

INSPECTION REPORT

PRESTON PRIMARY SCHOOL

Eaglescliffe

LEA area: Stockton-on-Tees

Unique reference number: 111535

Headteacher: Mrs Shirley Winters

Lead inspector: Miss Joyce Taylor

Dates of inspection: 6th -8th June 2005

Inspection number: 267515

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

| | |
|------------------------------|---|
| Type of school: | Primary |
| School category: | Community |
| Age range of pupils: | 3 - 11 years |
| Gender of pupils: | Mixed |
| Number on roll: | 171 |
| School address: | Laurel Road Eaglescliffe Stockton-on-Tees |
| Postcode: | TS16 OBE |
| Telephone number: | 01642 391816 |
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| Appropriate authority: | The Governing Body |
| Name of chair of governors: | Mrs Kerry Stockley |
| Date of previous inspection: | June 1999 |

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The school is situated to the south of Stockton-on-Tees in the small town of Preston-on-Tees. Almost all the pupils who attend come from the surrounding area. Normally, few pupils come and go other than at the usual times of starting and leaving. Apart from the 26 nursery children, the children are taught in mixed age classes in this small primary school. There are 171 pupils on roll, with roughly an equal number of boys and girls. Almost all the pupils are of white, British background with just a few having Asian and Chinese heritage. There is a tiny number of pupils from homes where English is not the language mainly spoken. The area presents a generally average proportion of adults with higher education and a slightly smaller than average proportion of children are entitled to free school meals. When pupils start at the school, most attain below what is expected for their age in several areas of learning. Around 26 per cent of pupils are identified as having special educational needs, which is higher than average. Six pupils have statements of special educational needs, which is high given the number of pupil's altogether. Most of the pupils receiving additional help have language difficulties, social or emotional difficulties and aspects of autism. The school has close links with other local schools through the local cluster. Since the last inspection a new headteacher is in post.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

| Members of the inspection team | | | Subject responsibilities |
|--------------------------------|----------------|----------------|--|
| 4275 | Joyce Taylor | Lead inspector | The Foundation Stage English as an additional language Mathematics Art and design Physical education |
| 8988 | Joan Cross | Lay inspector | |
| 4295 | David Dodds | Team inspector | Science Information and communication technology Design and technology Religious education |
| 27337 | Sylvia Oultram | Team inspector | Special educational needs English Geography History Music |

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a good school with some very strong features. The headteacher leads the school very well. She is particularly successful at bringing about effective change through working closely with teachers, governors, parents and the wider community. The school provides good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The headteacher leads the school very well, governors are most effective and senior staff provide strong support;
- Good teaching is raising standards and increasing the rate of progress;
- Standards in writing, whilst improving, are not high enough;
- Presentation in mathematics and writing books is unsatisfactory in reception, Years 1 and 2;
- The pupils play a significant role in the life of the school;
- Groups of parents contribute strongly to the success of the school;
- Provision for special educational needs is very good.

Improvement since the last inspection has been very good overall. Several issues highlighted at that time are now areas of strength. These are improving aspects of the curriculum, building maintenance and further involving governors and senior staff. Teaching is good. Good resourcing and teaching in information and communication technology (ICT) have lifted standards to a satisfactory level. Other significant improvements include the quality of leadership and management, special educational needs, the care, support and involvement of pupils and the partnership with parents. Standards in writing are still below average and have not improved enough.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

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

Overall, **pupils achieve well.** However, results show that standards have been falling in writing. The school has begun to turn this around and in Year 6, most pupils' achievement in writing is now good. Even so, their current writing standards, and those of the Year 2 children, are still below average. In other subjects, overall standards are average although sometimes they are above or below average where this reflects the children's capability. In the Foundation Stage, the nursery children make a good start. Reception children are on course to reach the goals they should in most areas of learning when they move to Year 1. In writing, about a quarter of the reception children are not reaching these levels. Achievement in reading, mathematics and science is good across the school. The most able pupils are achieving well and pupils with special educational needs do well for their capabilities. Children whose first language is not English achieve well.

Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are very good. The behaviour of most pupils is very good, as are their attitudes and commitment to hard work. The school has a high percentage of pupils with special educational needs who are sometimes demanding or behave unpredictably. Other children cope extremely well in these situations. The children treat each other well and have first-rate relationships with adults. Attendance is good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The school provides a good quality education for its pupils. Teaching is good overall. There is particularly good teaching and learning of reading, science, mathematics, art and design, music and ICT. Children are eager to take responsibility for their own learning and many are aware of the targets they need to tackle next. In English lessons, basic skills are taught well but teachers tend to limit time for children to consolidate and practise writing skills, and this slows their progress. In the infant classes, children's written work is often untidy. There is good teaching in the nursery and the reception/Year 1 class but the reception pupils do not always present their work neatly enough. Across the school, homework is used effectively and extends learning beyond lessons. Staff know pupils very well; they are caring and concerned that the children do well.

The curriculum is varied and interesting. Provision in the creative arts, ICT and aspects of physical development are especially strong. Visits, visitors and extra clubs and out of school activities are used very well to extend learning in several subjects. Pupils do not always develop their writing skills well enough across the curriculum.

Pupils' involvement in the life of the school is excellent. The school seeks and acts on their views extremely effectively. Parents, particularly through the excellent work of the Parent Teacher Association, provide very strong support for children's learning.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership is very good. Management is good. The headteacher has a very clear sense of where the school is going in order to ensure further improvement. Her very good leadership is seen in a persistent drive for higher standards and this is evident in improvements, particularly in special educational needs and mathematics, and in the greater involvement of all concerned in the life of the school. Senior staff are effective and all staff are extremely supportive. The performance of pupils is constantly checked. However, writing and the younger children's presentation is not monitored effectively enough to ensure the necessary rate of progress. The systems for evaluating teaching are used well and lead to improvements. Governance is very good. Individual governors are extremely supportive and interested. As a governing body, they have a sharp understanding of how well the school is doing and use this knowledge to ask about progress and to contribute to school developments. All statutory requirements are met.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Pupils say they thoroughly enjoy school and are particularly delighted over changes they have been involved with. They find lessons interesting and their teachers helpful. Parents strongly support the school and value highly the effort put in by staff.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Raise standards in writing;
- Improve standards of presentation in reception and Years 1 and 2.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Children enter the nursery with below average standards overall and get off to a good start. By the end of reception, their achievement is satisfactory. By Year 2, standards are average, apart from in writing, where they are well below average. Children achieve particularly well in reading and mathematics but their achievement in writing remains unsatisfactory. Through Years 3 to 6, despite the high proportions of special educational needs pupils, standards are average overall but below average in writing.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve particularly well in reading and speaking and listening across the school, and in mathematics in the nursery and Years 1 to 6;
- Achievement is good in science in Years 3 to 6 and is rapidly improving in Years 1 and 2;
- Ongoing strategies to improve achievement in writing have begun to raise standards, although standards are still too low and achievement remains unsatisfactory.

Commentary

1. Children in the nursery achieve well and achievement is satisfactory in reception, apart from writing and aspects of numeracy. When children join the nursery class many have social, language and mathematical skills that are less developed than would normally be expected for their age. Their knowledge and understanding of the world is limited in many cases. By the time they enter Year 1, most have made very good progress in their personal, social and emotional development and aspects of communication, language and literacy. Their progress is good in knowledge and understanding of the world, particularly in ICT, and creative development, and satisfactory in physical development. They reach the goals they should (the Early Learning Goals) and some show skills beyond this level, in all of these areas apart from writing. Mathematical development is satisfactory, apart from representing numbers alongside the corresponding quantities, where almost a quarter of the children do not reach the expected level.

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

| Standards in: | School results | National results |
|---------------|----------------|------------------|
| reading | 16.9 (17.7) | 15.5 (15.7) |
| writing | 13.6 (14.9) | 14.6 (14.6) |
| mathematics | 17.1 (17.5) | 16.2 (16.3) |

There were 17 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

2. Over the past few years the pattern of national test scores shows standards to be strong in reading and mathematics by the end of Year 2 and fluctuating in science. By the end of Year 6, standards have generally been above average in science and the reading aspect of English, and have recently improved to above average in mathematics. In both the infant and junior stages, there has been a pattern of weaker standards in writing. The inspection findings are that standards in reading, mathematics and science remain secure. Most pupils are achieving well in these subjects, because teachers have a good knowledge of what to teach and new initiatives, for example more independent work in science in Years 1 and 2, are proving effective. As a result of new strategies to improve standards in writing through increasing children's interest and enjoyment, Year 2 children have become more enthusiastic

writers and children's achievement has improved overall by Year 6. Standards in writing have drifted, because children have not consolidated and practised their skills well enough. Standards are now improving, although these new developments are not yet sufficiently well rooted to raise scores in the 2005 national tests.

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

| Standards in: | School results | National results |
|----------------|----------------------|------------------|
| English | 26.0 (26.0) | 26.9 (26.8) |
| mathematics | 28.4 (23.7) | 27.0 (26.8) |
| <u>science</u> | <u>1 29.4</u> (27.7) | 1 28.6 (26.6) |

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

3. Test results sometimes fluctuate because some year groups are quite small and have a high percentage of children with special educational needs. These pupils, the vast majority are boys, are supported well and make good progress.
4. The influence of the headteacher's leadership is seen in improvements in particular subjects, for example in science in Year 2, where weaknesses in pupils' investigative skills have been identified and tackled effectively. A strong focus on speaking and listening, reading and numeracy has raised standards in these subjects and the same approaches are now being used to support writing. For some aspects of art and design, music and sport, where the children also reach above average standards, their teachers seek inspiration from outside specialists, as well as using their own expertise. In ICT, the co-ordinator has raised standards across the school by supporting staff and by teaching almost all year groups.
5. Boys and girls achieve equally well, although boys' standards are lower overall than girls' as most of the special educational needs pupils are boys. The most able pupils (gifted and talented) are achieving well because their work is challenging, and good opportunities are provided for them to excel in areas such as music and sport. Children for whom English is an additional language achieve well and some show particular talents, in mathematics for example, that are nurtured carefully by the school.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils have very good attitudes towards their learning and their behaviour is very good. Provision for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good overall. Attendance is good and punctuality is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' willingness to contribute to school life is exceptional;
- Pupils work and play together very well and relationships are very good throughout the school.

Commentary

6. Pupils work hard and want to succeed because of the very positive climate for learning that staff create. Children like coming to school and say that they particularly enjoy lessons made interesting through visits and visitors, and the firm friendships that they form. Attendance has been above average for several years and most pupils get to school on time. However, lateness is on the increase. The school is working hard to overcome this concern.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

| Authorised absence | | Unauthorised absence | |
|--------------------|-----|----------------------|-----|
| School data | 4.6 | School data | 0.0 |
| 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.

7. Staff have established an exceptionally effective school council which provides pupils with opportunities to make a difference to aspects of school life that really matter to them. The councillors are rightly very proud of their considerable achievements, such as their input into the design of their new library and plans for the school to be more environmentally aware.
8. Through the tremendous commitment of staff and parents, pupils of all ages, apart from nursery children, enjoy a broad range of clubs that strengthen relationships and encourage development of new interests and talents. More than half of the school attended at least one of the clubs during the past year, showing pupils' willingness to continue learning in their leisure time.
9. Pupils are very good at organising 'craze of the week' activities, that promote co-operative play very successfully. They say that their 'friendship stop' works well for those who need help in finding a playmate. Pupils from minority ethnic groups are fully embraced into friendship groups and the life of the school. Most pupils and parents rightly feel that the school's procedures for dealing with bullying are effective but there is, nevertheless, some disquiet about this amongst a small minority of parents. Inspection findings indicate that anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism, is rare. There have been no exclusions from the school during the past year. Throughout the school day children with special educational needs are supported very well.
10. The quality of collective worship has improved since the last inspection and is now good. Staff involve pupils more in the proceedings and actively encourage them to relate the social and moral messages to their personal experiences. Multicultural education has also strengthened through the school's cultural diversity week, visits and visitors, and through learning about different faiths and cultures in lessons such as religious education and art.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is good. Teaching and learning are good overall. The curriculum is supported particularly well by extra activities that provide pupils with many interesting experiences. There are strong and effective links with parents. Links with the wider community are very good.

Teaching and learning

There is good teaching and learning in all classes, and some exceptional work in ICT in the nursery. Across the school the learning is more challenging than at the time of the last inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers ensure all pupils are included in good learning opportunities;
- Teachers have good knowledge of the subjects and intervene effectively to improve learning;
- Expectations of presentation are not high enough in Year 1 and 2, and in all year groups children do not consolidate and practise skills well enough to ensure they make satisfactory progress in writing.

Commentary

11. Teaching in nursery and reception provides children with a good start. The younger children learn to understand the purposes of writing and how to use their knowledge of counting to make numbered collections of objects. Excellent teaching of ICT ensures nursery children learn basic computer skills and enjoy using the hardware. Good teaching ensures children can count accurately and reading, speaking and listening skills are taught well in both classes. Children have good opportunities to describe their own experiences and explain their ideas. Older children in the classes are challenged well to use their skills and have good opportunities to think for themselves and share their ideas. They are taught to think of others and learn to concentrate and enjoy their tasks. Work in the children's mathematics and writing books is untidy in reception and not enough attention is paid to correcting the formation of letters and numbers or to correct the spacing of words.
12. In Years 1 to 6, teaching is good overall. There are particular strengths in helping children to use their imagination and talk about exciting ideas as a preparation for writing. This also leads to strong achievement in speaking, listening and reading. However, when Year 1 and 2 children come to recording their thoughts, some unsatisfactory expectations of presentation spoil their work and writing is frequently very brief or unfinished, because insufficient time is allocated to the completion of tasks. In Years 3 to 6, presentation of work improves and children are committed learners who apply themselves fully to extending their understanding and skills. The pace of learning is good in all circumstances, other than the timing in literacy lessons. The children have insufficient time to consolidate and practise writing skills and this has kept standards lower than they should be. Mathematics is taught well. Teachers think of interesting activities to motivate the children, who receive good support from classroom assistants where necessary, to help them concentrate. Recent effective improvements in the teaching of science in Years 1 and 2 have led to faster progress and significantly improved standards.
13. Assessment strategies are satisfactory overall, although there are some good features. Evidence about what the children can do is collected regularly, and for children in Years 1 to 6 it is linked to sub-levels of the national curriculum. Children are set targets for literacy and numeracy based on this data. The information is reviewed twice each year and new targets are set. This process is thorough and rigorous and each child is discussed carefully. In a few cases, the targets do not represent good progress and these children are expected to make steady or even slower than average progress according to their targets. In reality, because teachers work from yearly teaching plans, many of these children progress at a fast pace and in most subjects their achievement is good. In other subjects, assessment is satisfactory and is linked to blocks of work the children cover.
14. The Foundation Stage children are closely monitored through all areas of learning and their development is recorded in several ways, using a range of assessment schemes. The staff know the children well and recognise the stages they have reached in the nationally recommended curriculum. There is no system that links the children's actual progress to this curriculum, although a method of managing this is being introduced.
15. Pupils with special educational needs receive very good support. They achieve well against the precise targets that are matched accurately to their needs. The large team of classroom assistants is very effective and staff know precisely what to do in order to move the children's learning forward. Children who have difficulties in managing their behaviour are settled and calmed quickly.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 21 lessons

| Excellent | Very good | Good | Satisfactory | Unsatisfactory | Poor | Very Poor |
|-----------|-----------|------|--------------|----------------|------|-----------|
| 1 | 2 | 15 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 |

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

The curriculum

The school provides an exciting and challenging curriculum. Provision is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Opportunities to learn outside the school day are very good;
- Very good provision is made for special educational needs;
- More time is needed to improve writing skills.

Commentary

16. In nursery and reception, the children have a good range of learning opportunities that interest and stimulate them. In Years 1 to 6, the 'topic' approach and weeks when lessons focus on specific subjects, give the pupils opportunities to extend their learning practically. The curriculum has improved since the time of the last inspection. It is planned carefully and provides clear guidelines to teachers about what content to include. It has been adapted well to meet the needs of pupils in mixed age classes. The school has to reorganise classes on an annual basis. Each year the curriculum for each class is modified to match the needs of that particular single or two year age group. This is done scrupulously by tracking a pupil through their school career to see what content, knowledge, skills and understanding they have received. From this, the teaching programmes for the year are devised. Although this works well, consolidating children's writing skills needs to be developed.
17. Links with other schools and local centres enrich the curriculum. Through a strong involvement with the local secondary school and other specialist centres, the children have experienced opportunities for Chinese silk printing, ceramics and African music and dance. Out of school activities provide very good additional learning opportunities. Activities for the children include aspects of the arts, and a wide range of sports and community projects, sometimes using local amenities such as the museum. There are good opportunities for children to visit sites of historical interest and the school uses the local environment well.
18. Children with special educational needs are very well provided for by individual and group support of a very high order; gifted and talented children are also recognised and encouraged. For example, younger able children work with older groups in mathematics and literacy to ensure they are challenged well.
19. The accommodation is improving and plans are in place to develop this further. The new library and ICT suite are assets to the school. The staff have worked hard to make the building welcoming, both inside and out. Overall, resources are satisfactory, they are good in the Foundation Stage, ICT and English.

Care, guidance and support

Staff take very good care of pupils and support and guide them very effectively. They seek, value and act upon pupils' views exceptionally well.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pastoral care and overall provision are very strong;
- Pupils with special educational needs receive very good support and guidance;
- The involvement of pupils in the life and development of the school is excellent.

Commentary

20. Parents are justifiably very pleased with the care that their children receive at school. They particularly praise the kind and dedicated staff, who cherish and respect the pupils and develop happy, confident learners with strong personal values. Staff actively encourage parents to share any concerns about their children by assuring them that there is no such thing as a trivial worry. Almost all parents feel that induction arrangements work really well, whether at the usual time or when pupils move from another school. A child who had been bullied elsewhere has settled in wonderfully well and now enjoys school to the delight of the parents who applaud the 'faultless support' of the staff.
21. The school is rightly very proud of its all embracing nature. It welcomes pupils of all abilities and backgrounds, some with profound learning and socialisation difficulties. At the time of the last inspection, provision for pupils with special educational needs was generally good but there was insufficient support for those in Years 3 to 6. This deficiency has been tackled effectively. Teaching assistants skilfully intervene now when help is needed, and specially designed education plans and 'catch-up' programmes enable them to achieve as well as everyone else. Provision for pupils who are able and talented has also become well established in recent years.
22. The school's assertive discipline policy works really well because staff implement it consistently and fairly. Bullying is dealt with effectively through positive peer pressure, well publicised strategies, counselling for victims and perpetrators, and involvement of parents. Pupils are very clear that they have adults to talk to if they have any worries, citing teachers, teaching assistants and midday supervisors as good listeners.
23. 'Wrap around' care, offered on site by the long established Preston Children's Centre, is very popular and wide ranging. Breakfast, lunch and after school clubs, holiday and teacher training day care are available. Nursery staff link effectively with the playgroup that meets at the centre, so that children are well prepared for transition to the school.
24. The school council is extremely effective and pupils have initiated many changes that have given them immense satisfaction. Small, yet to them important, issues, such as being able to sit with their friends over lunch and getting rid of the annoying session bell, have been supported by the staff, who have also encouraged major decisions in school development. Pupils are also suitably involved in discussions with staff about how they are getting on with their work and ways to improve.
25. Attendance and punctuality are monitored effectively and the education welfare officer is involved with any families that have patterns of absence or persistent lateness. Child protection and health and safety procedures are well considered and executed.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school enjoys very good partnerships with parents, other schools and the wider community.

- Communication with parents has improved greatly over the last six years;
- The Parent Teacher Association makes an excellent contribution to school and community life;
- Very productive links with other schools help to raise standards;
- Effective use of community amenities and visitors bring many benefits for the pupils.

Commentary

26. Staff and governors have worked very hard to improve relationships with parents since the last inspection and have succeeded in winning their trust and confidence. They actively seek parents' opinions and respond suitably to their suggestions. Parents' views about the school are very positive now, and many took the trouble to write to inspectors in glowing terms about its provision.
27. Parents appreciate the regular overviews from class teachers that now brief them in advance about their children's learning. They value the meetings that explain methods of teaching and ways that they might help their children to learn at home. Reading and mathematics have formed recent foci. Staff also provided a 'lads and dads' evening to motivate boys and activity afternoons to show parents how children in the nursery learn through play.
28. The Parent Teacher Association is exceptionally effective and has gained a coveted national award for its outstanding contribution to extra-curricular provision. The association also organises extremely successful social and fundraising events, that benefit the pupils and bring the whole community together. Parents strongly praise the considerable support of the headteacher and staff with these events.
29. Staff provide clear information for parents about their children's progress. There are termly opportunities for formal discussions and parents are welcome to contact the staff, by appointment, and at other times if they have any anxieties. The secretary, often parents' first port of call, is very welcoming and reassuring, efficiently communicating messages between home and school, and dealing sensitively with any concerns. Staff usefully share targets for children's development with parents and enlist their support. Parents whose children have special educational needs are fully involved in the termly reviews of their progress. Families are encouraged to develop computer skills together by attending courses in school run by the adult education service.
30. The school's website, recently updated by a parent with expertise, is developing well. Online, parents can access newsletters, the prospectus, information about the Foundation Stage and the school's fascinating hundred-year history.
31. Very strong links with the local secondary school, to which most pupils transfer, help to smooth transition, particularly for those with special educational needs. Expertise and facilities there, connected with the school's specialist performing arts status, are tapped into very successfully to broaden pupils' experiences of music, drama and art. Able mathematicians also benefit from problem solving workshops at the secondary school.
32. The school has established very close links with the on-site Children's Centre, the local church and Preston Hall Museum, which pupils have 'adopted' through a local initiative. Theatre groups, artists, authors and poets bring learning alive through visits to school that are much enjoyed by the pupils. Relevant and purposeful off-site educational trips have recently focussed, wisely, on improving pupils' writing. Also, from within the local community volunteers are helping Year 5 pupils to create a stunning banner on a musical theme.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership of the school is very good, and management is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher provides impressive leadership and drive that commands the respect of the staff, governors and the wider community;
- The governance of the school is very good;
- Appropriate strategies to raise the standards of writing have not been implemented quickly enough.

Commentary

33. At the time of the previous inspection many aspects of the leadership and management of the school required attention. These concerns have been resolved. The school is run with a sense of purpose, high aspiration and clear plans for the future. There is strong and effective teamwork between staff, the governing body and parents. This has resulted in outstanding involvement of pupils and parents in aspects of the day-to-day life of the school. Senior staff take responsibility well for improving standards in their areas of responsibility and have worked effectively, particularly in mathematics and special needs, where provision is strong.
34. The governance of the school has been 'turned around' since the previous inspection. The chairwoman provides strong, informed and supportive leadership. Governors are now very knowledgeable, committed and effective. For example, resources for ICT have improved out of all recognition and have, alongside good teaching, helped standards improve from being unsatisfactory to being average, and in some aspects above average. Strategic planning in this area, as in many other aspects of the school, has been very good.
35. The school manages its finances very well. The professional expertise of some governors is combined with the management skills of the school secretary to good effect. The best value possible is gained from spending, even to the level of subject leaders being accountable for their budget allocations. For example, the ICT co-ordinator has reviewed improvements and reported back to the governing body in order for governors to review how effectively finances support developments. The governors and staff recognised an urgent need to improve accommodation and the long-term building development plan is having a marked impact on the standards of the school through, for example, the provision of a new library and ICT room.
36. Whilst these areas of management are very good, the school has yet to deal effectively with the below average standards in writing. Despite a huge effort to make the work stimulating and interesting, the school did not take account of the need to provide sufficient opportunities for pupils to practise and develop their writing skills.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

| Income and expenditure (£) | | Balances (£) | |
|----------------------------|---------|--------------------------------------|--------|
| Total income | 451,426 | Balance from previous year | 11,850 |
| Total expenditure | 452,629 | Balance carried forward to next year | 10,602 |
| Expenditure per pupil | 2,929 | | |

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 good and some aspects are very good. When the nursery children start school, for the most part their standards are below what one would expect for their age, in particular their confidence, language and counting skills. By the time they are ready to start Year 1, although most of the children usually reach the expected goals, almost a quarter do not in aspects of numeracy and writing. The Foundation Stage is led and managed appropriately by two teachers. The teachers, nursery nurse and teaching assistants work well together to plan and provide an interesting curriculum, with stronger teaching overall in the nursery.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children show a strengthening level of confidence as learners;
- They recognise that the needs of others are important.

Commentary

37. Children are taught very effectively to become independent and confident learners and they achieve well. By the time they leave reception, their standards are average. They make sensible choices about their play and work activities from the stimulating resources, and organise themselves well. In the nursery, they wait their turn for resources and if someone tries to help themselves, they point out the error politely. For example, a child using the toy farm asked 'Did our teacher tell you to take the cows?' when another intruded. There is good provision for children to talk about their own emotions and listen to the views and feelings of others. A very young nursery child, for example, anxiously hugged and comforted another, who was crying because her knees were grazed. By the end of reception, children readily pass resources to each other when the whole group are working together.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Provision in communication, language and literacy is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are very good opportunities for children to talk and listen to each other and to improve their communication skills;
- Writing is underdeveloped by the time the children leave reception, because the teacher's expectations in this area are not high enough.

Commentary

38. By the time they leave reception, children reach the expected standards in reading and aspects of their speaking and listening, and they achieve well in these areas. In both classes, talk is a high priority and is used effectively by the staff. As a result, children are generally confident speakers and contribute to discussions readily. Reception children still have a limited vocabulary and need prompting to recall phrases, such as staying 'in the shade' and using cream to avoid 'sunburn'. In the nursery, children are learning to form letters correctly and enjoy 'writing' in their creative play areas. In reception, children's standards are below average in writing and the most able children barely reach average standards. Although they recognise many initial letter sounds and use these to try and spell new words, the children's writing is immature, with few spaces between words and many letters misformed. The teaching of this aspect is unsatisfactory.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children count confidently;
- A high proportion of reception children cannot represent written numbers against quantities.

Commentary

39. Children reach the expected goals in most aspects of numeracy by the time they leave reception and their achievement is good overall. Much of the teaching is good. Very good opportunities to sort, arrange and count through play and direct teaching sessions are provided in the nursery. In reception, children extend these skills to a level where most can name the numbers readily and arrange them in order. They can recognise shapes and sort them by colour in order, for example, to play dice games. In both classes, much of children's understanding is reinforced through everyday counting sessions and, in reception, number names are chanted and checked on number lines and squares. Nursery children speak confidently about numbers and can make simple comparisons to illustrate their talk. For example, 'your footprints are big next to mine'. In reception, however, children's books show that about a quarter of them are unable to write numbers to nine correctly and cannot link the number accurately to specific quantities. In this area, expectations of these children are too low and teaching is unsatisfactory.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Provision in knowledge and understanding of the world is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good activities extend the children's experiences and they achieve well.

Commentary

40. The nursery children arrive with limited understanding of the world and rapidly expand their insight through play activities and good direct teaching. They have many opportunities to handle interesting resources and to investigate, for example, the properties of shaving foam. In both classes, children are familiar with computers and enjoy using them. Good, and sometimes excellent, teaching ensures they make rapid progress in handling hardware and learning basic ICT skills. When talking about everyday events, the children use simple vocabulary, although they readily adopt terms used by the staff during good opportunities to share views. Their play is guided towards reinforcing information they have been given and exploring familiar situations. There is good access outside and children use their outdoor area daily to use large or messy equipment. Standards are at the expected level by the end of reception.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are good opportunities for active learning.

Commentary

41. The classrooms are provided with a well designed outdoor area where many aspects of physical development are planned. Children have good opportunities to play with large scale resources and to move energetically. They use the spaces sensibly and are aware of safety aspects, such as the dangers of colliding on their wheeled toys. Good management of the tasks ensures children develop independence during these activities. One group of nursery children, for example, worked by themselves for an extended period, arranging and rearranging large plastic blocks in a variety of linear designs. There are many effective opportunities for children to develop fine control of objects and precise tools, such as brushes and pencils. In reception, children are not always expected to extend this control in learning to form their letters and numbers carefully enough.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children use creative play areas thoughtfully to develop their imagination.

Commentary

42. In both classes, the children produce drawings and painting that are individual and show their developing skills. In nursery, pictures of everyday events show good detail and outdoor chalk drawings show careful use of colour and space. In reception, similar subjects are treated with increased sophistication. The standards in both classes are average. When using their imagination in play situations, the nursery children's standards are above average. They adopt pretend roles within their familiar home and family experiences. For example, three boys, dressed flamboyantly in a variety of make believe costumes, prepared and arranged food before pretending to eat it. Good teaching ensures resources and settings help children extend their imaginative ideas and achieve well.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

English

Provision for English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in reading are above average in Years 1 and 2, and in speaking and listening across the school;
- Good teaching enables children to use imaginative ideas in their writing, but not enough time is given to consolidate the basic skills of writing, and overall standards are too low.

Commentary

43. Over the past few years, national test results show that children's standards, by the end of Year 2, have been above average in reading and below average in writing. By the end of Year 6, standards in English have been below average. The school's assessment data shows that, as in Year 2, the older children reached higher standards in reading than in writing. The inspection evidence shows that current standards in writing present a similar picture as before, with below average standards in Year 6 and standards that are well below average in Year 2. Although the Year 2 children's achievement is improving, it is still unsatisfactory, whilst achievement in Year 6 shows considerable improvement and is good. Standards in reading are average in Year 6 and above average in Year 2, and standards in speaking and listening are above average across the school. Children achieve well in these areas.

44. The school has identified the need to raise standards in writing and has put in place measures to speed improvement. The involvement of authors, poets and enactments by characters such as 'Claudia the Roman' and 'Leonard da Vinci' has resulted in writing of higher quality. On these occasions, the children's writing reflects their excitement and they write interesting pieces of work. Teachers are particularly good at providing children with imaginative ideas and building up their use of unusual vocabulary. This is particularly effective for higher attaining pupils, who excel in their use of creative vocabulary. Although teachers provide these stimulating activities and demonstrate writing strategies regularly, they are not providing frequent enough opportunities to allow children to consolidate and practise their basic writing skills. This slows their progress. In Years 1 and 2, many children are now keen to write because teachers have worked hard to raise their level of interest. Teachers demonstrate writing and support pupils but do not insist on correct letter formation or proper spacing between words. Children's presentation of their work is poor. Much of the work is unfinished, indicating that insufficient time was allocated for these tasks.
45. Throughout the school, children are good listeners and confident speakers. In Year 2, for example, during work based on 'The Boy who cried Wolf', the teacher asked the children 'Who had the wolf eaten and how did they know?' One child replied 'It's the man. Look the wolf's left the clothes and shoes and there's bones on the plate Ooh, how gruesome!' Older children know how to be persuasive. In their discussion about the ethics of keeping elephants in zoos, their arguments for and against were well structured and mature. Children with special educational needs are supported sensitively by experienced classroom assistants. This ensures that they are fully involved in the lessons and progress well. For example, throughout the school the children quietly rehearse what they want to say with the assistant. When they ask or answer questions, they are confident and what they say is well structured. Children with English as an additional language are taught well and make good progress overall.
46. Group teaching of reading, carefully matched to different ability levels, is ensuring that children are learning to use a good range of strategies to work out the meaning of unfamiliar words. By the end of Year 6, the majority of children read confidently and expressively. There is a good range of attractive books for them to choose from, as well as making selections from the library. In Years 1 and 2, systematic teaching of letter sounds is ensuring that children are able to put these together to form words. They read regularly and use their reading skills well in many different situations.
47. The co-ordinator is now leading the subject well in identifying weaknesses and providing many strategies to improve the provision for writing. The improvements in writing have been managed satisfactorily overall and this is now strengthening as standards are beginning to rise. The new library is attractive and well stocked. The children can use books, television, video and computers to find information. The library is spacious enough for whole classes to work together developing information retrieval skills.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

48. Good use is made of children's reading, speaking and listening skills in all subjects. There are frequent opportunities for children to use word processing as part of their work. Children apply their writing skills well when visitors come to school to support subjects, such as history or following a visit to a museum or environmental site. However, examples in pupils' history, geography, science, design and technology and religious education books show that pupils do not consolidate their writing skills effectively enough as their recording is below average.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching ensures children make good progress.

Commentary

49. In 2004, national test results show that standards in mathematics improved sharply in Year 6 and were above average. The current Year 6 children are reaching average standards overall. There is a high proportion of special educational needs pupils in this year group, several of whom are reaching average levels in mathematics because their learning difficulty is associated with aspects of literacy. Generally, the Year 6 children have achieved well and reached standards that are appropriate for their levels of capability. Children in Year 2 are also reaching average standards. They have made good progress during the year and have achieved well.
50. The school focus for improvement has been on developing the pupils' calculation strategies, including rapid recall of number facts. Good teaching ensures children benefit from this work in all year groups, as children can demonstrate their understanding of the relationship between numbers confidently and accurately. In Year 2, using hundred squares, the children add and subtract rapidly. By Year 6, children are able to design tricky formulae to catch each other out, using obscure but repeated series of calculations. For example, 'Add five to the first number, multiply the second number by seven and take the first answer from the second answer.' Pupils' good understanding means that some of the most able can unravel and explain the most difficult problems. These children are challenged particularly well. This work is brisk and demanding and prepares the pupils well for their subsequent work on other aspects of mathematics.
51. The effective co-ordinator has good subject knowledge and a clear view of what needs to be done. The improvements have had an impact on standards, particularly in Year 6, and this is supported by very effective monitoring strategies to check how new ideas are being put into practice across the school. The school sets pupils' numeracy targets and these are used to check progress twice each year. In a number of cases, teachers press on with the work expected to be covered in the year and children keep up and overtake their targets.

Mathematics across the curriculum

52. Pupils are provided with satisfactory opportunities to use mathematics across the curriculum. They create graphs and charts and measure in science. ICT supports mathematics appropriately, both by using the large computer linked boards to explain mathematical concepts and by providing children with stimulating opportunities to demonstrate their understanding, using the exciting technology.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Weaknesses have been identified and resolved, leading to higher standards;
- The teaching of science is particularly strong in Years 3 to 6.

Commentary

53. For the past few years, standards at the end of Year 2 have been average overall, although lower for investigative science than other aspects. In 2004, however, standards fell to well below average. Standards at the age of 11 have generally been above average. Last year standards were well above average when compared to similar schools. Current standards overall are at the levels expected for children in Years 2 and 6. This shows a good improvement in Year 2. Although pupils' ability to undertake scientific enquiry is still below the expected level, they are making good progress and standards are improving.
54. The school's monitoring procedures identified that in Years 1 and 2 using the children's general 'topic book' to record their science work was not a good idea. The co-ordinator noted the work was not presented well, standards and coverage were unclear and it was difficult to see how much the children had progressed. The children now have science books and their standards and rate of progress are evident.
55. Weaknesses in investigation and enquiry in Years 1 and 2 have been resolved. The pupils' current work, on plant growth, is well organised and pays good attention to scientific approaches. As a result, more pupils are now reaching the expected level. Occasionally, insufficient attention is paid to identifying the more able pupils and making sure that their work is challenging enough to ensure they reach higher than average standards. Science is taught well in Years 3 to 6. The pupils are developing good enquiry skills, such as asking scientific questions that require testing. They understand the need to create fair tests; during an investigation into habitat preferences of woodlice, Year 6 boys suggested that the dampness would need to be controlled in order to establish if this was a factor. These independent opportunities provide good opportunities for the teacher to extend the most able learners and to provide additional support for those with special educational needs.
56. The subject is led well. Each year the pupils' work is closely scrutinised and a written report prepared for all teachers on the strengths and areas for development. The school has developed an appropriate range of assessment techniques, including one where pupils record what they know about a topic at the outset of their work and again at the conclusion, and then compare the two.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The teaching of ICT is good;
- ICT is led well and resources are very good.

Commentary

57. Standards in ICT are at the expected level for pupils at the end of Years 2 and 6. Teaching is good throughout the school and the decision to use a specialist teacher has been very effective. All children make good progress, including those with special education needs, who have extra support during lessons from teaching assistants. Lessons build on earlier learning and the teachers' very good subject knowledge and expectations of high standards ensure progress is good.
58. The subject is led well and the support for colleagues and the introduction of new technologies is very effective. ICT is very well resourced, with a very high quality computer suite and a good range of appropriate software. There are computers in classrooms and a good range of additional equipment, such as floor robots and digital cameras. Pupils' previous work is not organised in a way that shows the progress they have made or easily identifies what needs to be learnt next.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

59. Whilst pupils are acquiring the skills of ICT well, their use of ICT in other subjects is satisfactory. In some classes and in some subjects, ICT is used well by pupils to record their work, find things out and communicate. For example, Year 3 and 4 pupils have skilfully used a blend of text and images to write horror and suspense stories, based upon the reading of a Shelley novel. In some subjects, such as science, very little ICT activity is planned into the work. This is improving, as teachers become more experienced in using computer-linked whiteboards throughout the school, to extend learning in several subjects.

HUMANITIES

60. No lessons were seen in geography and only one lesson was seen in history. These subjects, therefore, have been sampled but no overall judgements are made about the quality of provision.
61. In both of these subjects, the standards of work seen are in line with what is expected for children at the end of Years 2 and 6. Good use is made of the local environment and visits to places of interest. Links with other subjects, such as a field study of coastal habitats as part of science work, was undertaken well by pupils in the oldest class. These well designed activities help to bring the subject alive. In their history lesson, children in Years 1 and 2 handled artefacts from the past, such as a flat iron and dolly peg, and they showed an understanding of how times have changed as they tried to deduce what the artefacts were used for. Older children are able to imagine what life was like in classical Greek times, through writing news reports, for example about the Battle of Marathon. In geography, younger children have compared their own lives with others in different countries, including Tocuaro, a village in Mexico. Recently, older children spoke to a road safety officer and conducted a survey to find out about the problems of traffic in the High Street in a nearby town. Following this, they came up with appropriate suggestions to help solve the problem.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good use is made of visits and visitors to bring the subject to life;
- The school provides a good range of opportunities for pupils to apply learning to their daily lives.

Commentary

62. Pupils enjoy religious education and their standards are in line with the agreed syllabus. They make satisfactory progress. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of Christianity and two other major world faiths is extended by visits to places of worship. The local church is used frequently and Year 2 pupils visit a mosque. In Key Stage 2, pupils' knowledge and understanding of the rituals, celebrations, symbols and artefacts are further developed. For example, the pupils of Years 4 and 5 made a guidebook on aspects of the Jewish faith. Some pupils acquired a photograph and information about Shabbat Candles through searching on the Internet, and then presented their findings in their own words. Visitors to the school extend learning by explaining to the children how their beliefs influence their own lives.
63. The school provides opportunities for pupils to apply what they have learnt in lessons to their daily lives. For example, Year 5 and 6 pupils followed up a reading of the Lord's Prayer by exploring their views and feelings on forgiveness. A very powerful and thoughtful discussion centred upon an account of someone forgiving a serious assault on a family member. When the lesson concluded with the telling of the parable of the prodigal son, the pupils brought fresh insights to the story.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

64. No lessons were observed in art and design, design and technology or physical education and no overall judgements on provision can be made in these subjects.
65. Standards in art and design are above average. Across the school, children work with a good awareness of detail, as well as thoughtful use of colour and space. In Years 1 and 2, pictures are full of action and brilliant colour. In Years 3 to 6, children make good use of outside support. Members of the community, visiting artists and art centres help the children develop expertise in ceramics, sculpture and painting. The work is original and shows clearly developing skills, as children gain experience and expertise. Work in art lessons shows children apply their skills well and build up a good range of approaches to represent their ideas.
66. The standards of work seen in design and technology are at the expected level overall. Pupils make things well, with care, flair and imagination to a standard that is higher than average. There are some lovely displays of pupils' high quality work, such as the chairs made by Year 3 and 4 pupils. Pupils' designing skills do not reach the same high standards as their making skills. The designs are not developed sufficiently by Year 6 to include such things as scale, detail of joints and fastenings or annotating modifications. Similarly, their evaluation of work does not become sufficiently analytical or result in appropriate ideas for improvement. The school is already working to raise standards in design through intensive, three day sessions each term, when design is given particular attention.
67. In physical education, the range of learning opportunities covers the full curriculum and this is broadened through the wide range of extra activities provided. Many sports clubs are run by staff, parents and local specialists who provide coaching. The school joins tournaments and is frequently successful in reaching finals or ultimately winning. Provision is limited as the hall is small and the field is several streets away. Despite this, the curriculum is good. Plans for a new sports hall are in place and building is expected to start before Christmas.

Music

Provision in music is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average and children sing tunefully and with enthusiasm.

Commentary

68. Children reach above average standards in all year groups. They are provided with a good range of activities and the curriculum is extended through visiting music specialists, who support some children to play violin and brass instruments. The school encourages children to perform in assemblies and several gifted child pianists, who accompanied singing and provided incidental music, were very confident and greatly appreciated by the audience.
69. Pupils sing sweetly, tunefully and with enthusiasm. They respond well to teachers, when being conducted, and show they can vary the volume accurately. When choosing instruments to convey a 'swishy-swashy' sound, Year 1 and 2 pupils' evident knowledge of the sounds each instrument makes meant they selected well. In Years 4 and 5, the children's responses when listening to a wide range of different music show a developing maturity. They can identify instruments, such as saxophone, harmonica and violin. They can show how music affects them emotionally, by describing how different music makes them feel and identifying imaginary scenes conveyed by the music. The oldest pupils successfully perform pieces they have composed in groups and include 'rap' lyrics. They are justifiably proud of their compositions.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

70. Staff place high emphasis upon promoting pupils' personal and social skills right from the outset in the Foundation Stage. In reception and Year 1, for example, pupils listened to a story about children who quarrelled, fell out and later became friends again after exchanging apologies. Discussions during the lesson enabled pupils to empathise with the characters and learn from classmates' personal experiences that squabbles can often be resolved easily.
71. Staff promote good citizenship very effectively. The school council, for example, is a powerful forum for pupils to influence decision making within school, and in the wider community through charitable fundraising. Pupils have come up with the good idea of alerting staff to concerns or praiseworthy actions through a prominently sited 'come forward box'. Issues arising are then discussed with staff, either in private, in class or in assembly as appropriate. Every Year 6 pupil takes personal responsibility for helping the school to run smoothly by maturely undertaking a duty, however minor.
72. The school is working towards gaining the 'Healthy School' standard. Sex education and drugs education are taught effectively. Visitors, such as the school nurse, community police and representatives from the Justice Support Project, teach the pupils how to make healthy life choices and keep safe.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

| Inspection judgement | Grade |
|---|-------|
| The overall effectiveness of the school | 3 |
| How inclusive the school is | 2 |
| How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection | 2 |
| Value for money provided by the school | 3 |
| Overall standards achieved | 4 |
| Pupils' achievement | 3 |
| Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities (ethos) | 2 |
| Attendance | 3 |
| Attitudes | 2 |
| Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions | 2 |
| Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | 2 |
| The quality of education provided by the school | 3 |
| The quality of teaching | 3 |
| How well pupils learn | 3 |
| The quality of assessment | 4 |
| How well the curriculum meets pupils needs | 3 |
| Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities | 2 |
| Accommodation and resources | 4 |
| Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety | 2 |
| Support, advice and guidance for pupils | 2 |
| How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views | 1 |
| The effectiveness of the school's links with parents | 2 |
| The quality of the school's links with the community | 2 |
| The school's links with other schools and colleges | 2 |
| The leadership and management of the school | 2 |
| The governance of the school | 2 |
| The leadership of the headteacher | 2 |
| The leadership of other key staff | 3 |
| The effectiveness of management | 3 |

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