school needs to continue to create opportunities for pupils to develop enquiry skills.

Commentary

55. Pupils achieve very well to reach above average standards throughout the school. Improvement since the last inspection has been good because good standards have been maintained, and pupils make better progress. Standards seen during the inspection were above average throughout the school.
56. The overall quality of teaching and learning is good. As a result, pupils acquire a good level of knowledge of all areas of the science curriculum. Teachers place a good emphasis on pupils using the correct scientific language. For instance, in the work on forces in Years 1 and 2 pupils spoke about friction, and in Years 5 and 6 pupils studying soluble materials talked about dissolving and filtering mixtures. There are good opportunities for pupils to carry out investigations that motivate pupils very well. In Years 1 and 2, pupils were very interested as they investigated how objects moved and began to develop an understanding of what constitutes a fair test. In Years 3 and 4, pupils demonstrated a secure understanding of how to create a fair test in their work when they enthusiastically tested which materials were suitable to use to complete an electrical circuit. The carefully planned curriculum makes a significant contribution to pupils' very good achievement.
57. In Years 5 and 6 there are not enough opportunities for higher attaining pupils to decide how to carry out the investigation or how to record the findings themselves. Often these are discussed in class but pupils all record the findings in the same way, so that this aspect of enquiry skills is not developed as well as other aspects of science. There are plenty of opportunities for pupils to develop mathematical skills in science lessons; for example, they plot graphs to record the results of an experiment. ICT skills are also developed well because pupils often use computers to plot their results, as, for example, in an enjoyable lesson on sound patterns with a class of pupils from Years 3 and 4.
58. The subject is led and managed well because there are high expectations. The co-ordinator makes good use of assessment information and of information gained from checking the quality of education throughout the school, to identify weaknesses in pupils' learning. For instance, senior staff identified that learning about physical processes was a relative weakness in Years 1 and 2, and adjusted longer-term planning accordingly to address this. Teachers have begun to set pupils individual targets developing enquiry skills, as they are aware that not all pupils are achieving well in this aspect of science.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision for information and communication technology (ICT) is good overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good leadership and management of the subject has been a significant factor in raising standards and developing provision for ICT in the school.
- Effective teaching throughout the school means that pupils achieve very well and reach above average standards.
- Very good links are made to other subjects, but some opportunities to use ICT to support learning in lessons across the curriculum are missed.

Commentary

59. Improvement in provision for ICT since the last inspection has been very good as a result of very effective leadership and management of the subject. Standards seen in all areas of ICT during the inspection were above average in all year groups, and higher than those seen at the last inspection.
60. The co-ordinator's expertise enables her to lead by example, both in teaching and in planning across the school. Pupils' skills are developed systematically throughout the school from Years 1 to 6 and the subject knowledge of other staff has increased due to opportunities to teach alongside the co-ordinator. Senior staff check the quality of education very effectively to identify areas for development. Actions to address perceived weaknesses are carefully considered to make the most impact on pupils' learning. For example, it was decided to extend the computer suite and purchase data projectors, rather than installing interactive whiteboards in all classrooms. This has enabled staff to develop their confidence in teaching and using ICT, and provided additional opportunities for the pupils to access ICT in their learning. This rigorous approach to the leadership and management of ICT has been acknowledged with a National Association of Advisors for Computers in Education (NAACE) Award.
61. Pupils are engaged and motivated in lessons because tasks are interesting and make effective use of resources. Good teaching ensures that pupils have sufficient opportunities to learn about each new topic and to practise their skills independently before they move on. Assessment, by both pupils and teachers, is used effectively to identify areas for additional support. This helps teachers plan well-matched activities for the next lesson. In addition, senior staff have a clear indication of the level each pupil has reached, so that they can check the effectiveness of spending on ICT resources. In lessons teachers make sure all pupils reach the national expectations. Pupils achieve very well in reaching above average standards throughout the school. In some lessons higher attaining pupils were challenged very well, such as when pupils from two Year 5 and 6 classes worked together entering data and creating formulae in a spreadsheet. In some lessons, however, higher attaining pupils did not receive the same high level of challenge.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

62. This curriculum aspect is good because teachers plan links that are meaningful and enhance pupils' learning. Some very good tasks link to several different subjects. For example, Year 3 and 4 pupils used data-logging equipment to record the levels of sound created as more and more pupils clapped. Pupils used their mathematical knowledge astutely to create graphs, identifying the most appropriate type of graph to show the data they had collected, and avidly discussed why the sound had risen in a 'smooth curve'. Some opportunities for pupils to use computers in their own classrooms in other subjects are missed. Further very effective enrichment of the ICT curriculum is evident in the lunchtime clubs for all pupils. Every class has the opportunity to access the computer suite during one lunchtime each week. These sessions are very popular, and pupils often use skills and programs introduced in their lessons that week.

HUMANITIES

History and Geography

63. As only one **history** lesson was seen and none in **geography** it is not possible to make a secure judgement about the overall quality of provision, the standards that pupils achieve or the quality of teaching and learning in these subjects. Nonetheless, pupils' work shows that history and geography are covered appropriately throughout the school. Recently senior staff have introduced clear target sheets for each class, setting out the skills that pupils of all abilities will be expected to learn in the subjects. Pupils will complete these using a traffic light system,

colouring a red square if they do not understand, orange if they are beginning to understand, and green if they fully understand. Most pupils' books are prepared with these sheets, but the new system has only just been implemented so as yet few have used the sheets to check how well they are doing. The system has the potential to raise standards as it makes clear to both pupils and teachers precisely what pupils need to learn to improve their skills.

64. From Year 1 to Year 4 pupils' books show that there are long gaps between recorded work in some classes, and the work does not always match the intentions seen in teachers' planning. However, high expectations are evident in the presentation and quality of pupils' work. In Years 5 and 6, work is of a higher quality, particularly in geography. For example, pupils carried out a local study that involved asking their parents' views about making the local shopping centre a pedestrian zone. There were good activities enabling pupils to use mathematics skills and ICT to record the data collected. Literacy skills are used well in a range of different presentations, including charts and comparisons of fact and fiction.
65. The curriculum for both history and geography is well designed because it has been crafted to provide links with other subjects and is interesting for the pupils. For example, pupils study the history of the local area alongside local geography work in Years 5 and 6. Pupils regularly visit the local area to get a broader perspective, and a curator from the local museum brought an exciting variety of artefacts to help pupils throughout the school learn how to look carefully at historical evidence.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Lessons are brought to life well by the use of drama and other activities.
- Teachers have high expectations, which result in very good achievement for most pupils.
- Resources and visits are not used well enough to help pupils understand the importance of key features of the main faith groups in Britain and the local area.

Commentary

66. Pupils continue to achieve very well in religious education as they did at the last inspection. This is due to the very good curriculum provided. This captures pupils' interest in difficult ideas of faith through the use of drama and other activities such as art and music. ICT is used well, for example to create Islamic patterns, and an 'ideas web' composed when pupils thought about the meaning of Christmas. The good number of opportunities for pupils to be active in their learning motivates them very well, so that they talk enthusiastically about the subject, wanting to know more. Standards are above average throughout the school.
67. Teaching and learning are good. In the very best lessons pupils in Years 5 and 6 are fascinated by discussions about the meaning of artwork and photography. They talk animatedly about the range of emotions the pictures portray and listen with contemplation before they talk to each other about Handel's 'Hallelujah Chorus'. Teachers have high expectations that are seen in the high quality of work in pupils' books. New assessment sheets are prepared for religious education and are a further indication of the challenging targets set. Good leadership and management have ensured that teachers have high expectations for pupils' achievement.

68. In some lessons there are not enough high quality resources available to make the most of the activities that are planned. For example, pupils in Years 1 and 2 learning about the Hindu festival of Holi have the chance to get involved in exciting activities such as preparing food and painting pictures. The lack of good quality resources limits pupils' achievement in these lessons because they do not have a clear idea of what the festival looks like and which community it involves. There are very few visits to religious buildings other than the local church, with which pupils are very familiar. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 know a lot about the main faith groups. For instance, they can describe the main features of a mosque and the five pillars of Islam because they have seen many images projected onto the classroom screen and have been taught well. Nonetheless, they have little knowledge of the local mosque because they have no contact with the local Muslim community.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Not enough evidence was gathered in these subjects to make a secure judgement about the overall provision, the quality of teaching and learning or the standards achieved. One lesson was seen in **music**. No lessons were seen in **physical education, art and design, or design and technology**. There were examples of pupils' work in art and design and in design and technology and pupils spoke about the subjects.

Art and design

69. The curriculum is planned well using the national guidance as a basis for the topics. These are usually taught in blocks so that pupils can concentrate on developing their skills. Teachers have high expectations and regularly check pupils' progress using assessments linked to national expectations. Pupils throughout the school use sketchbooks effectively to record their ideas and investigate texture, line and colour, enabling the steps towards a final finished piece of work to be seen. Pupils study the work of different artists and the school makes good use of visits and visitors to support pupils' learning and experiences. In Years 1 and 2, pupils investigated weaving using different materials, weaving through a variety of frameworks, from wheels to chair legs, with a weaver from the local museum services. Pupils' work is valued and displayed around the school. An outstanding and extremely enjoyable assembly involved a Year 1 and 2 class acting out the roles of museum and art gallery attendants for the delight of the rest of the school and their parents. The pupils showed they were very familiar with the work and styles of Picasso and Matisse.

Music

70. The musical expertise of the co-ordinator plays a significant part in the effective planning for music throughout the school. This ensures that all teachers, whether confident musicians or not, are able to provide the pupils with many good quality experiences. Pupils talk enthusiastically about their learning, such as a group of Year 5 and 6 pupils who are currently working on 'The Witches Refrain' from *Macbeth*. Whilst some have learnt sequences to play on xylophones, recorders, the violin and keyboards, others have used the computer to compose their own music to accompany the piece. Pupils are keen to perform their work for their peers, parents and the local community and the school provides these opportunities regularly. Other cultures around the world are promoted well through music lessons. The school has a wide range of instruments, many from different parts of the world, and pupils are able to listen to and experience different musical styles, for example Indonesian music at the Gamelan Museum. The music curriculum is further enriched by high quality teaching provided for groups of pupils through peripatetic teaching and the very popular choir club, run by the co-ordinator.

Design and technology

71. Clear curriculum planning provides plenty of opportunities for pupils to develop skills in the subject as they progress through the school. This is further enriched by 'one-off' projects such as the one during the Health and Safety week. Pupils in Year 3 to 6 were given the challenge of designing a safety item in one day, such as a protective suit or a non-slip tray for the elderly. In addition to designing and making the item, they had to work as a team with managers, supervisors and designers and give a presentation to the whole school. Professionals were invited to help choose the best design and presentation. Pupils are highly motivated by this creative approach to the curriculum and spoke at length about what they had designed, planned, made and learnt during the day. Good links are made to other subjects so that pupils use their literacy, numeracy and ICT skills well to discuss and record their work. Links to other subjects, such as art and design, through the current Year 5 and 6 slipper project, are developing well and bring the curriculum alive for pupils.

Physical education

72. The school uses its present limited accommodation effectively to enable every pupil to experience all aspects of the physical education curriculum. However, time constraints, due to the many demands on the accommodation of the current hall, mean that lessons are often short and allow insufficient time for pupils to develop their skills fully. The very positive climate for learning that the school has fostered means that all pupils, whether skilful in physical activities or not, are keen to participate in lessons. Excellent attitudes were seen at the start of a dance

session where boys and girls very successfully, and with a great deal of enthusiasm, developed 'rock and roll' routines together. Wherever possible, the school seeks to enrich the curriculum further. In the summer term a cricket expert worked alongside Years 5 and 6 while they learned skills, ultimately forming a team of boys and girls who succeeded in coming second in a local tournament. A wide range of after-school clubs is also provided which are well attended and enjoyed by pupils.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school plans its teaching programme very well, with links made to many subjects of the curriculum.
- Very good use is made of outside agencies to enhance the curriculum for pupils throughout the school.

Commentary

73. In an excellent citizenship lesson, pupils in Years 5 and 6 were given a very good introduction to the business world. They were required to form companies, each with its own accountant and manager, while adults, including a parent and member of staff from a local secondary school, acted as clients and consultants. Pupils became thoroughly engrossed in this activity, particularly as the time came for bonuses to be awarded, and they achieved high standards. This exciting activity is typical of many experiences that are planned across the curriculum to help pupils develop their understanding of citizenship.
74. Elements of personal, social and health education are planned into other curriculum subjects. Pupils learn, for instance, about a healthy life-style in science, about co-operation and fair play in physical education, and about the wider world in geography. There are specific citizenship lessons on such topics as 'Choice', and good provision is made for pupils to learn about sex and relationships and awareness of the misuse of drugs. Many of these topics were reinforced in a recent Health and Safety week, when all classes studied the subject, with very good support from the local community such as the fire and police services. Pupils' personal development is supported very well in assemblies, such as the Thursday morning 'swap-over' assemblies, where pupils meet and work with a teacher from another class. This very good strategy helps pupils in this large school to become familiar and confident with all the teaching staff.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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