

INSPECTION REPORT

ANNIE LENNARD INFANT SCHOOL

Smethwick

LEA area: Sandwell

Unique reference number: 103932

Acting headteacher: Mrs Michelle Hollingsworth

Lead inspector: Mrs Sue Chesters
Dates of inspection: 13th – 16th October 2003

Inspection number: 255350
Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant school
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 – 8
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll;	140
School address:	The Oval Smethwick West Midlands
Postcode:	B67 6LE
Telephone number:	0121 429 4284
Fax number:	0121 429 9032
Appropriate authority:	Local education authority
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs J Wyer
Date of previous inspection:	08/06/1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Annie Lennard Infant School is in Smethwick. It educates pupils aged from three to eight. It is part of a Federation with Moat Farm Junior School and is unusual in that, although an infant school, it has a Year 3 class. There are 140 pupils on roll. This is about the same number as at the time of the last inspection. The school serves a mixed area with most pupils living locally. Eighty per cent of pupils live in the most deprived area of Smethwick. Pupils' attainment at entry is below average. Fourteen per cent of pupils receive free school meals. There are in the region of twenty seven per cent of pupils who are eligible for free school meals. However, only about one half claim their entitlement. Fifteen per cent of pupils come from ethnic-minority groups. Twenty six per cent of pupils are identified as having special educational needs. Their needs include moderate learning difficulties and speech and communication difficulties. One pupil has a formal statement of special educational need. A significant number of pupils (about one quarter) transfer into the school during the course of a school year. This is very high.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
23196	Sue Chesters	Lead inspector	English, Citizenship, Geography, History, Music, Religious education, Foundation Stage, English as an additional language, Special educational needs.
9039	Bernard Eyre	Lay inspector	
22516	John Williams	Team inspector	Maths, Science, Art and design, design and technology, information and communication technology, physical education.

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a very effective school which gives very good value for money. It has many strengths and few weaknesses. It has made very good improvement since it was last inspected and provides very good education for its pupils.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Standards in science and information and communication technology (ICT) are above average.
- Excellent inclusion of all pupils, whatever their gender, ability or cultural background.
- Very good quality teaching and learning, which results in all groups of pupils achieving very well.
- Very good leadership and management by the headteacher, governors and subject leaders.
- Very good systems for tracking pupils' achievement and for using data to predict pupils' performance.
- Very good provision for pupils with special educational needs.
- Standards could be higher, particularly for lower ability readers and higher attaining mathematicians.
- Attendance and punctuality are unsatisfactory, although the school does all that it can to encourage parents to send their children to school regularly and on time.

After a period of instability, the school has improved significantly since its last inspection. It has successfully addressed the issues raised at that time. It liaises very well with the Moat Farm Federation, through which it was successfully led and managed for two years. It now has its own very good leadership and management, guided by the acting headteacher.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Throughout the school, pupils achieve **very well**. The majority of children in the Foundation Stage start school with below average levels of attainment for their age. Many have very low-level communication skills and poor knowledge and understanding of the world. They achieve very well in the Foundation Stage but are still below average overall when they start Year 1. Pupils continue to achieve very well in Years 1, 2 and 3 and reach average standards in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 2 and Year 3. However, not enough lower ability pupils reach the 2C level in reading, nor do enough higher attaining pupils reach the higher level 3 in mathematics in national tests. Standards in science and information and communication technology (ICT) are above average in Year 2 and Year 3.

Year 2 results

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
Reading	D	E	D	D
Writing	B	D	D	C
Mathematics	E	E	E	C

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

The above table shows that, in 2002, pupils' results in national tests in reading and writing were below the national average and in mathematics they were well below average. This was because fewer than average numbers of pupils reached the higher level, level 3, in any subject. When compared with

similar schools, results were below average in reading but in line with other schools in writing and mathematics.

Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are very good. Pupils behave well in lessons and at play. Although they have very good attitudes to school, their attendance and punctuality are unsatisfactory. This is in spite of the school's best endeavours to encourage parents to send their children to school.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided for the school is **very good**. The very good systems for assessing pupils' achievements, and for tracking and recording their progress, underpin all of the school's work. This ensures that the very good quality of education which the school provides is maintained.

The quality of teaching is very good throughout the school and results in very good learning. Teachers plan their lessons very carefully, so that they hold pupils' interest. As a result, pupils achieve very well and improve their knowledge and skills rapidly. All staff work very efficiently together as a team and relationships are very good. Staff have very high expectations of their pupils and, consequently, pupils learn very successfully. Teachers use assessment very effectively to track pupils' achievements and to prepare challenging targets for all groups of pupils. Although all groups of pupils achieve very well overall, the lower achievers and the higher attainers are not doing as well as they could in reading and mathematics respectively, because they do not do well enough in national tests at the end of Year 2.

The school provides a very good, broad and balanced curriculum. It is enhanced very well by a good personal, social and health education policy and a citizenship programme. The curriculum for Year 3 is also enhanced very successfully by weekly French lessons. The school provides outstandingly well-informed support, advice and guidance. The school's links with the parents who wish to be involved with the school are very good. It successfully involves them in their children's education.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The overall leadership and management of the school are **very good**.

The school is led and managed very well by the headteacher, governors and subject leaders. All have a very clear vision for the future of the school which is firmly based on improving standards. They work together very closely and use well established systems to assess, monitor and evaluate the school's work and identify ways to improve still further.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

The majority of parents are very pleased with the school and support it very well. The pupils like their school very much.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Raise the reading standards of the low ability pupils and the standards in mathematics of the higher attaining pupils.
- Improve attendance and punctuality.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Standards are **satisfactory** and pupils achieve **very well**. Children in the Foundation Stage achieve very well although few achieve the expected goals set for each area of learning. In Years 1 to 3 pupils continue to achieve very well and reach average standards overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in science and information and communication technology (ICT) are above average.
- From a very low starting point, pupils achieve average standards in English and mathematics by Year 2. However, standards could be higher for the lower ability pupils in reading and for the higher attaining pupils in mathematics.
- The vast majority of pupils achieve very well because of the school's excellent inclusion policy.

Commentary

1. The 2002 national test results were below average in reading and writing and well below average in mathematics. This was because fewer pupils reached the higher level, level 3, in any of the subjects when compared with national figures. However, when these results are compared with those of similar schools, they are average in writing and mathematics and below average in reading. The unvalidated results for 2003 show improvements. The school has identified that, in reading, the lower ability pupils are not performing as well as they could. Not enough reach the expected level in national tests. It has also identified that not enough higher attaining pupils reach level 3 in mathematics. It is addressing both of these issues by:
 - using its very good assessment systems to identify pupils in these groups and establish targets to accurately challenge them;
 - implementing a tighter structure for teaching phonics in reading;
 - working with the numeracy advisor to ensure that the mathematics curriculum fully meets the needs of the higher attainers;
 - reviewing resources in both subjects to ensure that they are adequate and appropriate.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 – average point scores in 2002

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	15.3	15.8
writing	14.0	14.4
mathematics	15.1	16.5

There were 27 pupils in the year group.

2. Children start school with below average levels of attainment. Many have very low communication, language and literacy skills and poor knowledge and understanding of their world. They achieve very well in the Foundation Stage¹, in all areas of learning. The majority reach the goals set in personal, social and emotional development and physical development by Year 1. However, most do not reach the goals set in the other areas of learning and, therefore, at the start of Year 1 standards are below average.
3. Pupils achieve very well in Years 1, 2 and 3 and standards continue to rise. By the ends of Years 2 and 3, pupils reach average standards in English and mathematics. They achieve above average standards in science and information and communication technology (ICT). They achieve this well because of the very good:
 - quality teaching, which results in very good learning;
 - quality of the curriculum, which links their learning between subjects very effectively;
 - assessment systems, which enable teachers to devise challenging targets for each group of pupils;
 - leadership of the subject co-ordinators, who identify the needs of pupils and manage improvement very well.Thus pupils move from below average standards to average, and in some subjects above average, standards by the time they leave to go to the junior school.
4. One of the strengths of the school is that it enables all groups of pupils to achieve very well. It is outstandingly successful at including pupils who arrive at the school other than at normal admission times. Over one quarter of the current roll did not start at this school in the nursery or reception classes. Because the school has such efficient assessment systems, it is able to identify incoming pupils' abilities very quickly and challenge them accordingly. This means that these pupils are quickly included and begin to achieve as well as their classmates.
5. Twenty one per cent of the pupils have been identified as having special educational needs. The school addresses their needs with very good quality individual education plans which help them to achieve very well. Many pupils (over three-quarters) coming to the school have pre-defined individual educational plans. The school immediately slots these pupils into appropriately levelled groups and they receive very good support from all staff. This enables them to achieve at levels commensurate with pupils of similar abilities.
6. Pupils, who arrive at the school with little or no English, also receive very good support in lessons. Thus, they rapidly acquire enough English to work successfully alongside their peers and achieve very well. The school also identifies gifted and talented pupils and supports them very well. It advises the parents of these children, so that they may seek the best support for the particular gift or talent. This enables them to achieve to the best of their ability.

¹ There are six areas of learning in the Foundation Stage; personal , social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical development and creative development. There are average goals set in each of these areas which it is expected children will reach by the time they start Year 1.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

The attitudes of the pupils to the school and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are **very good**. They behave well.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Most pupils respond very well to the very high expectations of their teachers.
- Pupils work together sensibly and are kind and helpful.
- Behaviour in lessons and at play is good because of the consistent guidance of adults.
- Some pupils are shy, lack self-confidence and are reluctant to take part in activities.
- There is a pleasant and relaxed atmosphere in the school, which is conducive to very good learning.
- Pupils show respect for the customs and traditions of different faiths and cultures.

Commentary

7. In this school pupils are cherished by everyone. Each is valued as a special person. When children enter the nursery, they are welcomed into a stimulating environment. They are encouraged in a supportive manner to adjust to classroom routines. Activities are carefully matched to pupils' needs, to help them to achieve very well. When they leave the reception class, most are very well prepared for the more formal classroom routines that they will experience in National Curriculum subjects.
8. Pupils are encouraged to become inquisitive and to develop the necessary language skills which will enable them to take part in classroom discussions. This creates a zest for learning. The majority of pupils, including those who find their learning difficult, follow instructions sensibly. In a Year 2 lesson, two pairs of pupils worked, with little help, to plan and record instructions for drawing a robot. At the end of the lesson, the recorded instructions were played and their colleagues were able to sketch recognisable replicas. This created a real buzz in the classroom and showed that pupils are beginning to work independently.
9. Behaviour management has a high priority in the school and all adults work together closely to achieve a consistent approach. This ensures that minor squabbles and other thoughtless acts are dealt with quickly. Consequently, the majority of pupils benefit from consistently high standards of teaching which, in turn, helps the pupils to attain satisfactorily from a low starting point. Relationships between everyone in school were particularly strong features noted by the inspectors. Many parents and carers also commented favourably about this. Staff share sensitive and confidential information with them and the highest levels of pastoral care underpin everything that the school does.
10. Pupils are encouraged to develop an awareness of how special each one is as an individual and to combine this with the joys of shared experiences. For example, in an assembly, the anticipation of what might be in a "feely bag" produced a magic moment of awe and wonder, when the story of the hungry caterpillar unfolded before the pupils. They savoured the moment with great appreciation.
11. The school promotes very well an understanding of the importance of the festivals of the many faiths and cultures around the world. These range from being aware that birthday celebrations vary in other countries to the different ways in which people pay respect and homage. Pupils develop a very good sense of what is right and wrong. All staff encourage the pupils to share sensibly and to

help each other. This includes playground buddies looking out for someone “left alone”. and ensuring that they have someone to talk to or to play with. This encourages good understanding of the responsibilities people have when they live in a community. These aspects all make the school fully inclusive where pupils thrive both academically and socially.

Attendance

The attendance and punctuality of the pupils are **unsatisfactory**.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data:	9.9	School data :	0.3
National data:	5.4	National data:	0.5

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

12. The latest annual attendance data confirm unacceptably low attendance. Recent initiatives give a strong indication that improvements are underway and the attendance figure for the first part of the autumn term is closer to the national average. The punctuality of a significant minority remains a problem. The annual reports of pupils, who have poor attendance, contain blunt messages to inform parents that this has a direct and negative impact on the academic progress of their child.

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	74	0	0
White – any other White background	2	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	3	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	3	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	4	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	6	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	2	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	1	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	3	0	0

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is very good. It has a very good curriculum. It provides very well for pupils with special educational needs. It includes all groups of pupils outstandingly successfully and ensures that all achieve very well. The school cares for its pupils very well and has very good relationships with parents.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is very good throughout the school. The very good teaching means that all groups of pupils achieve very well. As a result standards are rising. The systems used to track pupils' achievements are very well established and embedded very effectively into teachers' planning.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers have very good planning and assessment procedures.
- They have very high expectations.
- All staff work together very effectively as a strong team.
- Teachers include all pupils and support pupils from all groups very well.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 27 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1	16	8	2	0	0	0

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

Commentary

13. The essence of the very good teaching and learning is the very good quality of the systems used by teachers to track how well pupils are achieving. From the information gathered, they set targets for individuals and groups of pupils. This means that all are challenged successfully and enabled to achieve very well. It also means that all pupils are fully included and fully engaged in lessons. Thus, all pupils, whatever their ability or background, feel valued and learn rapidly.
14. Teachers are particularly efficient at assessing very quickly pupils who come to the school at times other than normal admission times. They assess their ability as soon as they arrive in school. This means newcomers are rapidly included in all lessons and learn very well. Teachers monitor how well pupils learn and record achievement simply and efficiently. Thus they can quickly spot if a pupil's progress slows. They then adjust targets to provide suitable challenge at all times and to maximise achievement for all pupils. This is why pupils with special educational needs achieve so well and why pupils at an early stage of acquiring English make rapid strides in learning new vocabulary.
15. Teachers have very high expectations that all pupils will achieve very well. Pupils understand this and work hard in lessons. As a result, they achieve very well. Teachers also expect high standards of behaviour. They use the behaviour management policy consistently and effectively. This ensures that pupils' behaviour in lessons is constantly good. Relationships between adults are very good. All staff are very good role models for the pupils. As a result, pupils respect staff and

are eager to do their best for them. Staff work very well together. They are a very strong team. This enables them to give consistent and valuable support to all pupils. As a result, pupils feel valued and secure as they learn and achieve very well.

The curriculum

The curriculum meets pupils' needs **very well**. The school offers pupils a good range of extra-curricular activities and opportunities outside of lessons.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Curriculum leaders ensure that the school provides a very broad range of curricular opportunities.
- Measures which the school takes to ensure inclusion are particularly successful.
- Curriculum links with the junior school are very strong.
- The school provides good opportunities to enrich the curriculum.

Commentary

16. The school provides a curriculum which meets statutory requirements very well in all respects, including religious education and collective worship. Appropriate amounts of time are allocated to all subjects. In most subjects the school has adopted nationally recommended schemes of work. Subject leaders work hard to monitor the success of these materials and adapt them to meet the needs of all pupils. Thus, the curriculum is in a state of continuous development as teachers strive to provide the best for their pupils. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good and fully meets the requirements of the Code of Practice.
17. Staff are particularly keen to provide pupils with very effective personal, social and health education. There is a scheme of work to reach this goal. Arrangements, such as "Playtime Friends" and the Buddy system, help pupils to learn to develop socially and to care for and rely on others. Circle Time sessions help pupils to share ideas and discuss matters of concern.
18. Inclusion of all pupils is a very high priority for the school. This is outstandingly successful. Staff work very hard to support pupils who may have difficulties. The ethos of the school, which is so obvious at times such as assemblies, is one of care and mutual support. The very good use that teachers make of the information gained from assessment means that, in the vast majority of lessons, pupils are faced with work accurately matched to their level. In this way, all pupils, no matter what their background or ability, progress and develop in self-esteem.
19. The school prepares its pupils very well for the next stage of their education. The close links which exist with the federated junior school are particularly beneficial. Pupils in Year 3 follow exactly the same curriculum as their Year 3 contemporaries at the junior school. They visit their next school to take advantage of its very good ICT facilities and also to participate in a dramatic production. There is much exchange of the teaching staff between the two schools and also with the nearby infant school. A very close liaison exists between these federated schools. This means that when pupils transfer at the end of Year 3 they are very well prepared for what lies ahead.
20. There are good opportunities for enrichment of the curriculum. Most pupils go out for a carefully planned educational visit each school year. Older pupils are offered the opportunity to experience a residential visit at a field study centre. Visiting experts, such as musicians, come into school to

further support the curriculum. The school also provides a very good range of clubs and activities outside lessons, for example dance, computer, soccer coaching and recorders.

Care, guidance and support

The school ensures that there is a **good**, safe working environment. Child protection procedures are **very good**. The school monitors pupils' academic progress very well and considers pupils' views carefully.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are excellent arrangements to ensure that pupils can share confidences and concerns with adults because all adults have high levels of awareness of the needs of each individual.
- Pupils are trusted and respected. All staff, including the mid-day supervisors, provide consistent guidance and support.

Commentary

21. High standards are achieved because all adults work together to ensure compliance with guidelines and regulations. Outside agencies are used effectively to support the school. The governing body ensures that its management procedures provide very effective monitoring. These include the promotion of good social and personal relationship education and a curriculum that is rich and varied. Relationships are very good and all staff provide very good care and guidance for all pupils.
22. The arrangements for settling children into the school's routines include home visits. These ensure that secure and trusting relationships are established. Hence, there is a good climate for learning quickly. When pupils transfer into the school, the school collates information from the previous school with that provided by the parent. This ensures that initial assessments quickly set a base line against which teachers can plan to meet individual needs. Parent responses confirm that they regard this as a major strength of the school.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Links with the parents who wish to be involved in their child's education are **very good**. Mutual respect, trust and understanding between parents and staff combine very well, to ensure that pupils settle quickly and then achieve very well. Links with the community and other schools are very good.

Main strength and weaknesses

- Parents' questionnaires were positive and full of praise for the teachers and support staff.
- Parents say that the school is a community where "every door is open, everyone is made to feel welcome" and where sensitive personal matters are treated with discretion.
- Annual reports are frank and factual. They say, in clear language, if poor attendance is holding a pupil back. This is important because some parents do not send their children to school regularly, or on time.
- Some parents would like to see more after-school clubs and more educational visits.
- Pupils are very well prepared for the next stage of their education.

Commentary

23. Parents are delighted with the warmth and support that all staff show towards them and their children. They appreciate the time teachers take to listen to suggestions, particularly where behaviour problems or learning difficulties require a consistent approach. The manner with which teachers and parents meet and greet each other at the start and end of the school day makes these events happy social occasions. Parents like the annual written reports teachers write. They say that they are clear and give helpful information. Approximately half of the questionnaires distributed to parents were returned to the inspectors. This is a high number and reflects well the parents' views of the school. Responses were positive and supportive. The only area of relative disagreement (11%) related to bullying and harassment. These concerns were not substantiated by inspection evidence.
24. Some parents made complimentary remarks confirming that they are impressed by the amount of work that the school does to support fundraising projects for charities. They think it is a shame that more parents do not support the school's own fundraising projects. However, the monies that are raised at the summer fete and Christmas bazaar are used prudently to provide materials that enrich learning, for example reading schemes for the younger children.
25. Very close working relationships with other local schools prepare pupils very well for the next stage of their education. This is particularly praiseworthy because so many pupils move into the school other than at normal admission times. The school's inclusion policy ensures that all pupils have equal access to all parts of the school's work, including preparing them for their next school.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The school is **very well** led and managed. The governance of the school is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher provides the school with very good leadership.
- Subject leaders and other staff with management responsibilities are very effective.
- The school has very effective systems of management.

Commentary

26. The acting headteacher, who has received very good support until recently from the head of one of the other schools in the Federation, provides the school with very clear leadership. She knows exactly how she wishes her school to run and has very firm ideas on how to achieve this. She is quiet in manner but unobtrusively very active around the school. Staff are offered her full support. She has been particularly successful in evaluating the school's performance and then developing strategies to bring about improvement. She motivates and delegates well and staff are growing in confidence. The whole staff are united in their desire to provide equality of opportunity for all and the headteacher has made sure that inclusion is at the very top of this school's agenda.
27. Subject leaders manage their subjects very well. A particular strength of their leadership is the way in which they monitor the school's performance data. They analyse strengths and weaknesses very efficiently and take effective action. As a direct result of this very good leadership, standards are rising, particularly in end of year national tests. All subject leaders develop action plans to manage improvement in their subjects. They monitor colleagues' planning and often look at completed work. Teachers feed back to co-ordinators on the relative successes of different topics.

Improvements are then made. In this way, subject leaders ensure that the curriculum matches the needs of all pupils. Some leaders have observed and worked alongside their colleagues. In this way, suggestions for improvement can also be made.

28. The special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) manages the provision for the pupils with special educational needs very well. The school shares the SENCO with another school in the Federation. This works most effectively. It enables staff to have a wider view of the needs of the pupils in the school and means they have extra experience and expertise to tap into when needed. The SENCO, teachers and learning support practitioners work very closely together as a highly efficient team. They provide very good challenge for the pupils identified with special educational needs through well constructed and closely monitored individual education plans. As a result, pupils achieve very successfully. The provision for special educational needs is a strength of the school.
29. Governors offer the school strong and very knowledgeable support. Many governors are very experienced. They are fully committed to making this school increasingly successful and share the headteacher's ambitions. They have a full committee structure and meet regularly. They make the most of the very good quality information that the school makes available to them, in reaching their decisions. They are pro-active. They are profitably linked to individual subject leaders. Therefore, they know well the relative strengths and weakness of the school. This helps them to fulfil the role of critical friend very effectively.
30. Management is very effective. The school analyses available performance data very rigorously. It seeks constantly to evaluate its performance and find ways to improve. Performance management systems are very good. Clear targets for improvement are set and this is effective in bringing about improvement. New members of staff are provided with sensitive and supportive induction arrangements. Other staff are provided with regular training. The management are very keen to support and retain successful staff and pay particular attention to the workload and effective deployment of staff. Learning support practitioners are regarded as vital in supporting the work of teachers and their deployment is managed particularly well. Systems of financial and resource management are extremely strong. By this means, a substantial budget deficit of three years ago has been systematically and dramatically reduced. The school is on course to eradicate it altogether by the end of the next financial year. The principles of best value therefore are central to the school's management and use of resources.
31. The school has very effective systems of day-to-day management which enable it to run very smoothly. The administrative staff are particularly effective. They are very sensitive and supportive in their dealings with both pupils, parents and staff.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	521,139	Balance from previous year	-72,327
Total expenditure	478,539	Balance carried forward to the next	-29727
Expenditure per pupil	3223		

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

32. The provision for the children in the Foundation Stage is very good and has seen good improvement since the last inspection. Children enter the nursery in the term in which they are three. They move to the reception class the following September, in the year in which they are four. The two classes operate as a self-contained unit. Staff and children move between the two classes regularly. The majority of children start school with levels of attainment which are below those expected for their age group. Many have skills which are well below average in communication, language and literacy and in their knowledge and understanding of the world. Although children achieve very well in their first terms in school, by the end of the Foundation Stage few reach the goals set in most areas of learning. However, in personal, social and emotional development and physical development many do reach the goals set.
33. Leadership of the Foundation Stage is very good. Each area of learning is managed very well. Staff track very carefully what children know and do. They use this information very successfully to plan activities which challenge all groups of children and to ensure that the curriculum is adjusted to meet all of the children's needs. This supports very effectively the very good learning which takes place.
34. The quality of teaching and learning is very good in all areas of learning. Relationships are very good and all staff work together as a vibrant team. This enables the children to achieve very well because staff:
- have high expectations for their success and base activities very effectively on children's previous experiences;
 - set appropriately challenging tasks, enabling children to build up their skills, knowledge and understanding in all areas of learning;
 - plan activities very effectively, so that all children are fully included and have equal access to all lessons.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Staff are very good role models.
- They teach children to become independent.
- They encourage children with lots of praise, so that they want to work hard.
- They support all children very well, so that they are secure and happy while they learn.

Commentary

35. Because staff work very effectively as a team and relationships are very good, children are helped to settle quickly into school routines. They quickly relate very well to adults and to each other. Therefore, they learn successfully in a friendly and secure atmosphere. Staff encourage children to take part in all activities. They work alongside them, supporting their learning. Consequently, children achieve very well and learn very rapidly. Children learn good manners because they have

very good role models. Staff expect children to clear equipment away and leave things tidy. They teach the children to become independent and make good decisions. Thus, children become confident and begin to take responsibility for their own actions. This is an area where the majority reach the goals set, by the time they move to Year 1.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Staff lead by example.
- They provide interesting and challenging activities which promote very good learning.

Commentary

36. Staff work alongside the children and demonstrate what it is that they expect the children to do. They talk to the children, using most appropriate language structures. They encourage children to communicate with them and with each other. Thus, children feel comfortable when taking part in discussions and are prepared to 'have a go' at reading and writing. Staff provide activities which challenge all children successfully. They do this because they know and understand the needs of each child very well. As a result, children learn very rapidly. They soon learn to respect books and understand that words convey meaning. Most write their own name, with varying degrees of success. However, even though children achieve very well, because the majority start with low level communication skills, few will securely reach the goals set, by the time they move to Year 1.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT, KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD, PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT AND CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in these areas of learning is **very good**.

37. Not enough sessions were observed in these areas of learning to comment on them individually. The planning for all of the areas is meticulous and shows very good understanding of the children's requirements. Thus, activities match children's needs closely and the sessions flow from one activity to the next seamlessly. Children achieve very well, as they do in their personal, social and emotional development and communication, language and literacy. They move towards the goals set for the end of the Foundation Stage. However, apart from in physical development, where most reach the expectations, the majority will fall short of these goals by the start of Year 1.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- From a very low starting point, pupils reach average standards in reading and writing by the end of Year 2, which is very good achievement. However, more pupils should reach higher levels in the national reading tests in Year 2.
- The use of assessment and target setting.
- The work of the subject leader.

Commentary

38. Most pupils start Year 1 with reading and writing skills which are below average. They progress very well and, by the end of Year 2 and Year 3, the majority have reached average standards. They do this because of the very good:
- Teaching, which results in pupils learning very well;
 - Curriculum, which has been implemented in line with the National Literacy Strategy;
 - Systems, that teachers use to track pupils' achievements and set them challenging targets;
 - leadership of the subject co-ordinator, who guides and advises her colleagues very effectively.
39. Pupils' listening skills are better than their speaking skills. Teachers constantly encourage pupils to listen to each other in lessons and they do this well. However, many pupils do not have good levels of vocabulary and are not confident to speak out in class discussions. Teachers recognise this and teach the vocabulary that pupils need to succeed in lessons. They plan ample opportunities for pupils to speak. For example, in plenary sessions they allow pupils time to share their ideas and explain their work with the whole class. This helps pupils achieve very well and is instrumental in raising standards.
40. Reading standards are improving. However, more lower ability pupils should reach higher levels than currently do. The school has identified areas of weakness in the structure of teaching phonics and is successfully addressing them with a well-constructed phonics programme. It has also recognised that some of the reading books for lower ability readers were inhibiting progress. It is solving this by increasing the range and type of books for these readers, enabling them to achieve better results. This has also helped many pupils enjoy books more and has given reading a higher profile throughout the school. There is a pleasant and very well organised library, which staff encourage pupils to use regularly.
41. Pupils' writing skills are good. Teachers plan good opportunities for pupils to write for a range of purposes. Consequently, pupils begin to use their imaginations when writing stories. They practise their grammatical skills and spelling techniques in creative writing sessions. This means that they achieve very well and reach at least average standards by the time that they leave the school at the end of Year 3. Most pupils take pride in their handwriting. This results in well presented work in all subjects.

42. The school places high emphasis on including all pupils, whatever their ability or background. As a result, pupils, for whom English is an additional language, learn rapidly and achieve very well in the positive environment. Similarly, pupils who are new to the school, quickly begin to learn at the same speed as their classmates and achieve very well as a result. Pupils with special educational needs also achieve very well. This is because staff use assessment data very expertly to provide literacy work which is very closely linked to individual education programmes.
43. There has been good improvement since the last inspection. The co-ordinator monitors the subject very efficiently and evaluates all new initiatives very effectively in order to ensure standards continue to rise. The National Literacy Strategy has been fully and effectively implemented. Systems for monitoring and tracking pupils' achievements are very well established. This ensures continued improvement.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

44. Pupils use their reading and writing skills very well in other subjects. Teachers plan very good links between subjects. For instance, they use geography and history texts effectively to build pupils' literacy skills. Pupils write in a variety of styles, for example in history, they use reporting techniques to record their work on The Fire of London. They use their speaking and listening skills very well in all subjects. For example, teachers constantly encourage pupils to explain their ideas and tell others about their work in science and in physical education.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching overall is very good and pupils achieve very well.
- The National Numeracy Strategy has been implemented very well and this is bringing about an improvement in standards.
- The school analyses its performance data very well. This has provided clear targets for improvement. However, the number of pupils who exceed the national expectation (Level 2) although rising, is not yet high enough.
- Assessment procedures are used very well to track pupils' attainment and progress, and to devise targets for improvement.

Commentary

45. The majority of pupils reach average standards in all areas of mathematics by the time they leave Year 3. As the majority of pupils start school with below average levels of attainment, this represents very good achievement. However, the proportion of pupils who attain at above average levels could be improved. The school is aware of this. The co-ordinator has identified the need to provide pupils with more opportunities to use and apply their mathematical knowledge in investigations and to solve problems. By this means, the school hopes to bring about the required improvement.
46. The quality of teaching and learning is very good. This is helping pupils to achieve very well. Standards are rising steadily. In very good lessons, teachers plan activities which allow pupils to work practically. They encourage them to be actively involved in their own learning, making decisions and solving problems for themselves. This was seen in a Year 2 lesson, when pupils had

the chance to work independently. They were asked to look for patterns in groups of odd and even numbers. Several pupils devised theories, which they were able to evaluate. Every group of pupils achieved well. They showed good interest in, and clear understanding of, their work. Teachers plan their work particularly well in all lessons. They use assessment very well and think very carefully about what each group of pupils needs in order to make progress. Then, at the end of the lesson, they record progress. This tells them what to teach in the next lesson. This works particularly well when the teaching staff and teaching assistants work in close harmony. This very good teamwork was a feature of every lesson seen.

47. The National Numeracy Strategy has been fully implemented and the curriculum is good. The structure provided by this framework is having a good effect and is instrumental in bringing about improvement. The school analyses its test data very carefully. Use is made of this to modify the curriculum in order to improve pupils' performance, especially that of the higher attainers. Systems of assessment are very good. These allow the school to keep a check on pupils' progress. Targets are set and pupils who do not meet theirs are made a focus for further improvement.

Mathematics across the curriculum

48. Teachers plan opportunities for pupils to use their mathematical skills as tools in other subjects, such as science. There is evidence of calculations and measurement being used in design and technology and science, but this is limited and is an area which could be profitably developed.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **very good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards by Year 2 and Year 3 are above average.
- The quality of teaching and learning is very good
- The use of assessment and target setting is very good.
- The curriculum is very good

Commentary

49. Pupils attain good standards by the end of Year 2 and by the end of Year 3. Performance in national tests is improving, with a greater number of pupils attaining the higher level (level 3), year by year. Considering the ability with which pupils start, on admission to the school, this represents very good achievement.
50. It is evident from a thorough scrutiny of pupils' work and from the small sample of lessons seen that teaching is very good. Very good systems of assessment are in place and this means that teachers know exactly what pupils can do. They also know what they need to teach next. In each lesson, therefore, teachers' plans indicate exactly what they want different pupils to learn. They also record on that plan whether this has been achieved at the end of the lesson. Teachers employ a very good range of teaching strategies to get their points across. For the most part, pupils are actively involved experimenting and finding out. This considerably aids their learning. In a very good lesson in Year 2, pupils investigated what happens when certain materials freeze. They noted the effects of freezing on different substances and, as they handled them, were surprised at the effect that the warmth of their hands had.

51. Teachers have very high expectations of their pupils, both in behaviour and performance. This they transmit to the pupils, and it motivates them. All pupils are included very well in lessons. This works particularly well when the teacher and learning support practitioners (LSP) work very well as a team. This was particularly apparent in a Year 3 lesson, when the LSP supported pupils who may not have heard correctly or who did not understand.
52. Very good systems of assessment are in place. The co-ordinator analyses data from national tests, looking for strengths and weaknesses. She takes note of these and uses the information to amend the curriculum. For instance, it was noted last year that pupils were relatively unsuccessful in investigative aspects of science. This aspect was given greater emphasis in curriculum planning and, as a result, standards improved. Information from regular assessment is also used to set targets for groups and individual pupils. By this means, teachers tell if pupils are achieving as well as they might and which pupils could attain at higher levels.
53. The coordinator who is very proactive keeps the curriculum under constant review. She is supportive of her colleagues, liaises with colleagues and monitors planning. At present, the curriculum is based on nationally recommended guidelines. As a result of staff consultations, the school has amended these, in order to match the needs of the pupils particular situation. Planning is sharply focussed on developing key skills and raising standards.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average in Year 2 and in Year 3.
- The curriculum is very good.

Commentary

54. Standards and provision in ICT are good. Bearing in mind their starting points, pupils achieve very well. There has been good improvement since the last inspection, when standards were judged to be in line with national expectations. The school has a good suite of computers and staff have received good training. A network has been installed and up-to-date software purchased, in order that staff can deliver the full curriculum. This good provision, the good quality of teachers' planning and the quality and range of pupils' work are all strong indicators of very good achievement.
55. Only one lesson was observed but it was obvious that pupils very much enjoy ICT lessons. Teachers plan carefully, so that pupils develop their skills systematically. Pupils grow in confidence, learn rapidly and are happy to demonstrate their competence. This was demonstrated in a Year 2 lesson, when pupils compiled and amended lists. They were fully at home with the workings of the keyboard and could manage a good range of functions. They made rapid progress in their learning and worked very well in cooperation with each other.
56. The curriculum is based on national guidelines and all pupils receive their full entitlement. Opportunities are provided for pupils to present information in a range of different ways and to control equipment, using a series of instructions, for particular purposes. Thus, pupils in Year 2 create pictures using a paint program. They explore the effects of sketching and using flood-fill for visual effects. They then word process text to accompany their pictures. Pupils in Year 3, program

the on-screen turtle to go on a 'self-chosen' obstacle course. Using the Roamer, they then predict the number of moves required to produce pictures. Pupils have opportunities to use the Internet, retrieve information from a CD ROM and to use e-mail.

57. The co-ordinator has the curriculum under constant review and has set up a very useful system of skills tracking so that targets can be set for pupils' individual development.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

58. ICT is used across the curriculum. Computers are used in lessons to support learning in other subjects. For example, in Year 2, a program was used to support work in mathematics, during a session on odd and even numbers. However, this is an area for development. Pupils could use their ICT skills more to support work in other subjects.

HUMANITIES

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Provision in religious education is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils gain very good insights into the world's major religions.
- There are very good links with personal, social and health education and to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Commentary

59. There has been good improvement in religious education (RE) since the last inspection. The school places great emphasis on learning about other religions, and how other people live their lives. It is a very important part of the school's philosophy on including and valuing everyone in school. Thus, RE is very well linked to other areas of school life. For example, it supports the very good quality acts of collective worship which take place daily. Teachers encourage pupils from other cultural backgrounds and religions to share their experiences with their classmates. As a result, pupils learn to respect and value other peoples' ideas and traditions. Teachers also plan very good links with personal, social and citizenship topics, which enhance pupils' learning considerably. As a consequence of the very good teaching, the vast majority of pupils reach standards which are in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus.

60. Pupils respond very well in lessons and enjoy the activities that the teachers plan for them. For example in a Year 2 lesson, pupils enjoyed going into the school grounds to consider how wonderful autumn makes the place where we live. They shared their ideas very well and took turns to talk about the beautiful things that they had seen. The teacher's high expectations that the pupils would work hard and behave well meant that all pupils achieved very well. Similarly, in a Year 3 lesson, the very effective teamwork between the teacher and the LSP meant that pupils were kept fully engrossed throughout the lesson. They learned to appreciate why Muslims use patterns rather than pictures to help them concentrate on prayer. All achieved very well.

HISTORY AND GEOGRAPHY

61. Too few lessons were observed in geography and history to form overall judgements. However, it is evident, from reviewing teachers' planning and from scrutinising displays and portfolios of completed work, that provision is at least good. Teachers make good links with other subjects, such as art and English. In history, the work on display about the Great Fire of London showed very good attention to detail and much good use of the pupils' literacy skills. In geography, teachers cover the requirements of the National Curriculum very well. In the one geography lesson seen, pupils discussed with interest their likes and dislikes about living where they do and what it would be like to live on an isolated island. They achieved very well. Both subjects make a very good contribution to pupils' learning.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Design and Technology, Art and Design, Music, Physical Education

Provision in art and design, design and technology, music and physical education is **good**.

62. No lessons were observed in art and design nor design and technology. However, it is evident from reviewing teachers' planning documents, and from scrutinising wall displays and portfolios of completed work that provision is good. Art is linked successfully into topic themes such as "The Great Fire of London." Skills are taught progressively and pupils have good opportunities to explore a wide range of media. In design and technology lessons, pupils pursue a series of tasks designed to develop their proficiency in a variety of skills. They learn to use tools and to use a range of materials. Thoughtful and attractive displays of pupils' artwork are to be seen throughout the school. These considerably enhance the environment.

63. Music is taught regularly by a visiting teacher and all curriculum requirements are well met. On occasion, pupils perform in concerts, usually to celebrate major religious festivals. Music plays a prominent part in the life of the school, especially in assemblies. Pupils sing tunefully and well, and with great enjoyment.

64. Two physical education lessons were observed. Both were very good. Teachers plan their lessons very carefully, have a range of tasks for the pupils and know exactly what they want them to achieve. Lessons are conducted with good regard to health and safety, and pupils understand the benefits to health of regular exercise. Good levels of enthusiasm were evident in these lessons and pupils achieved well.

65. Pupils are very keen to attend sports activities that are provided for them after school. These enhance the physical education curriculum and provide opportunities for those pupils who show promise to develop their skills.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

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

66. The school has very good policies and schemes of work for both personal, social and health education and citizenship. These fully meet requirements and enhance pupils' learning considerably. Very good links are made with subjects such as religious education. Both subjects give very good support to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	2
How inclusive the school is	1
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	2
Value for money provided by the school	2
Overall standards achieved	4
Pupils' achievement	2
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	2
Attendance	5
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The quality of education provided by the school	2
The quality of teaching	2
How well pupils learn	2
The quality of assessment	2
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	2
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	2
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	2
The effectiveness of management	2

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

