

INSPECTION REPORT

NEWBOLD VERDON PRIMARY SCHOOL

Newbold Verdon

LEA area: Leicestershire

Unique reference number: 119942

Headteacher: Mrs D A Ward

Lead inspector: Mr C D Loizou

Dates of inspection: 23rd – 26th May 2005

Inspection number: 267383

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Community
School category:	Primary
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	202
School address:	Dragon Lane Newbold Verdon Leicestershire
Postcode:	LE9 9NG
Telephone number:	01455 822362
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr M Suart
Date of previous inspection:	11 January 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The school is situated in the village of Newbold Verdon in Leicestershire. There are 202 pupils on roll, which is average in size. The school admits up to 45 four-year-old children into its Reception year each September but the number on roll has been declining and there are currently only 16 children in the Reception class. The children's attainment on entry to the school is below average overall, especially in language and communication skills but this varies considerably from year to year and in some years it is well below average. There are six single-age classes and one class with a mixture of Year 5 and 6 pupils. In addition, the school also has a local authority funded Autism Unit. The unit has two classes of six pupils and they are admitted to the school with Statements of Special Educational Need as all the pupils are identified as autistic. These pupils are taught by specialist teachers and teaching assistants who are funded by the local education authority. In the rest of the school, most of the pupils live near to the school but some, including those from the unit who are admitted from anywhere in Leicestershire, travel considerable distances because the area the school serves is wider than the immediate village. Most of the pupils are of white (British) heritage and of the small number of pupils of Asian heritage none are in the early stages of English language acquisition. Twelve per cent of pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is below average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs (43 per cent) is well above average and 19 pupils have a Statement of Special Educational Need (12 are taught in the Autism Unit).

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
18645	Charalambos Loizou	Lead inspector	Foundation Stage Science Information and communication technology Physical education
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18703	Christine Canniff	Team inspector	Special educational needs Mathematics Art and design Design and technology Music
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4676	Mary Griffiths	Team inspector	Special educational needs provision in the Autism Unit

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a good school with a very good ethos. Pupils are happy, try hard and achieve well overall. They develop confidence, maturity and independence. Standards in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science are average in Year 6. Although pupils achieve well in nearly all subjects of the curriculum the more able pupils should do better in science. The school is very well led by the headteacher and senior staff and the governing body provides good support. Parents think highly of the school. Teaching and learning are good. The school offers good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The headteacher is very clear sighted and leads the school very well. She is well supported by an effective governing body and a very hardworking and committed staff.
- As a direct result of good teaching, pupils achieve very well in English and well in mathematics; there is highly effective teaching in Years 1, 2, 5 and 6.
- The local authority's specialist Autism Unit enhances the school's good provision for special educational needs but staffing difficulties and unsatisfactory accommodation are disrupting the education of the pupils in the unit.
- The pupils, including those with special educational needs in the main school, achieve well but more able pupils should do better in science.
- Information and communication technology (ICT) is used well to support teaching and learning;
- Relationships and pupils' attitudes to school are very good and pupils' views are valued.

The school has made good progress since it was last inspected. Standards are rising at a faster rate than the national picture by Year 6 and, after a brief period of decline, standards are now improving by Year 2. The teaching, assessment and curriculum have also improved well. Good progress has been made in addressing the key issues, particularly the improvements to standards in English, ICT and religious education.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

*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, including those with special educational needs, **achieve well**. The children enter the Reception year with below average skills in language and communication but in some years there is low attainment on entry. They achieve well and most will achieve the nationally agreed early learning goals by the end of the Reception year in all areas of learning. The school's results in the 2004 National Curriculum tests for pupils in Year 2 were well below average in reading, writing, mathematics and science. However, the pupils taking the tests that year started school with very low attainment and the results indicate satisfactory

achievement. The inspection confirms that the very effective teaching in both Year 1 and Year 2 has resulted in much improved standards. Reading and writing standards are now average; mathematics and science standards are below average and pupils are achieving well. The 2004 results for pupils in Year 6, although average, are continuing a trend of improving standards, especially in English and mathematics, over the last four years. However, the proportion of pupils achieving the higher levels in science is too low. Test results compare well with results in similar schools in English and mathematics but not in science. Inspectors found that standards in the current Year 6 are average in English, mathematics and science but more should be done to ensure that more pupils achieve higher levels in science. Standards in ICT and physical education are above average. In other subjects, including religious education, standards are average. The pupils in the Autism Unit make satisfactory progress but the unsatisfactory accommodation and staffing instability are having a negative effect on their progress as the quality of teaching and learning is uneven.

The pupils' **personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good**. They have very good attitudes to school and their behaviour is good. Attendance rates and punctuality are good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The school provides a good quality of education. The teaching is good and there is very good teaching in Years 1, 2, 5 and 6, especially in English, mathematics and ICT. Teachers and teaching assistants are particularly successful in planning challenging work that meets the needs of pupils with different levels of ability but this is not always evident in science lessons. Assessment procedures are good. Consequently, learning targets help the pupils to understand the next stages of their learning. Good use is made of resources, particularly those for ICT. Accommodation and resources are good but the accommodation for pupils in the Autism Unit is unsatisfactory.

The school provides a good curriculum, enhanced by a very good range of enrichment activities. The care and welfare of the pupils are very good and pupils are offered good support and guidance. The school benefits from good links with parents and very good links with the community. Links with other schools are satisfactory.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are very good overall. The headteacher provides very good leadership and this is having a direct impact on the pupils' achievement, and the rising standards. There is a strong focus on developing and improving the curriculum. There are issues relating to the management of the local authority funded Autism Unit which hinder the smooth running of the school because of staffing and recruitment problems that are beyond the school's control. The school has a very good climate for learning in which all pupils, including those with special educational needs in the main school, are able to make good progress. The governors and senior staff play a significant part in the school's development. The governors have been successful in ensuring that the school moves forward and provide good quality support.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

The parents think highly of the school and recognise the very good quality of the opportunities it offers. Pupils are very enthusiastic about school and value their friendships.

They like their teachers very much and feel very well cared for. Communication is very good.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- in partnership with the local education authority, take effective action to clarify how the Autism Unit will be managed to provide consistently effective teaching, more suitable accommodation, and improved provision and teaching for all pupils in the unit;
- raise standards further in science by ensuring that more able pupils achieve the levels they are capable of.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Overall, the pupils' achievement is good. Standards in English are average by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Mathematics and science standards are below average by the end of Year 2 and average by Year 6. Standards are rising well in English and mathematics but should be higher in science. Standards in ICT and physical education are above average. In other subjects, including religious education, they are average.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils of all ages and ability achieve well because they are well taught but more able pupils should do better in science.
- The children in the Reception year make good progress because there is a good balance of work provided for them in all areas of learning.
- The pupils with special educational needs in the main school make good progress but those in the Autism Unit only make satisfactory progress because their education is disrupted by staffing instability and unsatisfactory accommodation.

Commentary

1. The children enter the Reception year with skills that are below average; language and communication skills are particularly low in some year groups. They settle well, enjoy their time in the Reception class and are well taught. The large majority will achieve the goals expected of them by the end of Reception in communication, language and literacy and mathematical development and in the other areas of learning.
2. The school's results in the 2004 National Curriculum tests for pupils in Year 2 were well below average in reading, writing, mathematics and science. When compared with schools in similar circumstances, the results were in the lowest five per cent nationally. However, the attainment on entry to the school for that year group was very low as a large proportion (over 40 per cent) of them have special educational needs. The proportion of pupils reaching the higher Level 3 was well below average in all subjects although this was to be expected as very few of the pupils in last year's cohort were capable of achieving the higher level. Previous to 2004 there was a steady improvement in standards, particularly in writing and mathematics although less so in science.
3. Inspectors found that in Years 1 and 2, the pupils' achievement is very good in English and mathematics. They are very well taught and make rapid gains in their learning. Currently, standards in English are average and just below average in mathematics. Although science standards are below average, they are lower than in mathematics because fewer more able pupils reached the higher levels in science compared with mathematics. Overall, in relation to their attainment on entry, the pupils have achieved well over time, especially in English, but science standards should be higher.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
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Reading	13.1 (14.1)	15.8 (15.7)
Writing	11.8 (12.8)	14.6 (14.6)
Mathematics	14.0 (16.1)	16.2 (16.3)

There were 31 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

4. In Year 6 in 2004, the national test results were average in English and mathematics but well below average in science. When compared with similar schools, the progress made by the pupils was above average in English, average in mathematics and well below average in science. This indicates that the pupils should have done better in science. The proportion achieving the higher Level 5 was above average in English and below average in mathematics and science. The results for 2004 improved in English compared with previous years, reflecting the school's priorities to raise English standards. Over time, standards in English, mathematics and science have been improving at a faster rate than that found nationally but the school has yet to target more able pupils in science to ensure that they achieve the higher levels more consistently.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	27.2 (26.4)	26.9 (26.8)
Mathematics	26.8 (27.6)	27.0 (26.8)
Science	27.4 (29.9)	28.6 (28.6)

There were 28 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

5. Inspection evidence confirms that standards are rising in Years 3 to 6 and the pupils are achieving well but science standards should be higher. By the end of Year 6, standards are average in English, mathematics and science but the proportion of more able pupils achieving higher levels is less secure in science when compared with those in English and mathematics. The school places a high priority on the pupils' literacy and numeracy and a very close check is kept on how they are progressing. Well-structured lessons and a strong emphasis on providing practical, first-hand experiences help the pupils to make good progress in acquiring the basic skills. A wide range of strategies is used to develop the pupils' literacy skills as they move through the school and reading and writing are taught very effectively. However, given the pupils' below average levels of language and literacy when they first start school, standards in English are average. Grammar and spelling are taught very well and this is evident in the standards the pupils achieve in their weekly spelling tests and independent writing.
6. The mathematics programme is well organised and taught and this enables the pupils to reach the expected levels and current targets, and standards show that an increasing proportion are achieving the higher level (Level 5). Standards in science are also average and the pupils are given a variety of stimulating and challenging investigations and experiments, so that they develop the skills of scientific enquiry well. The school has identified science as a relative weakness and has begun to set more challenging targets, especially for more able pupils, to ensure that they achieve the higher levels.
7. Among other subjects, standards have risen very well in ICT and are now above those expected of pupils at the end of Years 2 and 6, due largely to improvements to resources, teaching and organisation. Standards in religious education are in line with

the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus and this signifies good improvement since the last inspection which found religious education to be unsatisfactory. Standards are also in line with what is expected in art and design, geography, history and music. In physical education, standards are above the expectations of pupils of this age because the pupils enjoy a very broad curriculum that develops their skills progressively as they move through the school.

8. Pupils with special educational needs achieve as well as their classmates because of the very good support and nurturing they receive. Planning takes very good account of their specific needs and the teachers ensure that these pupils receive the additional help they need in lessons. The teaching assistants have a significant impact on the achievement of all pupils, including those with special educational needs. A significant number of pupils with special educational needs exceed the progress they are expected to make by the end of Year 6. Those identified as gifted or talented in sport or the arts, for example, extend their skills very well through out-of-school activities and often achieve success in local organisations and after-school clubs.
9. Pupils in the Autism Unit make good progress towards their targets when they are provided with high levels of expertise from teachers and support assistants. However, staffing instability and turnover affect the continuity of provision for the pupils and, consequently, their progress is adversely affected. The teacher in charge provides a carefully planned learning programme in which a wide range of skills has to be specifically taught but this is often disrupted by staff absence which has a negative effect on the pupils' progress. The pupils are at various stages on the Autistic Spectrum and consequently there is a wide range of ability. When pupils join mainstream classes and are supported by well-qualified teaching assistants, for music and physical education for example, they often achieve well. In music they achieve very well. However, there are occasions when the pupils become distressed, as on two occasions during the inspection, when the lack of suitable intervention disrupted, for example, a lesson in the ICT room for pupils in Year 5.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils develop very good attitudes and values and behave very well. Pupils' personal qualities, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are good. Attendance is good overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are very good attitudes and high expectancies of good behaviour.
- The good personal development including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development contributes positively to the pupils' learning.
- Pupils are very willing to take responsibility.
- Relationships throughout the school are very good.
- Attendance levels are above the national average.

Commentary

10. As at the last inspection, the school places very strong emphasis on teaching good attitudes. Consequently, this is imbedded in the work of the school and pupils feel highly valued and display very good attitudes. They are generally eager to learn. Parents' views about the school are very positive; they believe pupils display good behaviour and they are right. Behaviour is, in fact, very good throughout the school.

This is a significant contribution to pupils' learning. There was only one temporary exclusion last year.

11. In the Foundation Stage (Reception class) children's achievement in personal, social and emotional development is good. Children learn early school routines well and a good range of activities enables children to become independent and make choices. Throughout the school pupils enjoy very good relationships with others. They work well together. In some lessons they discuss and plan work with a 'buzz partner'. These very good relationships are a significant factor in the high esteem and confidence enjoyed by pupils.
12. Throughout the school pupils accept very well many opportunities to take responsibility given to them. The very active school council is very well supported by the school. Selected pupils act as road safety representatives and some pupils are very pleased to act as 'tutors' in the Autism Unit's soft play area. The very good relationships mean that pupils are ever willing to help and undertake a variety of monitor-type jobs on a daily basis. With the development of the personal, social and health education programme, pupils have a good understanding of living in a community. The behaviour of pupils in the Autism Unit is mainly good due to effective class management by teachers and support staff. Concentration spans are very short and at times non-existent. Some older pupils are capable of working independently. Disruptive behaviour is kept to a minimum. Often, it is the teaching assistants' enthusiasm which keeps pupils on task, especially when the pupils know the staff, and the continuity of provision is maintained.
13. The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. The spiritual aspect of the school's work was found to be underdeveloped at the last inspection. It is now good. There are well-organised assemblies with a good religious education programme and visitors to the school have developed this aspect very well as it is now good.
14. Provision for pupils' moral development is good. As at the last inspection, pupils are well taught the difference between right and wrong; they have acted very well, contributing to class rules and fully understanding the high expectancies of the school. Assemblies further underline these requirements.
15. Provision for pupils' social development is good. Because of the very strong relationships that exist in the school and the staff providing very good role models, pupils of all abilities relate very well to each other. The very well organised and supported school council allows pupils of all ages to take on responsibilities for what does happen in the school.
16. Visits and events contribute further to the good social development. The provision for pupils' cultural development is good; this has improved since the last inspection because the school has successfully developed links with the local community. Younger pupils visit places of local interest, and young children have visited Leicester to see Diwali lights and experience the culture of Asian communities by visiting shops. There is a good knowledge of the personal details of a number of authors well displayed in the school. Music played at assembly indicates the type and name of the composer; this allows pupils to develop a knowledge of a range of music. Multi-cultural experiences are limited because of the local environment but an attractive display of a 'reality' mosque gives pupils an enhanced knowledge of other cultures and faith systems represented in multi-cultural Britain today.

17. Attendance is above the national average. Pupils are keen to come to school and are punctual.

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	4.4	School data	0.1
National data	5.1	National data	0.4

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

Exclusions

18. There was one temporary exclusion last year. The school has very good procedures that take all possible steps to avoid resorting to exclusion and parents believe that the school’s approach to behaviour modification and discipline is very good.

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	197	1	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	1	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	2	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	1	0	0

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides a good quality of education. The teaching, learning and curriculum are good and there are very good arrangements for securing the care, welfare, health and safety of the pupils. Links with parents are good and those with the community are very good. There are satisfactory links with other schools. Provision in the Autism Unit is satisfactory.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is good and there are good procedures for assessing the pupils' attainment.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers set high expectations and tasks are well matched to the abilities of the pupils except in science where the more able are not sufficiently challenged.
- There is good teamwork that results in a consistent and systematic approach across the school.
- The pupils work hard because the lessons are made practical and interesting.
- The teaching in Years 1, 2, 5 and 6 is very good and this is having a significant impact on raising standards.
- Staffing difficulties have disrupted the normally good quality of teaching in the Autism Unit.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 40 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
2 (5%)	13 (33%)	18 (45%)	7 (18%)	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.

19. The headteacher has established an effective team approach across the school which has led to greater consistency in the teaching compared with that found at the time of the last inspection. There has been good progress in this aspect of the school's work. Reception children are taught well and the teacher and two teaching assistants work effectively as a team to ensure that tasks are well matched to the needs of the children. They also work closely with the Year 1 and 2 teachers so the transition from the Reception year through to Year 2 is very smooth. This team approach is now well established across the school and results in a high degree of consistency in teaching styles. The teaching is well organised and managed by the headteacher and deputy headteacher with systematic monitoring to ensure that strengths and points for development are evaluated to ensure that the pupils do as well as they are able.
20. Teachers plan lessons that provide tasks that are well matched to the needs and abilities of the pupils, especially in English and mathematics but less evidently in science. The teaching in the Foundation Stage (Reception) is having a positive impact on children's learning. The members of staff have a good understanding of how young children learn and they have high expectations. They teach basic communication skills

well and are very successful at improving the children's personal and social development. Teachers and teaching assistants are clear about what they want the children to learn. For example, from the very start, the children soon learn to settle into school each morning. Activities are prepared for the children that reinforce their communication and language skills, as when sharing familiar stories about the sea or when told a thought-provoking story about a famous heroine who saved sailors after being shipwrecked. There are also good links to numeracy as some groups count out places when sorting and matching coloured toys or arranging characters in the small world area. Teachers and support staff sit with a group of children when they draw pictures and write about stories and are constantly asking questions, making assessments of the children's progress or teaching new skills.

21. Teaching in Years 1 to 6 is good overall with some very good features, for example, when developing independent writing skills in Year 1 or investigating number sequences in Years 5 and 6. A significant amount of good teaching was observed in every class and the very good teaching seen had a brisk pace with constant challenges posed for pupils of all abilities. This is what distinguished the good from the very good teaching because the pace and challenge of very good teaching interested and excited the pupils who in turn responded by trying hard and being eager to complete tasks. Literacy and numeracy skills are taught effectively and the pupils read a range of texts with increasing accuracy and fluency. It is clear from pupils' books in all subjects that extended forms of writing are given high priority and this is a stronger feature in Years 1, 2, 5 and 6.
22. Assessment is used well to inform teachers' planning and the targets set for pupils inform them how best to improve or reach the next stages of their learning. The consistency in teachers' marking reflects high expectations, and learning targets are usually individual to the pupils and are linked to National Curriculum levels or the stages that lead to these levels. In most subjects, assessments are regularly made of the pupils' progress and teachers monitor and track the progress of individual pupils accurately with plans to extend these systems to subjects such as geography and history. Consequently, all subject co-ordinators have a good grasp of standards in their subjects and are now striving to refine the way pupils' learning targets are set. Learning is made fun for all the pupils by teachers and support staff who show enthusiasm for teaching and enjoy helping the pupils to improve their learning and performance.
23. Pupils with special educational needs are included very effectively in lessons. Very good quality classroom support makes a vital contribution in achieving this. Tasks set are generally well matched to pupils' needs because the support is well planned. This enables these pupils to achieve well, enjoy learning and improve in confidence. Arrangements are flexible and responsive, enabling the emergent and changing needs of each pupil to be met well.
24. Assessment arrangements for pupils with special educational needs are very good. Problems are identified early and where necessary the school makes good use of outside expertise to ensure assessment of pupils' needs is accurate. The special needs co-ordinator knows the pupils well and regularly monitors their progress. She takes care to ensure that pupils are fully involved in evaluating their own progress.
25. The quality of teaching in the Autism Unit is good but provision overall is satisfactory as staffing turnover is disrupting the pupils' education. Teachers have a high level of expertise and are able to adopt a wide range of teaching approaches. For example, the

pupils enjoyed taking part in a history lesson exploring images from the past and making Egyptian masks. Teachers and support assistants work closely together to offer good quality support and establish an effective working atmosphere. This is not an easy task since the accommodation is unsatisfactory as some classrooms are too cramped and there is a lack of stimulation in the form of display or colour. Pupils sometimes have difficulty moving around freely as the two class bases are too small. Teachers work hard at developing good relationships with pupils and are adept at focusing pupils' attention on what they should be doing. Written labels, photographs and symbols are effectively used to structure the day and to ensure that pupils can make sense of what is happening. A 'Picture Exchange System' enables pupils to communicate with adults and other pupils. This was observed in an effective 'goodbye' procedure where pupils remove their picture from the class board before they leave the classroom. The progress of pupils is carefully monitored on a regular basis. An initial assessment is carried out when pupils join the unit and information is used to set up an individual education plan with targets that are shared with parents. Targets are reviewed annually, but are broken down into short-term targets that can be reviewed more often. Assessment and target setting are good but the disruption to staffing affects the continuity of provision for the pupils.

The curriculum

The quality of curriculum is good and fully meets all statutory requirements. Opportunities for enrichment throughout the school are very good. The staffing, accommodation and resources are well matched to the needs of the curriculum except that the accommodation in the Autism Unit is unsatisfactory because class bases are too small to meet the specific learning needs of the pupils.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Curriculum development has a very high focus and has improved well in key areas since the last inspection.
- The curriculum is well planned with a good range of interesting activities, which are tailored well to pupils' needs.
- The school makes very good use of visits and visitors to widen and enrich pupils' learning experiences.
- Opportunities for pupils to take part in a varied programme of extra-curricular activities are good.
- There is good provision for pupils with special educational needs but the accommodation for pupils in the Autism Unit is unsatisfactory and lacks stimulation.

Commentary

26. Under the leadership of the headteacher the school's curriculum has improved significantly. Clear priorities for improvement and better planning have led to improved standards and provision in English, mathematics, ICT and religious education. The school has focused strongly and effectively on these subjects and achievement in them is now good overall. The weaknesses in ICT identified at the last inspection have now been remedied and standards at the end of Year 6 are now above the nationally expected level. Opportunities for pupils' to use their literacy skills in other subjects of the curriculum are good. They use their writing skills well, in subjects such as design and technology, and extend their vocabulary through the learning of subject-specific vocabulary.

27. Planning for pupils' learning has greatly improved and is informed by the national guidance. Careful analysis of what skills and knowledge pupils need to acquire ensures that the school's strong focus on the development of pupils' skills is realised. Evaluation and assessment of pupils' learning are key features of planning and ensure that lesson content reflects the key learning intentions so that pupils' skills are addressed systematically. The blocking of subjects into themes and topics is being developed so that appropriate links between subjects can be effectively exploited and help pupils to understand how skills acquired in one subject can be use to enhance learning in another. The school has developed very good provision for personal, social, health, and citizenship education. In addition to the planned curriculum, this is promoted very effectively across all aspects of the school's work. This enables pupils to progress well as individuals and members of a cohesive community.
28. There is an extensive programme of interesting visits and visitors, giving good support to the curriculum. The expertise within and outside the school is used imaginatively to enrich pupils' experiences and promote pupils' personal development. These include visits to museums and places of historical interest and religious buildings, visits from theatre groups, musicians, community services, such as the police, and visitors representing different religious groups. These opportunities support the school's commitment to, and strong emphasis on, giving pupils experiences outside their normal daily lives in addition to enhancing pupils' learning.
29. A strong feature of the school is the wide range of stimulating and interesting extra-curricular clubs that further extend the skills pupils acquire in lessons. These include arts and crafts, music and sports. Sporting activities are numerous and pupils have many opportunities to take part in events with local schools, including competitive tournaments. All pupils have an opportunity to take part in music and drama productions, but due to other priorities the creative subjects of the curriculum are not as well advanced in their development as other areas.
30. The school's commitment to the interests of all pupils is reflected in the provision for pupils with special educational needs. The school identifies problems at an early stage and arrange appropriate support for pupils who need it. A highly motivated and skilled team of support staff give pupils very effective help inside and outside the classroom enabling them to access the curriculum well. Learning support staff work closely with the teachers to ensure that individual needs are met and that all pupils are secure and well looked after. The individual education plans, which list the targets and activities for pupils with special educational needs, are generally well focused, although the quality is not consistent across the school. Parents and pupils are fully involved at all stages, including the regular reviews. The good liaison with support agencies ensures that where pupils receive statements of need they receive the additional support to which they are entitled.
31. The pupils in the Autism Unit have access to the National Curriculum which is modified to meet their specific needs. A recent focus on the curriculum for the unit has ensured that there is a greater emphasis on dealing with the wide variation of autistic tendencies. Teachers within the unit maintain carefully planned timetables to ensure that a broad and balanced curriculum is delivered. Pupils receive the bulk of their teaching within the unit but whenever possible and with an appropriate amount of support most pupils are able to join their peers in mainstream classes. Music and physical education lessons prove to be particularly successful. Pupils also take a full and active part in community visits to enable them to develop social, language and independence skills. Every fortnight they go swimming and this enhances further their learning experiences.

32. The Autism Unit is funded and overseen by the local authority. The day-to-day management is left to the headteacher and the unit leader. This shared role is confused and complicated which has prompted a review of provision by the local authority working in partnership with the school. The number of well-qualified teachers and support assistants to cater for a wide range of needs is good but the school is vulnerable to a high staffing turnover and staff absence. Replacing staff is difficult because the pupils' needs are best served by having appropriately qualified staff working with them at all times. Staff turnover has therefore affected the quality of provision which, although regrettable, is a direct result of the lack of clarity in the way the unit is staffed and managed. Resources for supporting pupils' learning are very good but the unit's accommodation is unsatisfactory because there is insufficient space for pupils to move around and for storage of resources. The environment is not sufficiently stimulating. The exception to this is when teachers use their interactive whiteboards and a special sensory room to maximum effect. This provides a variety of stimulating light and sensory images for the pupils to interact with.

Care, guidance and support

The school very effectively promotes pupils' welfare in a very caring environment. Their personal development is very well supported. The school is very good at taking pupils' ideas and opinions into account.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- All members of staff ensure that pupils work in a safe and caring environment and are given good guidance.
- Induction arrangements to the school are good.
- The school provides good arrangements for pupils' views to be expressed and gathered and supports these very well.

Commentary

33. The school has enhanced the good provision in the last report because there are now very good child protection procedures in place, and guidance and support have been developed to a high order to give very good personal care to all pupils. Teachers and all adults in the school know the pupils very well and give appropriate attention when needed. This means that pupils feel very well cared for and very well able to express their views in personal and social education classes and in the school council where elected delegates from each class act in a very mature way. Suggestion boxes too, allow all pupils to express their views. The very strong relationships enable adults to be readily on hand; this is further enhanced by the very good provision of a pastoral visitor who can meet pupils to discuss confidential matters. All teachers have a very good personal profile of their classes.

34. Pupils with special educational needs receive good support and guidance on their academic and personal development. Appropriate agencies of support are in place, which means that differing needs are well met. Well-developed induction procedures allow pupils to settle well into the school. A strong feature of the Autism Unit is the care, support and guidance given to pupils within the unit. Their social interaction is given a very high priority as is the motivation to become both interested and independent. Procedures for pupils' early identification and assessment are very good.

Individual education plans clearly reflect the nature of pupils' needs. Targets are set for each identified area. Procedures and success criteria are all correctly identified. All pupils have access to tutor time and there is never a shortage of mainstream pupils to act as tutors and 'buddies'.

35. Attendance is very well monitored in that any pupil not at school within minutes of the registers closing means that parents may be contacted at home to ascertain the reason for absence. Appropriate checking of electrical equipment and fire fighting equipment is done. The school has a high number of trained first-aiders and the staff treat minor injuries in a calm and professional way. Records are kept of minor accidents. The headteacher is the designated person for child protection procedures; she is very well trained and has a very good awareness of needs in this important area.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has very good links with the local community and good links with parents. A satisfactory link is maintained with other local schools and colleges.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school has very good links with the local community.
- The school provides very good information to parents and actively supports their views and opinions.
- The Friends Association provides very good support in the school.

Commentary

36. Overall, parents say they and their children are very happy at the school. They can approach the school with confidence to discuss concerns. The high profile of the headteacher in the playground every day allows good access. Parents are given very good information about the school, a regular newsletter is sent and a website has been recently developed. Staff give very good statements of what the pupils can and have done and state targets for improvement. Although many parents fully support the school, a few parents still do not fully understand the reason and expectancies of supervising homework. This does not allow all pupils to progress as well as they could.
37. The satisfactory links with parents stated in the last report have become enhanced because the school has consulted them fully about the homework expectancies and values their views. Targets for improvement are now shared with parents and pupils.
38. The school had good links with the local community in the last report which have now been enhanced. The school is at the heart of the local community; for example older residents come to the school as reading partners. The local Working Men's Club has matched efforts of the proceeds from raffles of the Friends Association. The Association, very well organised and supported well by the school, provides a good programme of social and fundraising events and has provided equipment to support learning. A good example of the very good community links is shown in the provision of the Millennium Sensory Garden, well used by pupils at the school; at the community centre on the school site, adult classes are held as well as a very good range of other events and activities including a playgroup.

39. There are satisfactory links with other local schools. A well-developed induction programme allows pupils to spend two days at the high school before their transfer. Pupils from the local college enjoy work experience at the school. Student placements from Leicester University are welcomed to the school. These links contribute effectively to pupils' learning.
40. The school has established close links with parents of pupils in the Autism Unit. Parents' evenings are held regularly. The sharing of support between school and home is a strong feature. Parents are actively involved despite the fact many of them live a long distance from the school. They are welcome in school and join in trips out of school and also help with swimming activities. They are an important part of their children's reviews and are often invited into school to observe certain behaviours that their child is displaying. Attendance at annual reviews is usually good.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership of the school is very good. Governors provide good support to the headteacher and senior staff and the school is managed very well.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The very good leadership of the headteacher, well supported by governors and key staff, provides excellent role models for other staff and pupils.
- There is a very good format for development planning, particularly responsive to the needs of the school.
- There is a very good commitment to, and concern for, the needs of individual pupils.
- There is very effective financial management that enables the school to achieve its educational priorities particularly well.
- There is a very good programme of self-evaluation and performance management; the process of monitoring is now extending well into the non-core subjects.
- Management difficulties related to the Autism Unit have not yet been fully resolved.

Commentary

41. The current headteacher was appointed two and a half years after the previous inspection. That inspection found that the school was not living up to its stated aim to 'encourage work of good quality'. The new headteacher set up wide-ranging and rigorous systems for evaluating the work of the whole school. This evaluation was very effectively turned into action by involving everyone in the writing of the school improvement plan. This is a very good working document that has been central to the programme of driving the development of the school. The headteacher has a particularly clear vision of where she wants the school to be year on year, and has adopted the correct priorities for growth. The plan itself has grown more succinct and focused over the years.
42. Part of the plan has been to increase the role of the governors. As a result of training and better information, the governors are now a good support and critical friend to the headteacher. They have a good grasp of the context of the school and a strong commitment to inclusion, to provide a quality education for all pupils.
43. The delegation of roles through the deputy headteacher to the phase leaders has created a strong structure with a good flow of communication. The deputy headteacher

is a very good foil to the headteacher, balancing vision with practical realities, backed by thorough data systems. Very good relationships pervade the staff, and as a result the key leaders are excellent role models for all staff and pupils. Consequently subject leaders also have a very clear picture of where they want their subjects to be, and the best sustainable pace for raising standards within them, based on similar patterns of detailed self-evaluation.

44. The headteacher and governors are concerned to put the school 'well ahead of the game' in the management of work force re-modelling. This is based on a very strong programme of professional development. Teachers, teaching assistants and administration staff are engaged in a continuous process of upgrading expertise. This is linked to raising standards through the mechanism of rigorous staff appraisal, with hard targets in terms of pupils' attainment levels, in all subjects. The school is a very good centre for furthering the training of student teachers and other education roles.
45. The leadership and management of the Autism Unit are satisfactory but there are difficulties that the school has very little control over. The local authority funded Autism Unit is currently undergoing a full review and there are certain management difficulties that have yet to be resolved. The continuity of teaching and learning in relation to Autistic pupils is a particularly important concern in relation to the current job-share situation. Staffing turnover and instability have caused concern for the school and, despite the best efforts of the headteacher and governors, with the guidance of the local authority, these difficulties have not been resolved to ensure continuity of provision for the pupils.
46. The high carry-forward balance from the previous year and the current balance are largely committed and accounted for as the school is currently upgrading and improving its ICT resources. The expenditure per pupil, although in line with the national average, is influenced by the additional income the school receives for the use of its facilities by the Newbold Community Centre. Without this funding the school's income falls below the national average so the school does well with its limited funds and provides good value for money.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	602,199	Balance from previous year	63,536
Total expenditure	637,854	Balance carried forward to the next	27,881
Expenditure per pupil	2,873		

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

47. The provision in the Foundation Stage (Reception class) is **good**. The teacher and staff provide the children with a good start to their education. There are currently 14 full-time children and seven part-time children who will be five years of age from September this year. The school admits up to 45 children but falling rolls in recent years have meant that classes are much smaller than this figure. However, there are very good links with the Honeysuckle Playgroup (for three and four-year-old children) which shares classroom areas with the Reception class for part of every school day. The playgroup is very popular with parents. The Reception children are taught and cared for in a well-resourced Foundation Stage base by one full-time teacher, a nursery nurse and a teaching assistant. The management and organisation of children and staff are good and ensure that all children achieve well. Parents think very highly of the Foundation Stage and many volunteer to help, support and undertake training under the school's 'Family Learning Programme', which is part of the school's very effective community and out-of-hours provision. The indoor and outdoor accommodation and resources are good.
48. All the staff know the children really well because of detailed assessment systems, constant monitoring of the children's daily progress and very good communication with parents. The well-organised and effective planning ensures that every child works at a level that matches his or her age and ability. A significant number of the children (about two thirds) enter the school with varying degrees of speech and language difficulties and these are identified as early as possible. Planning is then put into place to provide programmes that will help all the children improve in all areas of learning, particularly in early language and literacy. In addition, the children with special educational needs are supported well, enabling them to make good progress. There has been good progress since the last inspection throughout the provision for children in the Foundation Stage.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The children achieve well because the teaching is well planned and effective.
- Personal, social and emotional development permeates all activities.

Commentary

49. The teachers and staff understand the personal and emotional needs of all the children. Good assessments are made early on entry so the staff are clear about the potential of each child. This leads to good and effective planning. Reception children soon learn to choose an activity as they enter the classroom each morning and happily tidy away as each session finishes. The staff are careful to gently prompt the children if they choose something they have already done before, thereby ensuring that the children experience all areas of learning each day.

50. The children soon learn to become confident and secure. They become familiar with the routines and participate in all activities with interest and enthusiasm. On arrival they come in and put their coats, books and bags in the correct place, and sit on the carpet. Parents are made to feel welcome and they also help to settle their children down. After settling down, they reply politely to the register and a special person is chosen each day to carry the register to the office. They learn to take turns and this is reinforced regularly throughout the day. In the welcoming session the children confidently share their news or special information and the staff value their contribution and so build up their self-esteem. Relationships are very good and there is an ethos of mutual trust and respect between adults and children. Children

concentrate extremely well in activities, for example when using the interactive whiteboard to draw pictures. Most of them can dress and undress themselves confidently for physical education.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children develop good speaking and listening skills, having started from a low base on entry to the Reception year.
- Reading and writing are taught well.
- Good use is made of stories, nursery rhymes and songs to develop language skills.

Commentary

51. The children enjoy talking about the 'Very Hungry Caterpillar' story and this is used well during an outdoor role-play session to help the children talk about the story and the sequence of events. Good use is made of stories and themes such as this so that the children enjoy their learning. Reception children sit as a group to follow words and pictures in the big book. The children explore the many role-play areas, often dressing up as caterpillars or butterflies, or when using the graphics and writing areas to answer the telephone and take messages by recording them on a small whiteboard or on paper. The vigilance of the staff when assessing the progress of the children and the good quality of their planning enable the children to talk and explain what they mean to adults and other children as well as learning how to listen to others in a group.
52. Activities are well planned to cover speaking, listening, and the development of specific vocabulary when improving the children's early reading and writing skills. The children enjoy handling books and listening to well-told stories and nursery rhymes. Books, tape recorders and computers are used effectively to engage the children's interest and provide a basis for discussion. Role-play and a variety of activities that extend the children's language are used to good effect. The children enjoy retelling and acting out the stories using their own words and are familiar with the sequence of a story. They quickly learn that text has meaning and this builds on the good work done previously when the children talk about characters in books and observe illustrations to point out what is happening in a story. Good teaching techniques are used, such as the use of initial letter sounds and word recognition of common high frequency words in texts. This helps the children to quickly learn the sounds and shapes of letters as well as combining words into sentences and phrases. More able children in the Reception year are beginning to use these skills to spell simple words. Children are encouraged to develop early skills of writing and learn that writing can be for many purposes. The majority of children are likely to attain the early learning goals by Year 1. Children's stages of development in communication and language are rigorously assessed as early as is reasonably possible and this is responsible for the good progress the children make.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is good teaching that is well organised and planned.
- All the staff work very well together and the children respond very well to the encouragement offered by the staff.

Commentary

53. The children develop a good knowledge of numbers, shape and time. Consequently, by the end of the Reception year, most children can count to ten and beyond. They have many opportunities to use their counting skills. Every day they count objects, sort shapes and use a variety of measures to determine 'more' or 'less'. The teaching by all staff exploits every opportunity to allow the children to develop their number skills. For example, they can recognise numbers on a number line and most understand that numbers are more or less than other numbers. This helps the children to sort, count and add or subtract one or more less. They are provided with interesting tasks including sorting into sets. They create repeating patterns using paint and templates to determine one and two-step patterns. Number rhymes and songs are used to good effect by the staff. The children develop a good understanding of the language of mathematics using 'more than' or 'less than' with confidence, especially when using containers in the sand and water area. Mathematical language and spatial awareness are used to good effect when the children play in open spaces or during physical education. Consequently, the children understand and develop positional language too, including 'on', 'under' and 'beside', especially when comparing objects or predicting if one container will fill another. Some of the teaching is too directed and this offers fewer opportunities for the children to think for themselves. Most of the time the children are happy to choose resources and try through trial and error, for example when connecting shapes and jigsaws or making repeating patterns with beads and coloured counters. The scrutiny of children's previous work indicates that most of the children will reach the early learning goals and have made good progress throughout their time in the Reception class.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers provide a wide range of activities that captures the children's interest.
- The children have regular access to the interactive whiteboard and class-based computer as well as other technology such as tape recorders.
- Good use is made of familiar stories, themes and resources to improve the children's observational and scientific skills.

Commentary

54. The children make good progress and reach the standards expected for their age in this area of learning. The adults organise a stimulating range of experiences to arouse the children's curiosity about, for example, how materials change when using dough or clay and the changes that take place when a caterpillar changes into a butterfly. The children enjoyed an outdoor role-play session where they could act out the story of the 'Very Hungry Caterpillar'. An element of mystery and surprise was created as the teacher delved into a large bag containing different fruits, vegetables and food. These foods were used to help the children recall the sequence of the story and they responded by acting out the transformation into a caterpillar and then a beautiful butterfly. The children are learning to recognise the characteristics of different animals and plants, and enjoy discussing these using images projected from the computer on an interactive whiteboard. The adults are very alert to initiating opportunities for the

children to encourage observation and investigation. They also respond promptly when the children indicate that they wish to pursue some experience or attempt to change pictures or graphics on the computer. The children's curiosity about the world around them is developing as they mature and they are increasingly becoming independent and confident learners.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good indoor and outdoor resources are used to develop the children's physical co-ordination and skills.
- The teaching is of good quality with very good opportunities for the children to use large and small apparatus but some of the teaching is over-directed.

Commentary

55. Effective teaching ensures the majority of children will reach the standards expected for their age by the end of the Reception year. The teaching is good because it caters for the children's natural curiosity and enthusiasm for physical activity. The school has made good progress since the last inspection in providing well-planned and imaginative indoor and outdoor play areas. These provide the children with daily opportunities to develop their physical skills. The outdoor area is a good and safe resource. Previous topics about their bodies help the children develop an understanding of the importance of exercise to ensure good health. Regular access to good quality equipment is developing spatial awareness, control and imagination as they respond well to their teachers and nursery nurses. Most children display a good degree of suppleness and agility as they become more aware of their own bodies. This is particularly well practised and developed during indoor physical education lessons, enabling the children to climb and travel over and under small apparatus. However, the instructions given at times are overstated so the children are not always given enough opportunities to explore their own ideas. Emphasis is placed on developing the children's independence and skill when handling tools and malleable materials such as dough and clay. They are becoming competent as they handle a variety of tools and materials safely and with care, for example when designing and making vehicles, buildings and animals.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The children develop imaginative and creative skills well because the staff are always on hand to help and support.
- A good range of role-play activities improves the children's creative development well.

Commentary

56. By the end of the Reception year, the children's attainment reaches the expected level for their age. Children achieve well using brushes, tools and materials, for example when colour mixing paints and sculpting mini-beasts with clay. The children enjoy making pictures to represent scenery and self-portraits with well-balanced and proportioned facial features. The staff are very good at praising their efforts by identifying what the child is telling them they are drawing (or writing). Consequently, the children show good levels of confidence, flair, imagination and creativity in their

work. The teaching enables the children to learn, master and use key skills and techniques. A good balance is achieved between activities where adults show the children how to carry out tasks and how to improve their work, and those activities that give the children the freedom to experiment and some tasks allow the children to make their own choices and decisions. The most striking feature of the Foundation Stage is the good planning of role-play areas that sit comfortably with structured areas that focus on key skills such as painting, sketching and sculpting.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good leadership and management have brought about considerably improved provision and standards since the previous inspection.
- Good teaching enables pupils to make good progress and achieve well.
- Very good teaching in Years 1, 5 and 6 inspires pupils and promotes very good achievement.
- Very good support by classroom assistants helps raise standards well, particularly for the lower attaining pupils.
- The range of pupils' speaking skills is not as extensive as it should be.
- Good teaching of seven year olds focuses well on pupils' understanding, but is at the expense of the length of their writing.

Commentary

57. Standards for Year 6 pupils have risen steadily over three years from a low level to the average level expected for pupils of this age. This year the school has maintained that level. Year 5 and 6 pupils are making very good progress and Year 6 pupils have achieved very well in relation to their starting points. Standards for Year 2 pupils have for several years been low. This has changed and for the first time standards in Year 2 have risen and match the average level expected for pupils of this age. The pupils are making good progress and achieving well. These are also significant improvements since the previous inspection, when standards were found to be below average. The reason is that the headteacher, taking the role of subject leader, rightly made English a first priority and put the major resources of the school into this key area.
58. Teaching is good overall throughout the school. In Years 1 and 2 it ranges from good to excellent. In Years 3 to 6 it ranges from satisfactory to excellent. Teachers establish very good relationships and deploy their classroom assistants very well in support of lower attaining pupils. The very effective support for pupils who have special educational needs is a strength within the subject. The level of detail in their files indicates that all teachers know their pupils very well. Teachers are very committed to inclusion and use their knowledge to make pupils feel valued and secure. In the very good and excellent lessons (in Years 5 and 6) this knowledge is used to set particularly high expectations for pupils' work and behaviour. The pace is rapid and the scope of the work is wide-ranging. For instance, Year 6 pupils studied a form of poetry known as Kennings. The lesson started with only a moderate amount of interest, but by the end the pupils were inspired and fully engaged in searching out vocabulary, imagery, spellings and using their group targets to ensure accurate punctuation. They came up with original ideas and expressions like "its terrifying canter even scares the pants off Santa."
59. Year 1 and 2 teaching is good because it has a very strong focus on pupils understanding the points being made. This is to counteract the weakness noted in the previous inspection, of pupils who did not know basic sentence construction. Year 2 pupils certainly know about sentences now and in writing describing mosques they

were accurate with their spelling and punctuation. This focus is sometimes at the expense of pupils' writing at greater length. The teaching seen in Year 1 was excellent because the techniques used by the teacher were highly effective, resulting in the pupils developing their independent writing skills very well.

60. Where the teaching is satisfactory, the pace is slower, expectations for quality are not as high and pupils' interest is not engaged as effectively. Pupils are given useful learning strategies like spider-grams, but are not prompted to use them to expand their ideas into full sentences and paragraphs. In a Year 3 lesson on character analysis, for example, the pupils' productivity was not high enough.
61. Leadership is very good. The headteacher has established strong teamwork and commitment to raise standards. The curriculum is more rigorous than in the previous inspection but suitably flexible. The literacy hour is not rigid, but allows teachers to move elements like guided reading to times when they work more effectively. Content from other subjects has been brought into the literacy hours with positive impact. The curriculum is well balanced with due attention given to basic skills in reading, writing and listening. Although staff provide many opportunities for pupils to engage in speaking activities like debates, this aspect is not monitored formally. This is the next major focus coming from the subject action plan.
62. Management is also very good. The headteacher has a firm grip on standards and trends. She has addressed and removed all the issues from the previous inspection relating to assessment, handwriting, spelling and the range of types of writing. Analysis indicated that writing was an area needing attention, and this resulted in a comprehensive programme of measures that strengthen the provision significantly, including bringing boys' interests into the content. Assessment is very systematic and gives clear pictures of the value added over time. It also feeds into pupils' personal or group targets. This is a popular system, and Year 6 pupils realise that it could be strengthened. They said that instead of having a rough idea of their levels, they would prefer an accurate knowledge of the details, which they could then use as a learning tool. This particularly fits with the measurement of quality of speaking, where pupils currently have a limited range of abstract vocabulary. This holds them back, for instance when wanting to make comparisons between authors and their writing intentions.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

63. The use of literacy across the curriculum is good. Teachers' planning includes specific reference to a wide range of opportunities to enable pupils to practise and use their language skills to enhance standards in other subjects. Year 6 pupils, for instance, produce comprehensive accounts of their study of a contrasting location, Llandudno, building up technical geographical language. Year 2 pupils use their reading skills well to find and check facts about Islam for their display poster in religious education. Good writing occurs in design and technology, where pupils record their design briefs, and evaluate their work well at the end of a project. Literacy links with other subjects are monitored systematically by the subject leader.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in mathematics have risen since the previous inspection and pupils achieve well.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good.
- Pupils have good attitudes to learning and work hard.
- Leadership and management are very good because the co-ordinator knows the subject well and provides clear direction for improvement.

Commentary

64. Pupils do well to achieve average standards by the time they leave the school because the quality of teaching and learning is good. Standards in Year 6 are higher than those reported at the time of the last inspection. The school has done well to raise standards considering that pupils' attainment is now below average when they start at the school. Pupils in the current Year 6 are achieving particularly well given their well below average standards at the start of Year 3. Their progress accelerates across Years 5 and 6 due to very good teaching, and the good match of work to pupils' needs. The strong emphasis on solving word problems is increasing pupils' ability to successfully apply their knowledge of the four operations of number. Standards in Year 2 are below average and lower than at the time of the last inspection. However, the improved provision and very well focused teaching in Years 1 and 2 ensure that all pupils, including the high proportion of pupils with special educational needs, make good progress in lessons. As a result, standards are beginning to improve. Year 2 pupils' knowledge of number operations is becoming more secure, although pupils do not always have enough opportunities to record their exploration of number patterns to reinforce their understanding and help them to visualise these as an aid to speedier recall.
65. Teachers plan lessons well so that they build effectively on pupils' previous learning. Lessons are purposeful and designed to advance pupils' learning in small, manageable steps. Teachers evaluate pupils' learning and, if necessary, adapt lesson plans to ensure that any areas of difficulty are revisited. As a result, pupils become more confident in using an increasing range of more demanding skills. Teachers make clear to pupils what they are to do and learn. They give clear explanations and involve pupils in working whole-class examples to promote understanding. Teachers place good emphasis on the teaching and learning of mathematical vocabulary and, in the better lessons, encourage pupils to explain their methods of calculation. This makes a positive contribution to the development of their mathematical thinking, and also to their literacy skills. However, they do not always make enough use of resources to involve every pupil in the mental and oral part of lessons, particularly those reluctant to volunteer to answer questions.
66. Throughout the school pupils work hard and behave very well because they understand teachers' high expectations of work and behaviour. They work well together sharing ideas and giving support to help each other succeed. In some lessons teachers encourage pupils to evaluate their own learning and this is effective in helping pupils to understand what they can do and what they need to improve. The deployment of support staff is very good and ensures that the needs of different groups and individuals are met. For the most part, teachers tailor the work successfully to meet the differing needs of pupils in mixed ability classes. Teachers and learning support assistants give very good support to pupils with special educational needs, who develop very good relationships with adults and respond well to the support and

guidance they receive. This support enables these pupils to make good progress and achieve well.

67. The subject leader is knowledgeable and effective and sets a good example in his own teaching. He is strongly committed to improving standards and is very well informed about what is happening throughout the school. Rigorous analysis of statutory tests and half-termly evaluation of pupils' progress give him and other staff a very good understanding of pupils' strengths and weaknesses. The subject leader makes very effective use of this wide range of information to put in place a programme of measures to support or challenge different groups of pupils, and to improve provision.

Mathematics across the curriculum

68. The school provides satisfactory opportunities for pupils to use their mathematical skills in other areas of the curriculum. Pupils often use their data-handling skills to support work in subjects such as science and geography in order to represent and interpret information. Teachers make appropriate use of interactive whiteboards to support teaching and learning in mathematics by presenting information in a more visually stimulating way, but pupils do not make enough use of computers in lessons as a tool to develop their learning, although appropriate use is made of their mathematical skills as part of the ICT curriculum.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- More pupils should achieve the higher levels by Year 2 and Year 6.
- The quality of teaching varies across the school; although satisfactory overall, it is strong in Years 1, 2, 5 and 6.
- Science has not been a focus for the school in the same way that it has in English and mathematics so that standards declined in science in recent years but the school is recovering well from this because the leadership of science is now good.
- Lessons are practical and engaging for the pupils and this is currently having a positive impact on the pupils' achievements, and standards are improving as a result.

Commentary

69. Last year's national test results in Year 6 showed that the pupils who did particularly well in English and mathematics did not do so in science. The headteacher and new science co-ordinator have recognised that science standards fluctuate from year to year because more able pupils are not always being provided with tasks that enable them to reach the higher levels in the same way they do in English and mathematics. Despite this, the school does provide some very effective lessons and this signifies that the strong leadership by the senior management team has identified key priorities that aim to bring science standards more into line with those in English and mathematics. Another important factor to take into account is the effect that the well above average proportion of pupils with special educational needs has on overall standards. Last year's teacher assessments in Year 2 showed low standards in science but the proportion of pupils with special educational needs was particularly high in that cohort of pupils. However, in the Year 6 national tests, the results showed well below average standards in science despite the fact that the same pupils did much better in English and mathematics.
70. Inspection evidence confirms that the school is now doing enough to address these relative weaknesses. Standards are average by the end of Year 6 and below average by Year 2. The pupils have made good progress in relation to their attainment on entry and, more importantly, more pupils are achieving the higher levels this year compared with previous years. The school recognises that this needs to be sustained and has already put in place effective measures to target the pupils who have the potential of reaching higher levels.
71. The pupils enjoy their science lessons particularly when they gain first-hand knowledge through practical experiments. They are responsive to teachers' questions and well motivated to remain focused on the tasks set. Year 1 and 2 pupils work very well together, sharing resources and ideas. These pupils make good progress in lessons and achieve well, as when Year 1 pupils measured their hand spans and devised questions to help them identify links between the relative size of their hands and other physical features. In Year 2 the pupils compared physical features of their bodies with relative shoe sizes. Good use is made of computers and interactive whiteboards to help and support the pupils' learning and this was evident in Year 2 when the pupils transferred the information they gathered about shoe sizes to a data-handling program in an ICT lesson. Very effective teaching in Years 1 and 2 is already having a positive

impact on science standards as more pupils are achieving the higher level (Level 3) by Year 2 compared with previous years.

72. The quality of teaching in Years 3 to 6 is satisfactory overall but it is strong in Years 5 and 6 where lessons are usually very challenging and match the abilities of the pupils well. The variation in the quality of teaching reflects the inconsistencies evident in past national test results. In the lessons seen, questioning is used effectively to assess pupils' learning and to extend their understanding but in some of the teaching seen, for example in Year 3, the questioning did not probe further nor did it help the pupils to explain more fully why, for example, the permeability of soils relates to the relative density of the soils themselves. In Years 5 and 6, science lessons present consistent challenges and this was evident in the scrutiny of pupils' workbooks as well as the very good lesson seen in Year 6. In this lesson, the pupils explored the environmental features and properties that affect different habitats. Sharp questioning and highly effective teaching elicited from the pupils many hypotheses and ideas that could be explored further.
73. The school's programme of study covers all elements of the science curriculum. Teachers plan together and share their expertise. Teaching assistants are used effectively to support the learning of pupils who have been identified with special educational needs, enabling them to access and complete the tasks set. Individual education plans for these pupils provide specific targets for them to improve their basic language and mathematical skills and this enables them to develop their scientific knowledge and understanding. Pupils with special educational need make good progress in science as result.
74. The recently appointed subject leader has already had an impact on science standards and is well supported by a very effective senior management team and the headteacher. The leadership and management of science are good and the school development plan for science identifies clearly what has to be done to ensure that more pupils reach higher standards. These measures have been effective as the current assessments show that more pupils are achieving higher levels compared with previous years. The school has already demonstrated in other subjects how the management of the school has a positive impact on raising standards and science is now the key priority for improvement in the same way that the last two years have been in English and mathematics. There has been satisfactory progress overall since the last inspection.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school has made very good progress since its last inspection.
- The pupils now achieve well throughout the school and standards are above average by the end of Years 2 and 6.
- The subject is very well managed and resources are well used and deployed.

Commentary

75. The school has improved the curriculum and ICT resources since the last inspection, resulting in above average standards. It is clear from the work that the pupils do in the computer room and at other times in a range of subjects that standards are improving well. Pupils of all abilities achieve well in lessons and printed work displayed around the school indicates that the pupils are making good use of their ICT skills to help their learning in other subjects. The work includes, for example, Years 3 to 6 pupils designing book covers for stories; using controlling and modelling skills to present information, including the design of posters; and highly organised and effective graphic and word-processing skills. Older pupils in Years 5 and 6 are able to use spreadsheets to plan a party as part of their mathematics project. Throughout the school, the pupils demonstrate how well they acquire skills such as word processing and graphics and are adept at combining these to edit and improve the presentations of stories, written accounts and presentations of particular topics or projects.
76. The teaching is good, with particularly skilful support and teaching provided by the subject co-ordinator. His skilful intervention and support of the staff have led to a very good rate of improvement since the last inspection. The leadership and management of the subject are very effective, with efficient use of the school's resources to enable teachers and support staff to fully utilise computers, projectors, programmable robotic devices and interactive whiteboards to support the pupils' learning across the full range of the curriculum. The teaching is having an impact on pupils' learning which is reflected in their achievement.
77. The pupils also achieve well because there is a cross-curricular approach to the subject and the teaching is particularly effective at combining the skills the pupils acquire with those in other subjects. This was demonstrated in a good Year 2 ICT lesson when the pupils followed up their science work by using a data-handling program to enter information about shoe sizes and then present these as graphs and charts. In Year 6, the pupils showed good skills using a control and modelling program to produce flow charts and in Year 5 the pupils enjoyed the challenges presented when attempting to work out how to make a lighthouse switch on its lights in different settings using a simulation and modelling program.
78. Other work covered across the school includes a good range of turtle graphics and sequencing work, and the teaching observed is particularly skilful in helping the pupils to use control technology to program and sequence information. The pupils with special educational needs also make good progress and achieve well. They are usually well supported by teaching assistants, especially when working in the computer room. The school is also good at grouping pupils so that more able pupils are on hand to help those who need additional support. This improves the knowledge and understanding and skills of both the more able pupils and those who find it difficult to grasp key skills the first time of trying.
79. The very good leadership and management combined with the highly effective teaching and the use of the interactive whiteboard have helped the school to improve the subject further. The subject co-ordinator is highly skilled at deploying resources and helping the staff to develop their skills and this has improved the professional competence of teachers and other support staff.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

80. The school makes good use of ICT across a broad range of subjects. There are many examples of computers being used well in art and design and design and technology

but less so in geography and in religious education. Where ICT is used well, examples include imaginative and descriptive accounts, presented using a good range of word-processing skills. The Internet and electronic mailing are used to good effect to help the pupils find information. Mathematics skills are used very well to help the pupils use spreadsheets to calculate totals and to produce formulas that can apply to a number of tables, charts and simple matrices. Modelling programs are used to present book covers, stories and newspaper articles written in the form of reports in past times during history lessons. Graphical representations of data are displayed in most classrooms using computer-generated graphs, matrices and spreadsheets. There has been very good progress since the last inspection in this aspect of the school's work.

HUMANITIES

81. In humanities, work was sampled in **history**. No lessons were observed. It is therefore not possible to form an overall judgement about provision or teaching in this subject. A study of the pupils' work indicates that the curriculum is reasonably broad. The medium-term planning sets out an expectation of pupils to use study skills such as reading, writing and numeracy, and history topics form the content of some literacy hours. Some links between history and ICT are laid out, but are not yet apparent in pupils' work.
82. The pupils' work is regularly marked but this does not entirely indicate to pupils how they might improve. Teachers use visits to places of historical interest well to make the subject more interesting, and give pupils appropriate experience to use in their work. Teachers assess the pupils' history work at the end of topics and grade the effectiveness of the topics. The subject leader monitors the information. This is an effective process of self-evaluation.

Geography

Provision in geography is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils make good progress and achieve well.
- Teaching is good. Teachers involve pupils well in exploring a range of relevant local problems, developing geographical skills.
- Pupils use numeracy well in their geography work, but not as much ICT.

Commentary

83. By the end of Year 2 and Year 6 pupils reach standards appropriate for their age. They achieve well and make good progress from a below average starting point. The school is strong on inclusion and provides considerable support for pupils who have special educational needs. These pupils, too, are achieving well. The geography curriculum has improved since the previous inspection. It is now based securely on national guidelines. In consequence Year 2 pupils study the local area and contrasting localities.
84. The teaching is good. Teachers introduce pupils to the learning for the lessons so that they understand the context. Teachers plan well and ensure that their lessons introduce or reinforce important geographical skills. Pupils are encouraged to use their mathematical knowledge to collect data and record it in the form of graphs. Year 3 pupils carried out an interesting survey for homework to gain the community views on parking. Unfortunately not all the pupils had brought their homework in. Year 4 pupils took the topic a stage further, using their mapping skills well to identify good locations for extra car parks. These are interesting strategies that engage pupils well in their learning. There is not much linked ICT work in pupils' books.
85. Good leadership has raised the profile of geography. Teachers mark the pupils' work more effectively than at the time of the previous inspection, giving pupils an idea of how to improve their work. Teachers do not, however, let the pupils know their levels, so that they are unable to judge for themselves the progress they are making. Teachers assess pupils' work at the end of topics, and also the quality of the topics. This enables the subject leader to evaluate the quality of the provision overall, and to monitor its effectiveness in raising standards.

Religious education

Provision in the subject is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There has been significant improvement in provision since the previous inspection.
- Good teaching enables pupils to make good progress and achieve well.
- The subject is very well led and the curriculum well enriched by visits and visitors.

Commentary

86. Standards are in line with the level expected for pupils aged seven and 11. This is an improvement since the previous inspection when Year 6 pupils were below the expected level. Pupils make good progress and achieve well. The school is sincerely committed to inclusion and very good support is given to pupils who have special educational needs. Consequently, they achieve particularly well.
87. Teaching is good overall. Teachers now display good subject knowledge. The teachers share their enthusiasm with the pupils. Consequently, the pupils listen with heightened interest and considerable involvement. The teachers are determined to overcome a weakness noted in the previous report, that pupils did not relate their learning to their own lives and found the work 'a chore'. By giving pupils, young and old, opportunities to voice their opinions, the teachers built up considerable engagement of the pupils. The pupils feel that their views matter and are valued by the teachers. Consequently, they enjoy the lively debates, which make the learning vivid and relevant.
88. In some lessons the teaching is very good. In these, teachers make particularly good use of visitors or pupils' recall of visits to places of interest. Year 2 pupils now use research well to add to the knowledge gained about Islam after their visit to a Mosque. Teachers use visitors well to widen the range of pupils' experience and produce livelier learning conditions. The older pupils were fascinated by the artefacts that the local vicar brought in. Year 5 and 6 pupils asked mature and detailed questions, which indicated that they were applying the learning to their everyday lives. The teachers use a wider and more interesting variety of recording the learning, for instance Year 2 pupils building up an Islam poster for display, or Year 5 making a list of things that are special to them, so writing is no longer a chore.
89. Leadership is very good because it has brought about the extensive improvements that have also raised the spirituality of the school. The subject leader has built up strong teamwork behind the subject, shown by the care taken by staff in marking, as assessment for learning. Management is also very good. The subject leader takes assessment information about progress and the teachers' views on the quality of the topics planned, to evaluate them and adjust them as necessary. The curriculum has been developed from a number of sources and gives a good structure to the programme of study. The involvement of ICT is somewhat limited, but it is part of the leader's action plan to increase resources for this.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

90. There was insufficient evidence to make an overall judgement on provision in some of the subjects in this area of learning, or to make judgements on pupils' standards or their achievements. One lesson was observed in each of **design and technology** and **music**. No complete lessons were seen in **art and design**.
91. In **art and design** pupils enjoy an interesting range of projects. Teachers base the curriculum on the national guidance for the subject and plan appropriate opportunities for pupils to work with a variety of materials within the different art skills. Pupils develop an understanding of different styles and places through studying the works of well-known artists. For example, Years 5 and 6 created attractive prints inspired by the designs of William Morris, and Year 2 an interesting range of three-dimensional wall sculptures based on the work of Steve Draeger. Pupils' artwork is celebrated around the school, helping pupils to recognise that creativity through art and design is a valuable skill. Their work, including that in sketchbooks, indicates that pupils do not have enough opportunities to put into practice the skills they are learning. The subject

leader has, however, already evaluated the art and design curriculum and identified that further development is needed.

92. Teachers' planning for **design and technology** and the work on display show that pupils have good opportunities to work with a suitable variety of materials, and to design and make their own products. Pupils create comprehensive design plans, which include clear instructions for making the product. They give careful thought to the evaluation of their finished article. For example, slippers made by Year 6 were tested for durability by walking up and down the classroom a set number of times, tested using a force meter and judged by appearance and market suitability. In the Year 2 lesson seen, teaching and learning were very good. Pupils made very good progress with the first stage of making models with a wind-up mechanism. They used the knowledge gained from evaluation of their designs and mock-ups to help them with the work. Pupils worked very effectively in groups, discussing ideas and sharing out the tasks. The teacher's and learning support assistant's very good questioning and support helped pupils to clarify their ideas and make improvements to their work. Effective monitoring and evaluation of the design and technology curriculum have given the subject leader a good knowledge of what is taking place across the school and how the subject can be further improved.
93. Planning for **music** ensures that pupils have opportunities to develop their skills across the expected range of musical activities, including singing and playing instruments, and exploring ideas and composing their own pieces. They can extend their skills by joining the choir or learning to play a musical instrument such as the recorder, clarinet or trumpet. All pupils have an opportunity to take part in a musical performance and the choir joins other schools in singing at De Montfort Hall. Pupils' participation in the junior school singing session is good. However, teachers do not place enough emphasis on the development of vocal techniques to improve the quality of pupils' work. In the Year 2 lesson seen the teaching was very good, because the teacher developed, in small manageable steps, pupils' skills and knowledge through practical music making. As a result pupils improved their performance of simple rhythmic patterns and could accurately identify the pattern of long and short notes.

Physical education

Provision in physical education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The pupils achieve standards that are above those expected for their age.
- The teaching is good and well organised and provides opportunities for the pupils to improve their performance and to evaluate the performance of others.
- The school achieves a good standard of performance in sport, athletics and outdoor pursuits and is committed to providing a very good range of extra-curricular activities.

Commentary

94. Standards are above national expectations by the end of Years 2 and 6 and a significant number of pupils achieve above average standards in sport and athletics. The pupils do well in competitive sports and games because the teaching is effective, skilled and well organised. Good opportunities are provided for the pupils to receive a balanced programme of physical education throughout the year. The leadership of the subject is very good and the staff are highly committed to providing the pupils with

opportunities to excel. Although no swimming lessons were observed, evidence from records kept about the pupils' performance and achievement shows that swimming lessons are well organised and the pupils get very good opportunities to use the swimming facilities in the local area. In the gymnastics lesson observed during the inspection, the pupils in Year 1 used a good range of movement to produce a sequence of body shapes and well-improvised movements to travel over and around small apparatus. The pupils showed very good balance and control. Years 4, 5 and 6 were observed being taught a range of athletics and problem-solving skills. Year 2 pupils enjoyed the challenges presented when attempting to work in teams to solve problems that required them to transfer different objects across obstacles using different parts of the body. Teachers' planning shows that games lessons are well organised so that each class experiences the full range of sports and games over the school year. Football, tag rugby, tennis, cricket and athletics skills are taught effectively, resulting in good levels of performance amongst a significant proportion of pupils throughout the school.

95. Extra-curricular activities are wide-ranging. They include a very good range of sports, games, and activities such as tag rugby, team skills, agility, basketball, mini-leader courses and many others. The most impressive aspect of this is that the staff are very much involved in organising these, demonstrating their commitment to the school and its pupils. A large number of pupils participate in after-school sports and activities. The very good range of extra-curricular activities as well as the high level of commitment shown by the staff to sport and to providing a very good range of residential visits for pupils from Year 2 through to Year 6, provide enrichment for the pupils which extends beyond that normally seen in the large majority of schools. This has a very positive impact on the pupils' attitudes to learning and the school.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

96. Only one personal, social and health education lesson was seen during the inspection. This was a good lesson for Year 5 pupils and demonstrated how the school has developed a well-structured programme of units that are carefully planned using interesting topics and themes. In this lesson the pupils were asked to show likes and dislikes about their playground and these were prepared by the pupils and read out to the rest of the class. Topics like these are often linked to whole-school themes, assemblies and topics in religious education. Good use of visual prompts, illustrations and storybooks help the pupils to relate to real and imagined characters in order to express how they feel and how the characters would behave in a story or real event. This lesson and others seen in other subjects provide many opportunities for the pupils to share ideas, to listen to others and to respect their point of view. Personal, social and health education lessons and those in most other subjects help to raise self-esteem and confidence especially when pupils speak to a group or the whole class. Good use is made of drama and role-play to help the pupils relate to the views of others and to prompt questions.

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	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	3
Overall standards achieved	3
Pupils' achievement	3
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities (Ethos)	2
Attendance	3
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The quality of education provided by the school	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	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	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	4
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).