

## INSPECTION REPORT

### **BISCOVEY NURSERY AND INFANT SCHOOL**

Par

LEA area: Cornwall

Unique reference number: 111903

Headteacher: Mr Richard Hope-Pears

Lead inspector: Geoff Burgess

Dates of inspection: 8<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> March 2004

Inspection number: 255513

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Nursery and Infant

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 3 - 7

Gender of pupils: Mixed

Number on roll: 308

School address: Lamellyn Road  
Par  
Cornwall

Postcode: PL24 2DB

Telephone number: 01726 812006

Fax number: 01726 813436

Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs Maureen Loughlin

Date of previous inspection: November 1998

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This is a large community infant school with its own nursery and Hearing Support Unit situated next to its partner junior school overlooking the sea but on the edge of housing estates near St Austell. The number on roll has grown to over 300 in recent years with around 70 children attending the nursery part-time. Very few pupils have ethnic backgrounds other than British. The percentage of pupils who qualify for free school meals is roughly average but much work in this tourist area is seasonal and low paid, and household incomes are low. The percentage of pupils on the special needs register is average but the number with statements of special need is higher than usual with some of these pupils connected to the Hearing Support Unit. Most children who attend the school start part time in the nursery whilst others experience some form of pre-school education in their own communities. All children move into the reception classes in September. The overall attainment on entry has fallen to low levels in recent years especially in the area of speech and language where the majority of children have very limited language skills when they start school.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
23708	Geoff Burgess	Lead inspector	Areas of learning for children in the Foundation Stage, Information and communication technology, Physical education.
9487	Frances Hurd	Lay inspector	
22058	Christine Richardson	Team inspector	Mathematics, Art, Design and technology, Music, Personal, social and health education, Special Educational Needs including the Hearing Support Unit
22578	Gavin Jones	Team inspector	English, Science, Geography, History, Religious Education

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**This is a good, well run school with a very positive, inclusive ethos, which gives good value for money. It has many strengths in its pastoral care and in the quality of the education it provides.**

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Overall achievement is good.
- Most teaching is good and sometimes very good with nursery nurses and teaching assistants making a very good contribution to pupils' learning.
- The nursery and reception classes give children a very good start to their education.
- Provision for pupils with impaired hearing is very good.
- Too few pupils are achieving expected standards in reading and writing by the time they are seven years old.
- The buildings and grounds have been very well developed to provide a stimulating and well resourced learning environment for children to work and play in.
- Pupils behave and get on together very well and happily take on every responsibility they are offered from an early age. Staff make very good provision for pupils' personal development.
- The school takes very good care of all pupils and ensures that they are happy and able to do their best.

Since its last inspection, the school has made significant improvements to the learning environment inside and out, the personal standards achieved by its pupils, and the overall quality of provision for children in the nursery and reception (Foundation Stage). Standards in most subjects have been maintained and, although attainment in reading and writing has gone down, most pupils are still achieving well in each. Overall improvement is satisfactory.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
Reading	C	E	E	E
Writing	E	E	E	E
Mathematics	A	C	C	D

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

**Achievement is good.** Children in the nursery and the reception classes are achieving well especially in their physical, and personal and social development. Most will be achieving, or close to achieving, the goals children are expected to reach by the end of reception in all areas of learning except language, communication and literacy. Having started school with very limited communication skills, the majority of children will not have achieved these goals when they move into Year 1. Standards in Year 2 are average in mathematics, science, information and communication technology and most other subjects, but are well below average in speaking, reading and writing. Pupils are achieving well in Years 1 and 2 with relatively higher attainers, those with hearing loss, and those on the school's record of need, doing particularly well. Other pupils do well in most subjects but tend to struggle with aspects of the literacy strategy. Although the strategy has been much modified there is still room for further development. Very good provision for children's personal and social development from the nursery onwards has helped pupils to develop **very good attitudes to learning, values and behaviour.** Significant factors in this are the high quality learning

environment, the school's caring ethos, and the very good role model provided by all staff. Relationships and expectations for pupils' behaviour are excellent.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**Biscovey Nursery and Infant School provides a good quality of education. Teaching overall is good** with strengths in the Foundation Stage and in provision for pupils with varying degrees of hearing loss. Nursery nurses and teaching assistants make a very good contribution to learning in both these areas and in supporting pupils who find learning difficult. Very effective, low key behaviour management and excellent relationships are features of almost all lessons. Staff provide a good curriculum overall but sometimes, in Years 1 and 2, the activities in the national schemes of work are not relevant to the needs and interests of the majority of Biscovey pupils. The very good accommodation and resources available to the nursery and reception classes make it possible for the school to provide these children with a very good range of learning opportunities. Staff know all pupils very well, understand their needs and take very good care to ensure that they are safe and happy and able to do their best. The school makes good provision for promoting pupils' personal, social and health development and works very hard to support parents, involve them in their children's education, and keep them informed.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**The leadership and management of the school are good.** Most governors are new to the role, as is the chair. They are fully supportive, aware of the school's needs and committed to developing their understanding and expertise. **The governance of the school is satisfactory.** The head motivates and inspires staff to produce their best and has done a great deal to provide them with a high quality learning environment in which to work. Under his **good leadership**, teaching staff make a good contribution to the leadership of their areas of responsibility. Leadership of the Foundation Stage and for hearing impaired provision is very good. Very good teamwork is a feature of the management and organisation of the school and senior managers provide very good role models for their colleagues. There is effective day to day administration and financial management with well established procedures and systems.

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

Parents are very pleased with the school, especially the quality of teaching and the fact that their children enjoy their time at school. Despite the school's best efforts, some parents have reservations about the way they are consulted and their concerns are dealt with. Pupils are very happy with their school and particularly enjoy school dinners and their relationships with the adults who look after them.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

The most important thing the school should do to improve is to:

- Make the curriculum for the majority of pupils with limited communication skills in Years 1 and 2 more relevant to their needs using models of good quality children's speaking and writing to spur them on.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS**

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

#### **Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses**

**Achievement is good and by the age of seven, pupils' attainments in most subjects are at least close to average. However, in reading and writing standards are well below average.**

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

- Achievement is good throughout the school.
- Standards in speaking, reading and writing are well below those achieved in other subjects.
- Pupils being given extra support in their learning are making good progress.

#### **Commentary**

1. There has been a downward trend in national test results achieved by seven-year-olds in this school in reading and writing in recent years. Results in mathematics have held up much better and remain average, although only just. Although boys did a little better than girls in mathematics, they were well behind them in reading and writing in each of the last three years. The fact that in 2003 twenty per cent more boys than girls took the tests made disappointing overall results look even worse. Significantly however, the school's records show that the percentage of children, especially boys, with poor language and communication skills when they started school has increased greatly in recent years. By comparing results for individual pupils with their attainments when they started school, it can be seen that almost all boys achieved as well as girls over time with many showing good achievement.

#### ***Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 – average point scores in 2003***

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	14.5 (13.6)	15.7 (15.8)
Writing	12.6 (11.8)	14.6 (14.4)
Mathematics	16.1 (16.8)	16.3 (16.5)

*There were 82 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

2. Children in the nursery started school with their physical development up to the standard expected of three year olds, their language and communication skills well below and all other areas of learning below average. Good teaching in the nursery means that children are achieving well and by the time they move into the reception classes they are expected to be much better prepared to move across the stepping stones to their early learning goals especially in their personal and social development and physical development. Language and communications skills are improved but still lagging behind. Good progress in all areas of learning continues in each of the three age-based reception classes. Almost all children are already at, or close to, the early learning goals in their personal, social and physical development, but few are at this stage in their language and literacy skills. Continued very good provision in all three classes will see the majority of pupils close to achieving the early learning goals in their mathematical and creative development and in knowledge and understanding of the world by the time they move into Year 1.

3. Consistently good teaching and overall good achievement in Years 1 and 2 sees this pattern of standards repeated in the rest of the school. Current standards in reading and writing in Year 2 overall are well below average but pupils in the higher attaining classes in Years 1 and 2 are achieving very well. Many of these pupils are expected to reach higher literacy levels in national testing. Listening skills are good but, although pupils are constantly encouraged to talk and are willing to try, the limited speaking skills of the majority of pupils inhibit learning across the curriculum.



However, the practical nature of work in mathematics, science and information and communication technology (ICT) leads to many more pupils attaining expected standards in these subjects. In lessons observed in the arts, the humanities and religious education, pupils were seen to be working at expected levels, although recorded work in the humanities is unsurprisingly limited.

4. Pupils with special educational needs make good, and sometimes very good, progress towards the targets on their individual education plans, and very good progress in the development of self-esteem and confidence. The school makes good use of assessment information and observations to identify pupils' needs and set manageable and achievable targets. Children and pupils who are supported by the Hearing Support Unit make very good progress because of the very good teaching and specialist support they receive. However, the progress of those identified as being in need of specific help with their language and literacy skills but not on the school's record of need is not as good.

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

**Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good**, even better than at the last inspection. Attendance, however, is worse and is now poor despite the best efforts of the school. **The school's provision for pupils' personal development is very good.**

**Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children are treated with courtesy and respect from their earliest days in the school: they willingly accept the school's clear moral code and behave very well.
- Pupils carry out a wide range of simple responsibilities sensibly and carefully.
- The school provides a good range of cultural opportunities, including opportunities to learn about other cultures and non-Christian faiths.
- Expectations of pupils' conduct and the promotion of good relationships are excellent.

**Commentary**

5. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour were consistently impressive during the inspection. Even the children in the nursery move confidently around the classroom, co-operating well with each other despite their poor communication skills. Pupils tidy up sensibly when asked, and show considerable pride in their school and in their own achievements. They are extremely welcoming to visitors. All pupils have responsibilities within their classrooms, including answering internal phone calls: Year 2 pupils help organise the hall for assembly and at lunchtimes. Each class draws up its own rules, which everyone signs. Pupils enjoy being at school, and expect to find lessons interesting. The school has a strong sense of community, and much emphasis is placed on kindness and consideration with staff providing very good role models. Pupils spontaneously applaud each other's successes, and are concerned and caring when someone is hurt in the playground. They are encouraged to raise money for charities. Hearing impaired pupils are completely socially integrated with their peers, and sign language and electronic aids are well used in class and assemblies to ensure these pupils can participate fully. Lively displays on every wall show pupils' enjoyment of art: examples from European and other cultures are used in teaching. The same is true of music and religious education. Pupils are given opportunities for reflection and individual investigation of the world around them.

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

Authorised absence	
School data	6.7
National data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	
School data	1.3
National data	0.5

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

6. The above table shows that some pupils miss too much school. Most parents work, a high proportion of them involved in shift-work. Most local employment is low-paid and linked to tourism, which makes it difficult for families to go away during school holidays. Although the school makes good efforts to promote the importance of attendance, it is handicapped by difficulties in contacting parents. Every effort is made to establish the cause of pupil absence on the first day of its occurrence and the school works closely with the education welfare service.

**Ethnic background of pupils**

**Exclusions in the last school year**

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	306	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	2	0	0

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

**QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL**

**The school provides a good quality of education.**

**Teaching and learning**

**Teaching is good throughout the school.** Learning is usually good, but is sometimes inhibited by limited speaking and literacy skills.

**Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Consistently good teaching is making it possible for all pupils to achieve well.
- Good preparation, very good class management, and very well established and understood expectations for behaviour and ways of working make it possible for pupils to learn well.
- Teaching assistants make a strong contribution to learning.

**Commentary**

7. At the time of the last inspection teaching was said to be ‘good overall, with very little unsatisfactory teaching and ‘around a third’ very good’. The table below shows that good teaching has been sustained with even more good lessons observed. Strengths in 1998 were in pupil management and the good use made of support staff. They still are.

**Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 40 lessons**

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	3 (7.5%)	32 (80%)	5 (12.5%)	0	0	0

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

8. Good teaching in the nursery is a team effort with all adults contributing towards providing young children with a learning environment and activities that make a good contribution to achievement in all areas of learning. A very good mix of well understood routines and established activities such as 'Tuck Time' and water play, with adults sometimes leading and sometimes working alongside children, make it possible for children to be active independent learners, taking a lot of responsibility for their learning in a structured environment. In addition, focused activities with groups of children taking turns to work with an adult provide opportunities for specific skills to be taught. Children work and play happily whatever the activity and skilful interventions by staff focus learning on the chosen objectives.

9. All teaching in the reception classes is good with some very good. As with all lessons in the main school, common features are:

- Very high expectations for behaviour so that no time at all is lost in managing misbehaviour;
- All adults have very good, trusting relationships with pupils who are happy and confident;
- The very good contribution to learning made by teaching assistants, notably when supporting pupils who for various reasons need extra help;
- Good awareness by teachers and teaching assistants of the needs of individuals;
- Good preparation and management of planned activities;
- Learning is sometimes inhibited by the difficulty many pupils have in responding orally even when they are fully engaged with the activity.

Good examples of all these features were observed in reception lessons ranging from literacy work based on phonics to apparatus work in the hall. In the very good lessons the activities involved, which included making Cornish Pasties, testing fabrics and using helium balloons to make Teddy fly, stimulated children to be even more enthused about their learning.

10. The great majority of lessons in Years 1 and 2 were good with the rest satisfactory. While almost all lessons contained all the strong features noted above, satisfactory lessons usually involved activities that did not really match the needs or the interests of the pupils in the class. This was especially the case with classes made up of lower attaining pupils where, in addition, limited speaking and literacy skills constrained pupils' responses.

11. Teachers and teaching assistants plan very carefully for pupils with special educational needs and monitor targets and progress equally carefully. Detailed records of teaching assistants' work with pupils are shared with the teachers and special needs co-ordinator on a regular basis. Specialist teachers and teaching assistants attached to the Hearing Support Unit plan very precisely for children with hearing impairment to ensure that they have full access to the curriculum and the level of support they require to meet their very specific needs. Hearing Support Unit staff check hearing aids regularly and make it possible for pupils to join in lessons by ensuring appropriate communication support is available. Pupils have additional preparation for lessons such as science and religious education using high quality materials made by staff.

## **The curriculum**

**The curriculum offered by the school is good overall with strengths in the Foundation Stage.**

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Very good accommodation and resources in the nursery and reception classes are significant factors in the ability of the staff to provide a very good range of learning opportunities.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good; and very good provision for pupils with impaired hearing ensures that they are able to join in with all the school has to offer.
- The school prepares its pupils very well for each stage of education.
- Some activities based on national guidance are not relevant enough to the needs of most pupils.

### **Commentary**

12. The very well planned curriculum in place for children in the Foundation Stage fully reflects all the areas of learning and provides a good balance between directed and self-initiated tasks. It is enriched by a variety of special events and visitors which included a mother and baby during the inspection. The space and facilities provided for the nursery and reception classes inside and out play a significant part in creating a very stimulating environment for the youngest children to work and play in. As a result children make good, and often very good, progress and achieve well right across all areas of learning.

13. The curriculum for the rest of the school is good which is an improvement since the last inspection. All subjects of the National Curriculum are provided with schemes of work and good levels of planning for all subjects. Planning tends to be on a year group basis, with individual teachers adjusting the work to suit their particular classes. Since the last inspection, the school has further developed its work in literacy and numeracy. The latter is currently the more effective, as its approach is more practical, interesting and relevant to the pupils. The same reservations can be made about work in other subjects which, although following national guidance, do not sufficiently meet the current needs of the pupils involved. A minor weakness of the curriculum, of which the school is aware, is the underuse of the very good information and communication technology resources to enhance learning in other subjects.

14. Provision for pupils with special educational needs and the level of inclusion in lessons and the life of the school are good. This is similar to the previous inspection. Most activities provided are relevant to the needs of pupils who find learning difficult. However, the school has recently identified the speech and language needs of a significant number of young children as a cause for concern and is anxious to develop relevant provision for these children as soon as possible. Teachers are developing use of the valuable multi-sensory room and beneficial activities such as Brain Gym and Write Dance as innovations designed to better meet the needs of the children who attend the school.

15. Specialist provision for pupils with hearing impairment is very good. Pupils and young children have their specific needs met very effectively and benefit greatly from their inclusion in main school activities. All pupils in the main school have the opportunity to learn sign language to help them to communicate with the hearing impaired pupils and this contributes to the high quality of inclusion in the school.

16. The school takes very seriously the way in which it prepares its pupils for each stage of education under its control. Before children start school there is a very good programme of home visits, visits to school, time in classes and a gradual entry for the youngest pupils to school life. At each stage when children move from the nursery to the Foundation Stage and from there to Years 1 and 2, teachers discuss pupils in great detail and keep good notes on the progress they are making. This helps children settle well and no time is wasted. Again, transfer to the adjacent junior school is very good and teachers liaise on a number of levels to the benefit of the pupils.

17. Over the recent past, the headteacher and the school handyman have transformed much of the building in order to make it a better learning environment and to make best use of all available space. They have succeeded in this and the school now has a computer suite, multi-sensory room, libraries, a before and after school club room, its own kitchen providing good quality meals, a toy library and a number of other rooms and spaces available for small group activities. All of these are very well resourced and play a significant part in providing children with a rich range of learning opportunities. Well qualified and experienced support staff significantly improve the learning environment in all classes, notably in the nursery, and in supporting pupils who need extra help.

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

**The school provides all children with very good support and guidance, ensuring that they are safe and secure. It makes satisfactory efforts to seek and act on children's views.**

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils' progress is closely monitored with very effective procedures used to identify areas of weakness.
- Very thorough procedures ensure the health and safety of all members of the school.
- The school's multitalented handyman provides a rapid response to any perceived hazards, and ensures high standards of security are maintained.

## **Commentary**

18. As at the last inspection, provision for the health and safety of all is very good. New fencing and entrance arrangements have greatly improved site security, but the school is still affected by vandalism out of school hours. Recently installed close circuit television may solve this problem. Most staff have basic first aid training, and special training has been given when necessary to support children with specific medical problems. The adoption of a system of very complex risk assessments provided by the local education authority has not led to any marked improvement in the school's existing high standards in this area. Equipment is regularly checked for safety, and any sudden hazards (such as a broken window) are efficiently dealt with by the handyman.

19. Teachers and learning support staff know the pupils and their families very well. They are sensitive to their needs which enables them to provide very good support and guidance. Very good relationships between pupils and staff encourage pupils to raise any concerns they may have, knowing they will be dealt with sympathetically. This helps pupils grow in confidence and self-esteem. Very good records of pupils' personal development kept by teaching assistants support teachers' records very effectively.

20. Good assessment procedures are well used by teachers to match work to pupils' needs. Teachers track the progress and personal development of all pupils, including those with special educational needs, well and this contributes to the good achievement of pupils. Targets set and reviewed regularly help staff and pupils maintain a clear focus on raising attainment. Members of the Hearing Support Unit track the progress of pupils with hearing impairment very effectively.

21. Pupils readily turn to staff for help with any problems they may have. When asked what they liked about their school, Year 2 children said they felt 'safe and happy'. Although there is no school council, pupils are encouraged to put forward suggestions which they think would improve school life. Teachers make good use of simple voting techniques in lessons.

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

**The school has a good partnership with parents overall and good links with the community and with other educational establishments.**

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The school makes every effort to get to know the parents, carers and families of its pupils, and tries hard to get them involved in school life.
- Any complaints or problems are quickly dealt with and feedback to parents is of high quality.
- Information for parents is not always presented in an easily comprehensible form.
- A significant proportion of parents make little or no effort to support their children's learning, particularly their literacy and communication skills. Few parents help in school.

## **Commentary**

22. Parents are very pleased with the school. They feel that their children enjoy it, are well taught, and are helped to settle in quickly when they first start. Some feel that their views are not sufficiently sought, and that they do not have enough information about their children's progress. Pupils' annual reports give a lot of information about what each child has done but not really what this means. For instance, they do not indicate whether pupils are performing at, above or below the expected standard for their age group, or include suggestions of ways in which parents could help their children improve. Targets are often couched in language ('continue to blend phonemes to read words containing consonant clumps') which will not be understood by most parents. However, pertinent and individual comments on pupils' personal development reflect teachers' good knowledge of their pupils. Parents whose children are experiencing difficulties of any kind in school life are given very detailed feedback and much support by staff. Information about planned events is clear and

helpful, although some parents would like to have a regular newsletter. The prospectus and governors' report fulfil statutory requirements and give much information.

23. No extended services or educational support programmes were running during the inspection, but those that ran in 2003 met identified needs well and on the evidence provided were of at least satisfactory quality. The school will again be running courses to show parents how to support pupils' learning from next term. It is to the school's great credit that several parents gained employment helped by National Vocational Qualifications courses run last year. The school uses questionnaires to gauge parents' opinions and has tried repeatedly to establish a parents' organisation without success. Social and fundraising events are organised by staff, some of whom happen to be parents. The number of parents available to help in school or on off site visits has fallen steadily since the previous inspection. Pupils' reading records show that many parents rarely hear their children read or ensure that they do other homework. However, a demonstration maths lesson taken by the Foundation Stage leader during the inspection was very well supported and much enjoyed and a small number of nursery parents had a good time making hand and footprints with their children at the beginning of the day.

24. The school invites local elderly people to share their life experiences and join in special events, local artists and musicians visit, as well as the emergency services. Several local community groups use the hall. The school works very closely with the junior school that shares its site and well established transition arrangements ensure pupils move with the minimum of disruption. Fowey Community College has provided specialist teaching and the school co-operates with other local primary schools over shared curriculum events and in-service training.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**The leadership and management of the school are good. Consistently good leadership by the head over the years and good management involving the whole staff has made this a successful school. The governing body makes a satisfactory contribution to the governance of the school.**

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The head, well supported by the deputy head, provides vision and a sense of educational ambition and involves the whole school community in the decision making process.
- The support of teams of colleagues for all leaders and managers helps them to make a good contribution in their areas of responsibility.
- A continuing programme for the improvement and development of the accommodation and of the services the school provides has been very well managed.
- Relationships and communications within the school community are very good.

### **Commentary**

25. The last report said that good leadership and management 'were effective in promoting school improvement and in providing a high quality learning environment'. Inspectors noted a shared sense of purpose and a happy friendly environment. This is still the case and with a largely stable staff in the intervening years, systems and procedures have been built up which support the school's inclusive ethos and make it possible for everyone to be involved in its management and improvement. With the head, well supported by the deputy, providing the vision, motivation and encouragement, teamwork is very much the key to the way the school operates. A very good example of this is the nursery which functions very well thanks to the efforts of the nursery team managed by the deputy head. Other good examples are the curricular 'units' which ensure that all co-ordinators have the support of colleagues in their work, and the Hearing Support Unit. Very good relationships, open communications and very efficient administrative support all help to ensure that the school runs smoothly.

26. At the time of the last inspection, most of the governors had been appointed 'within the last year' which limited the contribution they could make to the school although they were keen and committed. Much the same could be said about the current governing body and about other governing bodies in the intervening years. In addition, two experienced governors had to resign both as governors and as chair last year, leaving the governing body even shorter of expertise and experience. Despite this, the current governing body has done, and continues to do, all it can to support the school. The head keeps governors well informed and they are as involved in all the school's activities as time allows. Several are regular visitors and all have been involved in preparations for the inspection. However, lack of continuity, expertise and in some cases confidence means that the governing body has not been in a position to make the sort of contribution to the development of the school which every governor would wish to.

27. A strength of the leadership and management has been the way best use has been made of available accommodation, resources and expertise to enhance the school's environment and the services it offers. By these means, the school does all it can to ensure good value for money in all it does. Good examples of this use of enterprise and imagination have been:

- The conversion of the old swimming pool area to provide a home for the 'Bizzy Bees' out of school time club and 'Mini Bees' wrap around care for three-year-olds;
- The creation of the computer suite, the multi-sensory room and the story book library from underused spaces;
- The excellent work of the school's handyman in creating made to measure equipment, in evidence all around the school;
- The very popular decision for the school to run its own kitchens and healthy tuck shop.

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

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	605729
Total expenditure	581041
Expenditure per pupil	1997

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	94260
Balance carried forward to the next	118948

28. An even more ambitious project is in hand to develop the courtyard area in the middle of the school which explains the large balance carried forward noted above, more than half of which is earmarked with the local authority for this work.

29. All aspects of support for pupils who need extra help, including the Hearing Support Unit, are very well managed. The efficient and knowledgeable special needs co-ordinator works hard to ensure that the needs of identified mainstream pupils are met well. The school uses its funding carefully to ensure that there are sufficient resources to meet pupils' needs and provide opportunities for relevant training for teachers and teaching assistants. Hearing Support Unit staff provide high quality support for pupils with hearing impairment. They manage their time very well so that pupils have specific support for their individual needs when required and are supported appropriately when included in the main school activities.

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

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

**Provision in the nursery and reception classes is very good and children are achieving well.**

30. The school has a nursery and three reception classes arranged by age so that summer born children are in one class, spring born in another with the oldest children in the third. Children attend the nursery either in the morning or the afternoon from the September after their third birthday. Almost all then move into the three reception classes in the following September along with a small number who attend other pre-school groups. Good induction procedures ensure that the transition into school is achieved smoothly and all staff involved in the Foundation Stage work closely together as a team. The nursery accommodation is very spacious and the classrooms for two of the reception classes are good but the youngest reception class has a small stand-alone classroom without easy access to the very good outside facilities for the Foundation Stage. With easy access to all the other facilities and resources in the school such as the hall, the computer suite and the sensory room, the overall facilities available to the Foundation Stage are very good. The nursery is very well managed by the deputy head as leader of the whole Foundation Stage but, unusually, all teaching duties are carried out by three very competent nursery nurses and a teaching assistant. This arrangement works very well.

31. At the time of the last inspection, children in the nursery and the reception classes were said to be making good progress. However, having started school with 'a majority of children well below national expectations', many were not expected to achieve the early learning goals before they moved into Year 1. The school's records show that attainment on intake has been even lower in recent years, notably in communications and language. Teaching is never less than good in the nursery and in the reception classes, with teaching assistants making a very good contribution to children's learning. Achievement is very good in children's personal, social and emotional development and in their physical development, and good in the other areas of learning.

### **PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

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

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

- Work and play in all areas of learning, and day to day procedures, are used to support personal development.
- Staff provide very good role models and clear guidance for boys and girls to follow so they understand what is expected of them.
- Everything is done to make children feel secure, happy and confident in school and they respond positively and relate very well to the adults who help them.

#### **Commentary**

32. Records show that children are less advanced than usual in their personal and social development when they start in the nursery. However, very good provision in this area has seen almost all children in the nursery already progress to a stage where they are expected to achieve these early learning goals well before they move into Year 1. A very good example of their developing social skills is shown at 'Tuck Time' when children very sensibly take responsibility for their own tuck and drink and, skilfully prompted and managed, really enjoy the social occasion this has become, chatting with their classmates. Children put things out and tidy them away without being prompted and work equally happily with an adult or, by choice, for long periods on their own on chosen activities such as water play or on the computer.



33. The good work in the nursery is very well built upon in the reception classes where children understand all the routines very well, settle to tasks with little fuss and behave very sensibly. Some direct teaching in this area takes place in circle time and each class, including the nursery, has a set of class rules. These were seen to be applied when a teaching assistant reminded a child when a minor dispute arose that she had 'signed' the class rule 'We must share'. Another telling moment came when a child led the prayer at the end of the morning. More usually it was clear that teachers and teaching assistants were addressing social and emotional needs alongside the main focus of their teaching. An important factor in the mature way children in the reception classes work and behave is the very good role model provided by older pupils in the school in assemblies, at lunchtime and around the school. A very good example of this came in a story session when a five year old jumped up to answer the class telephone and very sensibly called over the teaching assistant to take the call.

## **COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teachers and teaching assistants take every opportunity to develop children's language skills.
- Few children engage in spontaneous conversations unless prompted by an adult and responses are often one word, or a series of words rather than sentences.

### **Commentary**

34. As noted previously, children's speech and language development when children enter the nursery is well below that usually observed. The school has been aware of this for some time and the development of this area is the key priority in the nursery and the reception classes. This is evident in both year groups in the importance all staff place on encouraging talk no matter what activity is taking place. Nursery nurses take any opportunity to work alongside children whether threading cotton reels or mixing batter, drawing out responses and extending vocabulary. Teachers give children in the reception classes plenty of opportunity to respond and discuss in taught activities as well as use their language skills in play situations. A good indication of the nature of the difficulties children have with language came when children who had great difficulty talking about the story they so obviously enjoyed quite happily sang or recited rhymes and songs they knew on their own in front of the rest of the class.

35. Some evidence of developing literacy skills was seen in the nursery with children identifying their names on cards (with the help of a picture) when they self-registered. Most children in the reception classes recognise their own names and can write them independently while some still need to copy them from name cards. They hold the pencil correctly and are beginning to form the letters correctly. Most can identify at least some initial sounds and some older children can build up simple words. However, an activity in which children had to match the letters 'm' and 'b' to pictures of objects beginning with these letters showed that a significant minority have not reached this stage yet. Few are writing at all independently although several will happily copy sentences scribed by the adults working with them. Relatively few children are expected to achieve the early learning goals in this area whilst in reception.

## **MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT**

**Provision in mathematical development is very good.**

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children experience number and shape in a very good range of practical activities.

- Starting from a low base, most children are expected to achieve, or be close to achieving, the early learning goals by the end of their reception year.

### **Commentary**

36. Children's mathematical development in the reception classes is broadly as expected with most children able to count, recognise and write numbers up to 10 and match one to one. Older children are able to use larger numbers and add and take away by counting. They all know simple shapes and can talk about their properties such as a triangle has three sides. Mathematical development is well promoted through structured teaching by the class teachers and the teaching assistants and through exposure to activities that encourage mathematical thinking. These include playing with maths games on the tabletop and on the computer, making repeating Islamic patterns using two colours and identifying solid shapes hidden in the sand. Very good taught sessions included, for younger children, a counting on exercise where the class counted, wide eyed, how many helium balloons it would take to make Teddy 'fly'. Older children made good use of number rhymes to practise counting on and back to 20.

37. Constructive mathematical displays and numbers feature in all classrooms including the nursery where large colourful displays encourage children to sort shapes and count the spots on the backs of ladybirds. Counting rhymes are well used in the nursery to familiarise young children with the order of numbers up to five, and activities such as putting out the plates and cutlery are used to talk about and practise one to one correspondence and sorting.

## **KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- A range of interesting activities is planned to promote learning in this area.
- All children have structured opportunities to learn how to access and use computers.

### **Commentary**

38. Regular routines make a strong contribution in this area both in the nursery and in the reception classes. Children are steadily gaining an awareness of the passage of time when they carry out daily routines that involve identifying the days of the week, discussing the weather and learning vocabulary such as today, yesterday and tomorrow. Children are familiar with their immediate environment and confident about finding their way around the school. Boys and girls have regular opportunities to create their own models and structures with construction kits and recyclable materials. They are successfully learning how to use small tools such as scissors and glue safely and effectively. Computers are in regular use and children are beginning to be able to play simple games with good control.

39. In the reception classes this is supplemented by a rich range of very relevant activities usually following a theme. For instance, in a very Cornish lesson soon after St Pirin's Day, the teacher made good use of a digital projector to show children what it was like down a tin mine. This was followed by a very hands-on session making pasties with all adults pointedly drawing out spoken responses as children worked. Others made their own glittery 'tin ore' or role played in the 'Biscovey Tin Mine' with torches and clip boards. In another lesson, children gained another insight into the passage of time sorting out several pairs of shoes owned by the same person at different times in their childhood. Relevant topics from the locally agreed religious education syllabus are taught discretely as was demonstrated by a lesson based on a child's birthday on special occasions.

## **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

**Provision in physical development is very good.**

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching in structured lessons in the hall is good and children achieve very well.
- Ample small equipment is available for boys and girls to practise their fine motor skills.
- The secure outside area provides a good space for children to move and play.

### **Commentary**

40. This is an area in which most children do very well. Resources for the development of children's physical capabilities in the nursery are excellent. The ample indoor and outdoor space and the ready availability of good quality equipment make it possible for children to develop their innate abilities rapidly when in school and at the time of the inspection, most were already well on the way to the early learning goals in this area. Boys and girls are given plenty of opportunities to practise their fine motor skills whilst involved in activities such as construction play, cutting and sticking, painting, play writing and using the computer. Most are very adept at all these skills although not all hold pencils correctly yet. The confidence and expertise of children working in the outside play area is a joy to see.

41. All of these areas of provision are continued into the reception classes with the addition of more formal physical education lessons in the school hall. In one, children worked with large balls initially rolling and 'catching', moving on to throwing and catching in pairs, then in teams. With plenty of practice and a little coaching almost all successfully completed a series of catches. In another, making use of all the equipment and apparatus, very confident and agile children moved with real control around and over equipment showing performance levels well ahead of their years. Some of the sequences performed for the rest of the class would have been good for much older pupils.

## **CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

**Provision in creative development is very good.**

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Well set up role play areas give children the opportunity to use their imagination.
- On going activities and taught topics provide children with very good learning opportunities.

### **Commentary**

42. Boys and girls in the nursery and the reception classes make good progress in the development of their creativity with many very well organised times provided for them to play imaginatively such as in a surgery or in a tin mine. Three year olds in the nursery thoroughly enjoy their two-story play house and happily involve visitors in their play. Teachers often use role-play to reinforce learning in areas such as language and literacy. Children respond with obvious pleasure to music playing percussion instruments, marching to different rhythms and singing enthusiastically in class and in assemblies. Creative activities such as painting and modelling with clay and dough are a feature of daily activities. Children are encouraged to experiment with paint and are well introduced to other techniques such as making a cut out car with wheels that go round and making sparkling prints. Children in the nursery had a great time with their parents and younger brothers and sisters

making hand and foot prints at the beginning of the day. All children's efforts are valued with many attractive displays celebrating their work.

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

### **ENGLISH**

**Provision in English is satisfactory.**

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

- More able pupils are attaining expected standards and achieve very well.
- Pupils with identified special educational needs achieve well as they receive good support.
- Standards achieved in speaking, reading and writing are well below average overall.
- Regular guided reading sessions are helping raise standards in reading but not enough time is devoted to writing for its own sake.

#### **Commentary**

43. Very many children enter the school with language and literacy skills well below those expected for their age. Over recent years, this situation has deteriorated. By the time pupils take their National Curriculum tests, results are well below average. This is below the levels noted at the last inspection. However, within this overall assessment, almost two-thirds of pupils did reach the expected level in 2003 in reading and just over a half in writing. These pupils come almost exclusively from the top band in Year 2, although one or two pupils from the other two classes reach this level. Achievement for pupils who reach the expected level is very good bearing in mind their low starting point. For pupils who reach the level below, achievement is good. However, about ten per cent of pupils make little progress over time and their achievement is barely adequate.

44. In spite of overall good teaching, maintained since the last inspection, the school finds it difficult to raise standards. In the seven English lessons seen, six were good and one was satisfactory. This profile of teaching helps the vast majority of pupils to achieve well, even though in some good lessons, learning was only satisfactory. Strengths noted in teaching were the good levels of questioning to probe pupils' understanding and to give good opportunities for speaking and listening skills to be improved. Basic skills are taught well, but pupils do not retain knowledge and understanding easily. Less successful is teachers' use of information and communication technology (ICT) to involve and interest boys especially in the writing process.

45. Overall the rigid adherence to the strategies and content of the National Literacy Strategy is not relevant enough to many of the pupils. It provides them with too many 'bits and pieces' of information to absorb and retain. There is a need for the school to be even more innovative and develop an English curriculum which addresses the problems experienced by the majority of its pupils. This could be done in the same way that the school has customised its mathematics curriculum by providing pupils with strategies for coping with the problems they currently encounter especially when writing. Pupils do not have regular opportunities to write freely for extended periods in the same way that the school invests time in guided reading activities outside the literacy hour. These are noted for a wide range of practical and fun activities, which are closely monitored by teachers, giving pupils daily reading opportunities. As a result reading standards are gradually improving. Overall the management of the subject is judged as satisfactory reflecting strengths and some areas for improvement.

46. Some lower attaining pupils in Year 1, working on appropriate material for pupils of their age, require some elements from the Foundation Stage in order to consolidate their learning in language and literacy skills. At the same time, boys, who are underachieving more than the girls, could be more attracted to writing if they were to be offered more, and different, opportunities involving the use

of ICT. At the other end of the scale, without good role models, more able pupils are not fully aware of what they might be able to achieve or of the various levels open to them. These pupils would benefit from understanding better what they need to do to improve on a daily basis by using national level descriptors in a language they can understand.

47. Pupils with identified special educational needs associated with language acquisition and speech make good progress at their own level. However, a further group of pupils whose needs have been identified but not officially recorded do not benefit from similar attention. Whilst the school is aware of their needs, it disadvantages itself by not openly acknowledging them, so that individual needs and the school's overall difficulties might be recognised more widely.

### **Language and literacy across the curriculum**

48. Pupils have good opportunities to use their limited literacy skills in work seen in geography, history and religious education. However, more could be done to encourage pupils to write at length in science. Opportunities to use ICT to promote writing have not yet been examined fully.

## **MATHEMATICS**

**Provision in mathematics is good.**

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils achieve well and standards are close to average by the end of Year 2 because teachers have adapted the National Numeracy Strategy well to meet their needs.
- The emphasis on practical activities helps pupils to extend their understanding of mathematical ideas.
- Consistent use of mathematical language makes a strong contribution to understanding.
- Assessment data is analysed effectively to raise standards in aspects of mathematics.

### **Commentary**

49. Since the last inspection there has been a dip in standards but they are now very similar to those at the last inspection. The school has worked hard to provide an effective curriculum for the increasing number of pupils who have made good progress but not achieved the expected levels in mathematics by the end of the reception year. Teachers make good use of Foundation Stage planning to ensure that lower attaining pupils have further experience of the essential early stages of learning mathematics. When pupils are able to do so they follow the numeracy strategy. As a result all pupils are achieving well. With good support from teachers and teaching assistants, pupils with hearing impairment or special educational needs achieve well and often very well. Higher attaining pupils are grouped together in one class in each year group and, with their work pitched at an appropriately high level, they achieve well.

50. A strong feature of the lessons seen was that pupils were involved in their learning through interesting, practical activities. For example, pupils walked to take up positions to show how many wanted jam or chocolate spread in brown or white bread sandwiches at a party they were planning. They moved thoughtfully into four groups. This physical movement reinforced their understanding of the four different categories that they had chosen well and helped them agree at the end of the lesson that they had solved their problem. A group of higher attaining Year 1 pupils used real money to carry out shopping activities. By the end of the lesson their understanding of coins worth amounts up to 50p was much improved. Pupils' behaviour and attitudes in lessons are very good because this is expected of them and their tasks are interesting and fun.

51. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers are aware of the mathematical vocabulary needed for each lesson. They introduce new words precisely and regularly check pupils' understanding by probing questions. Teachers show sensitivity when they ask lower attaining pupils questions which

they can answer, and challenge higher attaining pupils with more complex questions. They make simple tasks interesting and plan good links with other subjects. A Year 2 class needed more opportunities to develop their understanding of natural and man-made materials. These were used very effectively in a sorting lesson and the discussion within groups demonstrated what a beneficial exercise this had been both mathematically and scientifically.

52. The school maintains good liaison with the mathematics advisor and information gained from analysis of assessments is used well to give a clear focus to teaching. For example, the school identified a need to improve understanding of subtraction and money problems. Staff have these aspects in their targets and include work to reinforce them in most lessons, including registration when pupils work out how many dinners are required that day. The subject is led and managed well.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

53. Numeracy has been developed effectively in other subjects. Mathematical skills are used in science for measuring and producing pictograms. Construction materials are used to make shapes in design and technology, and counting skills are used in music. Pupils count how many pages are left when they are reading, and talk about long, short, big and little books.

## **SCIENCE**

**Provision in science is good.**

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Achievement in science is good and standards in Year 2 are average.
- Good teaching has a very positive effect on standards.
- Links with literacy skills are not as clear as they might be, especially for the more able pupils.

### **Commentary**

54. Standards reached by pupils at the end of Year 2 are in line with national expectations. This is an improvement since the last inspection and shows that pupils are achieving well, with a substantial minority of pupils achieving very well. Children enter school with below and sometimes well below average knowledge and understanding of the world, yet achieve national standards by the end of Year 2. This is mainly as a result of good teaching and the good attitudes shown to the subject. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in learning and achieve well in relation to their well below average starting point.

55. In the two lessons seen and in the scrutiny of previously completed work, it is clear that teaching is consistently good, especially in Year 2. The elements of teaching which have a very positive effect on pupils' learning are that lessons are made interesting and fun. Pupils in Year 2 were being asked to pretend to be different wild animals in order to see how important diet is to everyone. The questioning skills of teachers are of a high standard. In a Year 1 lesson, the teacher and her assistants posed a range of questions, which not only probed pupils' understanding but equally provided pupils with good knowledge and understanding as they looked at plants that can be eaten. Very good opportunities are given to pupils to improve their speaking and listening skills and pupils are encouraged and motivated by the good range of resources.

56. A minor weakness in the current work is that the system for recording investigations tends to have limitations for pupils who already have reasonable writing skills. A clearer writing frame, which encourages rather more extended use of literacy skills, would improve the quality of these pupils' investigations and of their writing. At the same time, more use could be made of information and communication technology within science. Not enough opportunities exist for pupils to follow lines of enquiry or to write using their computer skills.

57. The co-ordinator understands the strengths and weaknesses in the subject and is currently trying out a system of assessment, which is needed in order to check more carefully the progress pupils make and the standards they reach. She is developing the subject well and continues to be successful in maintaining standards, in spite of low attainment on entry to the school.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The school is well equipped for the teaching of ICT and teachers are well qualified.
- Pupils thoroughly enjoy working with computers and are confident using them.
- Not enough use is made of ICT in other subjects.
- The school is not monitoring the progress of individual pupils in specific ICT skills and understanding.

### **Commentary**

58. Standards in ICT were 'above average' when the school was last inspected in 1998. The provision of the computer suite and the adoption of the national scheme of work, along with the training that accompanied it, have seen improvements in standards. However, more is now expected of pupils of all ages and the standards observed now meet the current expectations for pupils in Years 1 and 2. During the inspection, pupils in both year groups showed they were competent in logging on and setting up the computer and accessing the programs being used. All used the mouse and the keyboard confidently to make selections and move around the screen, and most were happy to have a go at completing the tasks set. However, a minority of pupils were much less sure and needed help from adults or other pupils at most stages of the process.

59. Pupils in Year 1 used a simple word processing program to 'write' labels for relatives and friends, usually by selecting from a list ready for printing. Most accomplished the task successfully but some lower attainers had trouble actually finding the appropriate word (such as sister) from the list. Year 2 pupils were making a label for their homework book using a publishing program as used by adults. Most confidently created a text box, dragging it to fit, entered text and showed they knew how to change the font and the colour. Some pupils needed help and this was provided competently by the teacher and the teaching assistant.

60. Activity levels in ICT are good but there is scope for even more use to be made of the very good facilities as noted below. At the moment, the school does not have a means of monitoring how well individual pupils are achieving in ICT or of identifying trends in performance.

### **Information and communication technology across the curriculum**

61. Pupils use computers in art to make pictures and patterns that they display effectively in classrooms, but not enough examples in pupils' work show evidence of pupils using ICT skills to research or present elements of other subjects. Given the school's priority for improving writing, much more use could be made of the computer suite to enable less confident writers to put down and present their work in ways which motivate and please them.

## **HUMANITIES**

62. As only one lesson of **geography** was seen in Year 1 and one lesson of **history** in Year 2, it is not possible to make judgements on the overall provision in these subjects. However, previously completed work sampled during the inspection, gives an indication that work is close to the expected standards for pupils of this age group.

63. The work is planned in units, which are taught over the year and relate closely to the nationally recommended scheme of work. However, on occasions the work is not as relevant as it might be to pupils in the school. For example, studies of favourite toys working towards looking at toys from the past and looking at routes to school and holiday destinations, are both close to the pupils' understanding. However, work in studying aspects of the life of Florence Nightingale is so far removed from pupils' understanding that it could mean little and adds less to pupils' overall knowledge and understanding. As long as the skills of research and the abilities to understand chronology and to be able to use different sources of information are maintained, then the choice of topics can be made to have more relevance to the pupils.

64. In the history lesson seen, the pupils had previously seen a member of the support staff working in character, recounting details of life at the time of Florence Nightingale. The class teacher tried hard to maintain momentum by dressing in the style of the times and providing artefacts. However, even then the pace was slow and learning was just satisfactory. The theme was much more attuned to the lives of the pupils in a Year 1 lesson where the teacher was showing how different parts of the world had vastly different weather. To do this she was packing clothes into two different suitcases so that the young pupils could see what the differences in climate would mean to people who visited or lived there. A great deal of language work ensued and pupils were engaged and interested throughout the lesson.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

**Provision in religious education is currently satisfactory and steadily improving.**

### **Strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils achieve well in their work and most reach the standards expected by the locally agreed syllabus.
- The teaching of religious education is good.
- Good coverage of multi-faith issues supports pupils' multicultural development.

### **Commentary**

65. Standards of work are in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus largely as a result of effective teaching across the school. Pupils achieve well bearing in mind that for many language and literacy skills are well below average when they enter the school. In lessons their progress is sometimes good, although sometimes, even though teaching is good, the progress made is only satisfactory, especially when writing is involved. When pupils with special educational needs receive close support, their achievement is good. However when individual support is not available, their progress is very limited.

66. In Year 2, pupils were re-enacting a Hindu wedding, which was conducted with dignity, and carefully followed the pattern of the ceremony. The visual nature of the lesson gave pupils a clear picture of the wedding and allowed them to make comparisons with Christian weddings they had attended. Several girls were able to recount their times as bridesmaids and say how they felt the two services were different. Again, in a Year 1 lesson, pupils were discussing the importance of the Bible to Christians and looking at an important story from the Bible. Pupils already knew that the Bible was 'about Jesus' and guessed that the New Testament told stories about Him. They were enthralled by the story about David and Goliath and answered questions about the story well. Collective worship often makes reference to Bible stories and to God or Jesus. This helps confirm some of the work carried out in class and shows wider links between the work in religious education and the lives of pupils.

67. The analysis of previously completed work showed that a good range of topics had been covered. In the main, opportunities to write and use literacy skills had been well used but, from time to time, more extended writing opportunities were not clearly noted for the more able pupils. Equally,



very few examples were seen of pupils exploring or finding information from the Internet. Although the current co-ordinator for the subject has only been in post a short time, the management of the subject is good. She has already begun to come to grips with the strengths and weaknesses in the subject and is beginning to track the progress of pupils using a new assessment system. She has written an action plan for the subject and has recently had opportunities to monitor the teaching and learning in religious education.

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

**Music** was inspected in full and is reported below. **Art and design, design and technology and physical education** were not foci of the inspection and so were sampled.

68. Colourful and attractive examples of **art and design** work are on show in every classroom. A display of different styles of portraits by Year 1 pupils starts with faces coloured brightly in crayon in the style of Andy Warhol. Alongside are forceful charcoal portraits in the style of Pieter Bruegel and chalk portraits in the expressive style of Picasso. Pupils' work shows an unusual understanding of the style of the three artists for such young children. The development of three-dimensional skills is seen in sculpture. A visit to the Eden project has inspired pupils in Year 1 to design figures with movement and character using pipe cleaners. Pupils in Year 2 weave colourful patterns with strips of paper as part of their work on Africa and print animal patterns to create a large African picture, all of which capture the atmosphere of Africa well. Displays are enhanced by the labels and written contributions by pupils and the fact that all on show is children's work. Sketchbooks are used to practise skills and ideas.

69. In the one lesson seen in Year 1 pupils explored the idea of making sculptures with sand successfully and produced thoughtful collage designs with seeds and pasta with a very good level of application and concentration. Pupils looked carefully at a picture by John Dyer from the Eden Project. They painted vibrant pictures of interesting skies, flowers and water in a similar style. Some were of a very high quality because of the attention to detail and appreciation of the style pupils were following. Pupils were very disappointed when the lesson came to an end. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection.

70. One lesson of **design and technology** was seen and pupils' sketchbooks studied. In the good lesson seen pupils looked carefully at the designs for masks in their sketchbooks. All masks were completely different. Pupils had recorded all the materials needed and selected various items to make the masks. The teacher and learning support assistant encouraged pupils to work independently and used specific technical vocabulary for each task throughout the lesson very effectively. Pupils improved their drawing, cutting and sticking skills during the lesson and other pupils, who made animal figures with modelling materials, tried hard to write out the instructions for making their creature. Pupils understand the need to prepare a design and record the materials needed in advance and, at the end of the project, evaluate their work.

71. With two year groups and common planning in each, a limited range of **physical education** activities were observed. This included a Year 1 lesson with pupils working with large balls where activity levels were less than usual, and another Year 1 lesson which involved pupils moving around mats and apparatus stopping in balance shapes where performance levels were well up to standard. The good quality of movement and creativity shown in two Year 2 dance movement lessons where pupils shadowed each other moving to music as fishes showed that the good physical development observed in the reception classes had been built on.

## **MUSIC**

**Provision in music is good.**

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children enjoy music and join in activities with enthusiasm, and so achievement is good.
- Good teaching and interesting, relevant songs ensure that pupils' singing is good.

### **Commentary**

72. Pupils build well on their early musical experiences in the Foundation Stage and standards are in line with national expectations by the end of Year 2. Pupils' enthusiasm for music was obvious during assemblies and in a Year 2 singing lesson. Joining in rhythmically, pupils moved to the beat of the calypso, clapping, singing loudly and softly and concentrating very well. The teacher worked through the words of new songs systematically, showing where changes from a previous verse occurred and emphasising any new words or lines which helps pupils to learn them quickly. Pupils listened very well and after several attempts sang new songs tunefully and confidently.

73. In a Year 1 lesson pupils worked well together to distinguish high, low and medium sounds. They listened carefully when a pupil played an instrument in the book centre out of sight of the class, knowing they had to concentrate to give the right answer. By the end of the lesson most pupils distinguished between the different notes and matched actions to words well when singing, watching adults carefully so that they anticipated what to do next. Pupils know the names of a few instruments and look forward to playing them.

74. The subject is effectively led and staff who are not music specialists are supported well by a comprehensive published scheme. Music is an important part of assemblies with pupils listening carefully to the music of the week. Pupils in Year 2 listened to 'Carnival of the Animals' and painted interesting and colourful pictures of the animals featured. The school has a good range of well displayed musical instruments and CDs for pupils to look at, learn their names, and experiment with. All these opportunities help to build an appreciation of music and contribute to the maintenance of standards since the last inspection.

## **PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The programme is carefully planned to extend personal development and provide opportunities for pupils to grow in confidence.
- Working alongside pupils with a range of special educational needs, including pupils with hearing impairment, helps pupils develop their personal and social skills.

### **Commentary**

75. The school's good personal, social and health education programme provides opportunities for all pupils to increase their confidence and self-esteem in separate lessons and in all subjects. For example, children in the Foundation Stage are proud to show their healthy snacks and pupils understand that the food from the tuck shop and very enjoyable school dinners are there to help them develop healthy eating habits. Pupils take the initiative and accept responsibility around the school. For example, pupils set out materials for lessons and take registers to the office. Circle time provides good opportunities to share feelings and to discuss different topics. Having rehearsed what they have to say in discussions with a partner, pupils gain confidence in speaking in front of the class and others show interest in their views.

76. Pupils learn sign language and they know that it will help them to interact with any hearing impaired schoolmates. This enables them to communicate and involve everyone in their play. The very inclusive atmosphere in the school helps pupils respect and care for each other.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

### *Inspection judgement*

### *Grade*

<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>3</b>
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	4
Value for money provided by the school	3
<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>4</b>
Pupils' achievement	3
<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>	<b>2</b>
Attendance	6
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>	<b>3</b>
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	4
Accommodation and resources	2
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	4
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
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>3</b>
The governance of the school	4
The leadership of the headteacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	3

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