

INSPECTION REPORT

ST PETER'S CE VA PRIMARY SCHOOL

Mill End, Rickmansworth

LEA area: Hertfordshire

Unique reference number: 117448

Headteacher: Miss Philippa Golding

Lead inspector: Martin Kerly

Dates of inspection: 18th - 20th April 2005

Inspection number: 267929

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

© Crown copyright 2005

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

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

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	3 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	204
School address:	Church Lane Mill End Rickmansworth
Postcode:	WD3 8HD
Telephone number:	(01923) 773 240
Fax number:	(01923) 773 240
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Jonathan Carmichael
Date of previous inspection:	8 th February 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

St Peter's CE VA Primary School is marginally smaller than the average size school found nationally, with 204 pupils on roll aged three to 11 years, including 30 children who attend the Nursery class part time. There are a few more boys than girls on roll. The school is in the suburban, residential area of Mill End on the outskirts of Rickmansworth in Hertfordshire. The large majority of pupils are from white British backgrounds. There is a small minority of pupils from other white backgrounds. Other very small minority groups include black British Africans, Chinese, Asian British and Asians. Only six per cent are known to be eligible for free school meals, well below the national average. There are no refugees, asylum seekers, or pupils in public care, and no pupils needing additional support because they are at an early stage of English language acquisition being from homes where English is not the first language. There are two travellers' children. Only 11 per cent of the pupils are identified as having special educational needs and there are no pupils with statements of special needs; these proportions are well below the national average. Although the full range of ability is represented in the school's intake, the children's abilities on entry are mainly above those found nationally. In 2003 the school gained the Investors in People award and the Local Education Authority Nursery Quality Standards award.

There has been substantial turnover of teaching staff during the last two years with many newly qualified, temporary and supply teachers engaged. The newly appointed headteacher, the third head teacher in three terms, had been in post for only four days at the start of the inspection.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
12783	Martin Kerly	Lead inspector	Foundation Stage Mathematics Music Physical education
16472	Catherine Stormonth	Lay inspector	
22330	Laurie Lewin	Team inspector	English Geography History Special educational needs
13805	Lynn Lowery	Team inspector	Science Information and communication technology Design and technology Art and design Personal, social and health education

The inspection contractor was:

Tribal Education
1- 4 Portland Square
Bristol
BS2 8RR

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be made initially to the inspection contractor. The procedures are set out in the leaflet '*Complaining about Ofsted Inspections*', which is available from Ofsted Publications Centre (telephone 07002 637 833) or Ofsted's website (www.ofsted.gov.uk).

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	4 - 5
PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS	
STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS	6 - 9
Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL	9 - 14
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	14 - 16
PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECTS	17 - 29
AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE	
SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2	
PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS	30

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

St Peter's CE VA Primary School is providing an acceptable education for its pupils. The school has a number of strengths, and some serious weaknesses in standards achieved, staffing and management; these weaknesses need addressing urgently. **The school's effectiveness and the value for money it offers are unsatisfactory.**

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Many pupils do not achieve as well as they should in English, mathematics and science.
- The instability and high turnover of teachers has impacted on the standards achieved, the deployment of staff and the overall provision.
- The provision in the Foundation Stage is very good and children achieve well.
- Pupils' behave well. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.
- Despite recent improvements self-evaluation procedures, systems for assessing pupils' progress and using their performance data are not yet satisfactory.
- There is no long term strategic plan, but the very recently appointed headteacher has a clear grasp of the school's weaknesses and strategies for addressing them.
- Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) and music are above the national average.
- Arrangements for pupils' care, health and safety, although satisfactory, need strengthening further.

The school is less effective than it was at the time of the last inspection, in terms of standards achieved, the quality of teaching and aspects of management. However, after a lengthy period of uncertainty and decline the school is now improving, particularly in relation to aspects of leadership and management. Good progress has been made in addressing two of the previous key issues, notably the provision for pupils with special educational needs and standards achieved in ICT. There has been insufficient progress in two other key issues: the role of subject leaders and the use of assessment in the infant and junior years.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

Key: A – very high; 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.*

Achievement by many pupils is now unsatisfactory; in English, mathematics and science achievement is well below that shown for 2004 in the table above. Children achieve well in the Foundation Stage in all six areas of learning and almost all exceed national expectations by the end of the Reception Year. By the end of Years 2 and 6 standards are in line with national expectations in English, mathematics and science, but too many boys and girls do not achieve as well as they should, particularly those who are more able. Pupils in classes where there have been frequent changes of teacher have not made enough progress over time. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well as a result of the effective support received in their classrooms. Standards achieved in ICT and music are above national expectations by the end of Years 2 and 6.

Pupils' personal development is good, including their spiritual, social and cultural development. Their moral development is very good. These are improvements from the time of the last inspection. Attendance is satisfactory and punctuality is very good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is satisfactory. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. In the Foundation Stage it is very good, particularly in the Nursery, with high expectations of the children and the provision of stimulating and well structured activities. Substantial turnover of teaching staff has disrupted the quality of teaching in a number of infant and junior classes and this continues to impact on the quality of pupils' learning. The quality of teaching and learning is good in ICT and very good in music. Teachers manage behaviour well maintaining a good learning ethos in almost all lessons. Teaching assistants are well deployed and contribute well to the learning of pupils, particularly those with learning difficulties and in music lessons. Assessment and recording of pupils' progress is unsatisfactory in most subjects, particularly in the junior years. The curriculum provision in the Foundation Stage is very good. In the infant and junior years it is satisfactory, being sufficiently broad and balanced. There is a reasonable range of extra-curricular activities, but too few of them are freely available. The accommodation is very good, with significant improvements since the last inspection. Arrangements for pupils' care, health and safety are satisfactory, having recently been improved, but need strengthening further. The partnership with parents and links with other schools and the community, whilst satisfactory, are not fully developed.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management are satisfactory overall. Governance of the school is satisfactory. Management of the school remains unsatisfactory despite recent improvements. After a period of uncertainty and instability in the school, the newly appointed headteacher shows clear vision of the educational direction for the school and the actions that will be needed to achieve this, building on the firm base provided by the acting-headteacher in the spring term. Significant shortcomings remain in aspects of the school's management, notably poor recruitment and retention of staff, limited self-evaluation, insufficient analysis and use of performance data and the absence of a strategic development plan. The acting-deputy headteacher has too many responsibilities but provides good support in several areas. The Foundation Stage is very well led and managed and leadership of special educational needs provision is good. Leadership of some subjects remains unsatisfactory. The recently appointed chair of governors provides good leadership and the revitalised governors have replaced previously weak procedures and practices with robust systems so they are now able to fulfil all their responsibilities.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Most pupils are positive about their school and the range of activities provided; they feel valued and listened to. Members of the school council are proud of their achievements. The majority of parents are satisfied with the school in terms of their children's progress, the treatment they receive and the hard working staff. Inspectors share their concerns about the impact of frequent staff changes, the potential for improved information about their children's progress, the need for stronger leadership and management and greater involvement by parents in their children's work.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Raise standards achieved in English, mathematics and science.
- Strengthen the recruitment and retention of teaching staff to increase stability.
- Implement robust systems of self-evaluation, and the use of performance data.
- Establish effective assessment and recording systems for all subjects.
- Devise a strategic plan with priorities and strategies for several years ahead.
- Strengthen arrangements for child protection and health and safety.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

The children's standards of attainment at the end of the Foundation Stage before entry to Year 1 are **above** the national expectations of five year-olds. By the end of Year 2, standards are **in line** with those expected nationally in reading and writing, mathematics and science. By the end of Year 6 standards remain **in line** with those expected nationally for this age group in English, mathematics and science, and **above** national expectations in information and communication technology (ICT) and music. Standards in English, mathematics and science are much lower than those reported at the time of the last inspection and many pupils do not achieve as well as they should in these three core subjects. This is a serious weakness.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Whilst standards attained in English, mathematics and science are in line with national expectations by the end of Year 2 and when pupils leave the school in Year 6, many pupils do not achieve as well as they should.
- Many pupils in classes that have experienced significant staff instability are not achieving as well as they should.
- By the end of Year 6 standards in ICT and music are above those expected nationally.
- Pupils with special educational needs achieve well, making good progress given their starting points.
- Children in the Foundation Stage achieve well in all six areas of learning.

Commentary

1. Results from the national tests in the summer of 2004, being the most recently published, show that standards attained by pupils in Year 2 in reading were in line with the national average but well below those of schools in similar neighbourhoods. Standards in writing in Year 2 were above the national average and in line with those of similar schools. Standards in mathematics were below the national average and well below those in schools in similar neighbourhoods.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	16.1 (15.8)	15.8 (15.7)
writing	15.4 (15.9)	14.6 (14.6)
mathematics	15.9 (16.9)	16.3 (16.3)

There were 34 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

2. Standards attained in the national tests by Year 6 pupils in the summer of 2004 in English were well above the national expectations and above the average for schools with pupils who had similar starting points at the end of Year 2 four years earlier in 2000. In mathematics standards attained in national tests by Year 6 pupils were well above the national expectations and in line with similar schools. Standards attained in science were above national expectations and in line with those in similar schools. Those Year 6 pupils previously identified as having special educational needs and who received additional support achieved well, particularly in English, with most of them attaining the nationally expected levels in the tests.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	29.9 (27.2)	26.9 (26.8)
mathematics	28.9 (27.2)	27.0 (26.8)
science	29.9 (29.7)	28.6 (28.6)

There were 25 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

3. In 2004 standards in recent years had been consistently above the national average in the three core subjects of English, mathematics and science in Year 6, and the upward trend over the last three years had been greater than the national trend. Standards in Year 2 had been less consistent, with some fluctuation particularly in mathematics; however, the overall upward trend had been broadly in line with the national trend. There was no significant difference in the achievement between boys and girls or pupils of different ethnic groups.
4. Inspection evidence and the school's own performance data show that standards in English, mathematics and science have not been maintained by the end of Years 2 and 6 and are significantly lower than those reported at the time of the last inspection. The attainment of children on entry to the school is above national expectations in all six areas of learning. During their time in the Foundation Stage, children achieve well so that, by the end of the Reception Year, many are in line to exceed the goals expected nationally, particularly in personal, social and emotional development. Pupils with special educational needs are helped to become fully involved in all activities and these pupils also achieve well during the Foundation Stage.
5. By the end of Year 2 standards are in line with national expectations in speaking and listening, reading and writing, mathematics and science. They are above national expectations in ICT and music. The 'in line' standards in reading, writing, mathematics and science indicate underachievement by a proportion of the pupils during their two years in the infant stage. These pupils have, until recently, experienced considerable disruption caused by frequent changes of teaching staff.
6. By the end of Year 6 standards remain in line with national expectations for the age group in all aspects of English including speaking and listening, reading and writing. They are also in line with national expectations in mathematics and science. These standards are lower than those at the time of the last inspection. In these core subjects many pupils do not achieve as well as they should. Standards attained in ICT and music are above national expectations; this is a significant improvement on those reported at the last inspection when they were both below national expectations. Art and design, design and technology, geography, history, physical education and personal, social and health education were only sampled during the inspection and so there are no overall judgements about standards and achievement in these subjects. The school does not have sufficient assessment data of its own to show standards achieved in these sampled subjects.
7. The considerable underachievement in English, mathematics and science is widespread across the infant and junior years, but more concentrated in those classes and year groups that have experienced substantial disruption over the last two years with a succession of short term and supply teachers. In some classes the school's own performance data, and the pupils' workbooks indicate a proportion of pupils have made little if any progress over the last year, particularly in Years 3 and 5. Too few of the more able Year 2 and Year 6 pupils are likely to exceed nationally expected standards in the national tests in 2005, and in too many lessons whilst the least able pupils are well supported enabling them to achieve well, there is insufficient challenge of the more able so that they do not achieve as well as they should. Well targeted support enables pupils with special educational needs to achieve well across the school and make good progress in comparison with their prior attainment. The school's published targets for English, mathematics and science for the end of Year 6 for 2005,

although lower than those for 2004, are now seen by the school as extremely ambitious and impossible to meet.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are **good**. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **good** overall. Attendance is **satisfactory** and punctuality is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school has high expectations of the behaviour and attitudes of its pupils.
- Very good opportunities are provided for pupils' moral development.
- Pupils have positive attitudes and behaviour around the school and behave well in lessons.
- Pupils are polite, friendly and keen to take responsibility.
- The procedures to promote attendance are very good and are helping to improve both attendance and punctuality.
- Poor attendance by a very few pupils reduces the overall rate of attendance.

Commentary

8. Pupils have good attitudes towards school, their learning and people around them. They are interested in school life and keen to take advantage of the activities provided for them. Pupils enjoyed the opportunity to contribute to the formation of new school rules and enjoy being asked to take responsibility. The behaviour code is strong and everyone tries to adhere to it. Pupils new to the Foundation Stage settle quickly and a calm, purposeful working atmosphere is created. The personal, social and emotional development of these young children is very good, with most likely to exceed national expectations in the goals expected by the age of five. Even when older pupils find co-operation difficult, teachers and teaching assistants manage them well and ensure that difficult behaviour is not allowed to impact on the learning of others. No pupils were excluded from the school during the year of the inspection or in the previous year.
9. Relationships between pupils and staff are good. Pupils show respect for each other, their teachers and visitors. They are polite, considerate and helpful. Older pupils show concern for younger ones and take responsibility for them during breaks and at lunchtime. Pupils from different social backgrounds and minority ethnic groups are well integrated. Pupils with special educational needs are well integrated into all classroom activities. The good quality support they are given helps them to concentrate and develop confidence and a positive attitude towards school work. The traveller children, when in school, are well supported by the school and outside agencies who work well together to meet their needs.
10. The provision for pupils' personal development is good and is improving. Pupils are encouraged to take responsibility from an early age. Through effective, carefully planned assemblies, religious education and lessons in personal, social and health education, pupils consider moral issues and develop their own values and beliefs. Through religious education, pupils develop an awareness of beliefs across different faiths. The recently formed school council is giving pupils the opportunity to take responsibility for the school environment and to show responsibility within the school community. It has already resulted in the new school rules and much better facilities for pupils to enjoy during break and lunchtime.
11. The school now provides a strong moral framework and sense of community for its pupils. Pupils are encouraged to take responsibility for the environment and those less fortunate than themselves. They support an interesting and extensive range of charities. Their moral development is very good. Social development is good. Pupils work in pairs and small groups regularly. More able pupils frequently help those who are insecure, for example, when using computers. Pupils are quick to offer to help each other and are sensible about helping to tidy

up at the end of lessons. Lunchtime is a sociable occasion, with pupils eating nicely and talking quietly to each other in the dining hall.

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	4.9	School data	0.2
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.

12. Attendance is satisfactory and improving. Punctuality is very good. Attendance is currently just above the national average and is continuing an upward trend to improve. This is part of a concerted effort by the school over the past three years to successfully improve attendance. The attendance by most pupils is good. Attendance by a small minority is poor and this impacts on the overall figures. The rate of unauthorised absence is just below the national level and reflects the school's very good and persistent follow up of absences. Punctuality on arrival at school is very good. Timekeeping during the school day is good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is **satisfactory**. The quality of teaching and learning is **satisfactory** as is the curriculum along with the opportunities for enrichment. The accommodation is **very good**. The provision for the care, guidance and support of pupils is **satisfactory**. Partnership with parents is **satisfactory** as are the links with other schools and colleges.

Teaching and learning

The overall quality of teaching is **satisfactory** and consequently most pupils make **satisfactory** gains in their learning in lessons. Teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage are **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage is very good across the curriculum.
- The substantial turnover of teaching staff has disrupted the quality of teaching in a number of infant and junior year groups and classes and this continues to impact on the quality of pupils' learning.
- In too many lessons similar work is given to all the pupils regardless of their needs, often with the more able pupils not fully challenged.
- The quality of teaching and learning in ICT is good and in music it is very good.
- Teachers manage behaviour well and maintain a good learning ethos in almost all lessons.
- Teaching assistants are well deployed and contribute well to the learning of pupils, particularly those with learning difficulties and in music lessons throughout the school.
- Assessment and recording of pupils' progress is unsatisfactory in a number of subjects, particularly in the junior years.

Commentary

13. At the time of the inspection only one teacher had been in post for more than one year. In the two years prior to the inspection a total of 14 teachers had left the school. The quality of teaching and learning across the school is satisfactory. This judgement is based on lessons observed during the inspection, on a scrutiny of pupils' work over time, on teachers' lesson plans and records and from talking to the pupils. This satisfactory teaching and learning is a

decline on the good teaching reported at the time of the last inspection. During the inspection around two thirds of the lessons observed in the Foundation Stage classes were very good. Half of the lessons in the infant years were very good but less than ten per cent of those in the junior years were very good. The small percentage of unsatisfactory teaching and learning observed was all within the junior years.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 34 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0 (0%)	10 (29%)	10 (29%)	12 (35%)	2 (7%)	0 (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.

14. In the Foundation Stage the quality of teaching and learning is very good overall across all six areas of learning and is particularly strong in the Nursery class. All the children are encouraged to develop their independence. There is a very good balance between teacher directed and child initiated activities. Careful planning across the stage helps to ensure the children’s learning progresses over time and good use is made of the indoor and outdoor accommodation. Children from both classes have access to shared activities inside and out. Expectations by the practitioners are nearly always high with, for the most part, high quality observations and interventions to which the children respond well.

15. In the infant years the quality of teaching and learning has improved recently as the teaching team has become settled and gained experience. The recently appointed teachers have worked hard to improve the learning ethos, particularly in a class where behaviour was reported to have been poor earlier in this school year. The improved relationships are now enabling good learning in around half of lessons observed, after a disrupted start to the school year. In the very good lessons pupils of all abilities are learning well as a result of the teacher’s good knowledge of the subjects being taught, her high expectations of the pupils, carefully matched work to groups of pupils of different abilities and her own enthusiasm. For example, in a Year 1 English lesson related to learning about phonics and telling stories pupils were all occupied in a lively introductory session, recording their own ideas on mini-whiteboards, enabling the teacher to check their levels of understanding before proceeding to different group activities, carefully matched to their abilities and supported by the teaching assistant and teacher. The above average pupils were challenged and worked very hard; the below average were also challenged but given structured support to enable them to learn successfully.

16. The range in the quality of teaching and learning in lessons in the junior years is too great, with very few very good lessons and far more that are just satisfactory and some that are unsatisfactory. The ongoing turnover of temporary teaching staff continues to impact on the quality of learning by pupils as a succession of teachers, particularly in Years 3 and 5, struggle to establish an understanding of their pupils’ prior learning. For example some good teaching observed in a Year 3 mathematics lesson, which had been well prepared and was delivered with skill and expertise, did not achieve the expected levels of learning as the teacher, in her first week in the school, found the pupils’ understanding was well below that normally expected of this age group. Pupils’ recorded work in their books demonstrates that in too many lessons, not just in Years 3 and 5, pupils are required to cover the same work regardless of their ability, with only limited challenge and learning by the more able pupils leading to underachievement over time. The management of behaviour and establishing good working relationships in the infant and junior years has improved during the course of this school year as a result of whole-school discussions and hard work by teachers, many of whom are new to the profession and, or, the school.

17. The good teaching in ICT and very good teaching in music leads to good learning in these subjects across the school. In both subjects well planned lessons using good accommodation, with resources and equipment which is well presented, engage the pupils’ interest. In music it

is particularly strong, as a teacher and teaching assistant work very well together in each class lesson, each demonstrating good knowledge of the subject, enabling them to provide very clear expositions and to respond accurately to pupils' observations. They have high expectations and this recently established excellent staff deployment for music is leading to rapidly improving standards and enthusiasm for the subject.

18. Teachers plan work well to cater for pupils with special educational needs. Individual education plans are drawn up with precise targets that teachers ensure link securely with all of the ongoing work. Teaching assistants work effectively alongside teachers. They are well briefed about lesson planning and this enables them to work skilfully to support and guide individuals and groups of pupils. As a result, pupils with special educational needs progress well with their learning and cover the same areas of work as their peers.
19. Assessment and recording practices in the Foundation Stage are very good, with carefully planned and systematic observations of children being carefully annotated, discussed by the whole team and collated. These are then used to inform future activities for individuals and groups as a whole. Assessment arrangements in English and most other subjects are unsatisfactory, there being too few established procedures, although some individual teachers, for example in Year 1, carry out very detailed observations of pupils' learning in each unit of work. Assessment practices in mathematics in the infant and junior years are broadly satisfactory, being stronger in the infant years, although the data derived from these assessments is neither fully up to date, nor always readily accessible for teachers new to the school. Teachers use some good assessment strategies during lessons to check their pupils' prior knowledge and frequently return to the learning objectives at the end of lessons to check their pupils' perceptions of what they have learnt. Good assessment and recording procedures have recently been introduced in ICT, and in music good procedures are being implemented across the school. A strength of the music assessment is the way pupils are taught to evaluate the performances of others. Nearly all pupils' work is marked in most classes, with the majority of staff implementing the recently established marking policy. However, in some books there is little comment to help pupils gain an understanding of what they need to do to improve.

The curriculum

The **satisfactory** statutory curriculum is broad and balanced. A **satisfactory** range of enrichment opportunities is provided. Accommodation is **very good** and resources are **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum in the Nursery and the Reception class is very good.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good.
- The curriculum is enriched by a good range of visits and visitors.
- The school facilitates good quality activities led by members of the community but few of the extra-curricular activities are freely accessible to all pupils.
- ICT is now well resourced and impacts well on pupils' learning across the curriculum.
- Difficulties in the recruitment and retention of teaching staff have led to an unsatisfactory match of teachers to the curriculum.
- The accommodation is very good and contributes well to the overall curriculum provision.

Commentary

20. The Foundation Stage curriculum ensures that all the areas of learning are covered. A strong emphasis is placed on children learning through play and practical activities, both in and out of doors, and there is coherent provision across the two years of this stage. There are very good curricular links between the Foundation Stage and Year 1 supporting an effective transfer of pupils. Pupils in Years 1 to 6 benefit from a broad and balanced programme of work. Good emphasis is given to the development of literacy, numeracy and ICT skills. The school's long-term curriculum planning now ensures that all aspects of the National Curriculum are covered

systematically. A good programme of activities in personal, social and health education and citizenship was introduced last term and has already had a positive impact on pupils' attitudes and behaviour. Good opportunities are now provided for pupils to use ICT skills across a broad range of subjects. Pupils in Year 6 have the opportunity to learn French during the spring and summer terms, which helps prepare them for transfer to the secondary school.

21. Most schemes of work have recently been rewritten to ensure that the curriculum now fully meets statutory requirements in all age groups, although subject leaders are aware of the need for further work, particularly in physical education, geography and history. This is an improvement from that reported at the time of the last inspection. Effective use is made of national and local guidance to support teachers' planning for all subjects and areas of learning. Good support is given to pupils with special educational needs. There is no formal identification of gifted and talented pupils.
22. The school offers pupils a sound range of extra-curricular activities which are free and accessible to all pupils. The school facilitates a good range of other activities led by members of the community, providing additional opportunities for pupils. These clubs, for which the pupils have to pay, are popular and well attended, for example the art and gymnastics clubs. An annual residential visit to the Isle of Wight is enjoyed by pupils in Year 6. As well as supporting work in a range of subjects, the visit makes a strong contribution to pupils' personal development. Pupils enjoy singing in the choir and have the chance to take part in the local music festival. Annual visits are organised to support pupils' learning. Years 3 and 4 visit the British Museum and Years 5 and 6 visit Kentwell Hall in Suffolk to take part in a re-enactment of a period in history. Visits to the local area support learning in geography and coaching by the Saracens and by Watford Football Club develops pupils' sports skills.
23. The accommodation is very good, with large classrooms, very good access to outside designated areas in the Foundation Stage, and separate hall and dining rooms. Pupils benefit from a new, well equipped ICT suite, and a new library and music room have recently been opened. The school is very well maintained and provides a bright and stimulating learning environment. Displays of pupils' and other work around the school are good. Good use is made of the very pleasant school grounds to support learning in science. At the time of the inspection pupils had just carried out a very enjoyable 'bug hunt' and presented their findings using the new ICT suite.
24. Practical learning resources are satisfactory overall, although many subject leaders have recognised the need to reorganise them so that they are more accessible, and, to extend them to ensure there are sufficient quantities to facilitate whole class teaching. The relatively new and well resourced ICT suite has made a very significant contribution to improving standards and the quality of learning since the last inspection. The school benefits from a good number of effective teaching assistants. However, the match of teachers to the curriculum is unsatisfactory, except in music where it is good. Serious recruitment and retention difficulties in relation to teaching staff, including a number of temporary and supply teachers, have adversely affected curriculum provision in recent years in several classes and year groups.

Care, guidance and support

The provision of care, welfare and health and safety is **satisfactory**. Support and guidance based on monitoring of performance is also **satisfactory**. The involvement of pupils through seeking, valuing and acting on their views is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There have been recent improvements in the care and welfare of pupils.
- The improved arrangements for ensuring health and safety are satisfactory but need further strengthening.

- The induction of pupils on arrival in the school is well managed and pupils are helped to settle quickly and happily.
- Pupils feel they have a real voice in the school and a sense of being valued.

Commentary

25. The school is developing a supportive, inclusive and caring culture and has made much recent progress. Pupils confirmed how much behaviour had improved during this school year and how much better they felt about the more positive ethos. They also feel they would have someone to turn to if they were ever worried or troubled and are establishing good and trusting relationships with staff. When issues are detected they are resolved and monitored to ensure that pupils are happy and can achieve better. The school recently identified some previous weaknesses in the arrangements for child protection and has moved swiftly to correct these. They are now satisfactory. Pupils with a range of medical needs are catered for effectively. Many members of staff have recently received training in first aid and feel more confident about their ability to treat pupils when they are ill or injured.
26. The management of health and safety has some weaknesses. The inspection checklists are not sufficiently detailed to check the grounds and buildings adequately. The school was also reminded about the correct way to record safety routine checking systems and their frequency. Some security, health and safety issues were raised during the inspection. The school was informed about these and moved swiftly to address them.
27. Effective individual arrangements are made to ensure that pupils settle and adapt very quickly to the routines of their new school. Parents are closely involved until pupils feel able to cope effectively. The transition from the Nursery to the Reception class is smooth and pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education.
28. The school council is well established and pupils feel that it channels their ideas for school improvement effectively. They feel particularly proud of their involvement with the new school rules and the subsequent improvement in behaviour. A pupil representative in discussion with an inspector said, *“Everyone has their part to play in helping the school improve as part of a big school family”*. Pupils can talk easily and openly during ‘circle times’ and feel that staff listen to them and take their views seriously and are pleased about this.
29. All members of the staff team are committed to supporting pupils and respond to their personal and academic needs. The practice in the Foundation Stage is very good, involving all practitioners. Elsewhere pupils’ progress in the core subjects and in some other subjects is regularly assessed. Informal observations of their personal development are made, and any points out of the ordinary are recorded. Curriculum targets have recently been introduced to support pupils and are displayed in classrooms but many pupils are not yet clear about how they relate to themselves or exactly what they need to do to achieve them.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The links with parents are **satisfactory**. Links with the local community and with other schools are also **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents are keen to be involved with the school and their children’s education.
- Many parents are rightly concerned about the impact of staff turnover on their children’s education.
- The procedures to ensure that parents are satisfied and deal with any concerns have improved considerably and are good.
- Annual reports to parents are inconsistent and contain insufficient information on progress.
- Links with receiving secondary schools are underdeveloped.

Commentary

30. Parental support for pupils' learning and for the range of school activities is good. When parents are invited to school they attend well for consultations, meetings, supporting extra-curricular activities and church services. There is also a well-supported parents' association which raises large sums and provides a busy social calendar. Some parents regularly help in school and provide good quality help with reading and practical activities.
31. Parents raised issues in their meeting and in their questionnaire about the high staff turnover and the quality of information they receive about progress. There was also a strong feeling about the school not seeking and acting on their views. The inspection findings confirm that some of the parental concerns are justified, particularly in relation to the impact of frequent staff changes and the information received about their children's progress. The school has become more approachable recently and parents find it reassuring to be able to pop in and talk to staff when needs arise. Many of the teachers are, however, new and are still getting to know families and so partnerships with parents are still at a developmental stage. Formal consultation arrangements are good and the introductory meetings in the autumn term and information on curricular planning for some year groups is also good, but not good enough in those year groups where the staff changes have been greatest. School reports vary considerably and some do not report progress sufficiently and give little indication of pupils' performance against national standards. There is inconsistency in the way that weaknesses are identified and some reports do not give targets for improvement. The quality of other information in newsletters and letters is satisfactory but the school prospectus is out of date. The school has recently started to canvass parents' views on homework and out-of-school care but parents do not feel that their opinions are valued and acted upon sufficiently and this aspect is still underdeveloped.
32. Links with other primary schools are satisfactory within the Rickmansworth consortium and good practice is shared to benefit learning. Links with secondary schools are weaker, with limited information being available from the secondary schools. Older pupils were unaware of the arrangements for transition to their receiving schools and they had little idea of what to expect from the next phase of their education.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

As at the time of the last inspection, overall, the leadership and management of the school are **satisfactory** overall. The governance of the school is also **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Substantial work has recently been introduced to improve the school's leadership and management after an extended period of difficulties and weakness.
- The new headteacher shows a clear vision for the educational direction of the school.
- The Foundation Stage is very well led and managed.
- Special educational needs provision is well led and managed.
- The management of the recruitment and retention of teachers has been poor.
- Self-evaluation procedures and the use of performance data are unsatisfactory.
- Subject leadership has not strengthened sufficiently since the weaknesses previously reported.
- The new chair of governors is providing good leadership to a revitalised governing body.

Commentary

33. In the recent past, uncertainties in the leadership and management helped to undermine the ability of the school to recruit and retain its teaching staff. The resulting instability and high turnover of teachers have led to a situation where pupils' overall achievement is unsatisfactory. This academic year the governing body has been very proactive in moving to correct the situation. During the spring term, working closely with an interim headteacher, governors

established clear short-term targets to improve the overall leadership and management and the quality of education. Governors have also successfully revitalised their own roles so that they now have a much clearer awareness of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Led well by their recently elected chair, they have established robust systems to help them monitor the work of the school properly and set it on a course of improvement. When all the newly implemented systems become fully embedded, the strong commitment and enthusiasm of governors mean that there is much potential for them to operate in a very effective way in the future.

34. Over the last school term the interim headteacher worked very effectively. In particular, she raised expectations of pupils and staff and established open and clear communication, and some whole-school working practices which have resulted in staff and governors now having greater ownership and involvement in plans to ensure the school's future development.
35. The newly appointed permanent headteacher shows clear vision of the educational direction for the school. She has quickly grasped an understanding of the main strengths and weaknesses of the school and the resolve and actions that will be needed to address those weaknesses.
36. The distribution of responsibilities has been influenced by the high proportion of staff new to the profession and on fixed-term contracts. The recently appointed acting deputy headteacher has too many responsibilities. However, she has worked well, taking on a wide range of roles and, in particular, helping to re-establish good morale amongst the staff and improve the ethos of the school. The school's Foundation Stage is very well led and managed so that the provision here ensures children receive a good start to their time in school. Also, good leadership and management of the school's special educational needs provision ensures that all pupils concerned receive well targeted support.
37. Most of the school's subject co-ordinators are new in post. Whilst most have made a sound start to leading and managing the areas for which they are responsible, the school recognises the need to strengthen this role, particularly in relation to developing the curriculum and improving pupils' achievement. There has been insufficient progress in this aspect since the weaknesses identified at the time of the last inspection.
38. Whilst leadership and management have been improved to a satisfactory level overall, there remain significant weaknesses in aspects of management. There is no clear long term development plan, no planned programme of staff development and the school is at the early stages of establishing its self-evaluation procedures and systems for monitoring and using performance data. The recruitment and retention of teaching staff has been poor. The headteacher and governors are fully aware of the need to develop all these areas, but have correctly focused on the school's short-term need to stabilise the current staffing position. A clear procedure and time scales for establishing a strategic plan have been agreed now the new headteacher is in post.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	570,754
Total expenditure	572,660
Expenditure per pupil	2,797

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	109,401
Balance carried forward to the next year	107,495

39. The expenditure per pupil is broadly in line with the national average. By the end of the 2003 / 2004 financial year the school had accumulated an excessive financial carry forward. The governors have now established clear systems and procedures for managing the budget and they have an appropriate awareness of the need to get the best value from all spending. The

underspend at the end of the most recent financial year, yet to be published, has been much reduced with significant funding used for building and equipping the new library. Most of the extra finance currently available has already been 'earmarked' to support improvements to the site designed to improve health and safety. Draft budget proposals indicate an acceptable level of carry-forward is planned for the end of the current financial year. The school's administrative staff team works very well to ensure the smooth running and day-to-day efficiency of the school. Governors report all issues identified in a recent LEA independent audit have been fully addressed.

40. Overall, the school's satisfactory leadership and management ensure that pupils now receive a sound quality of education. However, the recent improvements have not had enough chance to improve pupils' achievement from the current unsatisfactory level and the school is therefore not yet providing satisfactory value for money.
41. Two significant barriers have contributed to the unsatisfactory achievement by many pupils within this school. They are related in the main firstly to the poor recruitment and retention of staff, which has led to disruptions in teaching and learning in several classes, and secondly to unsatisfactory processes by which the school has monitored its own practice. The very recent appointment of a new permanent headteacher, the relatively recent appointment of two senior managers, a newly elected chair of governors and revitalised governing body practices all contribute to the aim of raising the pupils' achievement in the near future.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Provision in the Foundation Stage is **very good**.

Most children join the school in the Nursery class, which they attend part time for a three hour session in the mornings. Almost all of these children then transfer in September or January, in the year of their fifth birthday, to the Reception class which they attend full time. Parents report very positively about the induction procedures and the way their children quickly settle into the school. Children achieve well during their time in the Foundation Stage. Many are in line to exceed the nationally expected goals by the end of Reception in all six areas of learning and almost all of the remaining children are in line to achieve them. The quality of teaching and learning is very good overall across all six areas of learning and is particularly strong in the Nursery class. All the children are encouraged to develop their independence. They pursue an appropriately wide range of activities, during which they socialise and integrate well, for example during child initiated play sessions when children from both classes have access to shared activities inside and out. Expectations by the practitioners in the classrooms are usually high, with, for the most part, high quality observations and interventions to which the children respond well. Assessment procedures are very good throughout the stage. Skilled observation by the practitioners enables the children's progress to be recorded carefully and monitored on a regular basis so that learning opportunities are always appropriate. All children are regularly and systematically targeted with observations carefully recorded and collated. In part, as a result of these careful observations, children with special educational needs make good progress and are carefully nurtured so that they have every opportunity to share in the well planned activities. Occasionally learning opportunities are missed in the Reception Year by a practitioner working in a more supervisory role, with only limited interventions and a relatively large group of children, whilst the class teacher leads small-group focused activities. Foundation Stage profiles statements are carefully assessed and the profiles are completed during the course of the Reception Year. The outcomes of these are shared with and greatly appreciated by parents.

The curriculum provision is very good, with a carefully planned and coherent programme addressing all six areas of learning, ensuring progression throughout the stage and making very good use of the indoor and outdoor facilities. The practitioners are very well led by the stage manager who manages the team well. She provides a very good role model, has a clear vision and understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum and how young children learn. She has high expectations of children, of herself and colleagues and has developed a very good team approach in which practitioners understand their role and contribute well. All have been involved in a comprehensive programme of professional development. There is a very good cycle of meetings at which team members systematically share observations of children and develop curriculum planning. The accommodation is very good, being well planned and presented and very well used, providing a range of space indoors and out, including covered external areas, flat tarmac and grassed area, all within a secure and stimulating environment. Resources are good, being of good quality, well presented and accessible to children. Very good links have been developed with the provision in Year 1 to ensure good preparation and a smooth transition to the National Curriculum in Year 1. The very good provision across the Foundation Stage is a further improvement on that reported at the time of the last inspection when it was good.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Most of the children are in line to significantly exceed the goals expected nationally by the end of the Reception Year.

- The strong commitment to this area of learning enables the children to achieve well.
- Children are encouraged at every opportunity to take responsibility for their learning and themselves and to think for themselves about the consequences of their actions.

Commentary

42. The personal, social and emotional development of the children is successfully integrated throughout all activities, and is seen by the practitioners as the most important area of learning for these young children. The sensitively established routines mean that children are confident and blend their responses easily into the next task or activity. Their behaviour and attitudes towards their work are very good; they share their ideas and play well alongside each other. All activities and tasks provide good opportunities to develop these aspects of their learning so that specific skills can be enhanced within working groups. They line up quietly, dress themselves for movement sessions in the hall and outdoor activities, find partners when required and respond well to rhymes and sounds which indicate a change of focus or activity. They show a high level of involvement and care in activities such as feeding a doll and demonstrate a well developed awareness of the need to care for others. This is reinforced through interest in the children and their work and practitioners treating each other and the children with courtesy and respect. These trusting relationships help the children to try new activities, initiate ideas and to succeed in their learning.
43. The clear routines and the balance of adult and child initiated learning enables children to work with independence at times and, when needed, to conform and work with others, sharing or taking turns. For example, children were observed outside 'repairing' wheeled vehicles in the garage as customers arrive. The children are being very well taught in this area of learning; they are achieving well and likely to make good progress, many well beyond the nationally expected goals by the time they leave the Reception Year, maintaining that reported at the time of the last inspection.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children make good progress and most are in line to exceed the goals expected nationally by the end of the Reception Year.
- Practitioners take every opportunity to develop children's language skills throughout all activities.
- Opportunities to encourage writing are embedded within all work areas outside and inside.
- Children enjoy reading and access books from time to time during the day.

Commentary

44. Throughout the day the children experience a wide range of activities planned and self-initiated which provide good opportunities for language development. Children listen attentively to practitioners and to their peers recalling and telling stories; many talk confidently to visitors and are keen to engage them in their role-play activities such as in the pizza café and the garage. They enjoy familiar stories and revel in the ability to recall and predict what happens next. They join in rhymes and enjoy alliteration. Children in both classes enjoy stories, handle books carefully, and 'read' menus to visitors with imagination and enjoyment. Children in Reception enjoy early phonics activities, for example when investigating objects in a feeling bag with similar initial sounds. A range of mark-making activities is presented in the Nursery and Reception both inside and out, although during child initiated sessions these are not visited by all children as frequently as some other activities. In Reception many children are gaining confidence in using computers to write names and simple messages, using letter names and recognising their shapes and sounds. The very good teaching and overall provision help

children achieve well so that most are in line to exceed the goals expected nationally by the end of the Reception Year, particularly in relation to speaking and listening and reading.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Most children are working at least at the expected levels for their age and many are in line to exceed the national expectations by the end of the Reception Year.
- Practitioners plan mathematical development activities well and integrate them across all areas of learning.

Commentary

45. Very good curriculum planning is enabling children in the Nursery to use and develop mathematical understanding in context and across the curriculum. For example, during child initiated activities some were independently recording, on a tally chart, fruit they had found around the Foundation Stage site as part of their work on understanding the world. These children were able to interpret their own recordings, and understood the principle of one-to-one correspondence. They also explore pattern making, handle money, understanding the principle of giving change, and they select two and three-dimensional shapes to make models. In the Reception class the majority of children are able to confidently count forwards and backwards in tens to 100 whilst warming up for a lesson on shape in the hall, in which they made sound progress in sorting three dimensional shapes. In a later lesson they applied their new understanding of solid shapes when examining a range of fruit.
46. Good teaching and learning provides a careful balance of teacher led and child initiated activities. In one lesson, despite good planning, the intended mathematical focus was lost for a time as the children became confused. This was recognised by the teacher and subsequent activities were adjusted to respond to the pupils' levels of understanding. Children achieve well and most are in line to exceed the goals expected nationally by the end of the Reception Year.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The children develop a good knowledge and understanding of the world.
- A wide and rich variety of first-hand experiences are planned to promote learning in this area.
- Very good use is made of the outdoor environment to support this area of learning.
- All aspects are given equal value and focus.

Commentary

47. This area of learning had a high priority during the inspection as all children in both classes were engaged on a study of fruit as the week's particular focus, being part of a longer-term topic on food. An imaginative and broad range of activities were being presented for practitioner led and child initiated activities. Children have a good understanding of living plants and animals having had experience of growing plants, studying flowers and examining fruit. They are able to name relatively obscure fruits and describe their features, for example the sort of place they might grow. They understand the principles of cooking food and take their role-play very seriously, including health and safety issues. They use computers confidently and select tools for repairing bicycles when delivering pizzas and when constructing homes for

pets. They are beginning to use and understand how they can operate small remote controlled vehicles, and operate listening centres to listen to pre-recorded stories.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good accommodation makes a positive contribution to achievement in this area of learning.
- There is very good access to outside areas supporting physical development.
- Very good curriculum provision ensures a good variety of activities making good use of all the facilities.
- Teachers have high expectations.

Commentary

48. The breadth and range of activities to support and promote the children's physical development is very good. Practitioners make good use of the very good accommodation, enabling the children to move freely at times, exploring a range of smooth, rough and sloping surfaces, controlling large wheeled vehicles in a designated area, manipulating suspended balls, woodwork, gardening and mechanical tools. A good range of smaller apparatus is presented and children learn to manipulate pegs on a washing line, and mark making in sand and water. Children enjoy and fully participate in action rhymes and show good coordination and sense of rhythm. In a teacher led session children in the Nursery showed a very good knowledge and understanding of their own bodies and how they react to exercise. The proximity of a good sized hall contributed to the very good teaching and learning in this lesson, along with the teacher's high expectation. A challenging activity was set within a supportive framework, so that children were challenged but not overwhelmed. Practitioners and volunteer adults are used to observe and assess specific pupils. Their recorded assessments are then used to support specific pupils, including those with special educational needs who lack coordination and balance skills and some self-esteem. The very good provision, teaching and learning results in most children in line to exceed the nationally expected goals in this area by the end of the Reception Year, maintaining that reported at the time of the last inspection.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

There is insufficient evidence to make an overall judgement about provision in this area of learning.

Commentary

49. The imaginatively presented learning environment promotes the children's awareness of expressive art and originality. They are given time to experiment and respond in child-initiated activities, particularly role-play and imaginative play. Activities set up during the inspection included exploring sounds made by musical instruments suspended outside from a line, colour mixing, collage making and painting fruit. Photographic evidence shows children experiencing music making and dance activities.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Many pupils do not achieve as well as they should as they move through the school.
- Pupils with special educational needs achieve well.
- Higher attaining pupils are not always sufficiently extended by the work they are given.
- A good start has been made with implementing initiatives to improve pupils' achievement.
- The school's systems for assessing and analysing pupils' performance in English are developing but remain unsatisfactory, being at an early stage of development.

Commentary

50. Standards attained in reading in the national tests for Year 2 pupils in the summer of 2004 were in line with those expected nationally but well below those in schools in similar neighbourhoods. In writing, standards attained by the same age group were above national expectations and in line with those in schools in similar neighbourhoods. Standards attained in English in the national tests for Year 6 pupils in the summer of 2004 were well above standards expected nationally and in schools where pupils had similar starting points. In recent years, standards have fluctuated considerably in both the Year 2 and Year 6 annual tests. Whilst standards have been generally above national expectations they have been below those reported at the time of the last inspection.
51. Standards attained by pupils in Years 2 and 6 are now in line with national expectations. These are lower than those reported on in the last inspection when they were above national expectations in Year 2 and in Year 6. Pupils arrive in Year 1 from the Foundation Stage with literacy skills above the national expectation for their age, but work seen shows that they reach standards in Years 2 and 6 that are only in line with national expectations for their age. Many pupils, particularly those of average and above average ability, do not achieve as well as they should given their starting points. Evidence from the scrutiny of pupils' work and from discussions with the literacy co-ordinator show that the turbulence in the teaching staff has had a negative impact on pupils' achievement overall. The literacy co-ordinator has worked hard in recent times to help staff instigate a range of procedures to reverse this downturn in achievement. For example, having identified a particular weakness in the standard of pupils' reading across the school, much work has been done to upgrade the effectiveness of ¹guided reading sessions. Although it is too early to evaluate the overall success of this and other new initiatives, many of the lessons seen showed pupils applying themselves well and progressing at a good rate with their learning. This shows an improvement from the indications of progress and achievement across the year reflected by the work in pupils' books.
52. Most pupils speak clearly and with reasonable confidence and by Year 6 they enjoy opportunities to discuss and debate. The school recognises rightly the need to promote this area to a greater extent in order to broaden pupils' use of language. Whilst pupils generally use an appropriate range of language, there is clearly much potential to extend them further. Across the school, good attention is given to ensuring that pupils present their work neatly, and most pupils learn to write legibly and join up their letters. Generally they take a pride in their work. By Year 2, pupils have sound writing skills and have learned to write for a range of reasons, for example, describing how an electrical circuit works. They write short sentences that usually have capital letters and full stops but spelling of basic words is often inaccurate. Year 6 pupils write interesting stories with mainly accurate punctuation, spelling and grammar. In Years 2 and 6 pupils show average reading skills and, by Year 6, they understand

¹ Sessions when the teachers focus on helping specific groups of pupils with their reading.

significant themes and ideas presented to them in text. However, the school has identified rightly that in many year groups pupils' reading skills, although of average standard, lag slightly behind their writing skills.

53. Pupils with special educational needs progress well because of the carefully targeted support they receive. Teachers plan work that matches their needs well, and teaching assistants work effectively with individuals and groups to keep them focused and progressing through their work at a good pace. The two traveller children are supported well when in school. This support is strengthened by effective partnership with an outside agency with specific tuition twice a week.
54. The overall quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory, although a significant number of good lessons were observed. Teachers have a good rapport with their pupils and use this well to encourage all individuals. They plan lessons that provide interesting work for pupils. In the good lessons seen, teachers used questioning well to guide and extend pupils' thinking. However, work in pupils' books and in the lessons seen indicate that higher attaining pupils are not always extended enough by the work provided. Assessment procedures are being developed under the guidance of the co-ordinator, but remain unsatisfactory being inconsistently applied across the school. This is not helped by the frequent changes of staff. Initiatives such as the establishment of a basic whole school target setting process are evidence of improving practice. English targets from previous years have been wildly inaccurate and not involved the appropriate key members of staff.
55. The subject is satisfactorily led. The subject leader has made a good start with implementing initiatives to improve achievement and has a clear overview of the quality of work across the school. She is fully aware of the need to maintain the momentum of all the recently implemented actions in order to raise standards in the future. A new reference library had been opened just before the inspection. It is well presented and organised but not yet fully operational.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

56. Teachers work hard to ensure that pupils have a good range of opportunities to extend their language and literacy skills in other subjects. For example, pupils write extended accounts in association with their history and science projects.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Substantial time is given to teaching mathematics in all classes and pupils cover a wide range of mathematical concepts.
- Many of the pupils do not achieve as well as they should.
- Standards achieved have declined since those at the time of the last inspection.
- The quality of teaching and learning in the infant years has improved recently and is now good.
- Frequent changes of teaching staff have impacted on the quality of learning and contributed to the unsatisfactory match of work to pupils' differing levels of understanding.
- Recently established arrangements for leadership of the subject are satisfactory, but they are yet to impact on the standards and overall quality of provision.

Commentary

57. Standards attained in the national tests for Year 2 pupils in the summer of 2004 were below those expected nationally and well below those in schools in similar neighbourhoods. Standards attained in the national tests for Year 6 pupils in the summer of 2004 were well

above standards expected nationally, and in line with those in schools where pupils had similar starting points. In annual tests Year 6 standards have been consistently marginally above national expectations for several years but below those reported at the time of the last inspection.

58. Standards attained by pupils in Years 2 and 6 are now in line with national expectations. These are significantly lower than those reported on in the last inspection when they were above national expectations in Year 2 and well above in Year 6. Pupils arrive in Year 1 from the Foundation Stage with a good understanding of number, pattern and shape, above the national expectation for their age. Many pupils, particularly those of average and above average ability, do not achieve as well as they should given their starting points. This is particularly significant for pupils in classes and year groups that have been experiencing substantial turnover of staff. Evidence from pupils' workbooks over the year, and the school's own assessment data shows that some have made little or no progress over the year. Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) frequently make good progress in lessons as a result of good support. The school almost reached its performance targets for all pupils in Year 6 in 2004. The targets for this year, for a different group of pupils, are not quite so high, and yet are likely to be missed by a considerable margin, with too few pupils exceeding the nationally expected levels, and too many failing to reach those expectations.
59. At the time of the inspection pupils were working on a wide range of mathematical topics, including numbers and the number system, number calculations, fractions, problem solving and the properties of shapes. Evidence from pupils' mathematics workbooks, from talking to pupils and from teachers' plans shows that the wide range of mathematical concepts in the National Curriculum is covered during the course of the year in all classes; the pupils' workbooks in most year groups contain a substantial amount of recorded work, a high proportion of which is accurate and reasonably well presented. In lessons many pupils are reluctant to talk about the mathematical concepts being learnt, the strategies used or alternative methods of calculation. Their understanding and use of mathematical terminology is barely in line with national expectations. For example, older pupils in Years 5 and 6 struggled to talk through how they would solve problems involving more than one operation, and pupils in Year 3 were slow to identify and explain patterns in pairs of two digit numbers totalling 100.
60. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. In the infant years it is now good. This is an overall decline from that reported at the last inspection when it was consistently good across the whole school. Most teachers plan lessons conscientiously, using nationally recommended guidance, with at least three distinct parts to each lesson. In a very good lesson observed, Year 1 pupils were all engaged in an oral and mental introductory session and totally committed to their work which involved quick thinking and responses; the teacher carefully targeted questions to specific pupils and the main lesson included different but related activities accurately matched to each group of pupils, enabling all of them to learn effectively. However, in too few lessons is the work accurately matched to the different ability levels within the class. Consequently in too many lessons groups of pupils are either under-achieving because they are not challenged, or struggling because they are bewildered and confused. In some cases well planned lessons, by teachers who hardly know the pupils, have to be hurriedly adapted, slowing down the pace of learning. In a few classes there is very little variation in the work covered by the most able and average pupils, with almost everything correct in the books of the most able, indicating a lack of real challenge.
61. Learning by pupils with special educational needs is sound overall. In some lessons it is good as a result of well planned support from teaching assistants who are deployed and briefed effectively by the class teachers, enabling the pupils to work on broadly similar mathematical concepts as the rest of the class but at a level at which they can succeed. In one Year 5 lesson pupils with special educational needs were somewhat overwhelmed attempting to solve the same word problems presented to the most able pupils, without sufficient understanding of the number operations and place value involved. Some older SEN pupils

are supported effectively by extra structured sessions at the end of the school day, revising some of the key mathematical concepts in preparation for the national tests at the end of Year 6. There are few lessons when the most able pupils receive additional support from the teaching assistant or class teacher to fully extend and challenge them.

62. Assessment arrangements are satisfactory. There is a whole-school approach to regularly assessing and recording all pupils' progress, and teachers frequently check their pupils' understanding at the beginning and end of lessons. Almost all pupils' recorded work is marked, and in some classes this marking includes constructive guidance about how pupils' can improve. In few classes is there evidence that pupils have had time to practise or implement the suggestions made. Annual reports to parents are unsatisfactory; they include aspects of mathematics covered but they do not sufficiently explain to parents the standards achieved by their children, and in some there are no clear targets for improvement.
63. Satisfactory arrangements for the leadership of the subject have recently been established, but have not yet had time to impact on standards and provision in the subject across the whole school. The new subject leader is undergoing extensive training and is developing a good grasp of the role of the subject and priorities for the future. She has monitored some teaching and learning, but has not had sufficient access to performance data needed to give her a clear picture of standards in aspects of the subject across each year group and to manage the subject satisfactorily.

Mathematics across the curriculum

64. The principles of the National Numeracy Strategy (NNS) have been adopted and are embedded in the practice throughout the school. Pupils' competence in numeracy supports their work in other subjects such as completing databases in information and communication technology, conducting and recording science investigations and understanding notation in music. Despite the time given to mathematics the subject does not have a high profile in displays in classrooms and around the school.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good emphasis is given to the development of pupils' investigative skills.
- Activities are interesting, so pupils enjoy the subject.
- Progress across the school is inconsistent.
- Many pupils underachieve by the end of Years 2 and 6.
- Marking is not consistently useful in telling pupils how to improve their work.

Commentary

65. In Year 2 the teacher's own assessments of pupils' work in 2004 were below the national average overall, although an average number of pupils attained above the nationally expected level. Gaps in learning as a result of changes in the teaching staff mean that the current Year 2 pupils are attaining standards broadly in line with national expectations, with relatively few pupils achieving above this level. Given their above average attainment on entry to the school, this means that they have underachieved during their two infant years. Since the appointment of the current teacher, Year 2 pupils are making better progress and their work is improving steadily. Their oral work is much better than their written work would suggest.
66. In the 2004 national tests, Year 6 pupils' attainment was above the national average overall. The number of pupils who achieved above the nationally expected level was well above average. However, an examination of Year 6 pupils' work shows that this is not the case this

year. Standards are now in line with national expectations for this age group, with relatively few pupils achieving above this level. Given their attainment on entry, this indicates that pupils have underachieved over time. The relatively new Year 6 teacher has analysed the reasons for the underachievement, recognising that frequent changes of teacher have resulted in significant gaps in pupils' knowledge. She is working hard to overcome the problem, using effective revision strategies. Pupils are achieving well in lessons now, but the changes have not been in place long enough to enable pupils to make up for time lost in the past. Consequently standards are lower this year. Pupils are enjoying their learning now and will move on to the secondary school with a genuine interest in science.

67. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall with some good and very good practice. Teachers generally have good relationships with pupils and this leads to very good behaviour and a desire to please. Teachers generally use questioning well to find out what pupils already know and to get them to apply what they already know in new situations. They plan interesting activities, linking them whenever possible to ongoing work in other subjects. Teachers use science well to develop pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. The subject also contributes positively to pupils' social, moral and personal development. Computers are used regularly to support or extend learning in science. Most teachers ensure that pupils benefit from frequent opportunities to carry out investigations. However, in some classes, pupils are given limited opportunities to work independently. Too much of their work is dictated or copied and all pupils do exactly the same, regardless of ability. The quality of marking varies among the teachers. There is some very good practice, which identifies what pupils have done well and tells them how they can improve. Sometimes it is not done as carefully as it should be and this results in some inaccuracies.
68. Leadership of the subject is now satisfactory. The very recently appointed subject leader has a clear vision for the future development of the subject. She has a good knowledge of the subject and a sensible action plan. She has correctly identified most of the strengths and weaknesses of the subject. She has already rewritten the scheme of work. It is now detailed and ensures that pupils consistently build on what has gone before and that all the requirements of the National Curriculum are met. However, she has not been in post long enough to have had a significant impact on standards.
69. Overall, there has been insufficient improvement since the last inspection. Standards are lower and achievement is unsatisfactory. Teaching is no longer consistently good. However, there is now a detailed scheme of work and effective assessment procedures have been introduced but not yet fully implemented. ICT is now making an effective contribution to pupils' learning in science.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils in Years 2 and 6 reach standards that are above national expectations for their age.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good and helps pupils achieve well during their lessons.
- The subject is well led and managed.
- Effective assessment procedures are in place but not yet fully used in all classes.

Commentary

70. Pupils enjoy their lessons in the ICT suite. Standards in Year 6 are above national expectations. Pupils work enthusiastically, both independently and in pairs. They share ideas and information and are quick to help one another. Year 6 pupils confidently produce multi-media presentations. They combine text and graphics from a range of sources, use formulae to make calculations on spreadsheets and regularly use the internet to carry out research.

Standards in Year 2 are also above national expectations; pupils word-process their work competently, changing font, colour and layout. They combine text and graphics to make their work look more interesting. Pupils use an art program effectively to draw pictures and patterns, changing the colours and methods of applying them. They give instructions to floor and screen turtles to make them move in different directions, for example to find 'treasure' on a map of an island. They can write out their instructions so that others can follow them.

71. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers have secure knowledge of the subject and are able to explain their lessons confidently and clearly, often supported by the subject leader, who is also the ICT technician. Their planning is detailed and takes into account the needs of pupils of different abilities. Behaviour management is generally secure; pupils know exactly how they are expected to behave and respond well. Pupils whose behaviour can be challenging like using computers and they generally try hard. Teaching assistants are well briefed by teachers and make a positive contribution to pupils' learning. Teachers plan interesting activities, which are often linked to ongoing work in other subjects.
72. Leadership and management of the subject are good. The subject leader has good knowledge of the subject and understands the strengths and weaknesses of the subject within the school. She has produced a sensible action plan which identifies appropriate areas for development. She has improved the range of hardware and software and ensured that teachers have the confidence to use it. The recently installed interactive whiteboard is a good example of this and its use is having a very positive impact on pupils' learning. An effective assessment strategy has recently been introduced and the co-ordinator is monitoring it and using the information to further improve standards. Due to the number of temporary staff in the school recently, the strategy is not yet consistently used in all classes.
73. Provision has improved significantly since the last inspection. The school now has a computer suite, which gives pupils greater access to computers and a much better range of software. Each class has at least one session a week in the suite; this means that new skills can be taught to the whole class and then pupils can use them to support their work in other subjects on their classroom computers during the week. There is a detailed scheme of work and assessment strategy. It ensures that the statutory requirements are now fully met. Staff training has led to increased confidence in the staff and this has improved the quality of teaching.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

74. Pupils use their ICT skills well to support a range of subjects. They draw graphs and use spreadsheets to support their mathematics work. They practise their literacy skills as they produce leaflets, write stories and poems and create multi-media presentations. They carry out research to support work in science, history and geography. Pupils produce some interesting artwork on the computers. The ICT suite is not always occupied, giving teachers even greater potential for using ICT across the curriculum than is currently taken.

HUMANITIES

No lessons were seen in geography. One lesson was seen in history and samples of pupils work were scrutinised in both history and geography. However, this does not constitute sufficient evidence to enable judgements to be made about standards achieved or the quality of provision in these subjects.

75. A scrutiny of work in both **history** and **geography** shows that pupils generally cover an appropriate range of work as they move through the school with pupils having useful opportunities to learn through practical work in geography: for example with field trips to study rivers and learn how to use maps in Year 6, and traffic surveys carried out by Year 2 pupils. Good links are made to other subjects, some, for example, with a good emphasis on extending pupils' literacy skills through writing historical accounts. Leadership and management of history and geography are satisfactory with the subject leader maintaining a clear overview of the

quality of work across the school through monitoring teachers' planning and checking samples of pupils' work. She has rightly recognised the need to review the schemes of work in use for these subjects to ensure that they give enough guidance to teachers in preparing their lessons.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Music

Provision in music is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards achieved in the infant and junior years are above national expectations.
- The quality of teaching and learning is very good.
- The subject is well led.
- There is a good range of musical experiences available to pupils.

Commentary

76. Standards in music are above national expectations by the end of Years 2 and 6 and pupils of all abilities are achieving well. This is an improvement on those reported at the time of the last inspection when progress was described as satisfactory. Pupils have a good understanding of musical notation, for example Year 5 pupils are able to distinguish confidently between pulse, rhythm and ostinato, and are able to discuss the suitability of various instruments for each role. Pupils have developed good listening skills and are able to appreciate pictures conjured by composers in such music as Elgar's Enigma Variations and contemporary film music. Younger pupils have worked competently on producing graphic scores and responding to music by Vaughan Williams. The standard of singing is good, and pupils enjoy performing in lessons and in whole school assemblies, sometimes part singing in harmony. Pupils play un-pitched instruments competently and demonstrate sensitivity, sometimes accompanying singing. Many pupils play orchestral instruments and enjoy opportunities to perform in assemblies, services in church and on other special occasions in school and in the wider community.
77. The quality of teaching and learning is very good. The staff deployment for music lessons changed earlier in the school year. Previously two classes were taught as one group in the school hall, limiting the range of activities and individual attention for each pupil. All classes now benefit from a strong team of a designated teacher and teaching assistant, each of whom have good subject knowledge and a passion for the subject. All lessons are very well prepared with a good range and balance of visual and auditory material, the opportunity to practise with instruments, and to develop and refine performances. The teaching is clear and well paced, and almost all pupils are fully engaged throughout. The teacher and teaching assistant work very effectively together as a team. Learning is enhanced by encouraging and supporting the pupils to listen carefully and to evaluate the performances of others which they do thoughtfully. A recently established and designated music room further enhances the quality of teaching and learning with easy access to instruments, and displays of pupils' work in music. Assessment is good, with consistent recording of individual pupils' responses and competences. Music contributes well to the pupils' spiritual and cultural development; many pupils clearly enjoy the act of performance, are sensitive in their responses to the performance of professionals and their peers and are being helped to experience music from a range of cultures and societies.
78. Leadership of the subject is very good. The subject leader is a part-time teacher. However, in a very short time, she has established a scheme of work and plans the work for the whole school, enabling good progression and breadth. By virtue of teaching all classes, she has first hand knowledge of standards throughout the school, and has produced a good action plan with priorities for the next year. She coordinates a range of extra-curricular activities which include choir, peripatetic music lessons, music in assemblies and whole-school productions.

She has strengthened the quality and range of music resources and access to them over the whole week.

Art and design

79. Few art and design lessons were observed during the inspection. Judgements are based on the quality of work on display around the school, discussions with the very new co-ordinator and an examination of the scheme of work. The school clearly values art and ensures pupils spend an appropriate amount of time studying it. Pupils enjoy this subject and are happy to show their work and talk about it. There are good quality displays around the school which contribute to the stimulating learning environment. Pupils have the chance to acquire a good range of skills. They work with lots of different media, including paints, pastels, fabrics, clay, paper, charcoal and natural materials. They work independently and in groups, on a large and small scale. Pupils are introduced to the work of a range of artists and Years 1 and 2 pupils have done some very good work based on Aboriginal Dreamtime art and their close observational drawings of snails using pastels are of a good standard. Teachers link art to ongoing work in other subjects wherever possible. Pupils have listened to music and responded through drawings and paintings, they have used ICT to support their work and have reproduced Tudor portraits linked to history. In the few lessons observed, teachers provided competent demonstrations and had prepared good quality resources, which helped pupils learn. Teaching assistants made a positive contribution, providing those who were less confident with the support they needed to achieve success. Teachers also encouraged pupils to evaluate their own and each other's work at the end of the lessons. They did this well, making relevant comments sensitively. This clearly made a positive contribution to their social development.
80. The scheme of work is new and is helping to ensure that skills are progressively acquired as pupils move through the school. There is no whole-school procedure for assessing and recording art and design. Currently, skills are not always sufficiently well developed in the oldest pupils and this restricts their achievement on occasions. The newly appointed subject leader is knowledgeable and enthusiastic. She has identified sensible areas for development, but has not yet had time to improve provision or standards.

Design and technology

81. No design and technology (DT) was taught during the inspection. Consequently, judgements are based on an examination of pupils' DT books and photographic evidence, looking at schemes of work and talking to the very new subject leader. Pupils clearly enjoy this subject and are encouraged to show creativity and independence. They have the chance to work with the range of materials specified in the National Curriculum and they follow the 'design process' from an early age. Pupils' designing and evaluating skills are generally better than their ability to produce objects with a high quality finish. The subject leader is aware of the need to further develop the scheme of work to ensure that pupils' making skills are progressively developed as they move through the school. Teachers plan interesting activities, many of which link well with ongoing work in other subjects, for example pupils in Year 3 designed, made and sampled a healthy sandwich. This linked well with their healthy-eating work in science. Year 6 pupils have done a lot of investigative work into suitability of materials chosen to make their slippers. Since the last inspection, the subject leader has improved the scheme of work and pupils study units based on recent national guidance. Assessment follows the same guidance, but is very new and is not yet effectively used to enable teachers to plan lessons that build on what has gone before.

Physical education

82. Only one games lesson was observed during the inspection and none in gymnastics, athletics, dance, swimming or adventurous activities and so there can be no judgements about overall provision, standards attained or the quality of teaching and learning in physical education (PE)

as a whole. Further evidence was gained from talking informally to pupils, consulting with the subject leader, and from a scrutiny of teachers' plans and records.

83. The long established scheme of work addresses all the PE areas of activity from the National Curriculum but was developed before more recent national guidance was published and is in need of revision. Coverage and progression in outdoor and adventurous activities is limited. All classes take part in two different PE activities during the week, in line with national practice. The school accommodation is a strength in relation to PE, with a well proportioned school hall for gymnastics and dance, extensive flat tarmac areas and grass for games and athletics. This was evident in the one lesson observed where the extensive flat playground with markings contributed positively to the teaching and learning, as did the availability of a good range of balls. Pupils in the junior years walk to a nearby leisure centre for swimming lessons led by a specialist teacher. Pupils have the opportunity to take part in a number of extra-curricular activities such as tag rugby, netball and football, and reached the semi-final of a local football tournament earlier this year. There is also a well established gymnastics club after school, with separate sessions for infant and junior pupils. This private club is facilitated by the school, being run externally by subject specialists.
84. Leadership of the subject is unsatisfactory. The very recently nominated subject leader has a range of other whole-school responsibilities and has not had time to begin implementing her role as PE leader. There is no formal system for assessing and recording standards in PE, including swimming, and no clear view about standards in the subject, nor the quality of teaching and learning. There is no school action plan for the subject, but the subject leader has been involved in a local school cluster plan to raise the profile of PE, and in particular to promote dance.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

85. Not enough evidence was available from the small number of class lessons seen in this subject to judge the quality of teaching and learning and, therefore, the quality of overall provision. A well planned teaching programme has been introduced very recently. It makes an effective contribution to the very good work that takes place in the school as a whole to encourage pupils' personal development. It links well with activities such as assemblies, the work of the school council and the residential opportunity provided for pupils in Year 6. In the small sample of lessons seen, pupils achieved similar standards to those achieved by pupils of the same age nationally. They confidently expressed opinions and listened sensibly to those of others. They demonstrated good levels of responsibility for each other and the environment. Pupils enjoy good trusting relationships with teachers, despite the fact that a significant number are not permanent members of staff. Teachers take care to value pupils' contributions in lessons, even when they get their facts wrong. As a result, pupils are keen to take part and offer suggestions, including those who lack confidence. Teachers ensure that pupils listen well to each other and that everyone has the opportunity to have their opinions considered. The activities planned are relevant to the age group. Health education is mainly taught through personal, social and health education (PSHE) and the science curriculum. Pupils have the chance to discuss issues related to sex, alcohol, drugs and smoking, and to learn about the associated dangers. The school nurse makes an effective contribution to the teaching of some of these aspects. The very recently appointed subject leader has already ensured that there is a detailed scheme of work in place, which ensures that pupils' skills are systematically developed as they move through the school. She has also ensured that all classes study PSHE at least once a week. The school has yet to develop effective assessment procedures in this subject.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Inspection judgement

Grade

The overall effectiveness of the school	5
How inclusive the school is	4
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	5
Value for money provided by the school	5

Overall standards achieved	5
Pupils' achievement	5

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	3
Attendance	4
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

The quality of education provided by the school	4
The quality of teaching	4
How well pupils learn	4
The quality of assessment	5
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	4
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	4
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	4
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	4
The quality of the school's links with the community	4
The school's links with other schools and colleges	4

The leadership and management of the school	4
The governance of the school	4
The leadership of the headteacher	4
The leadership of other key staff	4
The effectiveness of management	5

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