

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **HOLMWOOD FIRST SCHOOL**

Milton Keynes

LEA area: Milton Keynes

Unique reference number: 110392

Headteacher: Ms A Herbert

Reporting inspector: Miss M A Warner  
17288

Dates of inspection: 9 – 12 December 2002

Inspection number: 246993

Full inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	First
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 to 8 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Kensington Drive Great Holm Milton Keynes
Postcode:	MK8 9AB
Telephone number:	01908 260596
Fax number:	01908 260596
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr D Potten
Date of previous inspection:	17 November 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
17288	M A Warner	Registered inspector	<p>Science</p> <p>Information and communication technology</p> <p>Music</p> <p>Religious education</p> <p>English as an additional language</p>	<p>What sort of school is it?</p> <p>The school's results and pupils' achievements</p> <p>How well pupils are taught?</p> <p>How well the school is led and managed</p> <p>What the school should do to improve further?</p> <p>Assessment</p>
9457	G Bindoff	Lay inspector		<p>Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development</p> <p>Spiritual, moral, social and cultural provision</p> <p>How well does the school cares for its pupils?</p> <p>How well does the school work in partnership with parents?</p> <p>Accommodation</p>
22831	C Lewis	Team inspector	<p>English</p> <p>Geography</p> <p>History</p> <p>Education inclusion</p> <p>Special educational needs</p>	<p>How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?</p>

18370	K Johnson	Team inspector	Mathematics Art Design and technology Physical education The Foundation Stage	
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The inspection contractor was:

Nord Anglia School Inspection Services Ltd  
Strathblane House  
Ashfield Road  
Cheadle  
Stockport  
SK8 1BB

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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Holmwood First School is situated in the Great Holm area of Milton Keynes. It mainly serves the immediate area. Pupils come from a diversity of backgrounds, where social economic circumstances are above average and mobility is high. There are 212 pupils on roll, which is the same size as most primary schools nationally. There is a small number of pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds who speak English as an additional language, one of whom is at an early stage of learning English. These pupils' first languages are either, Gujarati, Urdu, Turkish, Japanese, French and Spanish. The school has identified 10.4 per cent of pupils as having special educational needs, which is well below the national average. One per cent of pupils have formal statements of need, which is below the national average. Attainment on entry is average although there is a wide range of ability. Most of the children have had some play-school experience but few have been to nurseries. Pupils joining the school in Reception begin part-time in September and attend full time by the autumn half term.

### **HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS**

Holmwood First School is a very effective school. Standards are above the national average, the quality of teaching is very good and pupils' have very good attitudes to learning. The school is very well led and pupils achieve very well. The school gives very good value for money.

#### **What the school does well**

- Relationships at all levels are excellent.
- The overall quality of teaching is very good throughout the school.
- The school effectively includes all pupils in question and answer sessions in class and all activities.
- The management of pupils, by all staff, is excellent and, as a result, pupils' behaviour is very good throughout the day.
- Pupils are very enthusiastic, have very good attitudes to learning and are interested in all activities.
- The school provides an exciting, purposeful and relevant curriculum, enriched by a good range of extra-curricular activities, which include a good number of visits.
- There are very effective links with parents, who have very positive views of the school.
- The headteacher and deputy provide very strong leadership for the school.
- The governors have a clear strategic plan for the school.

#### **What could be improved**

- The school has not yet computerised its systems for recording and analysing pupils' assessment results so that pupils' progress can be monitored more easily.
- Subject managers are unable to plan long-term with a delegated budget.
- Planned assessment opportunities, to find out what pupils have learned in foundation subjects, are not yet well developed.

*The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan.*

### **HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION**

The school was last inspected in November 1997, since when improvement has been well above what is normally seen. All four key issues have been addressed and weaknesses improved successfully. The quality of teaching has improved from good to very good, with the lower-attaining pupils taking a more active part in lessons. Standards in English and music have improved considerably since the last inspection and there has been substantial improvement, resulting in higher standards, in mathematics, geography and history. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and for extra-curricular activities has also improved considerably.

## STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 2 based on National Curriculum test results.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
Reading	B	A	B	B
Writing	C	A	A	B
Mathematics	C	A	B	C

**Key**

well above average    A

above average        B

average                C

below average        D

well below average   E

By the end of their reception year, almost all children reach the nationally expected targets and many achieve beyond them.

The National Curriculum test results in 2001 reflect a particularly high achieving group of pupils. Results in 2002 do not reflect a decline in the quality of teaching and were still above those of other previous years. In 2002, test results for seven years olds show that standards were above the national average in reading, where four pupils achieved Level 4, the level normally expected of eleven years olds. Results were above the national average in mathematics and were well above the national average in writing. Compared with similar schools, standards were above average in reading and writing. They were in line with similar schools in mathematics. In science, teachers' assessments show that an average number of pupils reached the expected Level 2 and a higher than average number reached the higher Level 3. In 2002, boys performed considerably better than girls. The school is now reviewing its curriculum and teaching methods to improve the attainment of girls.

Standards in English during the inspection were well above national expectations in Years 2 and 3. In mathematics and science, standards were above national expectations in both years, with pupils' knowledge of number and their ability to carry out investigative work being particularly strong. Standards in art, history, geography, music and physical education are all above national expectations in Years 2 and 3. There was too little evidence available during the inspection to support a judgement on standards in design and technology or religious education. In information and communication technology (ICT), standards were in line with what is expected nationally in Year 2 but because of lack of software for simulation exercises, they were below expectations in Year 3. Pupils make very good progress and achieve very well. Pupils who are gifted and talented and pupils with special educational needs make good progress in relation to their abilities and their individual education plans. There was no evidence of any significant variation in the attainment and progress of boys and girls during the inspection.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils are very enthusiastic for lessons and school activities. They particularly enjoy the imaginative ways subjects, such as history, are taught.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Pupils' behaviour is very good. All pupils respond very well to the guidance they are given about how to behave in school.



Personal development and relationships	The relationships between the pupils themselves and between the pupils and adults in the school are very good. The adults provide very good role models for the pupils, who develop tolerance, kindness and care for each other.
Attendance	Pupils' attendance is in line with that found in most schools nationally but some pupils have unacceptable patterns of lateness.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2	Year 3
Quality of teaching	Very good	Very good	Very good

*Inspectors make judgements about teaching in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. 'Satisfactory' means that the teaching is adequate and strengths outweigh weaknesses.*

English, mathematics and science are all taught very well. There are very effective strategies in place for teaching literacy, and there are effective strategies in place for teaching numeracy where teachers have strong subject knowledge and high expectations. Basic skills of literacy and numeracy are taught very well across the curriculum. The use of ICT, when teaching other subjects, needs developing, but is good in numeracy and is planned for in literacy. The teaching of art is very good and produces high standards. Science is taught very well and ICT, music and physical education are taught well. The management of pupils, by all staff throughout the school, is excellent and is part of the reason for the schools' success in creating a very positive ethos, which in turn aids learning and helps to raise standards. Almost all aspects of teaching are very good. The effectiveness of teachers' planning and their use of time are good. However, lessons tend to be late in starting at the beginning of the day, and planning for design and technology and religious education could be sharper to ensure pupils remember better what they have been taught. Teachers' planning and provision enables equality of access and opportunity for all pupils, with both lower- and higher-attaining pupils included in all activities, and catered for well, in lessons or 'booster' groups.

The quality of pupils' learning is very good. They acquire a very good range of knowledge, skills and understanding in almost all subjects. They put a considerable amount of their own effort into what they do. They are eager to learn and enjoy their lessons. They work at a good pace, concentrating well on each task set. While they have a reasonable knowledge of their own learning this area is not quite as good as others.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school provides an exciting, purposeful and relevant curriculum. There was limited evidence of design and technology and religious education, although planning shows that statutory requirements are met. A very good range of extra-curricular activities is offered and is well supported by pupils.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Arrangements for identifying and supporting pupils with special educational needs are good.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	There is good provision for pupils with English as an additional language because teachers adapt their teaching well to pupils' needs. These pupils make very good progress. However, ways need to be found to

	better support pupils when they are at an early stage of learning English.
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Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	There is very good provision for pupils' social and moral development and good provision for their spiritual and cultural development. These, while good, are areas the school has identified as being in need of improvement.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school provides a very caring and supportive environment in which pupils can learn and make progress. However, there are some minor issues with regard to health and safety to address. There is little systematic recording and monitoring of pupils' personal development or analysis of patterns of absence and lateness.

The school is successful in establishing a caring, family atmosphere where all pupils and their families feel included in the school community. Relationships between the school and parents are very strong.

### HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	There continues to be strong leadership from the long-serving headteacher who is assisted very well by her deputy head. A third member of staff, with good ICT skills, has recently joined the senior management team.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors, who bring different areas of expertise to the school, are knowledgeable and supportive. They fulfil their roles very well.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school is constantly monitoring and evaluating its performance and, as a result, standards have improved and gender differences are addressed. The high performance of boys in reading reflects this well.
The strategic use of resources	The management has a clear vision for the school and uses its resources strategically to fulfil that vision. The principles of best value are applied well.

Staffing, accommodation and learning resources are all satisfactory.

### PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• My child likes school. (100 per cent)</li> <li>• I feel comfortable about approaching the school with a question or problem. (100 per cent)</li> <li>• Behaviour is good. (99 per cent)</li> <li>• Teaching is good. (98 per cent)</li> <li>• The school is well led and managed. (98 per cent)</li> </ul> <p><i>These percentages are proportions of the returned questionnaires, of which there were 137 from 211 sent out.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The range of extra-curricular activities. (15 per cent)</li> <li>• The amount of homework their children are given to do. (7 per cent)</li> <li>• Information about their child's progress and what standards are nationally expected of different aged children. (4 per cent and parents' meeting.)</li> </ul>

Inspectors agree with the positive views of parents. Inspectors do not agree with all their concerns. The school provides a very good range of activities outside lessons, which include out of school educational visits and after school clubs for Year 3 pupils. Homework is used well to support learning and is linked well to work in the classroom. Parents have good opportunities to discuss progress with class teachers both informally and in formal consultation meetings and annual written reports contain useful information about their children's progress in learning. However, improvement is needed in the information given about what standards their children have attained and about nationally expected levels for pupils of different ages.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?**

#### **The school's results and pupils' achievements**

##### *Strengths*

- Some children achieve well beyond what is expected of children of this age in language and mathematical development by the end of the reception year.
- Standards in writing are well above the national average.
- Standards in reading and mathematics are above the national average.
- Standards in art, history, geography, music and physical education are all above national expectations.

##### *Weaknesses*

- One aspect of information and communication technology in Year 3 is below national expectations.
- Standards in design and technology and religious education could not be judged because of lack of sufficient evidence.

#### The Foundation Stage

1. When children begin school in the reception classes, their levels of attainment in language, mathematical development and their social skills are broadly average compared with other children of their age nationally. They build very well on their early achievement because of the very good quality of teaching they receive. By the end of their reception year almost all reach at least the national targets expected of them (the Early Learning Goals) in their social development.

#### Results and performance data

2. By the end of Year 2 in 2001, standards in reading, writing and mathematics were well above the national average. They were well above those of similar schools in mathematics and above those of similar schools in reading and writing. This reflects a cohort with a larger than usual number of high-attaining pupils. Standards in reading have been above the national average for the last three years. The school provides well for higher-attaining pupils.
3. In 2002, standards in the National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2 were above the national average in reading and mathematics and were well above the national average in writing. Standards were above those of similar schools in reading and writing and were in line with those of similar schools in mathematics. Standards in reading, writing and mathematics have improved considerably since the last inspection. In science, teachers' assessments show that an average number of pupils reached the expected Level 2 and a higher than average number reached the higher Level 3.
4. The school analyses its test data and, as a result, has identified some gender variations in the end of key stage test results, with boys, in 2002, doing significantly better than nationally. As a result (and this is a clear indication of the school's ongoing determination to provide equality of opportunity for all its pupils) the school is now reviewing its curriculum and teaching methods to improve the attainment of girls.

#### Standards during the inspection

5. Standards have improved in all core subjects since the last inspection. In English they have improved from being in line with national expectations to being well above them. In mathematics, they have improved from being in line to being above national expectations in both Year 2 and Year 3. Pupils' knowledge of number is particularly strong: they are good at mental calculation and when using pencil and paper methods to solve problems. In science, standards were above the national expectations at the last inspection and these good standards have been maintained.
6. In foundation subjects, standards in art, history, geography, music and physical education are all above national expectations in both Years 2 and 3. There was too little evidence available during the inspection to support a judgement on standards in design and technology or religious education. In information and communication technology (ICT) standards are in line with what is expected in Year 2 but because of lack of software for simulation exercises, they are below expectations in Year 3. The school expects to remedy this in Spring 2003.

#### How well pupils achieve

7. Pupils make very good progress and achieve very well. Pupils who are gifted and talented make good progress: the school has identified these pupils as the more able and plans well for them. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in relation to their abilities and their individual education plans. There was no evidence of any significant variation in the attainment and progress of boys and girls in lessons observed during the inspection.

#### **Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development**

##### *Strengths*

- Pupils are very enthusiastic for lessons and school activities.
- Pupils' behaviour is very good.
- The relationships between the pupils themselves and between the pupils and adults in the school are excellent.

##### *Weaknesses*

- Some pupils have unacceptable patterns of lateness.

#### Pupils' attitudes to school

8. The pupils have very good attitudes to school and these contribute very well to their good standards of learning. They enjoy their lessons and sustain their interest and concentration well. The previous inspection found that pupils' attitudes were a strength of the school and this strength has been maintained. Parents agree that their children are happy at school and that they are expected to work hard. Pupils in Year 3 were very excited about a special morning of activities linked to their study of ancient Greece. They especially enjoyed the mini Olympics, the dance and the making of jewellery. These activities stimulated the pupils' interest and helped them to understand something about the culture of the ancient Greeks. They were amazed to be able to hold in their hands actual coins from the ancient world when they went on a visit to the British Museum. They felt a real sense of wonder that they could touch something that had been used by people so long ago.

#### Pupils' behaviour

9. Pupils' behaviour is very good. This high standard has also been sustained since the last inspection. Parents are proud of their children's good behaviour and say that the introduction of Golden Time and the Golden Rules have been very popular with the children and make the school's expectations of the standards of behaviour very clear. The youngest pupils respond very well to the guidance they are given about how to behave in school. They are encouraged to share things and to listen to each other, and they develop good habits of work. This helps them to settle quickly into school routines and to make very good progress in their learning. No oppressive behaviour was seen during the inspection and pupils agreed with the Year 2 pupil who said, "There aren't really any bullies here". No pupils have been excluded in recent years and this is characteristic of the school's strong commitment to the inclusion of all pupils in the education it provides.

#### Pupils' personal development and relationships

10. The relationships between the pupils and the adults in the school, and between the pupils themselves, are excellent. The adults provide very good role models for the children and the pupils develop tolerance, kindness and care for each other. The school successfully raises the pupils' awareness of the needs of others and even the youngest children look after each other. The pupils in Year 3 take their responsibilities as 'Playground Friends' very seriously and watch out for anyone who may need help or support. Pupils in all classes help children who arrive during the school year and act as Buddies. This helps the new pupils to settle quickly into school, to feel welcomed into the school family and to make good progress in their learning. Ninety-five per cent of the parents who contributed their views to the inspection agree that the school is successful in helping their children to develop mature attitudes.
11. The pupils show respect for the traditions of different faiths. Pupils in Year 1 enjoyed sharing the celebration of Diwali with Hindu pupils and parents and Year 2 pupils were very interested in learning about the way Christians prepare for Christmas. They learned about the symbols associated with Christingles and, as they made them themselves, they gained some understanding of the Christian faith.

#### Attendance

12. Pupils' attendance is satisfactory and is in line with that found in most schools nationally. There is, however, a daily pattern of lateness for the morning session. Some parents need further encouragement to make sure that their children arrive at school promptly and do not miss part of the first lesson.

### **HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?**

#### *Strengths*

##### Teaching

- The teaching of English, mathematics, science and art are all very good.
- Teachers and support staff manage pupils excellently.

##### Learning

- Pupils acquire a very good range of knowledge, skills and understanding in almost all subjects.
- Pupils put a considerable amount of their own effort into what they do, eager to learn and enjoying their lessons.

#### The quality of teaching

13. The quality of teaching in the reception classes is very good. Teachers and nursery nurses have very good understanding of how children learn. They are very skilled at encouraging children to respond to questions and developing their curiosity and interest in learning. Assessments are detailed and relevant, providing a very sound basis for planning which builds systematically on what children already know and can do. Teachers provide a happy secure environment in which children's creativity and enthusiasm for learning are able to thrive.
14. English, mathematics and science are all taught very well. There are very effective strategies in place for teaching literacy, and there are effective strategies in place for teaching numeracy, where teachers have strong subject knowledge and high expectations. Basic skills of literacy and numeracy are taught very well across the curriculum. The use of ICT, when teaching other subjects, needs developing, but it is good in mathematics and is planned for in literacy. The teaching of art is very good and produces high standards. ICT, music and physical education are taught well. The management of pupils, by all staff throughout the school, is excellent and is part of the reason for the schools' success in creating a very positive ethos, which in turn aids learning and helps to raise standards. Almost all aspects of teaching are very good. The effectiveness of teachers' planning and their use of time are good. However, lessons tend to be late in starting at the beginning of the day, and planning for design and technology and religious education could be sharper, to ensure pupils remember better what they have been taught.
15. Teachers' planning and provision enables equality of access and opportunity for all pupils, with both lower and higher attaining pupils included in all activities and catered for well in lessons or 'booster' groups. Teachers meet the needs of special educational needs pupils with good quality support and differentiated tasks matched to their needs. Although there is currently no member of staff with responsibility for special educational needs the headteacher is currently taking responsibility. She liaises well with teachers and support staff and has a very good overview of special educational needs within the school. Learning support assistants work well with class teachers. They are informed of lesson content in advance of lessons, contribute well to the assessment and monitoring of pupils' progress and provide pupils with an appropriate blend of help and challenge. Support for pupils with statements of special educational need is good and pupils with special educational needs are very well-integrated into the school community.

#### How well pupils learn and make progress

16. The quality of pupils' learning is very good. They acquire a very good range of knowledge, skills and understanding in almost all subjects. They put a considerable amount of their own effort into what they do, are eager to learn and enjoy their lessons. They work at a good pace, concentrating well on each task set. While they have a reasonable knowledge of their own learning this area is not quite as good as others.

#### **HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?**



### *Strengths*

- The school provides an exciting, purposeful and relevant curriculum.
- The curriculum for the youngest children is carefully planned.
- Arrangements for identifying and supporting pupils with special educational needs are good.
- There is very good provision for pupils' social and moral development.

### The quality and range of opportunities for learning provided by the school for all pupils, including whether statutory requirements are met

17. The school provides an exciting, purposeful and relevant curriculum with a very good range of worthwhile learning opportunities which successfully meet the interests, aptitudes and special needs of all its pupils. The curriculum meets statutory requirements to teach all subjects in the National Curriculum and religious education. There has been a significant improvement in the whole-school curriculum since the previous OFSTED report, in particular, in the adoption of appropriate schemes of work for all subjects and in the quality of planning. There are appropriate schemes of work in place for all curriculum subjects that provide secure continuity and progression in learning and appropriate guidance to teachers. A minor concern is in the timing of the teaching of design and technology, as there are long periods of time when pupils are not taught this subject, and previously learned skills are more difficult to build on when this is so. The curriculum for the youngest children is carefully planned to meet the requirements of the Early Learning Goals and Stepping Stones for Learning.
18. Arrangements for identifying and supporting pupils with special educational needs are good. A detailed and comprehensive record of special educational needs is kept and appropriate individual education plans (IEPs) are provided for pupils on the register, written by class teachers. The provision of additional support for pupils with formal statements of educational need is of good quality. Although there is some withdrawal of pupils for support, this is appropriate and kept to a minimum; teachers are aware of the need to ensure pupils do not miss any lesson or activity regularly. The positive atmosphere of the school and the very good relationships promote the effective inclusion of pupils with special educational needs into every aspect of the school's life.
19. The school has implemented the government's recommended National Literacy and National Numeracy strategies very effectively, and planning and teaching take appropriate account of the recommendations both for lesson format and for lesson content. The school's provision for equal opportunities and inclusion is very good overall. There is a very positive school ethos, which reflects the commitment to equality of opportunity for all pupils. The curriculum provides good equality of access and opportunity for pupils to learn and make progress. There is a detailed and clear policy for equal opportunities in place, and staff are very well aware of the need to ensure all pupils are fully included in all aspects of the school's life. The school reflects equal opportunity in all its aims and objectives, curriculum and organisation and offers relevant role models to all pupils.
20. A very good range of well-supported extra-curricular activities takes place after school throughout the year, including recorder club, gymnastics club, computer club and sporting activities, such as football and hockey. A very good programme of additional educational visits and special event days is provided to further enhance learning very successfully; for example, Ghana Day, Book Day, Science Day, Victorian School Afternoon and, during the inspection, an Ancient Greek Morning.

How well the school provides for pupils' personal - including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural – development

21. The school makes good provision for pupils' personal development and the provision for pupils' social and moral development is very good. This is an improvement since the previous inspection, when the provision overall was satisfactory. Parents agree that the school is effective in promoting good moral values and encourages children to show respect for each other, to be kind and to develop a sense of fairness. The school aims to improve its provision for pupils' spiritual and cultural development and has plans in place to assess what is currently provided.
22. Pupils have good opportunities to share the experience of people with religious beliefs and to understand some important elements of faith. However, more opportunities could be provided in assemblies and collective worship for pupils to experience spiritual aspects of their lives and to reflect on their response to them. The school provides a very supportive environment for children where each individual feels valued and can gain self-confidence. Pupils are helped to understand and respect each other's feelings and to know what effect their actions have on others. They discuss and think about how they treat each other and how they themselves would like to be treated. Pupils are given very clear guidelines about how they are expected to behave. As a result, there is very good behaviour throughout the school.
23. Very good provision is made for pupils to develop social relationships and personal responsibility. Pupils in Year 3 are enthusiastic about their new role as 'playground friends'. This responsibility helps them to recognise the needs of younger pupils, to take a lead in initiating games and to gain maturity in their relationships with adults. The school Christmas production gives an excellent opportunity for all pupils to work together, to make a significant contribution to the event, to be responsible for their own role and to be proud of their personal and collective achievement. In physical education, pupils in Year 3 have benefited from the recent coaching sessions provided by members of Wimbledon Football Club. They were learning to play as team members during a final 'mini tournament' held during the week of the inspection.
24. The school makes good provision for pupils' personal, social and health education through whole school assemblies, circle times and the science and religious education curriculum. A good programme of visits and visitors makes an appropriate contribution to pupils' understanding of the responsibilities of being a member of the community. The school has satisfactory links with the local community and good and developing links and relationships with its partner institutions.
25. Provision for pupils' cultural development is good and reflects the diversity of cultures within the school's community and wider society. An audit of books in the school's library has been carried out to ensure that there is a good representation of different cultures in the fiction and non-fiction areas and the school library service is used well to extend provision. Good use of learning resources in some lessons contributes well to cultural provision, for example the use of a text on festivals of different faiths in a Year 3 literacy lesson. Art lessons contribute very well to pupils' cultural development in their study of famous artists. Pupils' cultural experience is also enriched by visits to museums. For example, Year 3 pupils have recently visited the British Museum as part of their topic on Ancient Greece.

**HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?**

*Strengths*

- The very caring and supportive environment for learning.
- The strong family atmosphere, where all the pupils and their families are well known.

#### *Weaknesses*

- Health and safety issues arising from the use of the school grounds by unauthorised persons.
- Training of staff in issues relating to child protection.
- Systematic recording and monitoring of pupils' personal development.
- Analysis of patterns of absence and lateness.

#### The steps taken to ensure pupils' welfare, health and safety

26. The school's provision for pupils' welfare is satisfactory overall and there are several strengths. There is a strong family atmosphere in the school and all the pupils and their families are very well known. The headteacher is legendary for her detailed memory of everyone ever linked to the school. Parents feel that everyone is always made to feel welcome and say that 'there is always a smiling face'. Pupils quickly feel that they are valued within the school community. A caring and supportive environment is established where pupils develop confidence in themselves and want to succeed. This contributes very significantly to their good levels of achievement.
27. Procedures for child protection comply with local requirements but class teachers and support staff have not been trained to recognise the signs and symptoms of abuse or to know how to respond to any disclosure a pupil may make to them. Improvement is also needed in the analysis of patterns of absence and lateness to ensure that individual pupils or identified groups of pupils are not disadvantaged by regularly missing parts of their schooling. Some good provision is made for the health and safety of pupils. Assessments of the risks associated with a range of school activities, including out of school educational visits, are thorough and regularly reviewed. Action is needed by governors to ensure that unauthorised persons do not use the school grounds out of school hours. Misuse of the grounds presents a risk to the safety of the pupils and adults in the school.

#### The effectiveness of the school's assessment and monitoring procedures

28. Very good procedures are in place to record and assess children's personal and social development in the reception year, and these contribute to the children's very good learning. Similar procedures are not yet in place in the rest of the school, although some class teachers have systems of their own to note the personal progress of some individual pupils. A more systematic approach is needed to ensure that objectives for pupils' personal development are planned and monitored thoroughly.
29. Very good assessment procedures are in place for literacy and mathematics and good ones are being piloted in science. Assessment procedures in other subjects have not been formalised sufficiently. There is good use of assessment procedures to identify pupils with special educational needs. The data obtained is used well to provide well-targeted support for pupils with particular learning needs. The school has fully adopted the recommendations of the recently introduced revised code of practice for special educational needs. There is a detailed and comprehensive record of special educational needs pupils and there are appropriate procedures for placing pupils on the register. The school meets the requirements outlined in pupils' statements of educational need with good quality support.

#### The effectiveness of the school's educational and personal support and guidance in raising pupils' achievement

30. The school gives good personal support to pupils, which helps them to learn well. Parents are very appreciative of the help given to their children. They say that individual needs are identified quickly and responded to effectively. They feel that the school is sensitive to family situations and gives very good personal support to pupils who are experiencing difficulties. Visiting specialists are also used well to help pupils learn. They work with individual pupils and give guidance to class teachers about strategies for meeting the pupils' needs. More specialist language support is needed for pupils who are at an early stage of learning in English as an additional language but provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. The excellent relationships between pupils with special educational needs and the learning support assistants who work with them contribute very well to the pupils' achievements. Good strategies are in place to help pupils settle quickly into school when they enter during the year and these help them to make good progress.
31. Very good strategies are used to promote good behaviour. Expectations are clear throughout the school and very good management of pupils by class teachers ensures that there is a calm and purposeful environment for learning. This contributes significantly to pupils' very good achievement.

### **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?**

*Strengths*

- Parents' have very positive views of the school.
- There is an open and welcoming atmosphere where parents feel valued and listened to.
- Parents value the inclusion of the whole family in the school community.
- There are very good opportunities for parents to contribute to the life of the school.
- There are good opportunities for parents to be involved in their child's learning.

*Weaknesses*

- Parents do not have clear information about the standards their children achieve or about national expectations.
- Parents would like information about what children will learn each half-term in English and mathematics.
- Consultation of parents about school development.

#### Parents and carers' views of the school

32. Parents have very positive views of the school and the quality of education it provides. In particular they say that their children enjoy school, behave well, work hard and make good progress. They have a high regard for the headteacher and her leadership of the school and think that the standard of teaching is high. They appreciate the care shown to themselves and to the children and feel that the school values them. They especially value the open and welcoming atmosphere, the ease of communicating with the school and the knowledge that their views are listened to and taken seriously. Inspectors confirm these positive views. The strong support of parents contributes significantly to the achievements of the pupils.
33. Some parents expressed concerns about the amount of homework their children receive, the information they have about how their children are getting on and about the range of activities the school provides outside lessons. Inspectors do not agree with all of these concerns. Homework is used well to support learning and is well linked to work in the classroom. Parents have good opportunities to discuss progress with class teachers both informally and in formal consultation meetings, and annual written reports contain useful information about progress in learning. However, further information about the standards their children attain and levels nationally expected

could be helpful to them. The school provides a very good range of activities outside lessons, which include out of school educational visits and after school clubs for Year 3 pupils.

#### The effectiveness of the school's links with parents and carers

34. The school is successful in establishing a caring, family atmosphere where all pupils and their families feel included in the school community. Relationships between the school and parents are very strong. Provision of opportunities for parents to be consulted on school development is an area for further improvement. Parents have some very good opportunities to contribute to the life of the school. Sharing the faiths and family traditions of different parents enriches the cultural experience of pupils. One parent recently made St. Nicholas biscuits for the children, which is a traditional Christmas custom in Belgium, and other parents came to share the celebration of the Hindu festival of Diwali. The Parents' Association is very active. The group organises fund raising and social events, and provides good, additional resources for the school.
35. Parents have good information to help them support their children's learning, although this could be further improved. Information about what children will learn is circulated to parents at the beginning of each half-term but does not include information about work planned in English and mathematics. Opportunities for communication between home and school by means of reading record books are very good and are generally used effectively to raise standards in reading. Parents of children entering the reception year are very well supported and this helps the children to settle in well and to make a very good start at school. Parents of pupils in Years 1 to 3 enjoy the mathematics tasks they share with their children at home, but these have been set infrequently. Parents feel that more of these shared activities would help to further improve the contribution they make to their children's learning at home.

#### **HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?**

##### *Strengths*

- There is strong leadership from the headteacher who has served the school for many years.
- The deputy headteacher has complementary skills and supports the headteacher very well.
- Subject managers are knowledgeable and most lead their subjects well.
- Governors are knowledgeable and supportive of the school.

##### *Weaknesses*

- The heating system, especially in the hall.
- There are no computers available for pupils in classroom areas.
- Subject managers are unable to plan long-term with a delegated budget.

#### How effectively the headteacher and key staff lead and manage the school

36. Leadership and management are very good. There continues to be strong leadership from the long-serving headteacher, who is supported very well by her deputy. The two make a very good team and a third member of staff, with good ICT skills, has recently joined the senior management team. The school already analyses its test data but the computerising of assessment data in order to track pupils' progress and measure the value added by the school are areas for management to develop.

37. The headteacher, with her team, has built a school with a very positive school ethos, which reflects their commitment to equality of opportunity and inclusion for all pupils. The school reflects equal opportunity in its aims and objectives, curriculum and organisation and offers relevant role models to all pupils. All involved are concerned with building a community where everyone is made to feel welcome, where staff, governors and parents work well together for the benefit of the children. Lessons are made accessible to all pupils and high expectations and the high standards of behaviour throughout the school, resulting from an ethos based on mutual respect, have a positive effect on the quality of pupils' learning. As a result, standards continually improve.
38. Subjects are mainly well managed and subject managers are generally knowledgeable about their subjects. The good and very good leadership of the core subjects has resulted in significant and measurable improvement in pupils' attainment in English, mathematics and science. Art, geography, history, music and physical education are well and very well led, with high standards reached in art and music, imaginative activities planned in history and geography, and new developments sought in physical education. The ICT manager is new to post and is leading the subject well. The leadership of religious education is satisfactory in the absence of the manager, but design and technology lacks positive leadership. A weakness lies in the fact that during a time of financial restraint subject managers have been unable to plan long-term with a delegated budget.
39. The school cares well for its pupils needing particular care and attention. The special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) reviews all pupils' individual education plans (IEPs). Teachers review pupils' targets, and progress towards these, regularly and formally, usually on a termly basis. Parents are kept well-informed and are involved at an early stage if a decision is made to place pupils on the special educational needs register.
40. There is a satisfactory level of well-qualified and very effective support staff. This ensures that all pupils have equal access to the curriculum. Teachers and classroom assistants work very well together.
41. The school is constantly monitoring and evaluating its performance and, as a result, standards have improved and gender differences are addressed. The high performance of boys in reading, for example, reflects this well.

#### The adequacy of staffing, accommodation and learning resources

42. The school was built in 1988 and provides satisfactory accommodation for the pupils. The building has an open plan for class groups and teachers use the learning spaces well. The building is in good condition apart from an area of flat roofing, which has a persistent problem of leaking. There is also need for improvement in the heating system in school, which is barely adequate. During the inspection the hall was very cold for all activities some of which included pupils sitting for considerable amounts of time. The hall is particularly cold in winter and the temperature should be checked to ensure that it does not fall below the recommended minimum. Outdoor areas are satisfactory but there is no shaded area for use in the summer and no large play equipment for the pupils. An area planned for environmental education is said to have been vandalised. Governors are aware of the need to provide a designated area for outdoor learning and play for the children in the reception year and have plans to provide this in the near future.

How well the governing body fulfils its statutory responsibilities

43. The governors, who bring different areas of expertise to the school, are knowledgeable and supportive. They fulfil their roles very well. The school has a very long-term and detailed school development plan. There is a clear vision for the school and resources are used strategically to fulfil that vision. Governors have ensured that the school no longer has a deficit budget and the Parents' Association, through fund-raising, has ensured that while there has been a deficit the pupils' education has not suffered. The principles of best value are applied well. Holmwood First School is a very effective school that gives very good value for money.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

44. In the light of the very good education provided by the school there are only a few areas for improvement. In order to maintain and improve this good quality, headteacher, governors and staff should:

- (i) Improve systems for recording and analysing assessment results, so that tracking and the value added can be more easily monitored. (Paragraph 36)
- (ii) Develop the role of middle management by:
  - Enabling them to plan long term with a delegated budget. (Paragraph 38)
  - Formalise assessment in foundation subjects. (Paragraphs 29, 100, 107)

They may also wish to consider the following when drawing up their action plan:

- Provide computers in class bases as planned. (Paragraph 101)
- Revising the time allocated for design and technology so that skills can be taught in a more progressive way. (Paragraphs 17, 89)
- Find further ways of supporting pupils who are at the early stages of learning English. (Paragraph 30)
- Develop formal procedures for monitoring pupils' personal development. (Paragraph 28)
- Monitor patterns of absence and lateness more effectively. (Paragraphs 12, 27)



## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

### Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	35
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	41

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	2	22	9	2	0	0	0
Percentage	6	63	26	6	0	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than three percentage points.

### Information about the school's pupils

#### Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR – Y3
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	N/a	212
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	N/a	5

FTE means full-time equivalent.

#### Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y3
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	N/a	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	N/a	22

#### English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	6

#### Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	23
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	21

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

%
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#### Unauthorised absence

%
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School data	5.5
National comparative data	5.4

School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.5

*Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.*

### **Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 (Year 2)**

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	2002	26	27	53

<b>National Curriculum Test/Task Results</b>		<b>Reading</b>	<b>Writing</b>	<b>Mathematics</b>
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	23	24	26
	Girls	25	25	24
	Total	48	49	50
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	91 (97)	92 (97)	94 (100)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

<b>Teachers' Assessments</b>		<b>English</b>	<b>Mathematics</b>	<b>Science</b>
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	23	25	25
	Girls	25	24	23
	Total	48	49	48
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	91 (97)	92 (97)	91 (98)
	National	83 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

*Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.*

### ***Ethnic background of pupils***

<b>Categories used in the Annual School Census</b>
White – British
White – Irish
White – any other White background
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean
Mixed – White and Black African
Mixed – White and Asian
Mixed – any other mixed background
Asian or Asian British - Indian
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background
Black or Black British – Caribbean
Black or Black British – African
Black or Black British – any other Black background
Chinese
Any other ethnic group
No ethnic group recorded

### ***Exclusions in the last school year***

<b>No of pupils on roll</b>	<b>Number of fixed period exclusions</b>	<b>Number of permanent exclusions</b>
128	0	0
0	0	0
8	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
4	0	0
2	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
3	0	0
6	0	0
0	0	0
1	0	0
0	0	0

*The table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only. It gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.*

### ***Teachers and classes***

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y3**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	9
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23
Average class size	26

#### **Education support staff: YR – Y3**

Total number of education support staff	7
Total aggregate hours worked per week	144

*FTE means full-time equivalent*

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	2001/2002
	£
Total income	454,471
Total expenditure	440,015
Expenditure per pupil	2,292
Balance brought forward from previous year	-8,161
Balance carried forward to next year	6,295

### ***Recruitment of teachers***

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	2
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	1
<hr/>	
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	2
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	211
Number of questionnaires returned	137

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	74	26	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	60	36	3	0	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	64	35	1	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	36	52	5	2	5
The teaching is good.	69	29	1	0	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	58	37	4	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	80	20	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	62	35	1	0	2
The school works closely with parents.	58	39	2	0	1
The school is well led and managed.	81	17	0	0	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	66	30	1	0	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	29	33	15	2	21

### Other issues raised by parents

- A lack of information about what standards are expected of different aged children.

## **PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES**

### **AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE**

#### *Strengths*

- Teachers have very good subject knowledge.
- The quality of teaching is consistently very good.
- The quality of planning and assessment procedures is very good.

#### *Priorities for development*

- Seek to broaden opportunities to develop children's knowledge and understanding.
- Fully develop the outside area to enhance provision for physical development.

#### **Introduction**

45. Provision for children in the reception classes is very good. There have been improvements since the last inspection in the quality of the curriculum, because the school has adapted successfully the recent national guidelines for planning. Teaching is consistently very good and is underpinned by very good assessment procedures.

#### **Personal, social and emotional development**

46. Children are happy to come to school. They know and follow the daily routines well. For example, after hanging up their coats, they sit quietly in the teaching areas to wait for their teacher. They respond politely to their teachers during registration and speak confidently about their own experiences and of things they do at home. During discussion times, children learn to listen to and respect the views of others. They learn, for example, that others have different likes and dislikes or do things in a different way. This was demonstrated very well when a parent spoke to the children about the family's Diwali celebrations. This provided a good stimulus for work on Diwali lights and cards.
47. Children show good levels of self-control. They know that there are times to be quiet, such as assemblies, and that resources have to be shared with others. They persevere very well when engaged in tasks. Children dress and undress independently for physical development lessons, and manage their own personal hygiene. They develop a very good sense of right and wrong. Commonly accepted values such as care and honesty are promoted very effectively during story times, when they discuss books such as 'The Bear Who Wouldn't Share'. Adults provide very good role models for the children. Consequently, children are courteous and respectful.
48. By the time they leave the reception classes, most children achieve levels of personal skills and development expected for their age.

#### **Communication, language and literacy**

49. Children express their ideas clearly when they start in their reception classes. Throughout the year they develop good early reading and writing skills. By the time they leave Reception, most achieve very well.
50. Children enjoy listening to stories and quickly develop an interest in books. They can often be seen browsing alone or sharing a book with others. During story times, they

listen attentively and ask questions about, or comment on, what they see in the pictures.

51. Speaking skills are developed very well because of the range of opportunities and very good support given by teachers. Children learn to organise their own play in the role-play areas. In the café, for example, children select from 'menus' while others take the order or they discuss 'ailments' in the 'doctor's surgery'. Teachers encourage children to work in groups where they learn to plan and negotiate while playing with 'small world' toys or construction sets.
52. Letter sounds are taught very effectively and teachers link initial sounds to simple words. Interesting methods make sessions lively and enjoyable, such as using a puppet to select items beginning with letter 'b' and then testing the children's knowledge. Children follow up these lessons by practising letter shapes on a white board or making letters from dough. Some children try their skills independently at the writing table and are beginning to write simple words in their letters to 'mum and dad'.

### **Mathematical development**

53. The school's assessments show that the children's knowledge and understanding of shape and measure is limited when they start school, and they have an average understanding of number. Children make very good progress and quickly build up their skills because of the teaching they receive. All children count reliably to 10 and some well beyond that. They learn to recognise the number of objects in a set and combine sets to find a total. They show increasing confidence when using mathematical language such as 'light,' 'heavy' or 'more than'. Water play enables children to develop an idea of capacity when they pour the contents of small containers into larger ones. Children name shapes such as a circle, a square and a triangle.
54. Teachers are very good at using opportunities to consolidate language. They encourage children to count and sort objects to develop their sense of number. After registration, one child managed to subtract 24 from 30 mentally to find out the number of children present. Most are able to count on or back from a number, using a number line to help them. By the time children leave Reception, almost all reach levels expected of them and a few achieve beyond expectations for their age.

### **Knowledge and understanding of the world**

55. Children start reception class with general knowledge of the world expected for their age. There are many very good experiences planned for them, which stimulate their curiosity and enable them to explore, through their senses, the world around them. Children recognise a variety of fruits, vegetables and plants. They tend plants and bulbs and observe their growth. Children recognise that they also grow and change over time; for example, they compare the amount of care they needed as babies with what they can do now for themselves. Visitors to school, such as the nurse and representatives from the RSPCA, help children to understand the importance of caring for themselves and other creatures. They explore similarities and differences in materials and learn to link experiences. When making 'party cakes' from dough, the teacher added peppermint flavouring. One child remarked that, 'It smells like my toothpaste'.
56. Children develop technical skills well. Construction sets provide opportunities for them to fix things together and build models that incorporate moving parts, such as wheels or



axles. They approach computers confidently and learn to control the mouse well, to click and drag images on the screen.

57. Teachers are very skilled at linking areas of learning. A good example was when children made sandwiches for the 'teddy bears party'. The teacher used the opportunity to promote some very good language development when talking about the ingredients, as well as helping children to improve physical control and mathematical skills by spreading, cutting and counting. Children observe seasonal changes as they occur and record changes in the weather, but there are fewer opportunities for them to broaden their horizons by visiting places beyond the school locality.

### **Physical development**

58. Despite the fact that there is still some development of outside provision to take place, the children make good progress in their physical skills. There are many opportunities for the children to develop finer movements by handling small tools and implements, building with construction pieces and modelling malleable materials such as dough. When the weather allows, good use is made of the area outside of the classroom for children to climb and balance and learn to control wheeled toys. The children have weekly sessions in the hall, which helps them to develop very good control of their body movements and become better co-ordinated when playing with balls and small apparatus. In a dance lesson the children performed their 'Winnie the Pooh' dance very well. They listened carefully to the music, moving quietly and rhythmically around the hall. Teachers modelled the dance very well. This encouraged the children to try harder and attempt more high and low movements.

### **Creative development**

59. This is another area in which children achieve well to reach their Early Learning Goals by the end of the reception year.
60. The children gain a wide range of interesting experiences through which they explore shape, colour and texture. They use vegetables as print blocks and apply paint and colour in interesting ways, such as hand printing or blowing through a straw. They create textured collage using different papers and 'shiny' materials. Their developing creativity and skill in fixing materials together is evident in their three-dimensional work, seen in their 'rockets' and colourful birthday cakes.
61. The children learn an increasing repertoire of songs and rhymes. They sing tunefully and learn to repeat simple rhythmic patterns on percussion instruments and on the musical instruments they make themselves.
62. The children's creativity is particularly well stimulated in the role-play areas. Teachers plan their time very well to include sessions in the 'café', for example, where they interact with the children and teach them the appropriate language to inspire creative play.

## **ENGLISH**

### *Strengths*

There are very high standards.

- Teachers have implemented the National Literacy Strategy very well.
- The quality of English teaching throughout the school is very good.

- The very good attitudes and behaviour of pupils result in very good progress and quality of learning.

### National Curriculum Test Data

63. Pupils' attainment in English by the end of Year 2 is well above national expectations. In 2002, the National Curriculum test results for pupils aged seven, in reading in particular, were well above those of pupils nationally, with 40 per cent of pupils achieving Level 3 (attainment more usually expected of nine year olds) and, exceptionally, a number of pupils achieving Level 4 (attainment usually expected of 11 year olds). This constitutes very considerable improvement in the period since the previous inspection, when overall standards were judged to be in line with national expectations.

### Inspection standards

64. From the time of their entry to the school, when most children are attaining expected standards in communication, language and literacy skills, to when they leave the school age eight, most pupils have made very good progress. The school has implemented the National Literacy Strategy very well. Teachers have undergone appropriate literacy training and have a very good knowledge of the strategy. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in English due to well-focussed support and well-targeted group activities in literacy lessons. They are included well in all curriculum activities.
65. The teachers, who systematically encourage pupils to talk and put forward their ideas during lessons, provide very good opportunities for speaking and listening. Most pupils listen very well to others and this ability, observed in many lessons during the inspection, has a significant, positive effect on pupils' progress. Pupils speak confidently, volunteering to go to the front of the class to read their work. They spoke clearly and confidently during the rehearsal for the school's Christmas concert. In reading, a significant proportion of Year 2 pupils achieve very well and demonstrate reading skills at a level well above those expected of pupils of their age. Pupils read a wide variety of texts appropriate for their age and ability and show a developing and considerable enthusiasm for books. 'Big Books' and group readers, used for shared and class reading in literacy lessons, include a good range of fiction with stories from a range of cultures, traditional stories and poetry and factual books. As they progress through the school, pupils acquire a love of books and develop a range of strategies and skills to enable them to tackle new words and understand text. The school has successfully bought books that catch the boys' interest, quite unusually, from a young age. Pupils are heard read regularly by their class teacher or by classroom support assistants. They take their reading books home regularly, with regular reading homework tasks.
66. By the age of seven, the majority of pupils have made very good progress in writing and, overall, attainment is well above expectations for pupils aged seven. Pupils make a good start in writing in the reception classes, learning the letter shapes and sounds, learning to form their letters (initially guided by their teacher's handwriting) and quickly beginning to make their own independent efforts. The writing of the majority of pupils in Year 2 shows an above-average understanding of the use of capital letters, full stops and sentence structure. Pupils use a good range of vocabulary and spell most short words correctly. The use of literacy across the curriculum is a strength of English teaching in the school. Very good use is made of pupils' literacy skills in other curriculum areas, notably in science, music and especially history, where there are

many examples of extended writing, frequently of a very good standard. Pupils have opportunities to write for a wide range of purposes. They are beginning to show an appropriate sense of audience in their writing and are adapting their writing to suit different audience. Pupils throughout the school regularly practise forming their letters, and standards of handwriting are good overall. Pupils regularly practise spellings taken from the 'most frequently used' word list in the National Literacy Strategy and from current lessons. Most pupils make good progress and standards of spelling, although variable, are above expectations for pupils aged 7 and 8. Satisfactory use of information and communication technology is made in English lessons.

### Teaching, learning and behaviour

67. Teaching in English lessons, which ranges from good to very good, is very good overall and, because of teachers' very good classroom management skills, pupils' attitudes and behaviour in lessons are similarly very good. This has a very positive effect on the progress pupils make in English. Pupils are enthusiastic and eager to learn and work well at their allotted tasks without the need for constant teacher intervention. This is despite the opportunities to lose concentration afforded by the 'open plan' nature of the accommodation. They respond enthusiastically to their teachers, do their best to contribute constructively to lessons and answer questions enthusiastically and appropriately. As a result of very good teaching and very good attitudes and behaviour, the quality of learning in lessons is very good. Teachers have a very good rapport with their pupils, use questioning very well and skilfully to guide and assess pupils' learning and move lessons along at a good pace. The teachers' very good subject knowledge, very good planning and very good understanding of the National Literacy Strategy enables them to teach the subject very effectively. Teachers have adopted the National Literacy Strategy well and literacy lessons are well planned and organised in detail, with resources readily available for pupils to use. A very effective lesson was when pupils were taught to recognise the important features of instructions and understood why these features were important. Marking of pupils' work is up to date, and frequently very good. It offers pupils positive encouragement to improve their work, and encourages a very good awareness of their own learning.

### Management

68. The management of the subject is very good and, since the introduction of the National Literacy Strategy, wholeheartedly and enthusiastically supported by the subject manager, has resulted in significant and measurable improvement in pupils' attainment. Resources for English are satisfactory overall. The school has a wide range of reading books, levelled into reading ages from which pupils confidently choose, and there is a satisfactory range of non-fiction books in the library.

## **MATHEMATICS**

### *Strengths*

- Standards are average and have improved since the previous inspection.
- The quality of teaching is better than at the previous inspection. It is now very good.
- Support for pupils who have learning difficulties is very good.

### *Weaknesses*

- Pupils have too few opportunities to carry out independent investigative mathematics.
- The use of ICT is limited because there are no computers in class teaching areas.

### National Curriculum Test Data

69. Standards in mathematics are above average at the end of Year 2. These standards are maintained at the end of Year 3. Overall, standards have improved since the last inspection and pupils achieve well. This was reflected in recent National Curriculum tests, at the end of Year 2. Boys tend to perform slightly better than girls at the end of Year 2. Generally, pupils do as well as those in similar schools.

#### Inspection standards

70. Pupils' knowledge of number is particularly strong. They are good at mental calculation and when using pencil and paper methods to solve problems. By the end of Year 2 most pupils add and subtract numbers to 20 mentally. They understand the value of numbers that have more than one digit and use different methods to solve addition and subtraction problems. Pupils are good at explaining the methods they use, such as when adding two numbers to make eleven, they add 10 first, then another 1. They understand rounding numbers to the nearest multiple of 10 and develop good mathematical vocabulary. Pupils understand that fractions are parts of one whole and solve problems involving time and measure. By the end of Year 3, pupils calculate mentally to 100 and understand that subtraction is the inverse operation to addition.
71. They use their knowledge of number well. For example, they solve problems by recognising 'near doubles' (e.g.  $39 + 39 = 20 + 20 - 2$ ) or by splitting numbers into tens and units to speed up calculations (e.g.  $27 + 13 = \{20 + 10\} + \{7 + 3\}$ ). However, there are few opportunities for pupils to engage in independent investigational tasks to apply their knowledge and skills more widely. Pupils' use of ICT to support learning is limited because, at present, there are no computers in the class teaching areas. There are a few opportunities for pupils to use mathematical skills in other subjects, such as sorting materials into sets according to their magnetic properties or presenting data about 'healthy eating' as a block graph.

#### Teaching, learning and behaviour

72. The overall quality of teaching and learning is very good. Teachers' strong subject knowledge and understanding of the National Numeracy Strategy enables them to plan very effectively. Learning objectives are very precise, so that pupils know what is expected of them. Mathematical ideas and the tasks that follow the teaching are explained clearly, enabling pupils to understand and progress in their learning. There is a very good emphasis on the teaching of basic number skills. The mental and oral sessions at the start of lessons are brisk and test pupils' mental agility well. Pupils in Year 2, for example, began their lesson with some rapid counting in multiples of 2 and 5. The teacher then tested pupils further by giving them word problems to solve mentally, for example 'I have 10p and buy something for 7p. How much change should I have?'
73. Teachers' expectations are high, so time is used well in lessons and teachers remind pupils regularly of what they expect them to achieve. All teachers manage pupils very well. There are clear routines and codes of conduct for lessons and these are consistently applied. Teachers immediately challenge pupils who are not fully attentive. They skilfully help pupils to sustain attention by asking them questions and praising their efforts. As a result, relationships are excellent, behaviour is very good and pupils achieve very well because they concentrate on their work.
74. Pupils who have learning difficulties are supported very well in lessons. Teachers and assistants are sensitive to their needs and make sure they are included in discussions. Learning-support assistants sit close to pupils to help them to listen, and teachers give

these pupils more time to think and answer questions. Teachers use assessment information very well to plan work for pupils of different abilities. Marking is helpful to pupils, because teachers often set new targets to show how they can improve their work.

### Management

75. Good leadership and management in mathematics have resulted in improved standards. Monitoring has ensured that the National Numeracy Strategy is having a positive impact on teaching and learning. The resources available are used effectively in lessons. The subject manager has a clear overview of the strengths of the subject and the areas for development. The school has a good capacity to maintain pupils' current levels of achievement.

## **SCIENCE**

### *Strengths*

- The standards reached by boys are well above average.
- The contribution the science day makes to pupils' progress.
- The very good leadership of the subject manager.

### *Weaknesses*

- Girls attained at a much lower level than boys in the teacher assessments in 2002.
- There is limited use made of ICT to enhance the subject.

### National Curriculum Test Data

76. In 2002, teachers' assessments showed that the percentage of pupils who attained the expected Level 2 or above was in line with the national average and the percentage that attained the higher Level 3 was above the national average. Pupils' knowledge in physical processes was well above average at Level 3. When compared with similar schools, the percentage reaching the expected Level 2 was well below average but was in line with the average at the higher Level 3. Boys achieve very well indeed in science. In 2002, the number of boys who reached Level 3 was double that reached by pupils of the same age nationally. However, the number of girls who were only working towards Level 1 or had reached Level 1, were twice as many as the national average in 2002. Standards at the previous inspection exceeded the national expectations. This is still so for some pupils, but the lower attainment of girls needs to be addressed. The school has already identified this.

### Inspection standards

77. In Years 2 and 3, a substantial number of pupils attain at levels that are above the expected levels. For example, higher attaining pupils in Year 3 are working at Level 3. They are set challenging work, which expects them to plan an investigation, and their work is well written. There are also pupils attaining at average and below average levels of attainment. In Year 2, pupils' attainment overall is above what is expected of pupils of their age. Pupils use tally sheets and graphs to present the information they have collected, such as when they study foot sizes in class when learning about the body. Their work on the different stages of life is very thoughtful and well produced. When studying light, they find that, 'when you look in a box without a light you cannot see anything, but when you look with a light you can see something'. Higher attainers demonstrate a high degree of understanding and presentation in their books. In Year 3, higher attainers' work also shows a very good coverage of the curriculum at above average standards. They have gained a considerable amount of knowledge about

teeth, and how to keep them healthy. They have carried out investigation about, for example, 'Do cats eat fish?' and 'How far will a toy car travel, propelled by a catapult?'. Their investigations are well planned and challenging and they are able to draw conclusions from their findings. They are also able to predict reasonably and accurately before they carry out an investigation.

78. Last year the school planned a science day that proved most successful, and there are plans to repeat this annually. Many activities were set up which pupils worked at, in rotation, throughout the day; they considered how muscles are used to create force and help us move; they tried using different forces to move a box; they investigated how air can be used to slow down a parachute or push a balloon along; they used their sense of smell to identify different foods; they showed how a shadow is formed when an object blocks light; they made a simple electrical circuit and discovered that different objects float or sink according to their size, shape and weight.

### Teaching, learning and behaviour

79. Teaching, learning and behaviour in all three lessons seen was very good. In a Year 2 lesson, pupils were attentive and listened very well and were very responsive. They were appreciative of each other's answers, and one pupil suggested that a lower attaining pupil should have a sticker for a good answer he gave. Teachers use subject-specific vocabulary well and are good at making sure that all pupils contribute to question and answer sessions. They set work very well for pupils of a wide range of abilities. They have high expectations of the pupils. As a result, all pupils work industriously. In the lessons seen, there was no difference between the attitudes and attainment of boys and girls. Pupils with English as an additional language are as well motivated as other pupils and achieve well. In Year 3, teachers are very well organised, explain objectives well at the start of lessons and challenge pupils very well. As a result, the standards achieved by a substantial number of pupils are well above what is expected of pupils of this age. The subject contributes very well to pupils' social development. Pupils are encouraged to work with partners and in groups to share their ideas and discuss their findings. Pupils with formal statements of need are very well supported, both by the class teacher and support staff. Specific targets are set and the class values their achievement at the end of the lesson.
80. Pupils' books show that they have a good degree of understanding of the work they do because learning objectives are clearly understood and teachers mark their work helpfully. For example, when studying different foods, they write, 'You have lots of carbohydrates. Maybe you should only have one' and 'Cucumber is actually a fruit because it has seeds'.

### Management

81. The subject is very well managed by a part-time teacher. However, she has no job description. There is a very detailed scheme of work, which includes expectations for assessment. It is a working document, being continually evaluated and updated as teachers find ways of making improvements. She has a useful assessment folder which is annotated helpfully. For example, she writes, 'Sometimes needs encouragement in some aspects e.g. to make her own suggestions'. The subject manager has done a considerable amount of work on assessment and is trialling ideas with her class. Some in-service training on assessment has been carried out but the subject manager realises that a portfolio of moderated and levelled work would be helpful to teachers. The subject is a priority on the school development plan for 2002/2003 and the subject manager has a clear action plan of what she hopes to

accomplish. These included monitoring teaching and learning and evaluating the National Curriculum tests results. She is aware of the considerable differences in the results of boys and girls in 2002. There is a very good range of science books in the school library and a good range of resources, which have been added to with money from the Friends Association. The Association is also developing a Millennium Environmental garden for the whole school to use. The local Lodge Lake and Environmental Centre are also used well for studying plants, animals, birds and learning how concrete is made. The use of ICT to enhance the subject is an area for development.

## ART AND DESIGN

### *Strengths*

- Standards in observational drawing, painting and collage are above national expectations.
- Teachers' subject knowledge is very good.
- Basic art skills are taught very well.

### *Weaknesses*

- There are too few opportunities for three-dimensional work.

### Standards

82. Standards are above national expectations for pupils at the end of Year 2 and Year 3. These standards are consistent with those reported at the time of the last inspection. Pupils use colour, line and texture well to explore and develop ideas. They evaluate their work and gain a good knowledge of styles and techniques of artists. Work in observational painting and drawing is a particular strength in art but there is scope to increase the range of opportunities for three-dimensional work. Nevertheless, all pupils, including those who have additional learning needs achieve very well.

### Teaching, learning and behaviour

83. The quality of teaching and learning is very good and has a direct impact on pupils' achievements. Basic art and design skills are taught very well. Pupils learn to mix colours in order to make different shades and practise line drawing and shading, using a wide range of drawing materials. As a result, they use these media skilfully and approach their work very confidently. Teachers' very good subject knowledge enables them to plan and demonstrate techniques very clearly for pupils. Visual resources are also used well to give pupils as much support as possible during lessons.
84. A good example was seen when pupils in Year 2 re-created a Monet print on their computers during an ICT lesson. Having studied the tone, colour and composition in the ICT suite they were very well prepared to explore Monet's techniques further in the art lesson that followed. They developed their skills and ideas well by using brushes, sponge and corrugated paper to achieve different effects with paint. All pupils achieved commendable results because of their confidence and the 'climate of success' which was very firmly established by the teacher. These same lessons were conducted, equally successfully, in reverse order for the parallel class.
85. Relationships in classrooms are very good. Teachers and support assistants praise and encourage pupils but also help them to develop a good 'critical eye' by encouraging them to evaluate and improve their work. This helps pupils to work more purposefully and to develop very good attitudes to art. Teachers demonstrate the value they place on the pupils' work in the quality of display around the school. The exciting use of

colour, seen in portraits in the style of Picasso and Andy Warhol, provide a very clear contrast to the more sensitive use of chalk and pastel in 'London Scenes' drawn by pupils in Year 2. The subject contributes very well to pupils' cultural development.

### Management

86. The subject is managed well. There is a good scheme of work to help teachers plan for the development of skills and knowledge of art. Resources adequately meet the needs of the curriculum and are used imaginatively to support pupils' learning.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

### *Weaknesses*

- The gaps between the blocks of time planned for teaching the subject are too long.

### Standards

87. At the time of the last inspection standards were judged to be above average. However, there was too little evidence available during this inspection to make a secure judgement about standards in Year 2 or Year 3.

88. Talking to pupils confirms that they understand and have practised the elements of designing, making and evaluating products. However, they found it difficult to recall in detail the things they had made or when they made them. The current arrangement, for including design and technology in the timetable every third term, means that there are long periods during which pupils do not make progress in developing their skills. It would also appear that they forget some of what they have been taught.

### Teaching, learning and behaviour

89. It was not possible to observe lessons because the subject was not timetabled during the inspection. There is, therefore, no judgement on the quality teaching. Long-term planning is satisfactory and indicates that pupils gain a reasonable range of experiences over a two-year cycle.

### Management

90. Currently the subject lacks positive leadership, resulting in pupils learning not being managed well enough. Provision therefore, whilst covering the National Curriculum, could be improved.

## **GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY**

### *Strengths*

- There is a good range of additional activities both within and outside school which enrich the humanities curriculum significantly and lead to a high level of motivation and, hence, pupil progress.
- Pupils' attainment at the age of 7 and 8 years is above average.

### Standards

91. Only one history lesson, an Ancient Greek morning with Year 3 pupils, was observed during the inspection and no geography lessons were undertaken. However, evidence



from the very limited number of lessons seen and a careful scrutiny of the work in pupils' books, and photographic evidence provided of activities during the current and previous school year, suggest pupils make good progress in history and geography as they move through the school. Attainment at the end of Year 2 and by the end of Year 3 in both history and geography is above national expectations due, to a great extent, to pupils' well-above-average literacy skills. Many examples of above-average extended writing were observed during the inspection, for example a letter supposedly from Lord Elgin to the Greek government, and a letter from Heracles, both demonstrating above-average knowledge, skills and understanding for pupils' age. Scrutiny of previous work indicates that, during the year, pupils have opportunities to undertake a good range of interesting activities in geography and history.

92. In history, pupils in Year 1 have visited Abington Park Museum, where they dressed in Victorian costume for their Victorian Days topic and identified differences between school then and now. In Year 2, pupils have studied the Gunpowder Plot, considered the events behind the annual Poppy Day appeal, and compared their lives with those of Victorian children. Year 3 pupils have studied Ancient Greece and, in particular, the differences between Sparta and Athens and, in a separate topic, looked at life in a Victorian terraced house. In geography, pupils in Year 1 have made maps of their journey to school, described the route, looked at features of the school grounds and written about, 'Places I have been in Great Holm', locating them on a map. Year 2 pupils have looked at contrasting localities, comparing the seaside with their own locality. Year 1 and Year 2 pupils have followed the travels of 'Barnaby Bear' closely. Year 3 pupils have looked at land use around the school, used Ordnance Survey maps to locate their home, and learned about grid references. They have visited an environmental centre, where they learned how to make bricks, and have looked at climate, particularly the effects of drought on an area. All pupils have been involved in the school's Ghana Day activities, dressing in national costume and learning a Ghanaian song.

#### Teaching, learning and behaviour

93. There was insufficient evidence to make secure judgements on pupils' attitudes and behaviour and the quality of teaching and learning. However, in the history lessons seen, the quality of teaching was very good overall. The teachers motivated pupils very well, used questioning well to probe and guide pupils' learning, and they managed the pupils very well. Pupils were very well-motivated by the very well-planned role-play activities. As a result, the quality of learning was very good and pupils' attitudes and behaviour were similarly very good.

#### Management

94. Both subject managers are enthusiastic and demonstrate good subject knowledge. History and geography units are taught in a series of lesson during the year, alternating with design and technology lessons. The units are currently organised on a two-year rolling programme of topics so that pupils undertake two half-term topics for each of the three subjects during each year. This does not appear to adversely affect the development of skills, knowledge and understanding in history and geography.

### **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

#### *Strengths*

- The ICT suite is well timetabled and successfully used.
- The developmental approach to the subject as planned well by the subject manager.

### Weaknesses

- The lack of computers in class-based areas.
- ICT is not used sufficiently to support learning in other subjects.
- More software is needed for pupils with special educational needs.

### Standards

95. In information and communication technology (ICT) standards are in line with what is expected in Year 2 but, because of lack of software for simulation exercises, they are below expectations in Year 3 in this particular aspect of the subject. Standards are similar to the last inspection. However, in Year 3, pupils successfully use a word-processing program and 'clipart' to combine text and graphics for a poster. They know that the information on record cards is divided into fields, and that there is a set of record cards called a file. For example, pupils use information to fill in two new record cards to add to a 'car' file. Higher attainers change font size, colour and type and know how to search for appropriate pictures and insert them into the screen, changing their sizes and moving them around. In Year 2, pupils use their word-processing techniques to write poems and understand the meaning of the wavy lines under words that appear on the screen, such as the spelling and grammar alerts.
96. Year 1 pupils use a variety of programmable floor roamers confidently, giving instructions and discussing what they should do next to make things happen. Their ICT skills of control, as well as their mathematics skills of measurement and their speaking and listening skills, are above average. Year 2 pupils, working in the ICT suite making paintings in the style of Monet, listen to their teachers very well, show a considerable degree of confidence, work very well with partners and achieve above average standards. They are able to log on and off, find their previous work from a file and print off their picture when completed.
97. The subject manager has promoted very good links between art and ICT, with the timetable planned in such a way that a lesson in one subject follows the other; for example, in lessons on a painting by Monet, where the same painting was studied in both art and in ICT. The standards of work in both lessons were, as a result, above average. Work on display also shows pupils have used 'Colour Magic' to create very effective pictures of a 'Japanese Footbridge' in the style of Monet.

### Teaching, learning and behaviour

98. In the three lessons observed, teaching, learning and pupils' behaviour were all very good. In a Year 1 class, very high expectations and very good planning led to very good learning. The teacher questioned pupils very well to revise what had previously been learned. The warm, friendly relationships and high expectations resulted in pupils responding very well and having the confidence to ask questions. Pupils behave and work together without need of constant adult intervention, clearly enjoying their tasks. The subject contributes very well to pupils' social and cultural development.

### Management

99. The subject manager has been in post for a term. The subject is very well managed and a clear action plan shows that developments have been good and there are good plans for the future. The subject manager has written a policy and is in the process of writing a new scheme of work. She is currently piloting good assessment procedures

with her class, which others will follow when the pilot is completed. All teachers have completed nationally funded training. An Internet policy has been written but letters from parents have yet to be sought.

100. A discrete computer suite has been in use since September 2002 and is timetabled strategically. Each class has two lessons a week, one on ICT skills and one on another subject. This term has been timetabled for numeracy and the next term for literacy. The manager has identified that more cross-curricular use of ICT is needed to support different subjects and this is expected to develop over time once teachers are more familiar with the numeracy and literacy software. There are no computers in the class teaching areas however, so incidental use of computers, for a range of subjects or to research information during a lesson, is not possible at the moment. However, this is the next area for development, identified in the subject action plan. The school has no access to a technician and this means that the subject manager, who is also a full-time class teacher and member of the senior management team, has spent a considerable amount of time inputting software on to computers and attending to any problems that arise. This is an area which needs further consideration by governors. Good support, however, has been given by the ICT consultant attached to the local education authority.

## MUSIC

### *Strengths*

- The music room is a useful resource in an open plan building.
- Music is taught very well.
- Singing is particularly tuneful for pupils of this age.
- Pupils' attitudes are very good and sometimes excellent.
- There is a good range of instruments for pupils to play.
- Appreciation of music is well taught.

### Standards

101. Standards in music are above national expectations in both Years 2 and 3. In Year 2, pupils learn to appreciate a variety of styles of music from different countries, clapping rhythms accurately and seeing patterns in the repeat of these rhythms. They say that it is an A B A or a B A B pattern, are able to play these rhythms softly or loudly when *f* or *p* is held up and are learning the meaning of *crescendo* and *diminuendo*. Pupils learn how to conduct and follow a conductor and are very good at stopping exactly on time. They have a good understanding of the musical vocabulary they have learned, such as *dynamics*. They explain what effect different music has on their emotions.
102. A very good lesson on musical appreciation was observed in Year 3, where behaviour was excellent and standards were above and sometimes well above national expectations. Pupils listened enthralled to four different pieces of music, Handel's *Water Music*, Stravinsky's *Dance of the Earth*, Greig's *Morning* and Dvorak's *Largo*. They then helped to decide which words best suited the four different pieces of music, for example loud, short, sharp, fast and digging for the *Dance of Death*. Pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds were enthusiastic and volunteered a number of answers, for example one commented that if she wanted to 'think thoughtfully' about a piece of music she would 'listen carefully and then tell someone how she felt'.
103. The end-of-term concert is of a high standard. Almost all the older pupils know the words of songs by heart and the younger pupils know at least the choruses by heart. Pupils sing duets and trios confidently in front of an audience and all sing very tunefully,

interpreting the mood of different songs very well, through singing and through actions. Pupils who accompanied the songs on tuned and un-tuned instruments did so with confidence and with a good sense of beat and rhythm; they kept in time very well. Tubular bells, and bells tied to pupils' wrists and shaken with arms swaying above their heads, all helped to create an enjoyable and tuneful occasion. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour during the rehearsal were excellent.

### Teaching, learning and behaviour

104. Teaching and learning are very good and pupils' behaviour is often excellent. Teaching in Year 2 is good, the teacher having good subject knowledge and very good behaviour management techniques. Teaching in a Year 3 lesson was very good. The teacher had very good subject knowledge, a very clear understanding of the lesson objectives and what she wanted pupils to learn. This resulted in very good progress being made by pupils. Excellent guidance was given, so that pupils knew what to listen for and how to appreciate different types of music. Homework was set to encourage pupils to continue to appreciate classical music at home.
105. The organisation of the school concert demonstrated very well the very good team work that is evident in the school. All teachers had specific roles, leading different aspects of the performance. Both the concerts and hymn practices provide additional times when music is taught successfully. A recorder club is run for Year 3 pupils, which is popular, and which not only enables them to play the recorder but also promotes pupils' social and cultural development well and gives them self confidence, working as a group and learning to take turns and listen to one another.

### Management

106. The management of the subject is very good. The subject manager's file shows that music is taught thoroughly and is often linked with topics. Assessment has yet to be developed. There is a very good selection of tuned and un-tuned instruments from a variety of countries, and a selection of videos and tapes, although few compact discs. The subject is, however, very well resourced for a first school. The designated music room, away from the open-plan teaching areas in the school, provides a very good teaching resource. It is used well and displays of posters, books and pupils' work about composers add to the knowledge that pupils gain and the sense of value the school gives to the subject. The local education authority advisory teacher has worked with teachers and this has proved very useful in promoting music lessons taken by class teachers. Year 3 teachers are, at present, using a scheme from the local education authority. Visiting musicians, such as a string quartet, have played to the pupils.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

### *Strengths*

- High standards have been maintained because of good leadership.
- Teachers' subject knowledge has improved.

### *Weaknesses*

- Pupils are not active for enough of the time in some lessons.

### Standards

107. Standards at the end of Year 2 and Year 3 are above those nationally expected of pupils of this age. These good standards have been maintained since the previous inspection.
108. By the end of Year 2, pupils, including those with special educational needs, select appropriate actions which they practise and combine imaginatively in sequences of movement. They balance confidently and there is fluency in their movements when they respond to music. Pupils develop good games skills and send and receive passes with increasing precision and control. Pupils know the importance of fitness and understand the need to exercise by doing activities. Pupils in Year 3 talk about the effects of exercise on their bodies and demonstrate a growing understanding of attack and defence skills when playing small-sided games. Overall, pupils make good progress and achieve well.

### Teaching, learning and behaviour

109. The overall quality of teaching and learning is good. There have been improvements in the range and quality of resources and in teachers' subject knowledge because of in-service training. This has resulted in the improved quality of teaching in gymnastics and dance.
110. The most effective learning occurred when teachers' expectations of pupils were high, and there was briskness and good pace to the lesson. This was exemplified in a lesson for pupils in Year 2, during which they combined explosive and gentle movements in their dance. Learning was strengthened by the good evaluative discussion that also took place. In some lessons, however, there is too much discussion, so learning lacks pace because too little time is spent on practising and developing skills.
111. Published programmes of work have been thoughtfully integrated with national subject guidance to develop a supportive scheme for planning. As a result, all teachers plan their lessons well and use their subject knowledge effectively to coach individual pupils and groups. Teachers and assistants are active during lessons and their example enhances the pupils' performance.
112. Pupils in Year 3 have benefited from the recent coaching sessions provided by members of Wimbledon Football Club. They learned a good range of soccer skills, which girls and boys applied well during a final 'mini tournament' held during the week of the inspection. A weekly gymnastics club provides good opportunities for pupils to develop their skills and interests outside school time.

### Management

113. The subject manager provides strong leadership and manages the subject well by seeking new developments. The school successfully bid for a grant, through the Sports Council, to buy more equipment. The quality of teaching and pupils'

performance is monitored by the subject manager. This is effective in that good standards are being maintained.

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

### *Strengths*

- The teaching and learning in lessons is very good.

### *Weaknesses*

- Pupils' ability to remember what they have learned.

### Standards

114. There was too little evidence available during the inspection to support a judgement on standards in religious education, overall. However, in the three lessons observed, attainment was at least above that expected of pupils of their age. Nevertheless, when talking with pupils they remember only a little of what they have been taught. At the previous inspection, standards were judged average. There has been little change since then. In a Year 1 class, when thinking about the presents that were given to Jesus at his birth, pupils discussed what present they would give a baby and why they chose it. In a Year 2 class, pupils learned about one of the ways Christians celebrate with a Christingle service. Displays show that they have looked at different traditions connected with Christmas and have made a 'celebration wheel,' which shows how people do different things when they celebrate, such as having special food or wearing special clothes. Work in books shows that pupils have thought about 'belonging' and have drawn pictures of their own families. They know that the angel Gabriel visited Mary and that Advent leads up to Christmas.
115. Displays in school show that pupils have learned about Hindus and the festival of Divali. They have made cards and, when questioned, showed that they know the story of Rama and Sita very well indeed. The school successfully includes those pupils of Hindu faith, giving them confidence when learning about and sharing their religion and valuing the support their parents can give. Pupils also know about the Islamic time of Ramadan and that people fast at that time. When interviewing pupils, and when they were reminded, they showed that they knew that Jesus was nailed to a cross and rose again, that He stilled the storm and that Noah built an ark. They know the stories of David and Goliath, the good Samaritan and Babouchka. They could sing songs connected to these stories. Pupils have also thought about special places and places that are special to themselves, and they have learned about baptisms.

### Teaching, learning and behaviour

116. In the three lessons seen, the quality of teaching and learning and pupils' behaviour were all very good. Teaching was accurate and pupils listen very well. In Year 1, pupils gave very thoughtful answers when thinking of presents that were not expensive saying, for example, they would like to play a game with him/her, give a flower, or give a smile. Their drawings also showed this thought when they drew a bear saying 'it would make him happy'. In Year 2, pupils made Christingles carefully and well. A considerable amount of knowledge was gained, particularly about the symbolism, through very good teaching and the practical activity. Support staff were deployed very well. The subject contributes well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

### Management

117. The temporary subject manager was absent during the inspection. An interview was held instead with the headteacher, and planning files looked at. The school has a comprehensive scheme of work matched to the present locally Agreed Syllabus. No in-service training has taken place recently, however, because a new Agreed Syllabus is about to be published and the school is waiting for this to happen. Some good resources have been bought, such as a series of 'Big Books'. Management of the subject is at least satisfactory.