

INSPECTION REPORT

NORTH THORESBY PRIMARY SCHOOL

North Thoresby, near Grimsby

LEA area: Lincolnshire

Unique reference number: 120470

Headteacher: Mrs. Irene Casey-Evans

Lead inspector: Hugh Protherough

Dates of inspection: 13th – 15th June 2005

Inspection number: 268081

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:	4 to 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	60
School address:	High St. North Thoresby Grimsby
Postcode:	DN36 5PL
Telephone number:	01472 840295
Fax number:	01472 840295
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Michael Nicholas
Date of previous inspection:	20 - 22 April 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This very small village primary school has 60 pupils on roll, almost all of who are from white British backgrounds. The majority of pupils come from the village and a few from further afield. However, an excess of places in local primary schools means that parents have plenty of choice and the numbers on roll have fallen significantly in recent years. Competition for places at popular secondary schools also contributes significantly to pupil mobility. The school has been through a period of considerable change since the last inspection in 1999 and has been led by four different headteachers in the past five years. The current headteacher took up post a year ago.

The attainment of the pupils on entry to the reception class covers the full range but taken overall is average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs (SEN), 28 per cent, is slightly above the national average and this includes four pupils with statements of SEN, a figure that is well above average for a school of this size. There is no local authority school meals service.

As a direct consequence of falling pupil numbers the school currently runs three classes in the mornings and two in the afternoon.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
8339	Hugh Protherough	Lead inspector	Foundation Stage; English; art and design; design and technology; music; physical education
32660	Bob Adams	Lay inspector	
27100	Trevor Davies	Team inspector	Mathematics; science; information and communication technology; geography; history; religious education, special educational needs and personal, social and health education

The inspection contractor was :

Inspire Educational Ltd

The Coach House
132 Whitaker Road
Derby

DE23 6AP

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REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6
PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS	
STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS	8
Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL	10
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	14
PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECTS	16
AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE	
SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2	
PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS	24

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Overall this is an **ineffective school** because there are serious weaknesses in some aspects of the quality of education provided in Years 1 and 2 where brighter pupils are underachieving, especially in writing and science. Elsewhere, teaching sustains satisfactory or better achievement by pupils. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher and governing body have set the correct agenda, but have not yet won the hearts and minds of *all* staff and parents. As a result, the school does not yet offer satisfactory value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- In Years 1 and 2 standards are not high enough and teacher expectations are too low
- An increasing amount of good teaching in Years 3 to 6 is improving the pupils' achievements in English, mathematics and science
- Communication between school and home is unsatisfactory
- Effective systems track pupils' progress and set challenging targets

Since the last inspection there has been considerable instability in school leadership and four headteachers in the past five years. Pupil numbers have fallen sharply. However, the new headteacher has evaluated the situation accurately and with the support of governors and the senior teacher has made a sound start to improving things. Even so, the school has declined since its last Ofsted inspection. Although the key issues in the last report have been addressed successfully, standards are now lower than they were.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Achievement is satisfactory. The attainment of pupils entering the school's Reception class covers the full range but overall is average. By the end of their Reception year, most pupils are on course to reach the nationally defined Early Learning Goals and one or two higher attaining pupils will exceed them.

The number of pupils taking the national tests each year varies considerably and is often small. Any conclusions drawn from an analysis of the results must, therefore, be treated with caution. For instance, only four pupils took last year's tests for Year 2 and this year there are twelve. Inspection findings show that in the current Year 2 too many pupils are underachieving. Although standards in reading and mathematics are broadly average, those in writing are below average. Analysis of the children's work in Years 1 and 2 shows that too few of the brighter pupils are being sufficiently extended to reach the higher levels of which they are capable in writing, mathematics and science.

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

Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average

Similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 2.

In the 2004 national tests Year 6 pupils achieved standards in English and mathematics that were in line with the national average, but well below average when compared with

similar schools. Results in science were well below the national average and in the bottom five percent of similar schools. In the current Year 6 almost a half of the pupils have special educational needs including some with significant learning disabilities. Standards are below the national average. However, the analysis of the pupils' work shows that they have achieved soundly over the course of this year and have mostly made satisfactory gains in their achievements in English, mathematics and science. The improvement in results of some of the pupils with special educational needs has been good.

The pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good. Throughout the school the pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to work are very good. Attendance is good and above the national average.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The overall **quality of education provided by the school is satisfactory and teaching and learning are satisfactory overall.** On the basis of pupils' achievements over the past year the teaching in Years 3 to 6 is satisfactory. During the inspection a significant proportion of lessons were of good quality and pupils' progress is accelerating. Lessons are carefully planned to ensure that tasks are well matched to pupils' capabilities. Teachers make effective links between the subjects of the National Curriculum and their careful questioning frequently probes and extends the pupils' understanding.

Teaching and learning in Years 1 and 2 are unsatisfactory. Lesson planning lacks sufficient focus so that the purpose of work is not always clear to the children and some get stuck or waste time. The teacher's expectations of the more able pupils are too low and marking does not consistently tell them how to improve. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory.

The partnership with parents is unsatisfactory. Although staff are approachable and willing to talk with parents about their children's progress, a significant minority of parents feel that they were not properly consulted and informed about recent, important changes to school policy and organisation.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. The headteacher, governing body and most staff share a commitment to improve what the school can offer its pupils and to raise standards. However, professional accountability based upon the rigorous evaluation of teaching and its impact upon pupils' achievements, though steadily gaining ground, is not yet firmly established at all levels. Governors fulfil statutory requirements in almost all respects.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

The views of parents vary significantly. Most are appreciative of what the school offers, but a significant and sizeable minority are unhappy about the leadership of the new headteacher. Whilst acknowledging that there have been shortcomings in some aspects of the school's communication with parents and carers, the inspection team strongly endorses the headteacher's determined start to improving the fortunes of the school and the achievements of its pupils. The overwhelming majority of pupils like school, enjoy their lessons and get on well with each other.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Increase the pace and challenge of teaching in Years 1 and 2
 - Ensure that any significant changes to school policy and organisation are carefully explained to parents and the wider community
- and, to meet statutory requirements:
- Complete the formal adoption of the policy for sex education

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Standards in all core subjects are below the national average at Year 2 and Year 6. Children in the Foundation Stage achieve soundly. The progress of pupils in Years 1 and 2 is unsatisfactory and higher attaining pupils in particular underachieve. In Years 3 to 6 achievement is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in writing are not high enough, especially in Years 1 and 2
- Brighter pupils are not being sufficiently challenged in Years 1 and 2
- In Years 3 to 6 pupils' achievements in English, mathematics, science and information technology are sound and gaining momentum

Commentary

1. The school's intake is mixed and the number in each year group is small. The attainment of the seven pupils who entered the school's Reception class last September covers the full range but overall is average. As they approach the end of their Reception year, most pupils are on course to reach the nationally defined Early Learning Goals and one or two higher attaining pupils will exceed them. There is effective and well-judged support for children with special educational needs that caters effectively for their personal, social and emotional needs.
2. Any statistical analysis of the national test results in a school with small cohorts must be treated with caution. For instance, only four pupils took the Years 2 test last year including pupils with some significant special educational needs. This year's group is larger and contains twelve pupils. The provisional results show that standards in reading and mathematics are broadly in line with last year's national average. However, on the basis of the inspectors' conversations with the children and an analysis of their work it is evident that pupils are not achieving well enough. Too few of the brighter pupils are being sufficiently extended to reach the higher levels of which they are capable, especially in their writing, mathematics and science.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	27 (28.4)	26.9 (26.8)
mathematics	27.6 (27.0)	27.0 (26.8)
science	26.4 (27.9)	28.6 (28.6)

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

3. In the national test results of 2004 the Year 6 pupils achieved standards in English and mathematics that were in line with the national average, but well below average when compared with similar schools. Results in science were well below the national average and in the bottom five percent of similar schools. In the current Year 6 almost a half of the pupils have special educational needs including some with significant learning

disabilities. Standards are clearly below the national average. However, the analysis of the pupils' work shows that pupils of all backgrounds and abilities have achieved soundly over the course of this year and have mostly made satisfactory gains in their achievements in English, mathematics and science. The improvement in the work of some of the pupils with special educational needs has been good. There is no significant difference in the performance of boys and girls. Pupils' achievements in information and communications technology are in line with the levels expected of Year 6. Their achievements in religious education are similar to those set out for eleven-year-olds within the locally agreed syllabus.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

The vast majority of pupils display very good attitudes to school and behave very well. Attendance is above average. Taken overall the school makes good provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Older pupils demonstrate high levels of independence and responsibility
- Behaviour in lessons is generally very good except when pupils in Year 1/ 2 are bored or insufficiently challenged
- Provision for the pupils' social and moral development is good
- Attendance is good and improving

Commentary

4. The relationships between adults and pupils at the school are very good. They are particularly strong in Years 3 to 6 where the teachers' high expectations of the pupils are reflected in the very good levels of personal responsibility demonstrated by the children during the course of each day. For instance, in many lessons the pupils in Years 3 to 6 collaborate effectively in their group work and demonstrate an excellent capacity for independent working in subjects such as mathematics and science. Their behaviour is very good. At morning break and at lunchtimes these older pupils take very good care of their younger schoolmates.
5. Taken overall the children's behaviour is very good. There have been no pupil exclusions in the past twelve months. In the Foundation Stage the children relate well to their teacher and the adult with whom they work most closely during each day. They work hard at their lessons and generally get on well together at work and play. The pupils in Years 1 and 2 are mostly well behaved. However, it is noticeable that when lower attaining pupils are unsure about what they are expected to learn their attention wanders. Although behaviour is never less than satisfactory, their attitudes to learning weaken. Throughout the inspection behaviour in lessons was very good in Years 3 to 6.
6. The good provision for the pupils' social and moral development is reflected in the intelligent way that many pupils talk about local and national events and the ways in which they engage with other people or have, as a school community, contributed to helping others less fortunate than themselves. For instance, pupils took a lead in raising money for the Tsunami appeal and Children in Need. Many speak enthusiastically about the developing work of the school council and the way that this organisation has helped improve the rules governing the use of the playground. The teachers are rightly concerned that pupils see themselves as part of the wider village community. The arrangements that involve pupils taking lunch with senior citizens from

the village each week are a good example of the effective realisation of this broader aim.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	4.8	School data	0.1
National data	5.1	National data	0.4

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

7. There has been sustained improvement in the pupils' attendance over the past couple of years. Attendance is clearly above average and improving, largely because of the determined stance of the headteacher and governors in insisting that parents limit the amount of holidays taken in term time to a maximum of two weeks.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

Overall, the school provides a satisfactory quality of education. The school's curriculum is on a sound footing. Teaching and learning are currently more effective in Foundation Stage and Years 3 to 6 than in Years 1 and 2.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is sound with the exception of Years 1 and 2 where it is unsatisfactory. Assessment is satisfactory in Years 3 to 6, but unsatisfactory in the Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Higher achieving pupils in Years 1 and 2 are not always sufficiently challenged
- In Years 3 to 6 lessons are carefully planned to ensure that tasks are well matched to pupils' capabilities
- Teachers make effective links between the subjects of the National Curriculum to enhance pupils' learning
- The day-to-day assessment of the pupils in the reception class and Years 1 and 2 lacks clarity and rigour
- Teachers assistants are effectively deployed to support pupils' learning across the school

Commentary

8. On the basis of the pupils' achievements over the past year the teaching in Years 3 to 6 is satisfactory. During the inspection a significant proportion of lessons were of good quality and it is clear that pupil progress is accelerating. This is particularly the case in the morning lessons in the core subjects of English, mathematics, science and information technology. These lessons are carefully planned to ensure that tasks are well matched to pupils' capabilities. The teachers make clear to the pupils what it is that they are expected to learn and there are frequent, helpful references to previous learning across the curriculum that help reinforce the pupils' learning. For instance, in one good literacy lesson Years 3 and 4 the pupils' consideration of persuasive language in advertisements and the rhetorical nature of many statements was effectively contrasted with the imperatives within World War II propaganda posters. Individual and group tasks are consistently well matched to the wide range of age and ability within each class. In the Year 5 and 6 class the teacher was observed providing a good level of challenge for the higher attaining pupils in both mathematics and science, whilst at the

same time ensuring that the work provided for the lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs was motivational and matched carefully to their personal targets.

9. Although many parents have expressed anxiety about the teaching arrangements for the afternoon sessions in Years 3 to 6, the inspectors found that these are working well. Lessons continue to be well planned and the teacher is supported effectively by the teaching assistants and volunteer helpers. Many pupils say that the Wednesday "Activity Afternoon" session is one of the highlights of their week and that this has provided them with many new and exciting learning experiences that add depth to their understanding. For instance, the austerity diet of those at home during World War II was effectively brought to life for the pupils as they cooked a number of unusual recipes, including a delicious nettle soup!
10. The teaching in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory. Although the teacher is new to this age group her planning provides a sound framework upon which the other staff can build a satisfactory range of learning experiences for the children. The strength of the teaching lies in the thoughtful provision for the pupils' personal, social and emotional development. Teaching in the other areas of learning is sound. Arrangements for recording assessment information about the pupils' day-to-day achievements are unsatisfactory. The current system of recording observations in a notebook is inadequate because it is not carried out in a systematic fashion across all the areas of learning.
11. Taken overall, teaching and learning in Years 1 and 2 are unsatisfactory. Analysis of the pupils' work shows that in far too many instances the pupils have not made enough progress over the course of the past twelve months. For instance, brighter pupils who were writing well within the level expected of seven-year-olds last September have not been helped to achieve the higher levels of which they are capable. Although many of the lessons observed in this class during the inspection were sound, there is a significant amount of unsatisfactory practice. Lesson planning often lacks sufficient focus so that the purpose of work is not always clear to the children. In one literacy lesson the teacher talked at the children for almost half an hour. The purpose of her talk was unclear and the few questions she posed to the pupils were too general and demanded only one-word answers. As a result many of the children stopped listening and, in the case of some lower attaining pupils, failed to understand the writing task they were subsequently set. A similar lack of clarity in the teacher's planning for science led to a potentially effective lesson failing to provide the higher and average attaining pupils with the types of support and challenge that would have helped them to a better knowledge of the parts of plants and the significance of their habitat. The marking and assessment of the pupils' work is unsatisfactory because not all work is thoroughly checked by the teacher, nor are pupils provided with coherent, systematic feedback that tells them how they can improve.
12. Over the past few years the headteacher(s) and governors have taken the decision to make considerable investment in teaching assistants. These additional adults have a wide range of experience and qualifications and are effectively deployed around the school working alongside teachers and supporting small groups of pupils in their learning. Several of these adults also make a significant contribution to the support of pupils with special educational needs.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 15 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	0	8	6	1	0	0

The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons; figures in brackets show percentages where 30 or more lessons are seen.

The curriculum

Curriculum provision is satisfactory and accommodation and resources are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Resources for learning are good
- ICT is used effectively to support learning across the curriculum
- The school's good accommodation is starting to be used effectively to enrich the curriculum
- Provision for pupils with SEN is good

Commentary

13. The school offers a satisfactory curriculum, which meets statutory requirements and also includes opportunities for pupils throughout the school to experience a foreign language. The introduction of an activity afternoon once a week illustrates the school's attempt to provide to an imaginative and enriched curriculum provision. The activities on offer provide a range of experiences which, during the inspection, included basic orienteering and World War II home cooking which was an exciting opportunity for the pupils to make and sample nettle soup and potato cakes.
14. National strategies are used to support the development of children's literacy and numeracy skills, and there is good provision for ICT which is used effectively to support teaching and learning across the curriculum. Recent improvements to the library offer a further resource to support learning. The teaching of history is enlivened by the use of original resources such as photographs and letters from local evacuees during the World War II. Provision in the Foundation Stage is sound with a reasonable use of the outdoor curriculum. The curriculum covers all the necessary areas of learning.
15. The school is an inclusive community and all children, including those with special educational needs, are successfully integrated into mainstream classes. These pupils make good progress against their specific targets because of good assessment, timely review and effective leadership and management. A clear commitment to inclusion is evident in the classroom and within the school community as a whole. The school has an effective approach to personal, social and health education. Weekly circle time provides opportunities for classes to discuss any issues of concern. Effort goes into ensuring that the pupils receive the help they need to access the curriculum and the support staff are deployed prudently to ensure that those pupils whose need is greatest receive the most support. Provision for gifted and talented pupils requires further development to ensure that the curriculum provides an appropriate range of challenges and opportunities.
16. The staffing, accommodation and resources contribute well to the quality of education that the school offers. There is a good ratio of support staff and a good balance of expertise. The accommodation is spacious and includes a school garden and wild life area and pond. The school provides an appropriate variety of visits to places of educational interest and significance, such as local museums. Pupils have the opportunity to learn musical instruments. The school currently provides both a recorder and a percussion club. A rolling programme of extra-curricular clubs and activities are available to the pupils.

Care, guidance and support

The quality of care provided for pupils and the support and guidance given to them is good and contributes well to their learning

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils corporate views are represented through the school council
- Pupils personal development is well monitored
- Child protection procedures are working effectively in the school

Commentary

17. The school has developed a caring and supporting environment. Teachers know their pupils well and value them highly as individuals. Pupils feel confident about approaching staff with any worries they may have. Pupils' views are represented through the School Council, which meets each half term and draws up its agenda with a school governor. From discussions with pupils, it is clear that they feel safe and secure in the school community and that their voice is heard in decisions about the daily life and development of the school. The next step is for more regular opportunities to be provided for personal reflection and a review of individual achievement.
18. The school has an effective health and safety policy. Regular risk assessments are carried out and all necessary safety checks on equipment are up to date. First aid boxes are appropriately stocked and sited. The headteacher has undertaken emergency first aid training and all staff are fully trained in first aid. The child protection policy follows local guidelines and is well understood by teachers.
19. The school has a strong commitment to meeting individual pupils' needs and this is apparent through the school. Parents are satisfied with the school's induction programme, which is effectively planned. Pupils' personal development, including those with special needs is very well monitored. The school shows a strong commitment to seeking additional resources for the benefit of the pupils. For example, there are good links with social and medical support services that ensure pupils particular needs are responded to quickly and effectively

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Taken overall the effectiveness of the school's links with parents is currently unsatisfactory. Those with the local community and other schools are sound.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The parents are strongly divided in their views of the school and in particular of the leadership of the new headteacher

Commentary

20. Although the vast majority of parents work closely with the school and are extremely supportive of their children's learning at home, all is not well. The school roll is falling and an alarming number of families have removed, or say they are about to remove their children from the school. A significant part of this problem stems from the fact that there is a large surplus of places at many other local primary schools. The situation is further complicated by the fact that some families who bring their children from outside the school's catchment area, decide later to change primary school again, to ensure a place at their preferred secondary school.
21. Shortly after her arrival at the school the headteacher canvassed parental views through a questionnaire and shared the findings with staff and governors. These suggested a mostly positive picture and steps were taken to address concerns about homework and day-to-day communication between home and school.
22. However, the views expressed at the pre-inspection parents' meeting, the analysis of the parental questionnaires and several letters sent to the inspection team suggest that a significant minority of parents are critical of the school's leadership, especially the headteacher's. The inspection team agree that over the past term or so there have clearly been some important misjudgements. Parents were insufficiently consulted and informed about the proposed changes to class organisation in the afternoons in Years 3 to 6. The new arrangements for teaching arising from the introduction of Workforce Re-

modelling also required far better explanation. The headteacher and governing body are aware of this and have a clear plan of how to improve things in future. For instance, the headteacher has started holding regular forums where she makes herself available to meet with parents and hear their views.

23. Not all parental perceptions are accurate. For instance, one popular view aired at the parents' meeting appears to be that everything is fine as the children enter school, but gets steadily worse as the children get older. Inspection evidence shows clearly that this is not the case. Indeed, the inspectors agree strongly with the views of those one or two parents who wrote in recognition that their new headteacher is trying her utmost to instil a greater rigour in the school by raising the sights of staff, pupils and parents; to aspire towards excellence rather than accept the wholly adequate.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Taken overall the leadership, management and governance of the school are satisfactory

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher, senior teacher and governing body share a common vision and commitment to raising standards and improving the quality of education
- Staff teamwork is good in Years 3 to 6
- Professional accountability is not yet firmly established at all levels
- The headteacher is doing too many clerical chores

Commentary

24. The headteacher has the wholehearted and undivided support of the governing body who appointed her a little over a year ago. The governors recognised that as a result of recent, frequent changes of leadership the school was treading water. They understandably seized the opportunity to appoint an experienced headteacher with many years successful teaching experience who can provide a strong role model in the classroom and lead from the front.
25. Conversations between the inspectors and the headteacher and governing body reveal that there have been some notable successes, but also some aspects of performance that require improvement. The governors are delighted that there is now an unrelenting focus on standards and improving pupils' achievements. Discussions and decisions about school policy are increasingly firmly rooted in a consideration of the impact of any action upon pupil progress. The organisation of equipment and resources has been improved; the school tidied and unsightly clutter and out of date equipment thrown out. School finances are now transparent and there is agreement about how these are to be managed. The curriculum is gaining in breadth and the provision for pupils with special educational needs has been put on a proper footing. Many of these initiatives are nowadays typically supported by a school administrator. However, the ill health of the current school secretary and the absence of a proper job description mean that far too often the headteacher is getting involved in clerical work in addition to her teaching and wider management responsibilities; for instance, typing pupil test and assessment data into her tracking programme or checking the school budget figures.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	189,840	Balance from previous year	NIL

Total expenditure	184,537
Expenditure per pupil	2,839

Balance carried forward to the next	5,310
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26. The governors have managed to balance their books after several years of overspend. However, with falling numbers and the imperatives associated with national workforce reform, it has become evident that further savings need to be made. The decisions taken by the governors in full consultation with the headteacher were well considered and offer a practical solution to a difficult situation. Best value principles are being carefully applied. The early evidence shows that the teaching of the Year 3 to 6 pupils in the afternoon sessions is thoroughly satisfactory and that the good quality support of teaching assistants is likely to enable these additional adults to deliver a small amount of teaching each week to enable all staff to have their legally required planning and preparation time. However, a significant number of parents were taken aback by the news of these significant changes to school organisation and understandably felt that they should have been forewarned and consulted in advance. Both headteacher and governors are aware that communication with parents needs to improve and a climate of trust re-established. Their combined action plan provides a good starting point for a fresh start.
27. The teamwork established between the headteacher and the senior teacher in Years 3 to 6 is growing in strength and effectiveness. They possess contrasting styles and competencies, but each recognises that they have much to learn from each other. Performance management is underway and there is shared agreement and a greater clarity about the roles and responsibilities of each teacher and the teaching assistants. However, though professional accountability based upon the rigorous evaluation of teaching and its impact upon pupils' achievements is steadily gaining ground; it is not yet firmly established in Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

28. The teacher responsible for the children in the Foundation Stage also teaches the pupils in Years 1 and 2. She is new to working with pupils of reception age, but has done a good job in ensuring that these children feel happy and settled in school. She plans the curriculum for the reception class and until recently, this has been taught by a well qualified teaching assistant. Following the recent departure of the teaching assistant to a new job, the Foundation Stage teacher was supported during the inspection by a supply teacher. There are currently seven children in the Foundation Stage who started school last September and who are approaching the end of their reception year.

Provision for the Foundation Stage is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The adults take good care of the children
- Children achieve well in their personal, social, emotional and physical development
- Day-to-day assessment arrangements lack rigour
- Some of the more able pupils have a good knowledge and understanding of the world

Commentary

29. Most of the pupils are on course to achieve the expected goals in their **personal, social and emotional development**. One or two already exceed them. The children are well cared for and arrive at school happily each morning, where they soon settle to the activities provided. At this late stage of the school year it is evident that their friendships span beyond the small group of reception aged pupils across the wider class setting. Children clearly feel comfortable in school. Levels of co-operation, sharing and turn taking are developing well because the adults have high expectations and provide good role models when working with the children.
30. A good example of the children's well developed personal skills was observed in a formal physical education lesson where they coped extremely well in working alongside the Year 1 and 2 pupils. The adults report that most manage to get changed independently. During the lesson it soon became evident that the children also maintain attention well and can sit quietly to listen to the teacher's instructions. In **physical development** their achievements meet and often exceed the expected goals. They show very good awareness of space and can walk, run, shuffle, skip and jump around the hall without bumping into others. All of the children, including a child with considerable special educational needs, worked very hard and successfully in walking around the hall with a beanbag balanced on their heads. The skills of throwing and catching are developing well. Throughout the lesson the children worked hard and with considerable focussed commitment. The positive relationships between the children and the adults who work with them encourages them to work hard and try to improve.
31. The development of the pupils' **communication, language and literacy** is given appropriate emphasis. Pupils are eager to look at books and discuss favourite stories and the teaching is already giving them a thorough grounding in learning letter sounds. For instance, the children thoroughly enjoyed playing Kim's Game with their teacher. There was no shortage of individuals wanting to hide an object from their classmates and this motivated everyone to concentrate on memorising the objects on the tray and listening hard to work out the sound of the initial letter of the missing object. Early writing skills are being encouraged in a way that successfully motivates the children. For instance, after extending pupils' **knowledge and understanding of the world** by dissecting an apple, examining the seeds and discussing the cycle of growth; the children were asked to record their knowledge in their own way. Almost all the children selected appropriate writing instruments such as pencils and crayons and began to

draw diagrams and write simple captions. One or two of the higher attainers wrote some simple words accurately. However, not all pupils possess a correct pencil grip, nor do adults always correct this.

32. The theme of growth continued to motivate the pupils throughout the inspection. There was a successful visit to the village shop to purchase seeds and the children were excited and eager to tell the inspectors which seeds they had chosen, where they had planted them and how long they thought it would take for them to grow. These experiences also provided the teacher with good opportunities to encourage the pupils' **mathematical development**. Seeds were counted and important mathematical language such as "more" and "less" successfully introduced. Similarly useful debate took place in the comparison of size, shape and the depth that seeds need to be planted. Overall, the pupils' achievements are in line with the expected levels.
33. Although it was not possible to observe the teaching of **creative** activities, the classroom walls and displays are covered with an interesting variety of previous work that confirms that the pupils have reasonable adult led opportunities to work in a variety of media and scale. There are observational drawings of tadpoles and newts from the school pond and collages of flowers and figures that provide a backdrop to the nursery rhyme, "Mary, Mary, quite contrary." Pupils have cut and stuck their own small-scale collages and contributed clay models to the tabletop display of the pond. On this evidence, the pupils' skills are broadly in line with the expected goals. However, there is little evidence of pupils creating independent responses by selecting from a range of different media.
34. The fact that the teacher is often at arms length from what goes on with the reception children means that assessment arrangements require a particular rigour. This is currently not the case. Historically, the approach consists of brief notes recorded by the teaching assistant in an exercise book at the end of some sessions. These notes focus almost entirely upon literacy and numeracy and convey little meaningful information because they are not contextualised against the teacher's planning, nor do they express clearly which of the Foundation Stage "stepping stone clusters" the pupils are being assessed against. There is very little recorded comment about any of the other areas of learning that can be used by the teacher when she comes to write each child's Foundation Stage.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Book provision has improved and reading standards are improving
- Pupils in Years 1 and 2 are underachieving in their writing
- The introduction of portfolios is increasing the range and scope of pupils' writing

Commentary

35. Throughout the school the pupils are receiving a secure grounding in speaking, listening and reading. The potential of the recently created, dedicated library space is starting to be realised. The school's book stock has improved and is currently being

organised more systematically so that pupils can be certain that they can track down particular authors or specific information. A good variety of literature for different ages, sets of books for group reading and a variety of publishers' schemes for teaching reading are now readily available to the pupils. The teachers are making increasingly effective use of this resource so that by the age of eleven most pupils are reading with increasing accuracy and fluency and will talk willingly about favourite books and authors. The home-school partnership is strongest in Years 1 and 2 where the teacher has capitalised upon the parents' enthusiasm to read with their children and to exchange notes through the home-school diary. This dialogue provides a useful boost to children's reading development.

36. The school has correctly identified that pupils' development as writers has not kept pace with other aspects of their literacy work. Since her arrival, the headteacher has introduced a portfolio system whereby pupils are encouraged to keep final drafts of their work across the different genres suggested within the national guidance. This is working well because when inspectors analysed the work of the pupils in Years 3 to 6 it was evident that children are now starting to write for a far wider range of purposes and audiences. This appears to be motivating the pupils because their stamina for writing is increasing and the well focussed commentary provided by teachers is helping them to identify how they can improve their work further. Taken overall the pupils have made steady progress this year, but some good teaching observed during the inspection suggests that the rate of improvement is beginning to accelerate. For instance, in Years 3 and 4 the teacher's lively and imaginative approach to teaching the children about persuasive language drew extensively upon the children's television viewing habits. Favourite jingles from commercials, new and old, were shared and in no time at all the pupils were hard at work composing their own in order to promote "a health giving toy." Teaching assistants and volunteer helpers provided valuable assistance so that all pupils achieved pleasing results regardless of background or ability.
37. However, in Year 2 the pupils are not achieving well enough in their writing. The analysis of the children's exercise books shows that they have made too little progress over the course of the past school year. Children who were writing three or four lines of news last September are doing little more in June. Although the work of lower attainers shows some maturational development, it is not at a rate fast enough to help them catch up to where they ought to be. The teaching observed during the inspection lacked sufficient clarity or rigour. Good ideas were not properly thought through and systematically developed. For instance, the notion of asking the brighter children to extract key information from a text and record this as bullet points was a good one. However, the incorporation of word processing skills was not successful because the teacher expected the pupils to type in all the text rather than providing them with pre-prepared text they could cut, paste and move around. The teacher's lengthy expositions sometimes leaves the lower attaining pupils confused about what they have to do and they show signs of boredom or inattention. On one occasion a boy was totally bemused about the exercise he was expected to complete, but once it was explained by the inspector he completed it easily.
38. The marking of the Year 2 pupils work is unsatisfactory. Although most pieces of work receive a tick and a comment, the teacher does consistently tell pupils how to improve their writing and check that they act on her suggestions. Analysis of handwriting exercises suggest that adults are not paying enough attention to ensuring that pupils start their letters in the right place and form them correctly.

39. Although the Year 2 teacher is currently the subject co-ordinator, there are evident tensions surrounding the leadership and direction of the subject. The arrangements for the subject leader's performance management have, for a variety of reasons, been postponed on several occasions and require urgent implementation.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

40. By Years 5 and 6 the pupils' improving literacy skills have a positive effect upon their work in many other subjects of the National Curriculum. For instance, some of the oldest pupils in Year 6 know how to retrieve reference books and are confident researchers on the Internet. There is evidence of these skills being used in their written work in subjects such as science, history and geography. Similarly, by Year 6 most pupils have developed a reasonably fluent, joined script that enables them to write neatly and swiftly when jotting down ideas or planning their work. However, in Years 1 and 2 the occasionally indiscriminate use of worksheets in subjects such as science, limits the opportunities for the pupils to apply their writing skills across a similar breadth of subjects.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Although current standards are below average, they are improving, particularly in Years 3 to 6
- The introduction of systems for tracking individual pupil progress is impacting with improved levels of achievement
- Pupils with special educational needs receive good support and achieve well
- There is insufficient challenge for more able pupils in Years 1 and 2

Commentary

41. Standards in mathematics have been consistently in line with the national average for the last few years. However, in comparison with similar schools, the results are well below the expected standard. The introduction of more challenging teaching and learning, particularly in Years 3 to 6, is helping to raise both standards and achievement in these classes. For the current Year 6, standards are below average, but the support provided for the high percentage of special needs pupils in that year group is good and they achieve well. Evidence of work seen, supports the view that standards in mathematics are improving in Years 3 to 6.
42. Standards in Year 2 have also been below average compared to similar schools, apart from 2004, when results show that higher ability pupils achieved particularly well. However, pupils in the current Year 1 and 2 classes are underachieving. The work has a strong bias towards basic numeracy, which is entirely appropriate, but from the evidence of work seen, pupils are insufficiently challenged, especially those of higher ability. The quality and quantity of work produced illustrates a lack of pupil expectation and progress.
43. The teaching of mathematics is good overall, with some good teaching and learning observed in Years 3 to 6. For example, in one lesson observed in Years 5 and 6, pupils

were well motivated by the teacher's approach to teaching ratio and proportion. The pupils were set differentiated group problem solving tasks and gained confidence from the clear explanations provided by the class teacher. From the lessons seen in Years 1 and 2, teaching is satisfactory with some good aspects. Pupils were keen to learn, enjoyed mathematics and displayed very positive attitudes. This was because the teacher had a good relationship with the class and gave them confidence to tackle the number tasks set. There was a good use of mathematical vocabulary and pupils collaborated well solving two digit number problems. However, planning was not sufficiently focused to meet the needs of the different age and abilities of pupils in the class. Therefore, some pupils were confused and required greater support, whilst others were not sufficiently extended, either in the nature of the task or the quantity of work expected of them.

44. The leadership and management of mathematics are good and the subject leader is influential in bringing about improvements in standards, provision and resources. The monitoring procedures give her a good grasp of the strengths and areas for development. These include, analysis of individual pupil tracking records, informal discussions with pupils and an evaluation of national, school and other results from voluntary tests. The subject leader has introduced a greater focus on investigational mathematics in the older age groups as a consequence of findings from earlier monitoring and review. The target setting process is in its infancy and is clearly in need of improvement in order to ensure that every pupil is achieving as well as is expected.

Mathematics across the curriculum

45. Pupils in Years 3 and 6 are developing improved skills of arithmetic, problem solving, data handling and measurement. This is partly due to the fact that they are given the opportunities to develop these skills across the curriculum, particularly in science, but also through ICT, in art and design, design and technology and history and geography. Younger pupils also are able to apply their numeracy skills to other curriculum areas. In one Foundation Stage lesson, children estimated and counted the number of seeds in a packet when learning how seeds grow.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are improving and pupil achievement in Year 5 and 6 is good
- Pupils underachieve in Years 1 and 2
- The work of older pupils includes a strong and increasing emphasis on investigational science
- The pupils with SEN are effectively integrated in lessons and achieve well

Commentary

46. Pupils leave the Foundation Stage with a range of experiences which begin to develop their enjoyment, interest, awareness and understanding of science. However, in Years 1 and 2 pupils make insufficient progress. Low expectations of what they can achieve, together with teaching and learning experiences that are insufficiently planned, focused and challenging, are factors that contribute to this under achievement.
47. Improvements to the leadership and management of science have resulted in improved levels of achievement in Year 5 and 6. Observations of lessons, discussions with pupils and an analysis of work confirm this. Standards at the end of Year 6 continue to be below average.

However, standards are improving and pupils are achieving well. This results from good teaching and more challenging expectations in these year groups. An increased emphasis on investigational work in science has also resulted in greater pupil enthusiasm, confidence and understanding.

48. Year 1 and 2 pupils cover units of work in science that follow national guidelines. For example, they gain an understanding of things that use electricity, study the properties of different materials and observe different habitats in the school grounds. In one lesson during the inspection, pupils were observing and recording different parts of plants. However, scrutiny of pupils' books and discussions with Year 2 pupils indicates that much of the work makes insufficient demands on the pupils, particularly those of higher ability. The quantity and quality of pupils work in these age groups is unsatisfactory. There is little evidence of challenging investigational and practical activities and work is poorly planned and does not take into account the specific needs of the different ages and higher ability pupils.
49. In the older age groups there are many examples of good teaching and learning experiences, which are helping to raise pupils' confidence, understanding, and most importantly, standards. Lessons are well planned and maintain a good pace. A strong emphasis is placed on investigational science activities. Year 3 and 4 have recently investigated 'Keeping Warm' and have researched the most effective thermal insulators. During the inspection, Year 5 and 6 were observed developing a scientific enquiry and were able to plan an investigation taking into account different variables whilst ensuring a fair test.
50. Science is satisfactorily led and managed. The subject leader has introduced a greater focus on investigational science and this is impacting on improving standards and achievement in Years 3 to 6. Resources for science are good and the curriculum organised effectively using national guidelines. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and achieve well. However, the monitoring, review and evaluation of science requires further development to ensure that the school identifies and addresses the poor standards and pupil progress in Year 1 and 2.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils in Years 3 to 6 are achieving well
- ICT is well led and managed
- The subject is well resourced and the accommodation is good.
- There are some good cross-curricular links.

Commentary

51. The school has improved its provision very effectively, particularly in the last two years and has successfully kept up with the fast moving developments in technology, curriculum and teaching methods. It has been able to finance a computer suite for the focused learning of skills and knowledge, and data projectors to support teaching and learning. Roamers enhance control technology for the younger age groups and electronic programming resources develop these skills further for the older pupils.
52. Pupils show confidence, enjoyment and successful collaboration as they work with computers and other technology. By Year 5 and 6 pupils are handling professional software, such as presentation, spreadsheet and word processing packages with increasing skill and confidence. The effective use made of computers in other subjects helps to consolidate and extend skills and knowledge.

53. Good teaching and learning was observed in the older classes. In Year 3 and 4 for example, clear explanations and demonstration of software meant that pupils were able to show good understanding of screen turtle to create a variety of shapes on the computer. In Year 5 and 6 all pupils were able to create a PowerPoint presentation and higher ability pupils were challenged to develop their presentation further by adding colour and sound. Pupils displayed very positive attitudes to learning and teaching clearly took account of the needs of pupils of all abilities. Although no lessons were observed in the Year 1 and 2 class, evidence of work seen and discussions with pupils indicates that standards are satisfactory.
54. Leadership and management are good. The subject leader has managed the provision and resources well. Assessment systems are beginning to be used to inform planning. Monitoring, review and evaluation requires further development. The school is part of local learning network of schools, which is focusing on the use of ICT as part of its remit. The subject leader is using this as an opportunity for joint staff training with other schools as a means of developing further staff expertise.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

55. The school places a strong emphasis on developing ICT skills in other subjects. Older pupils use PowerPoint to create presentations, such as 'Sports Day' in literacy and a science investigation on 'Helicopters'. In a history lesson, Year 5 and 6 pupils used the Internet to access the Imperial War Museum web site and download information on evacuees during World War II. In Year 1 and 2, pupils use software to reinforce their understanding in numeracy lessons.

HUMANITIES

56. No geography lessons were taught during the inspection and only one history lesson was observed. It is not, therefore, possible to make a firm judgement about the quality of the provision. From the evidence of planning, work seen and through conversations with pupils it is evident that pupils experience a broad and balanced history and geography curriculum, which follows national guidelines. ICT is used effectively to support teaching and learning in both of these subjects, pupils' attitudes are good, and pupils with special educational needs achieve well.
57. In **geography**, the evidence indicated that the pupils in Years 1 and 2 have an understanding of routes and key features within their own locality. In Years 3 to 6, pupils have studied mountain climates around the world such as the Himalayas and compared these to our own climate in the UK. Work seen and discussions with pupils suggest that by Year 6 pupils have a good understanding of different environments, use globes and atlases and understand geographical vocabulary.
58. In the one **history** lesson observed, pupils in Year 3 to 6 gained an understanding of the lives of young evacuees from local schools during World War II using original sources of evidence. The lesson was well planned and activities were appropriately differentiated to support the needs of the different age groups, aptitudes and abilities of the pupils. Discussions with pupils and the scrutiny of work on a recent topic on Ancient Egypt, show that pupils enjoy history and are developing skills that allows them to have a knowledge and understanding of events, people and changes in the past.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The teaching of religious education successfully informs the school's wider values and curriculum

Commentary

59. During their time in the school pupils build effectively on their knowledge and understanding of Christianity as well as learning about other world faiths such as Hinduism, Islam, Judaism and Buddhism. They know about major festivals and celebrations. With prompting, the pupils in Year 2 talked about the events surrounding Easter or Christmas, and they have a satisfactory knowledge of other faiths. Planning in all lessons is closely linked to the locally agreed syllabus. In one of these units of work, 'Beautiful World, Wonderful God,' older pupils were given an understanding of the responsibilities we have to care for our world. In a lesson observed, pupils considered environmental issues and showed maturity, both in their discussions, and in the time for reflection at the end of the lesson. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good, enabling pupils to achieve well. Religious education is well supported through the ethos of the school, the sense of caring and community, which permeates much of the learning.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

60. It was not possible to observe much teaching in music, art and design and design and technology; so judgements are based upon informal observations, discussion with pupils and an analysis of their work.
61. Although no **music** lessons were observed, pupils sing tunefully during worship and more than a third of the school are learning how to play an instrument. In **art and design**, during the Wednesday "Activity Afternoon" the Year 3 to 6 pupils were observed producing some good quality observational charcoal sketches of flowers. Other work on display relating to figures confirms that this aspect of art is well developed, although the progressive development of painting skills and techniques is less firmly established. Holiday homework provided many pupils with the interesting challenge of producing a response to the theme "April Showers." A variety of imaginative three-dimensional artefacts depicting homes and gardens show that the core skills of **design and technology** are given satisfactory coverage.

Physical education

Provision in physical education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils receive regular opportunities to exercise vigorously
- Higher attaining pupils have few opportunities to extend their skills to higher levels

Commentary

62. In both the lessons observed during the inspection the teaching was satisfactory. In Years 2 and 6 the pupils are achieving standards in games and athletics that are broadly in line with those expected nationally.
63. One of the key strengths of both lessons was that the teachers kept the pupils busy and occupied throughout. They ensured that the pupils warmed up thoroughly and then kept them exercising vigorously. In the Year 5/ 6 lesson, the pupils had good opportunities to practice running at different paces and successfully identified the way that body position alters at different speeds as well as the effects of exercise upon their breathing and pulse rate. The pupils participate enthusiastically when playing long ball, although the ball striking of some of girls requires improvement.
64. In the Year 2 lesson the teacher was not properly dressed to teach physical education effectively. Even so, the lesson was satisfactory because there was a steadily increasing demand in what she demanded of the children that led to many improving their skills of throwing, catching and controlling balls and bean bags.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

65. No specific lessons in personal, social, health education and citizenship were observed during the inspection. However, the evidence gathered during discussions with staff and pupils, worship, class meetings and circle time indicates that most aspects of **personal, social and health education** are satisfactorily covered within the school's curriculum.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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