

# INSPECTION REPORT

**ALBOURNE**

**CHURCH of ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Albourne

LEA area: West Sussex

Unique reference number: 126014

Headteacher: Mrs Alison Wood

Lead inspector: Wendy Simmons

Dates of inspection: 15<sup>th</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup> September 2003

Inspection number: 255304

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 – 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	171
School address:	The Street Albourne Hassocks West Sussex
Postcode:	BN6 9DH
Telephone number:	01273 832003
Fax number:	01273 835569
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Jane Warne
Date of previous inspection:	April 27 <sup>th</sup> – 29 <sup>th</sup> 1998

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Albourne is a small, community primary school for boys and girls who are 4-11 years old. It has 171 pupils organised in six classes. Children join the reception class during the autumn term before their fifth birthday and in addition to this; the school has a high number of pupils joining other classes throughout the year. Only a few leave the school at other than the usual exit times. The school is situated in the middle of Albourne village, with pupils travelling from five surrounding villages to attend this school. The school serves families from a wide range of social circumstances, which are broadly average, although the school has a high percentage of pupils from one-parent families. Several pupils are cared for by adults other than their parents. West Sussex does not provide hot school meals and so only an average proportion of pupils is identified as being eligible for free sandwiches. The school notes that this is not a true reflection of eligibility, especially in light of the high instances of one-parent families, which is 29 per cent overall.

Pupils' attainment when they start school is currently average, though there is a wide range of ability within each age group that varies from year to year and, where pupils join the school, few are of higher or average ability. Forty one pupils have been identified as having SEN (special educational needs), for a variety of learning and behavioural difficulties, and three have statements to outline particularly significant needs. The proportion of pupils needing additional support is average overall, but varies from one year group to another. All but a few pupils are from white ethnic backgrounds and none are learning English as an additional language.

The school is going through a period of significant change in staffing. At the beginning of this term three new teachers joined the school, two of whom are newly qualified and one is temporary. The deputy headteacher has been away from the school since June 2003, due to ill health.

The school is involved in the *Think First* initiative, which is part of the national initiative *Network Learning Communities*. They also participate in the *Family Links Nurture Programme*, which is a community-based project to enrich parenting skills.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
23674	Wendy Simmons	Lead inspector	Foundation Stage curriculum, science, design and technology and physical education.
9053	Vivienne Philips	Lay inspector	
31222	Sue Croft	Team inspector	Mathematics, geography, history and music.
29695	Jill Lance	Team inspector	English, art and design, information and communication technology, religious education and SEN

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

The overall effectiveness of Albourne School is **satisfactory**. Pupils start school with broadly average attainment and meet national expectations in most subjects. They achieve satisfactorily overall, but could do better in mathematics and in aspect of information and communication technology by Year 6. Teaching and learning are satisfactory and enable most pupils to make sound progress. Pupils with SEN (special educational needs) make at least good progress but Higher-ability pupils do not achieve consistently well. Leadership and management are satisfactory in terms of raising achievement. The headteacher shows strong leadership. A higher than average number of pupils join throughout the year from other schools and many of these are of lower than average ability or have significant social needs. **The school provides satisfactory value for money.**

### The school's main strengths and weaknesses

- High standards by Year 6 in English and science, which reflect good leadership.
- Provision for children in the reception class is good and helps them to make good progress.
- Very good provision for pupils with SEN, which helps them to achieve very well overall.
- A very caring school with very good provision for pupils' personal and social development.
- Links with parents are very good and the community support pupils' learning effectively.
- Standards in mathematics are poor and pupils do not achieve their best in this subject.
- The cramped accommodation impinges upon pupils' achievement in ICT and physical education.
- The provision for Higher-ability pupils is too inconsistent across the school as a whole.

**Satisfactory improvement** has been made since the school was inspected in 1998. There have been improvements in the former key issues including leadership, management and governance, but some staffing difficulties have slowed the rate of progress. The school has also been successful in raising boys' achievement in English and in the recent improvement in English and science. Standards are lower in mathematics than they were; this is unsatisfactory. There has been very good progress in developing the provision for pupils with SEN, and in the partnership with parents and not least in the care and provision for personal and social development. Progress in developing ICT has been slow.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

The table below shows how the school compares with other schools in the country and against very similar schools. In comparison with schools that have a similar proportion of free school meals some tests were in the lowest five per cent in 2002. However, this comparison does not accurately reflect the pupils' circumstances. Since 2002, standards have risen in English and science. Currently standards are average overall, although they are higher than average in English, science, design and technology and in watercolour painting and drawing, but in mathematics and aspects of ICT, they remain lower than average by Year 6. However, improvement is evident, as standards in Years 1 and 2 are currently average in mathematics.

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
English	C	D	C	D
Mathematics	D	C	E	E*
Science	C	D	E	E*

*Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average; E\* - in the lowest 5% of schools.*

*Similar schools are those with similar percentages of pupils eligible for free school meals*

**Achievement is satisfactory.** Pupils with SEN achieve well, but across the school as a whole, the rate of achievement for Higher-ability pupils is inconsistent. Pupils have made slower progress in Year 3 in the past; the school is taking firm action to address this. In English, pupils achieve well, which is leading to higher than average standards by Year 6. Good achievement is most evident in reading, where standards are high by both Year 2 and Year 6 and reflect good teaching. In science, good specialist teaching at the top end of the school has a positive impact on achievement and standards. Pupils do not achieve their best in mathematics from Year 3 onwards. Good achievement is evident in the reception class as a high proportion of children reach standards expected by Year 1. Links with parents and the community have a positive effect on achievement.

**Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good.** Pupils have **satisfactory** attitudes to learning and behave **well**. Attendance is **good**.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The quality of education provided by the school is satisfactory.** The care shown by staff contributes strongly to pupils' personal development. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. It is good in Reception class where children learn from a rich variety of well-planned experiences and teachers use assessment information well to meet pupils' needs. In Years 1 and 2 teaching is satisfactory overall, but several lessons were of significant high quality in Year 2. In Years 3, 4, 5, and 6, teaching is also satisfactory overall. Teachers make satisfactory use of assessment information to plan work for pupils, although challenges for the Higher-ability pupils are inconsistent. The best provision is in English. Good teaching is also evident in science in Years 4, 5 and 6. In mathematics, the numeracy strategy is not used rigorously enough. Provision for pupils with SEN, is very good. Assessment in ICT is limited and access to resources reduces learning opportunities.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**Leadership and management are satisfactory.** The headteacher has a clear vision for the school and leadership and management are having a satisfactory impact on raising achievement; governance is satisfactory. The chairperson is very experienced and effective in her role; most governors are long serving and have a satisfactory knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses in the school. Many subject managers are new to their posts. Firm steps have already been taken to improve the provision for mathematics in the future.

## **PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL**

Parents are very satisfied with almost all aspects of the school, although they have identified concerns about the provision for pupils in mixed-age classes and they would like a larger school hall. The inspection findings have identified some occasion where pupils in mixed-age classes do not have equal opportunities. Pupils are happy with the school overall and especially like the *Nurture Programme* and the school's council.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- Raise standards and pupils' achievement in mathematics by using the National Numeracy Strategy and assessment information rigorously and by providing more challenging activities.
- Bring about improvement in standards of ICT by developing assessment procedures, so that pupils make consistent progress. Also, by improving access to ICT resources.
- Higher-ability pupils need to be more consistently challenged and supported.
- Governors should pursue the possibilities of providing a larger school hall with greater vigour, so that pupils can do their best in PE.



## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

#### Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Standards of pupils in the school are currently broadly average, with some strengths in English and science and the need for improvement in mathematics and ICT. Pupils achieve satisfactorily overall. Pupils with SEN do well, but higher-ability pupils do not always achieve their best.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Higher than average standards and good achievement in English and science by Year 6, with the school doing well against its targets.
- Good achievement in the Reception class, with above average standards in reading and personal and social skills by Year 1.
- The very good provision for pupils with SEN helps them to achieve well.
- The standard of work and pupils' achievement in design and technology.
- Good attainment and achievement in painting skills in art.
- Pupils' achievement in mathematics is poor.
- Due to difficult access to resources, achievement in ICT is too patchy.
- Achievement for higher-ability pupils is inconsistent.

#### Commentary

1. The knowledge and skills that the children bring into school are average for their ages overall when starting in the Reception class. When they enter Year 1, most of the children will have met the expected goals for learning, and some will exceed them. Children's achievement is good overall. This is because they are given strong support with their language and literacy skills and in their personal and social development. This means that they are well prepared for Year 1; this is especially evident in the work on reading and in their ability to work with others, which is above average.

2. Standards by Year 2 are currently average, with satisfactory achievement. Standards and achievement are best in reading, where, by 2002, 40 per cent of pupils were working at a higher than average level for their age. The results from the tests in 2003 show that high overall standards have been maintained. In writing, standards are average, there was rapid improvement in 2002, when standards were best, with above average attainment overall. In mathematics, standards are currently average and show improvement in the number gaining average results. This reflects the strong support for pupils with SEN. However, fewer gained higher than average results. Girls often do better than boys. However, it is important to note that a nearly all of the boys taking the tests in 2003 were still six years old, as they have summer birthdays and more boys than girls receive support for special needs.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	16.5 (15.0)	15.8 (15.7)
Writing	14.9 (13.2)	14.4 (14.3)
Mathematics	16.1 (16.1)	16.5 (16.2)

*There were 30 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

3. The table shows the average points scored for pupils at the end of Year 2 in the 2002 tests. It is not possible to add the 2003 point score, as national data was not ready at the time of the inspection.

4. Standards by Year 6 are currently average, as seen in the work produced by the pupils in the new Year 6 class. They are best in English and science, where the school has focussed much attention on raising standards. As a consequence of good leadership and management in English and science and good teaching at the top end of the school, pupils are doing better than average. Achievement is good in English and satisfactory in most other subjects. However, pupils' progress in mathematics and aspects of ICT is too inconsistent and this is unsatisfactory. The school places a strong emphasis on art and design and design and technology. Standards are better than average in watercolour and drawing work and in design and technology overall.

***Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 – average point scores in 2002***

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	27.6 (26.4)	27.0 (27.0)
Mathematics	24.9 (27.0)	26.7 (26.6)
Science	25.8 (27.9)	28.3 (28.3)

*There were 20 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

5. The table shows the average points scored by pupils in the 2002 national tests. The 2003 points score information was not available in time for the inspection report and thus, does not indicate the improvement in science and English to date. Achievement compared with similar schools shows low standards, indeed, it was in the bottom 5 per cent in the 2002 national tests, but this is not a true comparison for this school. The school has improved since 2002. Also, West Sussex does not have a hot meals service and some parents who could claim free meals do not formally identify their eligibility. With, the high proportion of one-parent families in the school, at 29 per cent, it would suggest that the school has not been placed in the correct grouping for analysis against similar schools. Additionally, it is important to note that the school has a higher than average rate of mobility. While slightly fewer than average leave the school a higher than average number of pupils join the school in different year groups and, although a few are of higher-ability, most need additional support.

6. In English, since the last inspection, standards have fluctuated. The 2003 results show improvement, with all but three pupils gaining at least an average Level 4, which is above average. A high proportion gained a Level 5. Girls outperform boys at Level 5, especially in writing. This was mainly because many boys needed additional support. Pupils with SEN are very well supported in English, which often results in them attaining average standards. The school is rightly pleased with the improvement in English, as they exceeded their target in 2003, especially for the higher Level 5 results. This shows how the school is well on the way to meeting the needs of the most-able pupils in English, although it is not yet fully consistent across the whole school. For example, last year's Year 3 work had little extended writing. Overall, provision for reading is still stronger than writing. The school has successfully made improvements in helping boys to reach average standards. The school has a register of gifted and talented pupils and through links with the Local Education authority, provides a satisfactory range of activities to help them to reach their potential. Nonetheless, overall, their achievement in school is patchy.

7. In science, since the last inspection, standards have fluctuated, with poor attainment in 2002. The school has been taking action to address this. A new co-ordinator was appointed last year and there is a drive to introduce more investigative work and to help pupils, especially girls, to see science as an interesting subject. This has worked well, which is reflected in the rapid improvement in results in 2003, when every pupils gained at least an average level 4 and the proportion gaining the higher level 5 also rose.

8. In mathematics, since the last inspection, standards have fallen considerably. The school identified this as an aspect on which they wanted the inspection team to focus. In 2002, only 65 per cent of pupils reached average standards and the 2003 results show further decline. Not enough pupils are getting higher level results. Girls often do better than boys, which does not follow the

national picture. The findings of this inspection show that pupils could be achieving much better. There are three main reasons for low standards and patchy progress. First, the National Numeracy Strategy has not been implemented with enough rigour. Secondly, the samples of work and tracking information show that pupils in some classes were not making enough progress. Lastly, the provision for higher-ability pupils and challenge in lessons is inconsistent.

9. Across the school as a whole, there are two factors that are currently barriers to better achievement of pupils. These relate to ICT and physical education. The accommodation in the school is extremely cramped and this means that pupils can often only work infrequently on computers. The school hall is not big enough for class activities in PE.

**Pupils’ attitudes, values and other personal qualities**

Pupils’ attendance, attitudes, behaviour and personal development are good overall, in response to the priority the school gives to developing personal qualities and social skills. The school fosters other aspects of personal development, including spiritual, moral and social development to a good overall standard. Aspects of cultural development are underdeveloped.

**Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Good attendance and punctuality.
- Pupils’ positive views of school because it is a happy and attractive place to be.
- Good behaviour in lessons and around the school.
- Good responses to the school’s emphasis on tolerance and consideration for others.
- Good efforts to help pupils to see the difference between right and wrong.
- Good development of pupils’ self-awareness and respect for others’ beliefs.
- Very good nurturing of a sense of community and social responsibility.
- Pupils work on set tasks quite willingly, but without eagerness to do their very best.
- As the school has identified correctly, pupils still have too few opportunities to develop awareness of the wider world and its cultural diversity.

**Commentary**

10. Attendance and punctuality are good because parents understand the importance placed on this by the school and do their best to respond to its high expectations and effective procedures. Recent slight dips in rates of unauthorised absences reflect patterns of illness and limited agreement to holidays in term time. This shows the school’s determination to achieve a settled start to each term and to value national tests. The school does not authorise holiday absences in these crucial weeks.

*Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)*

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	4.5%	School data	0%
National data	5.4%	National data	0.5%

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

11. Pupils respond well to the school’s strong encouragement of good behaviour and are happy to take part in the full range of work and play activities. They feel, as one child said, pointing to the surrounding fields and shady trees “so lucky to have all this and a sunny day”. Very well supervised playtimes are lively, friendly and often involve imaginative games of make-believe alongside more traditional playground games and active use of outdoor equipment. Standards of behaviour and co-operation around the school are better than average. Any instances of bullying are quickly dealt with.

### **Ethnic background of pupils**

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
White – any other White background

No of pupils on roll
162
2

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

Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
0	0
0	0

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

12. Children enjoy play and well-chosen practical activities most of all. Their attitudes to school are positive but few have developed a real thirst for learning or take pride in always doing their best. About half of the pupils who filled in questionnaires said a definite, “Yes’, we find out new things in lessons.” Just over a third felt that “Yes, lessons are interesting and fun”. Just over a quarter agreed that this was the case mostly and a few more that it is true sometimes. Inspectors found that many lessons lacked sparkle, which affected pupils’ interest in their work. Not all lessons are planned with a sharp focus on satisfying the wide range of abilities in the class and to be stimulating enough to foster a desire to learn in everyone. As a result, pupils’ attention sometimes wanders. In lessons where elements of teaching and learning are very good, pupils enjoy rising to the challenge of working harder and learning more. For example, everyone in a year 4/5 class tried to say something positive and personal to give ‘a warm, fuzzy feeling’ to the recipient of a compliment such as “You’re always willing to play with people when they’re lonely.” This was because the teacher explained what was expected and challenged pupils to think and express themselves, in an atmosphere of trust and respect.

13. All children are encouraged to listen to one another with respect right from the start. In the best lessons, this sometimes leads to moments when someone says or does something that fascinates others. One of the youngest children described and correctly identified an apple in a ‘*feely box*’, to his own and other children’s obvious delight. Pupils’ spiritual awareness is developed well as a result of such experiences. In lessons and assemblies they discuss stories with moral themes enthusiastically and learn to value different personal histories and opinions. The school helps the pupils to have an appreciation of other cultures and faiths and is just beginning to widen pupils’ awareness of the rich diversity of communities beyond the local area, for example, by visiting a local mosque. The school fosters other aspects of equality well, which ensures that pupils with difficulties are welcomed, accepted by other children and included in activities. The school has dealt very well with pupils’ complex difficulties and needs. No pupil was excluded in the year prior to inspection.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL**

### **Teaching and learning**

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall; it is best in English and in science, but not yet challenging enough in mathematics. Teaching and learning is good in the Reception class and pupils with SEN benefit from good teaching, with very good support from the co-ordinator and good support from teaching assistants. The quality and use of assessment information is satisfactory overall.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Good teaching and learning in English.
- Good teaching in Foundation Stage.
- Good use of teaching assistants.
- Specialist teaching of science is helping pupils to learn and achieve well at the top end of the school.
- In mathematics, challenges for higher-ability pupils are too inconsistent and the
- The National Numeracy strategy is not being used with sufficient rigour.
- Higher-ability pupils are not always given suitably challenging work and activities.

## Commentary

14. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. Teachers usually use their termly planning appropriately to ensure that pupils learn new skills and knowledge in a systematic way. Teachers are mostly enthusiastic and always try to coax reluctant learners, although some pupils still need much guidance and are not always self-starters. The school is seeking to help pupils to develop skills, so that they have a growing capacity to work independently and collaboratively. For example, the school is involved in two interesting projects to help pupils to recognise how they learn best, as part of the *Think First* project. Teachers recognise that pupils often learn in different ways. Relationships are good and almost all pupils show self-discipline in lessons. However, very occasionally, teachers do not insist that pupils listen attentively while the teacher talks. Some lessons, although satisfactory, lack excitement, energy and sparkle.

15. Teachers are best at challenging pupils in English and science. For example, they question pupils' knowledge and encourage problem-solving activities, so that they learn new things and are clear about what they are doing. Pupils in the mixed Year 4 and 5 class enjoyed a very good lesson on making similes to describe the landscape in photographs from around the world. Here, the teacher had organised the work very well so that every pupils could contribute their ideas and try out new descriptive vocabulary because they had been taught how to use the thesaurus. Literacy skills are well used in a range of subjects.

16. In some classes there are mixed ages and, on occasions, the pupils in one class do not have the same opportunities as those in the other class with the same age pupils. The school is seeking to address this. For example, during the inspection week, all of the Year 4 pupils were clustered together for science and all pupils learn about electrical circuits, which encompassed work that was suitable for all abilities. This judicious grouping of pupils enables teachers to work more effectively and also helps pupils to focus specifically on what they are learning about. In one unsatisfactory lesson, this did not occur because pupils were trying to do too many different things without the challenge and support that was really needed.

17. Although all but one lesson seen in mathematics was satisfactory, there are weaknesses in how well pupils' learn, which is a significant factor in why standards are much lower than average. The work sample showed patchy progress and achievement of pupils, especially those who were in Year 3 prior to the summer holidays. The headteacher has been working to improve mathematics, by monitoring lessons, tracking progress and by seeking specialist support. In the past, there has been too much reluctance by some staff to implement the full National Numeracy Strategy. This has been addressed through performance management and changes in staffing. In lessons, although teachers are now following the numeracy programme there is still a lack of rigour. For example, in how the mental skills are taught in the introductory sessions of the lesson and in how the plenary is used to round up learning and give further additional challenges. Pupils are beginning to become more confident in explaining how they solve problems, but overall, this aspect of work is underdeveloped. Pupils are not helped enough to note their mathematical working and ideas on paper as jottings.

18. Teaching and learning is good in the Reception class and, despite staff changes, the newly qualified teachers, with the support of the former teacher, are maintaining the good provision also noted at the time of the last inspection. Learning is rooted in well-organised practical activities. Teachers and the assistant talk and intervene in children's activities, so that they understand what they are doing and gain further skills. Careful planning and effective use of time ensures that the children make decisions for themselves. Firm foundations are laid for Year 1, especially in social skills, literacy and computer work.

19. Pupils with SEN benefit from good teaching, which helps pupils to achieve well by Years 2 and 6 in particular. Work is well planned to meet their specific needs. Careful support ensures that pupils are challenged and do not become over dependent on adults. Strong links with parents and outside agencies has a positive impact on pupils' learning.

20. The school has begun to focus on higher-ability pupils, but as yet there is still too much inconsistency in the provision and challenges for these pupils. Often teachers and assistants give more of their time to pupils with SEN or to average ability pupils. For example, in a mathematics lesson higher-ability pupils worked steadily with little further additional challenges to support their understanding of shopping calculations.

**Summary of teaching observed during the inspection.** 32 lessons or parts were observed.

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0(0 %)	3(9%)	11(34%)	16(50%)	2(6 %)	0(0%)	0(0%)

The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons; figures in brackets show percentages where 30 or more lessons are seen. Due to rounding, the total may not add up to 100 per cent.

### The curriculum

The curriculum offered to pupils is **satisfactory overall**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The provision for children in the Reception class and Years 1 and 2 is good.
- The provision for pupils with SEN is very good.
- Personal and social education are both very good.
- Opportunities for enrichment and curriculum innovation are good.
- There is some inequality of access and opportunity, especially for higher-ability pupils.
- The curriculum for mathematics is less well developed than English or science.
- The accommodation for ICT and PE are inadequate and this affects standards.

### Commentary

21. The curriculum in the Reception class and in Years 1 and 2 is good. In Years 3 to 6 it is satisfactory. However, pupils in mixed aged classes do not always receive the same opportunities. The school has been successful in improving the scheme of work for English, science in response to key issues from the last inspection. In mathematics standards are lower as the National Numeracy strategy is not fully implemented.

22. The curriculum makes very good provision for pupils with SEN, but provision is inconsistent for higher-ability pupils, as work for these pupils is not as well planned and as a consequence of this, teachers do not place enough emphasis on their needs in lessons. The provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is very good and further details of this are included at the end of the report. The school is actively involved in curriculum innovation through *Think First* and a collaborative learning project with Brighton University. This is helping pupils to begin to understand how they learn to best advantage and in helping pupils to learn by working collaboratively. A significant strength of the curriculum is the *annual enrichment week*, which allows pupils to engage in many interconnecting subjects and to enjoy the support of many other professionals in the community.

23. Pupils have good opportunities for learning through a wide range of extra-curricular activities, including music, sport and art. The school provides a suitable additional range of Local Authority opportunities for gifted and talented pupils. Younger pupils have effective fortnightly homework called *Ask Me About* when curriculum experiences are shared at home with opportunities to extend learning. The school makes good use of community links to support learning objectives. Visitors make a good contribution to the curriculum. The local vicar visits the school and some parents visit school to share a range of faiths with the pupils.

24. The match of teachers to the curriculum is satisfactory. There is a very good number of support staff to meet the demands of the curriculum. Good quality, training gives staff the opportunity to develop curricular knowledge and skills. All staff have completed a training course in the use of computers in order to address a key issue from the last inspection. However ICT provision remains unsatisfactory as the school does not have anywhere where larger groups of pupils can learn computer skills and this slows their rate of learning and overall attainment. Similarly, the school hall is too small for class use, to develop PE skills to the full. Overall, accommodation is unsatisfactory, because it is not large enough for the growing numbers of pupils attending the school. Displays are thoughtfully presented and pupils' work is valued. Resources for learning are satisfactory overall. The range of classroom books, which was a key issue in the last inspection, is supplemented each term with a loan from the county library bus. Subjects have limited finances to improve resources.

### **Care, guidance and support**

The school gives a very high priority to pupils' well being. Pupils are looked after very well. They receive good support and guidance within a caring community where their views are sought and genuinely valued.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Very good arrangements to deal with child protection issues and health and safety matters.
- Very good, trusting relationships between children and adults.
- Adults know children and their personal needs very well.
- Good support and guidance, especially for pupils with particular needs.
- Strong teamwork and community spirit in which all adults and children are valued.
- Very good induction arrangements for children starting school.
- Highly effective school council and processes for seeking pupils' views.

### **Commentary**

25. The school has worked strenuously since the last inspection to give a high quality of care and ensure that all pupils feel secure, happy and, therefore, ready to learn. It has been very successful in its aim to create a very positive, caring ethos where people value one another and work together productively. Parents and pupils rate this highly. Adults take great care to ensure that pupils of all ages are supervised properly and are safe at work and play. All necessary health and safety procedures are in place. The school is vigilant in caring for children with particular needs and in keeping its comprehensive child-protection procedures up to date.

26. Support and guidance as a whole are good because staff have very good and positive relationships with pupils of all ages and very helpful understanding of their general development, particularly their personal and social skills. The school is particularly supportive when pupils have personal problems, but is not as well tuned to raising aspirations and steering pupils to first-rate academic achievement. This is because the focus has been on creating a climate where 'a happy learner' can be 'a good learner', without equivalent attention to timely and practical advice on how to learn better and make faster progress, particularly for higher-ability pupils. Reports and lesson plans do not always spell out the implications of individual assessments clearly enough. They rarely specify exactly what pupils need to practise, or aim to do, to make the most rapid progress of which they are capable. As a result, guidance is rarely focussed sharply enough on enabling all pupils to make great strides in progress. It is at its best for pupils with SEN or in public care, for whom well-targeted guidance is very good. Otherwise, the school is reasonably effective in using assessment information to provide generalised help and support for each pupil. Teachers track pupils' overall progress and personal development effectively, using a range of assessment procedures, with good examples of how work improves in *See the Changes Books*, which can be shared readily with parents.

27. As pupils' well-being is a high priority for the school, it has very effective arrangements for getting to know children before they start school and helping them to settle, whether or not they join at the usual times. A very thorough programme of home visits and informal chats with parents and children helps with this process. Similar care is taken to prepare pupils for secondary school so that they feel confident and happy about moving on.

28. The *Nurture Programme*, which gives pupils a clear set of principles for managing their own behaviour and valuable opportunities to express their feelings, underpins the quality of relationships and support in the school. Some parents have already received training, with more due this term. The programme offers consistency in dealing with particular behaviours and experiences and reinforces the value of parents' involvement in their children's learning and development.

29. Parents' views that "nothing is too much trouble" for the school are supported by how staff go out of their way to make pupils feel special and to listen to what they have to say in lessons and at other times of the school day. The school takes its responsibilities to consult pupils very seriously. It has raised the status of the school council by timetabling regular sessions and meeting more frequently than it did four years ago. Its agenda has included improvements in school playtime through to specific charity initiatives. Pupils of all ages learn quickly that their views are taken seriously and so they try to express themselves thoughtfully when given the chance to say what they think. Recently, this has been helped by the school's involvement in the *Think First* project, with displays of 'diamond-nine' (agreed ingredients of a good lesson) displayed prominently.

### **Partnership with parents, other schools and the community**

The school has very good links with parents because of very strong commitment to partnership. It has good links with the community through a range of useful projects.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Very good effort to involve parents with school life and projects.
- Very good range of information in parent-friendly language.
- Very active canvassing of parents' views.
- Very welcoming atmosphere and strong reputation for a caring ethos.
- Very good links with families for children starting school and for children with SEN.
- High degree of trust in the school's attention to children's best interests.
- Good links with the local community and partnership schools.
- No significant weaknesses but the school has scope to involve parents in raising aspirations and standards.

### **Commentary**

30. Parents' views of the school are very positive; they feel welcomed and valued as partners in their children's education. Parents receive regular, interesting, helpful information about the school's life, so they have a very good idea of what is happening day by day. The school gives parents very helpful booklets about what they can do to help their children and good, clear guidance on what procedures to follow, for example, when a child is too ill to come to school. As a result, parents feel very comfortable about approaching the school with questions and complaints, though they rarely have cause to object to what the school does. Parents have very good opportunities to air their views informally, for instance at the start and end of the school day and, more formally, in response to questionnaires. The school acts on this information to try to improve levels of satisfaction and achieved a significant rise in parental approval from 2001 to 2003.

31. The school keeps parents well informed about their children's progress, for example by use of notes written in home-school contact books, consultation evenings and annual reports, as well as informal, everyday communication. Progress reports are generally fairly detailed and informative, with targets set for the coming year and useful chances for parents and pupils to comment on what teachers have written. The targets are not always as helpful as they could be, particularly when they mention long-term goals or refer to what the teacher, rather than the child, has to do, as in 'introduce more formal methods of mathematical recording'. This reflects the lack of specific targets for most



pupils within lesson planning, with few outlines of precisely what different pupils are expected to learn. In contrast, targets for pupils with SEN are recorded and checked more rigorously and shared more clearly with them and with their parents.

32. The school is outward looking and welcomes involvement from parents and the wider community in its daily life and with specific projects. Pupils and staff have the chance to work with others from similar rural schools within one school partnership group. The local village and its church have extended pupils' understanding of the Christian faith, local and personal history and activities in enrichment week. The *Think First* and *Nurture Programme* contacts with other schools and support groups, respectively, ensure that the school can tap into skills and expertise likely to benefit pupils and improve their all-round achievement. The investment of time and energy in these project partnerships is consistent with the school's aims and commitment to high-quality personal development, ready for improving learning.

33. Information about pupils transferring into or out of the school is shared effectively so that they have every chance of settling in quickly and being successful in the new school. Staff take a lot of trouble to get to know new pupils, including those just starting school, for whom home visits are seen as invaluable. For pupils new to the school and those who are leaving, strong emphasis is placed on highlighting particular needs and ensuring that pupils feel that they can cope with the challenges of a new school. The school goes out of its way to check that those with SEN are reassured about changes, even to the point of arranging separate induction visits to secondary schools, where necessary.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**Overall, leadership and management are satisfactory.** The headteacher shows good leadership and is effective in helping the school to raise standards. Overall, governance of the school is satisfactory. Leadership is good whilst management is satisfactory.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Headteacher has good vision, linked to improving standards.
- Headteacher has a strong commitment to teamwork.
- The school has managed difficult circumstances with staff changes successfully.
- Leadership in the Foundation Stage is good.
- Induction of new staff, and delegation of responsibilities to make this successful.
- Strategic planning to improve English and science is good.
- Leadership and management of SEN are very good.
- Governors not challenging the school enough on standards.
- The school's improvement plan is not sharply enough focused on the priorities to raise pupils' attainment and achievement.

### **Commentary**

34. The headteacher has a clear vision of what she wants to achieve and is supported well by the senior managers. Despite difficult staff circumstances, she has encouraged the staff to plan in Key Stage teams and has developed the subject co-ordinator role. New staff are inducted well and feel part of the school. The school's administrative staff support the running of the school to a good standard.

35. The headteacher is effective in helping the school to raise standards, although there has been more success in raising standards in English and science than in mathematics. The headteacher and governors have had to make some difficult decisions about staffing issues and the outcomes of performance management findings in order to raise standards. There is a satisfactory climate for learning and commitment to inclusion of pupils.

36. Overall, governance of the school is satisfactory. Leadership is good whilst management is satisfactory. The well-established governing body is closely involved in the running of the school and the chairperson works well with the headteacher. The governors make an input into the school development plan and understand the main strengths and weaknesses of the school. Governors are supportive but do not always call the school to account enough over standards.

37. The school evaluates its performance and has raised standards in English and science through taking effective action. Performance data is not always used precisely enough to target areas for development and thus raise standards further. In this respect the school's improvement plan is not sharply focussed enough on the key priorities for improvement. Professional development is given a high profile and the school is starting to develop effective links with other schools through the *Think First Network*. Teacher assistants are well trained and do a good job. Teamwork is well established.

38. The school is developing a 'learning ethos' but children do not consistently take responsibility for their own learning by showing their initiative and acting on their ideas. The leadership team and the governors understand that a school can only be providing *best value* when certain principles are applied in the daily workings of the school. For example, they consult with parents and pupils about how to improve the school and always seek several quotes when planning spending on projects. The cramped accommodation has potential to be used more innovatively while governors explore the possibilities of funding to replace the school hall.

39. The school's expenditure per pupil is higher than average. The school will be increasing the number of pupils, which will allow re-organisation to provide more single-aged classes. Currently, the school is planning its finances so that this can be achieved. The school allocates a significant amount to top up the funding for pupils with SEN.

**Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003**

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	405,587.80
Total expenditure	401,007.86
Expenditure per pupil	2443.30

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	31,721.00
Balance carried forward to the next	62,206.00

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

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

Provision in the Foundation Stage is **good**, as found by the previous inspection.

#### **Commentary**

40. When children enter the Reception class they benefit from a very good induction programme, which helps them to settle and also fosters very strong links with parents and carers. The quality of teaching in the Reception class is good, which reflects good leadership and management and further improvement since the last inspection. There are very good relationships between adults and children, which makes children happy learners. There are a high proportion of boys in the Reception class. Standards are broadly average by the end of their time in the Reception class, although standards in aspects of communication, reading, and social development and ICT skills are above average. Achievement is good. Children are well prepared to move on to their next stage of learning in Year 1.

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

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

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Achievement is good.
- Learning opportunities are well planned.
- There is very good provision for children with SEN.
- Routines are beginning to be well established.
- Behaviour is good.
- Constant guidance and support help the children to work and play together well.
- There are too few role-play resources to extend social skills.

#### **Commentary**

41. Good teaching and learning help the children to grow in confidence. Boys are dominant in group activities and the staff are working effectively to help girls to be more vocal. Many of the children are only just beginning to play directly with others, but through focussed encouragement and sensitive intervention, adults help them to learn how to play co-operatively. Behaviour is good. Adults give much attention to helping the children to learn about sharing and how to take turns. For example, when playing with the 'magic mud', some children took more than others, but this was soon sorted out without tears, so that all children had equal amounts. Sessions are planned to help children to think and make decisions for themselves and show their initiative as well as to listen to adults and to do what they say. There are too few role-play resources to help children to extend their social skills through imaginative play.

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

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

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Good attainment and achievement in reading.
- Good teaching and learning, which place a strong emphasis on listening, talking and early literacy skills.
- Good use of ongoing assessment helps children to make quick progress.
- Teachers and the assistant have high expectations.

## **Commentary**

42. The provision and teaching in this area of learning is good. The children are already able to sit and listen attentively for short periods because the adults help them to understand how to do this. They make listening fun. For example, this often includes such themes as soft music where they listen for a gentle bird flying, and while doing this; children are reminded about the target for the day to be a 'good listener'.

43. Children are growing in confidence as they talk to adults, although many are still at the stage where they prefer to observe others and then use their face and hands to gesture their responses. Higher-ability children speak with confidence and are keen, often using a comprehensive range of vocabulary, although they are not always sure of the meanings of the words that they use. A strong emphasis is put on developing early reading and writing skills.

44. Children quickly learn how to write their names and to recognise different letters and sounds. Careful modelling of writing by the teachers helps children to see how writing should look. For example, they all had a go at writing what Brown Bear saw following the class story. High expectations and assessments of what children need to learn next help them to master new skills quickly.

45. Much time is spent encouraging the children to become confident readers. At this early stage in the term most can hold a book correctly and copy the main story line from their memory or from the clues in the pictures. By Year 1 they mostly have reading skills beyond that expected in the early learning goals.

## **Mathematical development**

Provision in mathematical development is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Plenty of practical activities and opportunities to learn how to write and count numbers accurately.

## **Commentary**

46. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. There is a good emphasis on learning basic numbers. The range of practical activities supports their understanding and the adults are just beginning to assess children's specific needs, for example in how to meet the needs of able children, who are already able to do most of the number activities provided with ease. The children are already growing in confidence in recognising numbers and the quantities to ten. Most are also beginning to write them with some accuracy, due to good demonstration by teachers and the assistant. They sing number songs and rhymes to support their learning and are beginning to recognise and name simple shapes, especially when making pictures. During the inspection, good intervention at the sand and water tray helped the children to learn about full, empty, half full and half empty.

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

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching and learning are good; this helps children to learn about the world.
- There is a strong emphasis on discussion and introduction of new vocabulary.
- Learning is rooted in carefully planned practical activities and investigations.
- Achievement is good.
- Sometimes, resources are not plentiful enough.
- There is no growing/nature area in the children's own outside play area.

## **Commentary**

47. The children learn about the world around them well. The quality of teaching and learning is good. When using computers, the children learn good mouse control skills and are able to use relevant programs on the computer, showing perseverance and concentration, which reflect the effective help from adults. Children have access to a broadly suitable variety of construction materials and are able to develop their designing and building skills appropriately, although the lack of sufficient parts sometimes hampers their completion of activities. For example, there were not enough sections to finish the train track. Good intervention by adults helps the children to think about how to make their models more successful. For example, one child made some binoculars and improved the join by reinforcing it with sticky tape. They make books about their homes and families. In a good lesson investigating touch, helpful and provoking questioning and introduction of new words helped the children to widen their vocabulary. Currently, there is no growing area in the playground, and so they cannot watch the daily changes of insects and plants in an outside environment. Nonetheless, the children benefit from learning about their environment on weekly *wellie walks* around the environment.

## **Physical development**

Provision in physical development is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There is a good range of interesting activities that helps children to master new skills and greater accuracy in co-ordination.
- Achievement is good.
- When children use the hall space it is too small for the number in the class.

## **Commentary**

48. Children develop physical skills well and the provision for this area of learning is good. Teaching is focussed on pupils learning to hold a pencil or pen correctly and learning to move around safely and confidently. Teachers make good use of the school's adventure area and large playground to help them to move with greater agility and confidence. All adults make learning fun and inspire the children to take risks. For example, two boys delighted in jumping from one tree stump to another, while other children followed a spiral track until they became dizzy. There are only a few wheeled toys, but the school is developing these. Sometimes, the children use the school hall, this is too small to allow them to move expressively as they cannot run and dance without bumping into other children.

## **Creative development**

Provision in creative development is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children benefit for a good range of teaching and learning experiences.
- Children are encouraged to make decisions and develop their imaginations.
- There are not enough dressing up clothes and multicultural resources.

## **Commentary**

49. Provision and teaching in this area are good. There are many opportunities for the children to play and make decisions about their creative activities. Resources are organised so that children can select things for themselves and engage in long periods of exploration, as seen when two children were captivated by the sounds made by the rain stick. When using the role-play area, the children are helped to develop their stories and games by adults who join in to extend their discussions. However, there are not enough dressing up clothes and artefacts to further extend play opportunities. Overall, children are encouraged to use their imaginations well and are beginning to explore colours and design as seen in their painting and pictures. There are plenty of opportunities to experiment with music. This has a positive impact on children's spiritual and cultural development.

## **SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2**

## ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are higher than average by Year 6.
- Reading skills are developed very well throughout the school.
- Pupils with SEN make very good progress.
- Good leadership and management in English.
- There has been good progress since the last inspection in improving boys' attainment.
- Planned work does not always consistently challenge Higher-ability pupils.

### Commentary

50. In the national tests for seven year olds in 2003 pupils' performance was in line with the national average for writing but above the national average for reading. In tests for eleven year olds in 2003, pupils attained above average results in English compared to the national standards. Pupils with SEN achieved well. Girls outperformed boys, especially in writing. Pupils begin at the school with average skills in English. No pupils are learning English as a second language.

51. Inspection evidence indicates that standards in Year 2 are broadly in line with those reported above. The good achievement in language and communication in the Reception class provides a firm foundation for further development. Standards seen in Years 3 and 4 are in line with national averages but in Years 5 and 6 good teaching raises standards to above average in Year 6. The greatest strength in standards is in reading. Pupils' speaking and listening skills and their written work are good overall. Girls achieve higher than boys, which reflects the national trend. The school is monitoring boy's literacy. There has been good improvement in helping boys to reach average standards since the last inspection. This has been achieved by providing focused support in groups. It is noteworthy, that many of the boys in the last sets of tests had summer birthdays and were thus much younger than some of the girls. Pupils with SEN (SEN) make very good progress. English makes a good contribution to pupils' personal development.

52. Achievement is good. In a very good Year 2 reading lesson pupils achieved well. Clear learning objectives for each group meant that there was a good balance of different strategies, with good inclusion of all abilities. Boys and girls were well integrated, although the higher-ability pupils were mostly girls. In a very good literacy lesson pupils in years 4 and 5 achieved very well writing similes. One higher ability pupil wrote, *The building is as desolate as a tomb*. Pupils with SEN achieve well throughout the school. In a Year 1 literacy lesson, very good specialist support helped one pupil achieve his target and write *mummy* for the first time. Similar good support was seen in Year 5, enabling a pupil with a statement for SEN confidently to work alongside his peers and write an informal letter home. In the same lesson a higher-ability pupil wrote 'I have arrived safely after my cramped and tiring journey.' Both pupils achieved well.

53. Teaching and learning are good overall. In Years 1 and 2, teaching and learning are sound overall, with strengths in the teaching of reading. Pupils with SEN receive good adult support to achieve this and Higher-ability pupils are set challenging work. For example, in Year 2, pupils correctly sequenced the story of 'Sam's Duck' by Michael Morpurgo. Work ranged from sequencing pictures and writing a caption to independent writing using a dictionary. Good home/school links encourage parents to support learning. Reading books go home daily and every fortnight English work is reinforced with *Ask Me About*. In Years 3 to 6 teaching and learning are good overall, especially in Years 5 and 6 where shared learning objectives, good inclusion and high expectations mean almost all pupils concentrate well and learn effectively, resulting in good achievement. Pupils mostly relate well to one another and the teacher. For example, in Year 3, two higher-ability pupils, worked together to discuss rhyming words and lower achieving pupils worked independently when adult support was temporarily removed. Teachers have introduced good regular assessment, setting targets for improvement. Older pupils take an active part. Throughout the school, where teaching does not focus sharply enough on different bands of ability, for example, on higher-ability pupils, they

make less progress and do not achieve as well as they could. Marking of pupils' work is up to date but does not always explain how to move forward in learning.

54. The subject is well led and managed. Effective subject support and training of the Literacy Strategy is provided for staff, including those new to the school. Work samples are monitored effectively, enabling standards to be assessed. There is insufficient time for lesson observations to monitor teaching. There is a limited budget for English and overall resources are barely satisfactory. The co-ordinator has correctly identified that the small non-fiction library and the narrow breadth of reading books at some levels, affect attainment.

55. Good progress has been made since the last inspection and the school constantly reviews its success and introduces new initiatives, like an enrichment day, to raise standards. Pupils at the end of Year 2 are achieving similar writing standards and have improved reading standards. By the end of Year 6 pupils achieve standards above those reported in the last inspection. Both key issues relating to English, to raise achievement by monitoring progress and to improve the consistency of assessment have been successfully addressed.

56. Language and literacy are promoted well across the curriculum, with a strong emphasis on reading to find new information. Pupils learn how to use a range of different styles of writing to support their learning and achievement in other subjects. For example, in science, they are taught how to write concise factual points. Word bank and dictionaries are not always well used in all subjects and this sometimes leads to needless incorrect spelling.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **poor**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The new co-ordinator is determined to raise standards and make a difference, and has the capability to do so.
- There are examples of good practice which can be used to good advantage across the rest of the school.
- Displays of mathematics are interesting and set useful challenges to pupils.
- The National Numeracy Strategy is not vigorously applied or firmly embedded and does not make enough contribution to raising standards.
- Pupils, especially the higher-ability, are not challenged to achieve their full potential.
- Assessment is not sufficiently developed to help teachers to plan the next challenging stages of learning for pupils.
- There are significant weaknesses in teaching and learning.

### **Commentary**

57. Results by Year 2 in the 2003 tests were slightly below the national average, with no boys achieving Level 3 however, the current Year 2 show average attainment, with better evidence of more systematic development of skills. By Year 6, standards are well below the national average, with no boys achieving the higher levels in the most recent tests in 2003. Pupils with SEN make good progress so that no child achieved lower than Level 3 in the tests.

58. Pupils make progress in mathematics across the school but too often higher-ability pupils are not extended and this means that children do not achieve their best. Overall, there is too much variation in achievement, sometimes it is satisfactory, but often progress is too slow, which is unsatisfactory. For example, pupils currently in Year 4, made little progress in developing skills in all aspects of mathematics while in Year 3.

59. In the lessons seen during the inspection, the teaching of mathematics was of variable quality and with the evidence of the work sample and discussions with pupils it is unsatisfactory overall. Teaching and learning are satisfactory in Years 1 and 2, but in other year groups it lacks sufficient

rigour, which prevents pupils from achieving their full potential, even though almost all lessons seen during the inspection were satisfactory. The work in books confirms patchy progress, limited challenge and poor use of the National Numeracy strategy. These features, together with a poorly planned curriculum make provision poor.

60. Where teaching is good there is a brisk, focussed interactive mental warm up which challenges each pupil. For example, in a Year 4 and 5 lesson, the teacher started by counting in tens, this led quickly onto the metric system and measurements, and from there to fractions. The pupils made rapid progress in their learning at this time and were all engaged in the task.

61. The scrutiny of pupils' work showed little evidence of how pupils record their workings (jottings) in a meaningful and systematic way. Much collaborative work was observed but little independent thinking. Pupils do not have enough time to work silently, so that they can think without being disturbed. Currently, the school is not ensuring that pupils learn and understand new things to best effect. As yet, there is not a consistent approach to homework.

62. Where teaching was less than sound, the pace was pedestrian and the activities were not appropriate for all pupils in the class. Deadlines were not set and therefore children lost focus and made limited progress. Higher-ability pupils were particularly disadvantaged as they were rarely challenged to extend their knowledge.

63. The school has not embedded the National Numeracy Strategy and its principles across the school so that there is a consistent steady drive to raise standards. The quality of teaching is patchy and does not address all abilities through variation in pace, focussed questioning and work appropriate to the wide ability range in each class.

64. Assessment has not been sufficiently developed to help teachers to plan what pupils need to do next, so that they consolidate their understanding and then quickly learn new skills. Thus, there is some underachievement. The school recognises this and is beginning to take action to improve standards. This is most evident in the work produced by Year 2.

65. The subject leader for mathematics left the school at the end of last term and a new one has been appointed. Leadership and management currently show a clear grasp of the issues and have identified actions to address them. The school has the capacity to improve standards. The headteacher has sought the advice of advisory teachers to effect change and requested the support of the inspection team in helping with this process. The 2003 result for Year 2 show that improvement is evident, but it has been too slow at the top end of the school. Since the last inspection, standards have fallen and this is unsatisfactory.

66. The school is making a conscious effort to build in cross-curricular links and these were seen in planning across the school. Links with ICT are considerably underdeveloped.

## **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards are higher than average by Year 6.
- Leadership is firmly rooted in a drive to raise standards.
- Standards in the 2003 national tests show rapid improvement.
- Teaching at the top end of the school is consistently good.
- The provision for pupils of the same age in the mixed year classes is not always consistently well planned to ensure equal opportunities.
- The use of computer technology to support pupils' learning is underdeveloped.
- Links with mathematics have been identified for further improvement.



## Commentary

67. The results from teachers' assessment of pupils' work show average standards by Year 2. The 2002 results were lower than average, but since then the school has worked hard to improve results. For example, all pupils gained an average Level 4 and the school has increased the number of Level 5 results. Although the school did not have as many Level 5 results as the national average, their performance shows rapid improvement compared with the 2002 results, with three more pupils only one or two marks away from gaining further Level 5 results. Added to this, girls' performance has improved. The good support for pupils with SEN is a significant factor in why standards are high.

68. Attainment is currently average by Year 2. Pupils have a strong knowledge of plants and insects. This understanding is aided by practical investigative activities such as through the regular *wellie walks*. Pupils talk about their investigations. For example, they explained how they sorted materials and then designed waterproof packaging. They know about what plants need to grow and how heat and water can change such things as spaghetti. Although their books show examples of work on electricity, pupils cannot talk about this with clarity.

69. Attainment by Year 6 is broadly above average. Pupils talk about a good range of scientific activities and clearly enjoy doing investigations. Their folders of work show many opportunities to plan their own work and write up their experiments. There are good links with literacy, as pupils readily use scientific vocabulary, such as crystallizing and solidifying. Pupils explain how twin variables impact on change, including how the amount of sunshine affects the number of bees visiting a plant. Pupils confidently explain electrical circuits and suggest how the brightness of light bulbs can be altered. Pupils know less about the earth and moon.

70. Overall, achievement is satisfactory. They make steady progress to Year 4, but from then on pupils' progress increases, so that pupils of all abilities achieve well by Year 6. However, progress in Year 4 is variable. Higher-ability pupils achieve best in Years 5 and 6. Higher-ability pupils are usually well challenged, as seen when average-ability pupils explored how sound travels through different materials, while higher-ability pupils had to find out how the pitch of the sound altered.

71. In the lessons seen, the teaching and learning of science was satisfactory overall. Teaching and learning are best at the top end of the school, where a specialist teacher inspires the pupils to think for themselves and engage in problem-solving activities. This is where the best challenges exist for higher-ability pupils. For example, pupils grappled with pictures of electrical circuits and had to work in groups to find out why circuits would not work, overcome problems and then draw diagrams using the symbols for cells, switches and bulbs. Across the rest of the school, teaching and learning are satisfactory, with a growing emphasis on practical investigation. One unsatisfactory lesson was observed, this was when too many different activities were going on at the same time, which prevented the teacher from really challenging and developing pupils' understanding of pulleys.

72. Assessment is satisfactory and shows recent significant improvement, which includes all pupils being involved in making assessments about how they learn through investigations and the use of 'brainstorming' to help with improvement of work. A recording sheet is now in place for all years, so that pupils' progress can be tracked.

73. The curriculum is satisfactory overall, with strengths in the recent developments of practical work. Good management identified the need to improve resources, as limitations were proving to be a barrier to effective learning. The use of ICT in teaching and learning is developing steadily, but aspects of the work, such as handling and recording data and use of measuring equipment are not well established. However, use of digital microscopes and cameras is good, as seen in pupils' understanding of eyes. Links with mathematics are correctly identified for further development, especially linked to recording data. The best work related to measuring air resistance of parachutes with different diameters.

74. There have been changes in the subject leadership of science in the last year. Building on the work started by the former co-ordinator, the current leader demonstrates a good vision for development. Management is good. The best features include the rigorous evaluation of how this

school compares with other schools. For example, girls' performance had been a significant weakness, which the female subject leader is addressing by providing a strong and skilled role model. Opportunities for science lessons to be evaluated are limited, although pupils' work is sampled and as a consequence of this, leadership shows a clear grasp of the actions needed to improve science.

75. Since the last inspection, standards have been variable, with poor attainment in 2002. Due to strong recent leadership and an emphasis on this subject, standards have risen considerably in 2003, with the school achieving its target for improvement. Improvement since 1998 is satisfactory overall. A significant aid to raising achievement is the subject leader's involvement with other schools and national testing. Furthermore, there is a strong commitment to staff development and clear priorities for improvement. Emphasis on all aspects of science is now better balanced and there is a drive to help able pupils to achieve their potential.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils with SEN make good progress, with good support from teaching assistants.
- The location of the school's computers prevents whole class teaching.
- Standards for older pupils are below national expectations.
- ICT is not used enough to help pupils with their learning in other subjects.

### **Commentary**

76. The school's current arrangement of resources prevents a class ICT lesson taking place. Two lessons were observed with a few pupils working on two or three computers while the rest of the class were learning English. There was insufficient inspection evidence to judge standards of achievement in Years 1 and 2. Standards by Year 6 are below average and achievement overall is unsatisfactory. Pupils with SEN make good progress as they have frequent access and direct adult support. Other pupils make patchy progress, as there is unsatisfactory provision or time for the systematic acquisition of skills. Older pupils do not have enough skills to work independently and this affects the standards they attain, for example, in word processing. Currently, the school does not have a subject co-ordinator to lead the school forward and manage the necessary steps to raise standards. The school has addressed key issues from the last inspection to ensure that teachers have appropriate skills and improve assessment. However, the lack of accessible resources is hindering improvement. There has been a fall in standards since the last inspection. The lack of skills means there is limited use of ICT in other subjects.

## **HUMANITIES**

Provision is **satisfactory** overall.

During the inspection, these subjects were not a major focus. Nonetheless, lessons were seen in religious education and geography and pupils' work was evaluated. Inspection findings are similar to the last inspection. Judgements are not made about history, due to limited evidence to form secure judgements.

## **Religious education**

The provision for religious education is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils develop a good understanding of the Christian faith.
- The subject contributes effectively to pupils' personal development.
- Effective links with visits and visitors.
- There is no subject co-ordinator.

### **Commentary**

77. One lesson was seen in religious education and further evidence was gathered from talking to pupils and looking at their work. The standards in both key stages are in line with the Locally Agreed Syllabus, which is currently under review. Study is predominantly Christian, but satisfactory comparisons are made with other religions for older pupils to describe the key beliefs and teachings of religions studied. The subject makes an effective contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Good links with the local church and families of other faiths reinforce pupils' learning. There is currently no subject co-ordinator.

## **Geography**

The provision for geography is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Good scheme of work in place.
- Much use made of local environment, making study more meaningful for the pupils.
- Assessment needs to focus on raising standards.
- Challenge and rigour is limited, especially for the higher-ability pupils.

### **Commentary**

78. Attainment is in line with the national expectations across both key stages. Pupils achieve a satisfactory standard of work but, despite different abilities being catered for in the planning, the higher-ability pupils do not always achieve to their full potential. Some work is not presented as well as it could be. The quality of teaching was satisfactory in Key Stages 1 and 2. Lessons were well planned and resourced and subject knowledge was good. The children had a positive attitude to their studies. Teachers did not always identify stringent use of deadlines and adapt their teaching to vary the pace in lessons. There was a strong emphasis on using interesting resources to make learning interesting. The subject leadership has been good. The school makes good use of the local environment to widen learning. Links with other subjects of the curriculum are developing well, including links with ICT and literacy, which are especially strong. The subject is adequately resourced and the coordinator has a clear idea of the way forward. Monitoring is taking place but is not often sharply focussed on standards.

## **CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS**

The overall provision is **satisfactory**.

79. During the inspection, samples of art and design and design and technology work were evaluated and lessons in physical education and music were observed. Inspection findings are similar to the last inspection.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Some samples of work are above average in art.
- Very effective links to other subjects.
- There is no subject co-ordinator in art.
- The subject co-ordinator for design and technology shows good leadership and also coordinates science, which helps to consolidate links between these subjects.
- The hall space is too small for physical education.
- Higher-ability pupils are not always challenged in musical activities.

### **Commentary**

80. No lessons were seen in art during the inspection, but some evidence was gathered from scrutiny of work and discussion with pupils. Some samples of older pupils' work around the school are above average standard. However, their understanding of the subject is less well developed than their practical skills, so overall standards in both key stages, are in line with expectations. The teaching of art and design is often effectively linked to other subjects. There is limited use of ICT. The previous co-ordinator established an effective scheme of work for teachers to use but the subject does not have a subject co-ordinator at the moment.

81. In design and technology pupils do specific tasks, such as design different mazes using many materials and complex joining mechanisms. The curriculum is not directly linked to the sequential improvement of skills and this is an aspect of the school's work identified for development in the future. Nonetheless, because of the links with subjects such as science, pupils have a good understanding of how things work and how they can improve their design ideas. Links with ICT are underdeveloped.

82. Two physical education lessons were observed, which focussed on dance and movement, with strong links to literacy. Both lessons were good, but pupils' were not able to really develop their ideas and skills due to the cramped space. As a consequence of this, pupils did not achieve their full potential. For example, in a Year 1 lesson 30 pupils had a hoop, but there was no space to move around the room and when one pupil made a very good suggestion of how to be a shark swimming around the boat, it was not possible for pupils to try this out. The wall bars are old and too close to the door to allow pupils to use them to develop more complex gymnastic sequences. The school has been in consultation with the Local Education Authority about this, but, as yet, no action has been taken to meet the needs of the pupils in this growing school.

## PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

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

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school has a well-established school's council.
- Links with community are strong.
- The school has a carefully thought through scheme of work.
- Relationship are very good, which help pupils to talk confidently about their ideas and concerns.

### Commentary

83. One lesson of personal, social and health education was seen and an inspector observed the school's council in a debate. Discussions were also held with staff and pupils.

84. Since the last inspection much work has been done to develop this aspect of pupils' learning. The school has comprehensive planning for the subject, which is both, linked to other subjects and taught in its own right. The school has strong links with the wider community in providing meaningful and interesting learning opportunities.

85. The school has given a high priority to pupils' personal development through involvement in special projects such as the *Nurture Programme* and *Think First* initiatives and its own personal, social, health and citizenship programme. Through these initiatives, all pupils have high quality opportunities to learn how to relate well to others, to listen, and to express their views and feelings clearly. As a result of the school's consistent guidance on making choices, pupils learn to do the right thing and to understand the consequences of the wrong choice. Their behaviour and personal qualities mature well, because the school fosters moral and social development very effectively. The development of the school council into a group with genuine influence and responsibility has made a significant, positive difference to pupils' involvement in school life, sense of community and to their growing maturity. The school has a carefully thought through programme for helping pupils to learn about the misuse of drugs and about sex education.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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