

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **CLOWNE INFANT and NURSERY SCHOOL**

Clowne

LEA area: Derbyshire

Unique reference number: 112533

Headteacher: Mr. G Leyland

Lead inspector: Mr. George Crowther

Dates of inspection: 26<sup>th</sup> – 29<sup>th</sup> April 2004

Inspection number: 255839

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 - 7
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	331
School address:	Ringer Lane Clowne Chesterfield Derbyshire
Postcode:	S43 4DB
Telephone number:	01246 810518
Fax number:	01246 813401
E-mail:	headteacher@clowne-inf.derbyshire.sch.uk
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr S Patrick
Date of previous inspection:	2 <sup>nd</sup> – 5 <sup>th</sup> March 1998

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Clowne is a large, community infant school for boys and girls who are 3-7 years old. It has 228 pupils organised in eight classes, and 103 children who attend part-time in the nursery. The school is situated in a former mining village and the needs of the community have been recognised by the school's inclusion in a recently-formed Excellence Cluster, which aims to raise standards. Most of the pupils live in the village, but a few come from further away. The school serves families from a range of social circumstances but, taken together, these are less favourable than the national picture. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is average. Overall, pupils' attainment when they start school is below that expected for their age, though there is a wide range of ability within each age group that varies from year to year. Sixty-five pupils, an above-average proportion, have been identified as having special educational needs. In the nursery, a significant proportion of pupils have special needs associated with speech and communication or have weaknesses in their social skills. The same needs are found in Years R to 2, together with a few pupils who have moderate learning difficulties. One pupil has a statement to outline particular special needs. Almost all pupils are from white ethnic backgrounds, and none is learning English as an additional language. The school has Investors in People status, which recognises that it has good systems to support and train its staff. Healthy Schools and an impending Artsmark awards show that the school has strengths in aspects of its curriculum.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
18814	George Crowther	Lead inspector	Mathematics, science, art and design, music
19798	Jane O'Keefe	Lay inspector	
34394	Janet Blackhall	Team inspector	English, design and technology, information and communication technology, physical education
27654	Robina Scahill	Team inspector	Foundation Stage, geography, history, religious education, special educational needs

The inspection contractor was:

**e-Qualitas Limited**

Langshaw  
Pastens Road  
Limpsfield Chart  
Oxted  
Surrey  
RH8 0RE

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**Clowne is a good and effective school** that is highly regarded by parents. The headteacher's very good leadership is helping the school to improve, and standards are rising. The staff are very positive about finding ways to improve the quality of education still further. Pupils' achievement is good overall. It is very good in the nursery, good in the reception classes and satisfactory in Years 1 and 2. Across the school, the quality of teaching is good. The friendly, caring atmosphere within the school, based on very good relationships, provides an excellent foundation for building pupils' confidence and underpins the very positive environment for learning. The school provides good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are

- Children get a very good start to school in the nursery, built upon well in the reception classes
- The headteacher has a very clear view about aspects of the school's work that need to improve and, by his very positive approach, has lifted the expectations of staff, governors and parents
- Pupils achieve well in reading, but achievement in writing is not yet good enough
- Teaching is good overall but, in Years 1 and 2, there are weaknesses in some lessons
- Pupils have very positive attitudes to their work and they behave very well because the school pays very good attention to their personal development
- The headteacher and staff have introduced good initiatives aimed at raising standards, but recent, positive developments have not yet been seen through

Since the school was inspected in 1998, **improvement has been satisfactory**. Standards in national tests are about the same as at the last inspection. The points for development have been tackled. Subject leaders now have more influence on raising standards. Better procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and checking on their progress are supporting teachers' planning of lessons. Parents have plenty of information about the work of the school and the progress their children are making. Procedures for evaluating the school's performance are effective and have enabled staff to identify suitable areas for development. Most improvements have happened recently.

### 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	D	C	D
writing	C	D	D	E
mathematics	B	E	C	C

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

**Pupils' achievement is good.** When children start school, overall their knowledge, skills and understanding are below the level expected for their ages. In the nursery, children achieve very well because the very good range of well-planned activities stimulates their learning and adults provide very effective teaching. Achievement is good in the reception classes. By the time they join Year 1, most of the children reach the expected standards. A few do not, mainly owing to weaknesses in their literacy skills. In Years 1 and 2, achievement is satisfactory. By the end of Year 2, standards are above average in reading, and average in mathematics and science. They are below average in writing and achievement is unsatisfactory because, in the past, many pupils have not done as well as they could. Better teaching strategies introduced recently are now helping standards to rise. In all other subjects where judgements were made standards are close to those expected for pupils' ages. Pupils' special educational needs are identified early and they do well because they are supported effectively and given lots of encouragement.

**Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are fostered very well.** As a result, pupils are confident around school and very keen to be involved in lessons. They are very well behaved. Relationships between pupils and with adults are very good, which supports learning very well. The school provides lots of opportunities that develop pupils' social skills and there is a strong emphasis on learning about right and wrong. Despite excellent efforts made by the school, attendance remains below average.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The quality of education provided by the school is good.**

**The quality of teaching is good.** Learning for children in the nursery is very well planned to provide a wide range of challenging experiences, and the teaching is very good. Teaching is good in the reception classes; effective strategies make learning enjoyable and motivate the children to do well. In Years 1 and 2, teaching is satisfactory overall, with some weaknesses that are being tackled. Where teaching is good, lively whole-class sessions capture the pupils' interest and teachers make sure that tasks are relevant and challenging. Other strengths include well-prepared lessons, lots of encouragement to make pupils confident learners, and the good contribution made by teaching assistants. In some lessons, however, the pace of learning is too slow or work is not challenging enough to extend pupils' skills, and so they do not make enough progress.

The curriculum is satisfactory, but the school is planning to review its quality so that subjects can be taught in more depth. At present, key skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT are not taught well enough through other subjects. Systems for assessing pupils' attainment and for checking their progress have improved recently and are now good. In many lessons, they are helping teachers to know what pupils need to learn next, but this is not yet happening consistently in all classes. The school provides very good care and support for its pupils and has a good partnership with its parents.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**Leadership and management of the school are satisfactory.** The headteacher's leadership is very good. He has made a very positive impact during his first fifteen months at the school, gaining the confidence and commitment of the school community. He provides a very strong lead in the work to raise standards. Key staff provide satisfactory support. Governance is satisfactory. The governing body is very supportive of the school, takes a keen interest in its work, and fulfils its statutory responsibilities. Governors have a growing understanding of the school's strengths and of the areas that need to be improved and are increasingly involved in planning future developments. Management is satisfactory. There is a good understanding of what the school does well and what needs to improve because measures to evaluate performance have improved and are now good. The school improvement plan contains a number of important initiatives, but the priorities are not yet clear enough. A number of positive, recent developments, such as improving the monitoring of teaching and learning, and better systems for assessment, have been started effectively, but it is not yet possible to evaluate their impact on pupils' achievement.

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

Parents have very positive views of the school. Almost all feel that their children are making good progress and that the school does a good job. Pupils say they like school, they like the staff and find lessons interesting and fun.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

The most important things the school should do to improve are

- Continue to raise standards in writing
- Improve the quality of teaching where there are weaknesses
- See through and evaluate recent initiatives aimed at raising pupils' achievement

## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

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

Pupils' achievement is good overall. Children in the nursery achieve very well in all areas of their learning, owing to a rich curriculum and very good teaching. Achievement continues to be good in the reception classes. Almost all of the children are on track to reach the expected standards by the end of the reception year. Although achievement is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2, pupils do not build as well as they could on the very good start they had in the Foundation Stage. Achievement is good in reading, satisfactory in mathematics and science, but unsatisfactory in writing. The school helps pupils with special educational needs to achieve well by planning work for them carefully and ensuring they are well supported in their learning.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children get a very good start to school in the nursery, built upon well in the reception classes
- Results in national tests are improving
- Pupils achieve well in reading
- During Years 1 and 2, achievement in writing is unsatisfactory

#### Commentary

##### National test results and other performance data

1. The results of the 2003 national tests are about the same as those reported at the last inspection. There have been fluctuations, largely as a result of the varying abilities of groups of pupils, but staff and governors also say that the low results in 2002 were partly owing to a difficult period for the school caused by senior staff absence. Since then, with the appointment of a new headteacher and a growing emphasis on raising standards, results have been improving. The 2003 results were average in reading and mathematics, but below average in writing. The school has been pursuing the raising of standards in writing as its main priority. When the school's results are compared with those gained by *similar schools*\*, the 2003 picture looks unfavourable. Only the mathematics results were average, with reading below average and writing well below average. This is not a fair picture. For 2004, the school has been placed in the group that more closely reflects the social circumstances of its families. As a result, comparisons with similar schools are likely to be better this year. The school's own data, tracking the progress of pupils and their likely performance in national tests, also show an improving picture for 2004. Overall, the evidence indicates that standards are rising and that Clowne is an improving school.

\* 'Similar schools' are those with a similar proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	15.6 (15.0)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	13.7 (13.5)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	16.4 (15.5)	16.3 (16.5)

*There were 85 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

2. Given that children start school with attainment that is below average overall, the standard of work seen in pupils' books represents good achievement. At present, however, much of this progress is made in the nursery and reception classes, with satisfactory achievement during Years 1 and 2 in English, mathematics and science. This is because there are some weaknesses in the quality of teaching and learning in the Year 1 and 2 classes, largely owing to a lack of pace and challenge in some lessons. This is often related to teachers following their planning too closely or using work sheets, even when pupils are not gaining enough from the activities. Teachers are not quick enough to adapt the work, based on what they know about pupils' abilities and using their knowledge of what the pupils need to learn next.



### **Foundation Stage (nursery and reception classes)**

3. Children achieve very well in the nursery. Very good arrangements for starting nursery ensure that the children get a very good beginning. Adults quickly assess the level at which the children are learning and provide a very good range of activities to ensure that the children build their skills very well in all areas of the curriculum. The richness of the activities, the vitality of the teaching, and the very good support provided by adults help the children to make very good progress. As a result, the children are very well prepared for next step in their education. They continue to make good progress in the reception classes. The more structured pattern of lessons suits the children for some of their learning, and there are also opportunities for them to work on a wide range of activities from which they can choose, increasing their confidence and independence. The teaching is well planned, lively, and responds well to the needs of the pupils. Because of the very positive environment for learning throughout the Foundation Stage, the children get a very good basis for work in Years 1 and 2. Teachers and teaching assistants work in very effective teams to ensure that all the children are well supported in their learning.

### **Pupils in Year 1 and Year 2**

4. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2. In English, pupils achieve well in reading because the teaching and learning are good. Teachers give pupils an enthusiasm for reading through the books they read to them; they teach them how to tackle unknown words using a growing knowledge of letter sounds; and they have good routines for making sure that pupils read books of the right level of difficulty, regularly. Parents also play a significant part in sharing books with their children and ensuring the frequent practice that breeds success. In writing, pupils have not been achieving well enough. Writing has not been taught in the same, effective way. Since September, however, better teaching methods in lessons and a number of initiatives to improve the writing skills of groups of pupils have resulted in higher standards. There are, however, still weaknesses in Year 2 pupils' writing because too few write at length with the variety of language and level of spelling and punctuation expected of this age group. In mathematics, whilst pupils make steady progress in developing their skills in number, shape and measures, some of this work is insufficiently challenging, and there are too few activities that encourage pupils to decide for themselves how they will solve mathematical problems, which would help them to reach the higher level. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory in science and they develop their knowledge steadily, but there are too few opportunities for them to experiment and investigate, which would make the work more challenging, particularly for the more-able pupils. Insufficient evidence was gathered to make judgements about pupils' achievement in other subjects but, by Year 2, the standard of work they produce is as expected in all subjects where a judgement could be made.

### **Pupils who have special educational needs**

5. Pupils who have special educational needs make good progress in most lessons and consistently achieve the well-defined targets set out in their individual education plans. Teachers generally ensure that work is well matched to these pupils' needs and, in most lessons, effective teaching assistants support their learning. Teachers make sure that these pupils are fully involved in lessons. For example, in a good English lesson for Year 1, after a lively introduction, the teaching assistant worked with a group of less-able pupils to reinforce work on letter sounds and then supported them in their writing. As a result, they achieved far more than would have done without adult support.
6. At the previous inspection, pupils' achievements were satisfactory overall, including in the nursery and reception classes. Pupils' achievements are now very good in the nursery and good in the reception classes, which is a significant improvement. A similar raising of achievement has not yet taken place in the Year 1 and 2 classes, but the school has identified many of the areas that need to improve, teachers are very positive about embracing the changes, and strong leadership is sharply focused on making this happen.

## Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils have very good attitudes to their work and they behave very well. The overall provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development has improved since the last inspection and is now very good. Despite the school's excellent efforts, attendance levels are unsatisfactory.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils enjoy coming to school and are very keen to learn
- The promotion of pupils' confidence and self-esteem is excellent
- Relationships are very good and pupils treat each other with kindness and respect
- Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development are fostered very well

### Commentary

7. Pupils clearly enjoy coming to this school because it is a very happy and welcoming place. When asked what they like best about the school many pupils answered, "Everything!" Pupils have very good attitudes to school and their work, which is an improvement since the last inspection. In lessons they listen and concentrate very well and are very keen to answer questions. Pupils behave very well in lessons, around the school and at playtimes. This is due to the school's very effective behaviour management systems, which ensure that the small minority of pupils with behavioural difficulties are managed very well and do not disturb the learning of others. Pupils are confident that, should a bullying incident occur staff will deal with it quickly and effectively. Lunchtimes are well organised, pleasant and orderly. In the playground, pupils happily use the good range of activities provided for them and, as a result, they play purposefully.
8. Pupils' social skills are constantly and successfully promoted throughout their time in the school. The wide-ranging reward system is highly valued by pupils and works very well. As a result, pupils are friendly, courteous and outgoing with visitors and always keen to discuss their work. Those pupils given responsibilities around the school carry them out with confidence and pride. Relationships are very good and pupils treat each other with much kindness and respect. Pupils are particularly helpful to their classmates who have special educational needs. Playground buddies play a very important role in supporting any of their peers who may be feeling lonely.
9. Throughout the school, staff work extremely hard to build pupils' confidence and self-esteem. Praise is used very effectively in lessons to build confidence and encourage pupils' efforts. The headteacher makes an outstanding contribution to pupils' spiritual development by his inspiring assemblies. Pupils clearly understand the difference between right and wrong and discuss moral issues thoughtfully in lessons and in circle times (when children gather in a circle to discuss their feelings and views). Pupils are strongly encouraged to work together, and they play together very well. Through the school council, pupils learn to express their opinions and listen to those of others. Pupils' cultural development is appropriately fostered in subjects such as art and music. Pupils have some experiences of other cultures and faiths, for example through effective links with the Salvation Army.
10. Most pupils arrive punctually in the mornings but attendance levels are below those found nationally. The school is very aware of this and the efforts of headteacher and his staff to improve the situation have been outstanding. Pupils' individual attendance levels are very closely monitored and every effort, including very close and effective links with outside agencies, is made to support families and stress the value of good attendance. However, despite this, a small minority of parents do not value their children's education sufficiently to ensure that their children attend school regularly.

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

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	5.8	School data	0.5
National data	5.4	National data	0.4

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

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides a good education for its pupils. Teaching is good overall, and particularly strong in the nursery. The curriculum is satisfactory, with a sound range of experiences in most subjects, but too few opportunities in mathematics for pupils to use and apply their skills, and too little work in science where pupils investigate and experiment. Key skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT are not used and developed well enough as part of work in other subjects. Good systems are in place for assessing pupils' developing knowledge and skills, but teachers do not always use this information consistently to plan appropriately challenging work. Pupils are cared for and supported very well. The school has a good partnership with parents, good links with the community, and very good links with other schools.

### Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching is good overall. The pupils enjoy their learning and generally try hard with their work. Teaching is very good in the nursery and good in the reception classes. Teaching is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2, but there are weaknesses in a few lessons that prevent pupils from learning as much as they could. The proportion of good and very good teaching has improved since the last inspection.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good teaching in the nursery gives children a very successful start to school
- Teaching interests and engages the pupils, and so they are well motivated to learn
- In a few lessons in Years 1 and 2, the work is too hard or too easy, and so pupils do not make the progress of which they are capable
- In some subjects, teachers' lack of expertise prevents them from adapting their planning
- Pupils achieve well because they try their best with the tasks they are given
- In a few lessons in Years 1 and 2, the pace of learning is too slow
- Teaching assistants make a good contribution to supporting pupils' learning

### Commentary

#### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 39 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
	8 (21%)	19 (49%)	11 (28%)	1 (3%)		

*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.*

11. In the nursery, learning is fun! The teachers provide a wide range of interesting activities, through which adults help the children to become confident, enthusiastic learners. A good balance of whole-class sessions and independent activities, underpinned by well-established routines, helps the children to get the most from all their learning. 'Singing time' is a very engaging session when all the children listen to stories and sing songs. In one session seen, the children sat spellbound as the teacher told a story about a caterpillar asking various animals what it was going to be. By using a variety of animal toys, actions with which the children joined in, singing and very expressive language, the teacher fascinated the children with the story and taught them about the life cycle of the butterfly. Other activities are very well planned to contribute to a theme so that the children see the links in their learning. For example, children cut out pictures of fruit, glued them to strips of paper, made the strips into rings and joined them to make *The very hungry caterpillar* in a story they had heard. Like many activities in the nursery, the children developed lots of skills within one task. Adults know just how young children learn best and they provide the right support whilst helping the children to be increasingly independent in all they do.
12. In other classes, teachers make most lessons interesting and enjoyable. They find good ways to engage the pupils from the very beginning of the lesson. They explain what pupils are going to do and get them involved in their learning. Lively whole-class sessions were a good feature of many of the lessons seen. For example, a science lesson for Year 1/2 began with the teacher reviewing what the pupils had learnt about forces. She juggled with three balls and bounced them against the wall, challenging the pupils to explain what was happening in terms of the forces acting on the balls. This

humorous and entertaining beginning to the lesson captured the pupils' attention and really made them think, preparing them well for the activities that followed. In a Year R class, work on sounds was made much more interesting when the teacher asked the children to say the sounds 'in a sing song way' or 'in a whispery way', transforming an ordinary activity into one that was fun. Such clever teaching techniques ensure that learning is good. Pupils are well motivated because adults are very positive when they make an effort, and praise them when they get something right. It is not surprising then that, in most lessons, pupils enjoy their learning and achieve well.

13. In many lessons, teachers judge the difficulty of the work well so that all the pupils are appropriately challenged and can take the next step in their learning. In a few lessons seen, however, the work was either too hard for the less-able pupils or, more often, too easy for the more-able pupils. For example, in a mathematics lesson for Year 2, the whole-class session was about the calculations that can be made with the digits 20, 15 and 5, emphasising that  $20-15=5$  is the inverse of  $15+5=20$ . It soon became clear that many of the pupils already knew this but, instead of increasing the difficulty of the work, the teacher carried on. Similarly, in an English lesson for Year 2, where pupils were writing a job description following the visit of an air hostess, the less-able pupils needed more support for their writing, and the more-able were constrained by a work sheet and were not given enough time to produce the quality of writing of which they were capable. Pupils' past work, particularly in mathematics and science, also shows that pupils of varying abilities often do the same work.
14. There are two reasons why teachers are not always matching work carefully enough to pupils' needs. Firstly, although the school has recently developed good systems of assessing pupils' attainment and checking their progress, teachers are not using this information well enough when they plan lessons. They know what level pupils have reached but the tasks they plan do not extend the pupils appropriately. In some cases, the planning teachers use purports to be suitable for pupils in say, Year 1, but it is not really suitable for all the pupils in the class. As a result, in some lessons teachers 'stick to the script' rather than adapting the work to meet the needs of the pupils more closely. Secondly, in order to plan work that is more flexible in meeting pupils' needs, or to adapt planned work during the lesson, teachers need a good grasp of the subject so that they know instantly how to increase the challenge. All teachers do not have this level of expertise in all subjects.
15. Pupils generally apply themselves well to their work and they get a lot done. They are quick to pay attention, they want to be involved, and they generally settle well to any tasks they are given. For example, in a good English lesson, Year 2 pupils worked with Year 5 pupils at the junior school, following their joint creative arts project the previous day. They listened carefully to the teacher's introduction and started quickly on their task of researching and writing about animals and plants that can be found locally. All the pupils put a lot of effort into their work and a high level of interest was maintained.
16. In a few lessons seen, the pace of learning was too slow. Sometimes whole-class sessions lasted too long, and so pupils became fidgety and did not have enough time to complete their individual work. In mathematics, lessons often lack a significant quick-fire session to develop pupils' mental skills. In a few lessons, the good pace of the whole-class session was not sustained during the group work. Teachers did not make it clear enough that pupils should get on quickly and they did not remind the pupils about the time remaining. As a result, pupils worked at their own pace and did not complete as much work as they could have.
17. During the past year, the school has increased the number of teaching assistants significantly. They sometimes help a pupil who has particular special needs, but more often provide support for a group of pupils. They make a good contribution to the quality of teaching and learning. For example, in a mathematics lesson for Year 1/2, more-able pupils were exploring a doubling pattern, which they found quite hard. The teacher was working with the less-able group and, without adult support, the more-able group would have stalled. The teaching assistant helped the pupils to explore ways of calculating the answer, which resulted in them making good progress in the lesson. Assistants who work with pupils who have special needs keep them focused on the lesson and provide invaluable support when these pupils are tackling activities. Teachers make sure that the assistants know what to do and value the part they play in pupils' learning. The combined efforts of the staff ensure that the quality of teaching is good for pupils who have special needs.

## **The curriculum**

The curriculum is satisfactory overall and with a similar balance of strengths and weaknesses as reported at the last inspection. The very good and varied curriculum in the nursery is built upon well by a good curriculum for children in the reception classes. In Years 1 and 2, however, despite satisfactory achievement, there are some weaknesses in the curriculum for English, mathematics and science. The curriculum is enriched effectively by a good range of extra learning opportunities. Accommodation and resources for learning are good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The good provision for personal, social and health education develops pupils' attitudes and values effectively
- Writing skills are not developed systematically enough and there are insufficient opportunities to write regularly in other subjects
- Pupils are not given enough opportunities to explore and investigate in mathematics and science
- The pupils benefit from a wide range of enrichment opportunities
- Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because they are identified early and well supported throughout the school
- Very good links with the junior school prepare pupils well for the next stage of their education

### **Commentary**

18. The good provision for personal, social and health education accounts for the happy, caring atmosphere in the school. In lessons, teachers provide good opportunities for pupils to talk about their feelings and opinions. Adults in the school are good role models and they show they care by the way they talk to pupils. Pupils have been fully involved in drawing up the school rules so they all know and understand them and realise that rules are part of everyone living and working together harmoniously. The new school council has been elected by the pupils and, in doing this, they learnt about the democratic process of elections. School council members have been involved in choosing playground toys and have learned how to relate expenditure to their budget. Pupils are given lots of responsibilities such as 'Playground Buddies' who have been trained to support and help other pupils at playtime. All these measures, along with personal, social and health education lessons, teach the pupils valuable lessons about caring for themselves and others.
19. During the past 12 months, the school has made good improvements to the planning of literacy and numeracy lessons. In writing, however, in the past, pupils have not had enough opportunities to write at length and have not been given enough support to develop their skills. In mathematics and science, pupils do not have enough opportunities to experiment and investigate, making their own choices about the way they tackle problems. The school uses national guidance to plan the curriculum, but intends to review this planning so subjects can be taught in more depth, and so key skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT can be taught more systematically through other subjects.
20. Children start school in the nursery with a varied and very interesting curriculum. These exciting activities are continued in such initiatives as the Literacy Festival, to promote writing through art, and the Rainbow group to encourage writing for the more-able pupils. Visiting artists and theatre groups, and trips to the theatre, further enrich the curriculum, helping to make pupils confident and keen to learn. Lunch time clubs such as dance, recorders and football also serve to enrich the pupils' experiences. Very good links with the junior school, through paired reading and shared playground games, have resulted in pupils developing confidence and social skills. It also prepares them well for when they move up to the junior school.
21. The school provides well for pupils who have special educational needs. Children's special needs are identified very soon after they start school in the nursery. They do well because they are supported and encouraged and most difficulties are solved by this early intervention. Throughout the school, the provision for special educational needs is organised effectively. Parents are fully involved in deciding their child's targets. Individual education plans, which give details of these targets and the support the school will provide, are reviewed with parents about every eight weeks. The school makes special arrangements so all parents of pupils with special educational needs are able to attend these reviews.

22. The school has a good level of well-qualified teachers. Teaching assistants are experienced and well trained. They are used effectively in supporting both individual pupils and groups. The accommodation is good and, although one classroom is small, there are good shared areas and convenient group rooms such as the music room. Plans about to be implemented to reorganise and extend the small classroom will improve the learning facilities. Although some classrooms are used for lunches, this has the advantage of pupils sitting in small groups which encourages them to be very well behaved. It also frees the hall for lunchtime clubs. Good resources are used well to help pupils learn effectively.

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

As at the last inspection, the school takes very good care of its pupils. Arrangements for child protection and health and safety are very good. Very good systems are in place for the induction of new pupils. The school seeks and values pupil's views effectively.

### **Main strengths**

- The school is a very caring place where children are secure and happy
- Children are protected by very efficient procedures for health and safety
- The school council is well organised and effective

### **Commentary**

23. The staff have a very caring approach and look after pupils very well. This ensures pupils' welfare and general well-being and is much appreciated by parents. Pupils know who to see if they are hurt or feeling unwell and appreciate the care they receive from adults. During the inspection, a number of pupils who were unwell were looked after in a very sympathetic way and, where necessary, parents were contacted so that they were aware of the situation. The school has a happy, family atmosphere where pupils feel safe and secure.
24. The headteacher is the person designated to deal with any child protection concerns. He has ensured that very thorough procedures are in place for dealing with child protection issues and that staff are trained and aware of the necessary steps to follow should an issue arise. Staff work very closely with outside agencies to ensure that all pupils and their families are well supported. Comprehensive arrangements are in place for ensuring the health and safety of all in the school. These are being implemented with very efficient support from the caretaker who ensures that all necessary risk assessments and safety checks take place.
25. The school has satisfactory and improving procedures for monitoring pupils' academic progress. Better systems for assessing pupils' attainment and checking their progress have recently been established and staff are beginning to use the results to support pupils' learning. Staff get to know their pupils very well. They monitor pupils' personal development as they progress through the school and provide sensitive support to those experiencing difficulties. Particular attention is given to pupils who have special educational needs and their progress is checked carefully.
26. Staff realise the importance of a smooth start to school and those in the nursery manage this process very well. Children and their parents are made very welcome in school and staff also visit them at home. Parents and children have very good opportunities to get to know the staff and the school before they arrive and, as a result, pupils settle quickly into school life. The school council is well established and successfully promotes pupils' independence and confidence. Members of the council meet regularly to discuss suggestions and concerns and take pride in having their say on the running of the school. The staff are very keen to seek and respond to pupils' views.

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

Parents are very happy with the care and education their children receive. Partnerships with parents are good and have improved since the last inspection, particularly during the past year. Links with other schools are very good, and there are good links with the local community.

## **Main strengths**

- Parents have very positive views about the school and feel that it has improved recently
- The school provides very good information for parents
- Good links with the local community enhance pupils' learning
- Very good links with local schools benefit the pupils

## **Commentary**

27. The school works very hard to build and maintain its good partnerships with parents. At the time of the last inspection, parents were unhappy with the information they received from the school on its work and their children's progress. This has now improved considerably and parents are very happy. Parents receive good information on general matters through regular newsletters and personal contact with staff. The school's prospectus and governors' annual report are clearly written and contain the information they should. Consultation meetings are useful and the use of target setting and homework helps parents to support their children's learning at home. Annual reports are sent home in the summer term. These give detailed information on work pupils have covered and the progress made, including suggestions of ways they could improve.
28. The school listens carefully to parents and actively seeks their views about the school and its future. Staff respond positively to any suggestions or concerns raised. The school provides very good personal support to families and regular meetings are held to explain different areas of the curriculum. Attendance at these meetings is increasing. Parents and carers are very supportive of the early morning reading activities and many sit with their children to share books before the start of the school day. The Parent Teacher Association has recently been established by a small number of committed parents. This is developing well and is further increasing parents' involvement in the school. Funds raised have helped to provide useful extra resources for the school.
29. Good links with the local community support pupils' learning and personal development well because they take part in local events such as the recent opening of a large supermarket nearby. The school premises are used by children's groups outside school hours. Close links have been established with the Salvation Army whose members regularly lead school assemblies. Pupils and their families take part in many fund raising events for local and national charities and good use of the local area is made for visits.
30. Very good links have been established with other schools in the area, particularly the junior school on the same site and the nearby secondary school. The headteachers and staff of these schools work very closely together to ensure that transfer to each phase is very carefully handled. This has a positive effect on pupils' learning as they progress through their school lives. Pupils frequently visit both schools for a range of curriculum events and joint projects. Year 6 pupils visit the infant school to organise games with the pupils at lunchtimes.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory overall and improving rapidly. The headteacher's very good leadership is making a significant difference in helping the school to improve. Key staff are increasingly playing their part. Management and governance are satisfactory, but also improving.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The headteacher has high aspirations and provides dynamic leadership with a strong sense of direction
- The school evaluates its performance thoroughly and this is helping to raise standards
- Subject leaders have an increasing understanding of strengths and weaknesses
- Management is not yet rigorous enough and so there are inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and learning
- The governing body is very supportive of the school and is developing its role well

## Commentary

31. The headteacher has made a very positive impact during his first fifteen months at the school. Following a period of uncertain leadership, and little school development, parents, staff and governors describe him as “a breath of fresh air” that has revitalised the school. He has gained the confidence and commitment of the school community, showing kindness and generosity of spirit to all children and adults. He leads by example, providing inspiration and fostering motivation. As he moves around the school, and during his excellent assemblies, both staff and children respond to him in an overwhelmingly positive way. But his leadership is not just about the excellent relationships he has cultivated in school. He has also created a climate in which everyone is dedicated to improving the education provided for the pupils. He has introduced a range of initiatives, for example to raise the standard of pupils’ writing and, even though some of these initiatives have not been in place long enough to judge their full impact on children’s learning and achievement, early signs are encouraging. The headteacher’s leadership is giving everyone – children, parents, staff and governors – the confidence to succeed.
32. The school now has a very strong sense of direction. All staff have been involved in developing the detailed school improvement plan by producing action plans for the subjects they manage. They have evaluated the quality of pupils’ work and strengths and weaknesses in teaching. They have identified related targets, for example to implement the literacy hour, and have focused on developing writing and spelling across the school. Success is carefully measured by how well pupils’ achievements are being improved. The school development plan is currently being refined to prioritise areas for improvement because there is too much to tackle in one year.
33. Similarly, there is a strong emphasis on developing staff expertise and skills. The headteacher has introduced a very good system of performance management for all staff with targets linked to the school improvement plan. Subject leaders have an increasing understanding of areas for development and how to support them through checking on the quality of teaching and learning and using better assessment, staff training and resources to seek improvements. The work of subject leaders, however, still has weaknesses because they do not always have a precise enough understanding of where improvements need to be made. The school has planned more training to enable them to perform their role effectively, in order that they can play a full part in reducing inconsistencies in pupils’ achievement in some classes and subjects. The headteacher has good plans for reviewing and developing the subject leaders’ role, through drawing on the strengths of teachers to support each other.
34. The governing body is very supportive of the school, taking a keen interest in its work. Governors are aware of their statutory responsibilities and ensure requirements are well met. Governors have an increasing awareness of the strengths of the school and areas that need to improve. The headteacher encourages governors to be involved by keeping them fully informed about the work of the school through purposeful meetings and detailed reports. The governing body is increasingly involved in strategic planning, for example being more aware of curriculum developments. Governors know that this is necessary so that they can monitor the performance of the school in order to provide support and challenge.
35. The arrangements for the financial management of the school are good. The school has effective financial routines that are understood and followed by all staff involved. The school’s spending decisions relate to priorities for raising standards and aim to benefit all pupils.

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

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	510,083
Total expenditure	486,905
Expenditure per pupil	1462

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	32,904
Balance carried forward to the next	56,082



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

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

36. Provision for children in the Foundation Stage (nursery and reception classes) is very good. When children join the nursery, their skills and knowledge are generally below the standard expected for their ages, particularly in speech and language development. They make very good progress during their time in the nursery because the teaching is very good and learning is active and very interesting. This is built upon effectively in the reception classes. Most children are on course to reach the expected learning goals by the time they enter Year 1. A small minority will not reach all of the goals, but some will exceed them. Teaching is very good in the nursery and good in the reception classes. Adults are always enthusiastic, and so children are very keen to experience the wealth of activities available to them. All adults work very effectively together, planning carefully to provide children with a rich variety of practical tasks to help them learn well. Adults have high expectations of children behaving well and settling quickly to work so that they spend all their time productively. Children who have special educational needs are identified early and work is carefully planned and matched to their needs and abilities. They are supported very well so they make very good progress. Staff assess the children's growing skills carefully and these assessments are used to plan the work and activities that children will experience. Provision for children in both the nursery and reception is very well led and managed. Parents are fully involved and the staff have a clear view of how to develop the area further. Since the last inspection, there has been good improvement in all aspects.

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

Provision for children's personal, social and emotional development is very good.

#### **Main strengths**

- Arrangements for starting nursery are very well established, and so children settle quickly into school routines
- Children achieve very well because of the very good range of activities that are planned to develop their personal and social skills
- Relationships between adults and children are very good
- Children behave very well

#### **Commentary**

37. Arrangements for starting at nursery are very good. Staff make helpful visits to children in their homes, and parents and children gain much from the planned visits to the nursery. Many parents come into the nursery to work with children at the beginning of each session, which helps children to settle quickly and happily. Children make very good progress in their personal and social development because they are encouraged to make choices for themselves, and to join in planned group and whole-class activities. Where children choose which activities they want to do, staff give them time to investigate and encourage them to persevere. They experience a very wide range of activities that are interesting and fun. Most children in the nursery are beginning to work together, although some still play alone. Children in the reception classes benefit from the good start they had in the nursery. They respond well by listening and taking part in whole-group sessions and they follow instructions well. Their behaviour is very good and staff have very high expectations of children working co-operatively. Children achieve very well in all areas of their learning because of this very good start in developing their personal and social skills.

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

Provision in communication, language and literacy is very good.

#### **Main strengths**

- Adults take every opportunity to develop the children's language skills
- Children become confident readers
- Children learn to speak confidently and listen attentively

## **Commentary**

38. Teaching is very good in this area of learning and children make very good progress in all aspects of communication, language and literacy. With constant encouragement, they grow in confidence, learning to communicate with adults and each other in a wide range of situations. In the nursery, all activities are planned very well to encourage speaking. Children with particular difficulties in language development are very well supported in small groups by working with a teaching assistant in the 'talking room'. There is a constant emphasis on developing language skills through work in all areas of learning. Children are expected to listen to each other and take turns when speaking, so that they learn to listen attentively, knowing that they will have their turn. The many labels and signs in the classes encourage children to read familiar words and they are encouraged to label their own work by copying words. As a result, children in the nursery are beginning to recognise their own names. Teachers are very good at praising children for their efforts and this gives children a pride in their achievements. In the reception classes, the children are encouraged to talk confidently and listen to each other attentively during whole-class times. For example, a child explained to the class what she has put into her 'precious box' and other children were encouraged to ask questions. Big books are used very well so that children learn early reading skills, and they take books home so that they learn to read confidently. Consequently, many children in reception read short, repetitive stories confidently and fluently. Teachers promote early writing skills very well and many children write simple words, using their knowledge of sounds to spell these correctly.

## **Mathematical development**

Provision in mathematical development is very good.

### **Main strengths**

- Good reference is made to numbers in everyday activities
- Teachers make lessons fun
- Through well-planned activities children experience a wide range of mathematical ideas
- Children learn to count confidently and record numbers correctly

## **Commentary**

39. Adults are very good at finding opportunities for counting and thinking about numbers, shapes and measuring as part of almost every activity the children tackle. Throughout their time in the nursery, children have many opportunities to count, such as counting the number of children in the group or sorting the number of play people on the mathematics table. The good variety of equipment and very well planned activities encourage children to recognise and order numbers. In the reception classes, mathematics lessons are well planned so that all children are included and make good progress. Children learn to count confidently and accurately, to carry out simple calculations and to write numbers correctly. They recognise and count numbers to 10 and more-able children can count forwards and backwards well beyond this. In nursery and reception, the use of mathematical language is promoted well, for example when children learn the names of shapes. Sessions are interesting and fun because they are well planned, use a variety of relevant resources and are often based on games that interest all of the children. The children sing number songs to help them with their learning and activities are fun. Consequently the children enjoy learning and achieve very well.

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

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

### **Main strengths**

- Imaginatively-planned experiences help children to learn a lot about the world around them
- Many interesting activities encourage children to explore and discover

## **Commentary**

40. Very good teaching for this area of learning in the nursery, and good teaching in the reception classes, is well organised and stimulating. There are high expectations about what children can learn and a very effective blend of direct teaching and opportunities for children to explore and discover for themselves. As a result, children participate fully and gain much knowledge and

understanding. For example, children in the nursery were fascinated by the mini beasts they were examining. They identified different creatures confidently, and particular characteristics such as the colours and number of spots on ladybirds. They then chose which creature they would like to copy to decorate the hats they were making. Reception children talked animatedly about the tadpoles that had hatched from the frogspawn, and knew they would become frogs. Teachers make good use of stories in literacy to stimulate interest in living things. For example, children learned about the life cycle of a butterfly from the story of *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*. Children use the computers with growing confidence, which supports other areas of learning well.

### **Physical development**

Provision in physical development is very good.

#### **Main strengths**

- The outside area is used very well to promote the development of physical skills
- Teachers have high expectations of pupils achieving well

#### **Commentary**

41. Children make very good progress in this area of learning because teachers have high expectations and plan interesting activities that include all of the children. The outside area is used very well so that the children learn to become more co-ordinated as they ride a variety of wheeled toys and use the climbing frame safely and confidently. The hall is used regularly by groups of nursery children. This enables them to work in a large space, move confidently and learn to control their movements. Reception children dance imaginatively with increasing awareness of space. Pupils achieve very well because teachers ensure they learn the skills necessary to develop good co-ordination. Children use scissors and other tools safely and with increasing control, and they use a wide range of pencils, brushes and glue sticks confidently. Personal hygiene is promoted well so that children learn the importance of keeping healthy through washing hands and avoiding germs.

### **Creative development**

Provision in creative development is very good.

#### **Main strengths**

- There is a wide variety of well-planned opportunities for children to explore creative activities
- Displays celebrate children's work very well

#### **Commentary**

42. Children make very good progress in this area of learning because there is a wide range of opportunities provided and children enjoy them. Imaginative play is well planned for so that children act out their own experiences in the role-play areas and use play equipment, such as cars and dolls, to make up their own stories. There are many resources to support children when they create their own pictures and collages, and their work is displayed very well for all to celebrate. Children experiment with mixing colour when painting. They participate in cutting and sticking activities to make their own pictures. Displays in both nursery and reception are lively and stimulating and reflect the wide range of activities the children have covered. Singing time in the nursery is the highlight of the day where all the adults and children are involved. Children listen spellbound as the two teachers tell stories. They join in and sing enthusiastically with actions when it is their turn. This is an example of the very good relationships, teamwork and enjoyable learning that motivates and engages the children and results in them achieving very well.

## SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGE 1

### ENGLISH

Provision in English is satisfactory and improving.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Opportunities for pupils to develop their speaking and listening skills are good
- Good teaching of reading helps pupils to achieve well
- Pupils' achievement in writing is unsatisfactory, but improving
- Management is clear about the aspects of the subject that need to improve

#### Commentary

43. The results of the 2003 Year 2 national tests in reading were average when compared with all schools, but below average when compared with similar schools. Standards in the current Year 2 are much better, and above average in reading, because the school has worked hard during the past 12 months to raise standards through better teaching and its close partnership with parents. Results in writing were below the national average and well below average when compared with similar schools. Standards in writing are still below average, but the school has put in place a number of initiatives that are helping pupils to write more confidently and fluently. Standards in speaking and listening are average. Overall, pupils join Year 1 with average attainment in English. They achieve well to reach the standards seen at the end of Year 2 in reading. Pupils' achievement in writing is not yet good enough, but the good quality of teaching seen during the inspection indicates that it is improving. Overall, pupils' achievement in English is satisfactory.
44. Pupils make steady progress in developing their speaking and listening skills. This is because teachers plan a wide range of opportunities for pupils' to speak for a purpose and listen actively. In a number of lessons seen, teachers used 'talking partners' well to encourage pupils to listen to each other and share experiences and ideas. For example, in a Year 1 lesson, after reading the book *Elmer*, the teacher asked pupils to talk with a partner to discuss why Elmer wanted to laugh and when this had happened to them. Pupils discussed this question enthusiastically and listened carefully to each other, making good progress. This was successful because, during the whole-class session, by using effective demonstration, questioning and praise, the teacher and assistant had developed the children's confidence to speak and listen. Most pupils answer questions confidently during the imaginative assemblies because their contributions are encouraged.
45. Pupils in Year 2 read well, experiencing a good range of fiction and non-fiction books. They are guided to choose suitable books matched to their ability. The more-able pupils read simple novels fluently, with understanding, and can predict what happens next. They tackle challenging texts using a wide range of skills. Those of average attainment read with fluency and expression and can correct words they find difficult by re-reading the text so that the meaning becomes clear. The less-able pupils read competently, using their knowledge of letter sounds well to tackle their books with confidence. Pupils are keen on reading owing to their teachers' enthusiastic approach. Reading skills are emphasised in all lessons. For example, in Year 1, 'show me' activities using letter fans helped pupils learn about letter sounds. These activities were followed by the teacher's dramatic reading of *Can't you sleep little bear?* Reading skills were developed well through pupils re-telling the story using teddies, with two children acting out pupils' suggestions, which had to be in sentences. Lots of praise and careful guidance by the teacher and teaching assistant ensured all the pupils made good progress. The development of guided reading in school, good support from parents and effective use of reading buddies are helping children to achieve well.
46. Currently, pupils' achievement in writing is unsatisfactory, but the school is tackling this issue. The lessons observed focused on pupils' writing development in three important ways. Firstly, the experience of reading a book was used effectively as the main source of knowledge about the written word and how it 'sounds', supported well by lively phonics activities to help pupils' spelling. Secondly, teachers skilfully combined story telling with clear explanations and instructions to help pupils re-tell the story and to 'say it like the book'. Thirdly, through shared writing, teachers demonstrated effectively how to structure, punctuate and join sentences, choose and spell appropriate vocabulary and make the meaning clear. In these parts of the lessons, good progress was made. However, in some lessons, when pupils were then asked to write independently, the activities and resources

were not matched well enough to the needs of the average and more-able pupils, resulting in less progress than expected being made. At present, there are still weaknesses in Year 2 pupils' writing because too few write at length with the variety of language and precision in spelling and punctuation that are expected of this age group.

47. The quality of teaching was good in all but one of the five lessons seen, which indicates an improving picture for pupils' learning. Lessons are planned carefully with good whole-class activities to develop pupils' skills. Skilful questioning, a good pace to learning and very good relationships between adults and pupils support achievement well. Teachers are using imaginative methods to promote writing. For example, a Literacy Festival Project pairing Year 2 and Year 5 pupils from the junior school resulted in effective learning for all of them. This was due to clear tasks being set, namely to research and write a page for a non-fiction book about plants and animals, with good support by the adults and helpful resources. Teaching assistants are deployed effectively to support pupils' learning, particularly when they work with less-able pupils and those with special educational needs. Teachers mark work regularly and generally point out to pupils how they can improve.
48. The subject is satisfactorily led and managed. Strengths and weaknesses have been identified correctly, and a range of strategies put in place to improve writing. These include 'Rainbow Writing' and 'Big Writing', special activities for specific groups of pupils, but it is too soon to judge their effect on pupils' progress. Overall, improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory.

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

49. The use and development of pupils' language skills through other subjects is satisfactory and teachers are reviewing their planning to extend these opportunities. Already, creative approaches are being used. For example, a Year 2 dance/drama lesson based on the story and music of *The Colour Maker's Assistant* enabled the teacher to make imaginative links between colours and emotions. She inspired pupils to explore these feelings through speaking, listening and movement, with all making good progress. A selection of 'big books' supports children's learning in all subjects. Pupils are encouraged to read learning objectives, instructions and key words displayed in each lesson and to use them in their speech and writing.

### **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

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

- Results in national tests have improved, but more-able pupils are still not doing well enough
- Management has correctly identified aspects of pupils' work that need to improve, but has not yet taken the appropriate action
- Although teaching is satisfactory, there are a number of weaknesses
- Pupils' attitudes to work are very good and they enjoy their mathematics lessons
- Pupils are given too few tasks that encourage them to solve problems independently

#### **Commentary**

50. Standards are about the same as at the last inspection, but results in national tests have improved recently. In 2003, the results were average, which was a significant improvement on the previous year. The school's data about current attainment in Year 2 indicate a further improvement in the proportion of pupils reaching the expected Level 2. However, Year 2 pupils' current work shows that too few are reaching the higher Level 3 to make a significant difference to the overall standards, which remain average. Whilst the teaching ensures that pupils make steady progress in developing their skills in number, shape and measures, some of this work is insufficiently challenging, and there are too few activities that encourage pupils to develop their skills in using mathematics to solve problems, which would help them to reach the higher level.
51. In Year 2, almost all the pupils have a sound grasp of calculations with numbers to 100, adding and subtracting accurately and beginning simple multiplication and division. For example, pupils totaled amounts of money such as 30p and 29p and then found the change from £1. Their understanding of fractions is developing, for example in finding  $\frac{1}{2}$  of 16p. They have a secure knowledge of shapes and can identify features such as curved and flat faces on solid shapes. The work shows that pupils

are experiencing a satisfactory range of learning in most aspects of the subject, but there are too few activities that challenge them to explore patterns in numbers and shapes. In Year 1, work sheets are dated and ordered but in Year 2 too many of the work sheets are undated, making it difficult to track the pupils' progress. Pupils do too little work in exercise books and, where they do, presentation is untidy.

52. When pupils join Year 1, standards are average because pupils have made very good progress through the Foundation Stage. During Years 1 and 2, pupils' achievement is satisfactory. In lessons, teachers give different tasks to pupils of different abilities, and they provide good support for the less-able pupils. However, whilst the tasks for the more-able pupils may involve higher numbers, they do not always place greater demands on these pupils' mathematical thinking. For example, finding change from £1 is more difficult than finding change from 50p, but the mathematical skills are the same. Pupils' recorded work, therefore, shows that pupils of all abilities often complete similar work, with varying degrees of success, rather than appropriately challenging work with an appropriate degree of success. As a result, more-able pupils do not always achieve as well as they should. Average and less-able pupils achieve satisfactorily and work is generally better matched to their level of understanding. An adult usually works with the less-able pupils, including those who have special educational needs, which gives them the confidence to be successful. Teachers know the level at which pupils are working, but they are not always clear about the work pupils need to do next to extend their skills.
53. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. It was satisfactory in three of the five lessons seen, good in one but unsatisfactory in one. Teachers' planning of lessons is clear and detailed, and they make sure that pupils know what they are going to learn. A weakness in some lessons seen was that teachers stuck to their plans too closely, even when it was clear that many of the pupils already knew some of the planned learning. They did not have the subject expertise to extend and adapt the work. In whole-class sessions, teachers explain new work in an interesting way, often asking challenging questions and involving pupils in demonstrations, but they do not make enough use of quick-fire mental mathematics activities to sharpen pupils' recall of number facts. Where teaching was unsatisfactory, the whole-class session was too slow, did not challenge the pupils' sufficiently, and left too little time for the pupils' individual tasks. Very good relationships help adults to focus pupils on their work and this supports progress. For example, in a good lesson for the Year 1/2 class, pupils were learning about doubling and, although the activities were challenging, adults helped the pupils to find the best ways to tackle them, which led to good achievement. A weakness in some lessons was that independent activities were not well matched to pupils' existing attainment, being either too hard or too easy, and so pupils did not make the progress of which they were capable.
54. Management of the subject is satisfactory. There is a growing understanding of what is done well and what needs to improve, based on analysis of pupils' work and the quality of teaching. As yet, however, management does not have a clear enough view of the reasons for weaknesses, and action to tackle them is at an early stage. There is little evidence in pupils' work or in lessons that ICT skills are used to support work in mathematics. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory, but there is a strong impetus from management and a very positive attitude amongst the teachers about improving pupils' current achievement.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

55. Pupils' use and development of mathematics in other subjects is satisfactory. There are some good examples of pupils recording results in graphs and tables in science, and measuring when making products in design and technology. In topic work, teachers make incidental links with mathematics, such as work about dates in history, but opportunities to develop mathematical skills are not planned systematically enough.

## SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils make steady progress in developing their scientific knowledge, but they have too few opportunities to experiment and investigate
- Pupils of all abilities generally do the same work, and so some pupils are not always challenged appropriately
- In the lessons seen, the pupils enjoyed their learning, particularly the practical tasks
- Teachers place a good emphasis on developing pupils' scientific vocabulary

### Commentary

56. Standards are about the same as at the last inspection. In 2003, teachers' assessments of Year 2 pupils' attainment showed that the proportion reaching the expected Level 2 was below average, but an average proportion, about a quarter, gained the higher Level 3. Year 2 pupils' current work confirms this picture of average standards. Most of the pupils have a sound knowledge of science for their age, such as classifying materials into natural and man made, understanding the effects that exercise has on their bodies, and knowing that plants need particular conditions if they are to grow. With help, they carry out simple experiments, for example answering the question, "Which fabric is most hard wearing?" They predict which fabric they think will be the best, test a variety of fabrics using sand paper, and reach a simple conclusion. As at the last inspection, there are too few examples of this type of investigation in pupils' work, and so the skills of being a scientist, testing out questions and reaching conclusions, are not developed systematically enough. Pupils have too few opportunities to explore how to make experiments fair and to develop the quality of their conclusions, drawing on what they already know from their everyday experience of science.
57. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. When they join Year 1, standards are average because lots of practical activities provided during the Foundation Stage have developed their knowledge and understanding of the world well. During Years 1 and 2, pupils are generally given the same work, with support provided for the less-able pupils and occasional adaptation for the more able. Whilst this is appropriate for some activities, work sheets often provide insufficient scientific challenge for the more-able pupils. The over use of work sheets also prevents pupils from experiencing the variety of ways in which they might record their findings, and so developing their literacy skills. In tasks where pupils are encouraged to experiment and investigate, such as the work on forces seen during the inspection, there is scope for the more-able pupils to be adventurous in their thinking and to describe their findings in more detail. Because pupils have not had enough of this type of experience, their conclusions to the experiments they have carried out are very simple and do not reflect the level of scientific thinking they showed they were capable of in discussion with inspectors.
58. In the two lessons observed, the quality of teaching was good in one and satisfactory in the other. Teachers introduce and reinforce effectively the use of correct scientific vocabulary. In a good lesson for the Year 1/2 class, an imaginative introduction in which the teacher juggled balls and bounced them against the wall caught the pupils' interest and enabled her to ask some searching questions about forces. The pupils showed they had a sound grasp of the forces that make objects move, including an early understanding of gravity. Well-organised work in groups, in which pupils investigated how a variety of objects behave when a force is applied, created lots of opportunities for adults to discuss what was happening and refine the pupils' thinking. A weakness was that little recording was expected, so the pupils were not learning that scientists record their findings. Opportunities were missed to use discoveries made within one group to make general points to the whole class. A similar lesson in another class also provided good opportunities for practical activity, and the teacher made some good points about how testing has to be fair to be accurate. The independent activities, however, became rather noisy and disorganised, which reduced the quality of the pupils' learning. In both lessons, teachers missed opportunities to promote learning about scientific skills, for example observing carefully and describing exactly what happens, which indicated weaknesses in their subject knowledge.
59. The curriculum is satisfactory, but coverage of various aspects of science lacks depth, a weakness that the school has plans to remedy. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory,

with an increasingly clear view, based on scrutiny of pupils' work and teachers' planning, of what needs to be done to raise standards. Weaker aspects of pupils' achievement have been identified and appropriate action is planned to tackle them. Pupils make some use of ICT, particularly the digital camera, to support their work, but this is patchy. Systems for assessing pupils' attainment and tracking their progress are in place, with useful assessments each term to find out what the pupils have learnt. This information is not yet used consistently to plan appropriately challenging work. Resources are good, but the small Year 1/2 classroom restricts possibilities for practical work. The school recognises that, to build on satisfactory progress since the last inspection, improving pupils' skills in experiment and investigation is the main priority.

### **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)**

60. No lessons were observed and so it is not possible to make a judgement about overall provision. Pupils were seen working independently on computers, a reasonable quantity of their past work was available for scrutiny, and the school portfolio contains examples of pupils' work. This evidence, along with discussions with staff, enables a judgement to be made about standards.
61. By Year 2, standards are in line with the expectations for pupils of this age, and similar to those reported at the last inspection. Good teaching of basic skills in the Foundation Stage gives pupils a good basis for steady progress during Years 1 and 2. They quickly become familiar with the mouse and keyboard and carry out effectively tasks such as accessing programs, saving and printing their work. By Year 2, pupils use a range of programs confidently. They use word processing for short pieces of writing and captions, but there are few examples of longer pieces of writing. They have experience of working with data-handling programs, for example in science when they use information to generate a graph of favourite activities for exercise. There are examples of pupils using a graphics program for drawing. However, these are largely isolated examples and do not show sustained and extended use of ICT, which would build specific skills.
62. Leadership of the subject is satisfactory. The subject leader and headteacher have jointly produced detailed guidance for teachers, to raise standards in ICT skills, knowledge and understanding and to enhance and extend pupils' learning across the curriculum. Good assessment procedures have been put in place. The subject leader has collected examples of pupils' work in a school portfolio to demonstrate the expected levels of attainment compared with national standards, and as a useful support to teachers. Every year a printed sample of each child's work is kept in their Star book, to show their level of attainment. Pupils have an 'I can' sheet that forms an ongoing record of what they can do and how much support they require. The subject leader also observes lessons to monitor the quality of teaching and learning, and to provide helpful feedback to teachers.
63. There has recently been significant investment in replacing and enhancing equipment, exceeding national targets for 2004. There is also a good range of resources to support pupils' learning. The school has suitable measures in place to protect children when they are using the internet. National training has been provided for staff. Good training and support have been given through the expertise and knowledge of both the subject leader and headteacher.

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

64. Teachers' planning shows satisfactory use and development of ICT skills across subjects. For example, this term Year 2 pupils will have the opportunity to search a CD Rom to find information linked with their topic on the seaside, using indexes and finding key words. In this topic, there are also opportunities planned for pupils' to use digital cameras to take photographs of the school environment and to link this with their art work activities, using a range of textiles and materials. There is recent evidence of Year 2 pupils' careful work using a graphics draw/paint program, to design a coat to be made in a design technology lesson. During the inspection, however, in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, only limited use and development of ICT was observed, resulting in missed opportunities to develop pupils' learning and skills.



## HUMANITIES

65. Only two history lessons were observed, and no lessons were seen in geography or religious education. As a result, it is not possible to make judgements about overall provision in any of these subjects. A reasonable selection of pupils' work was available from which to make a judgement about standards. Inspectors also examined teachers' planning and talked to teachers and pupils. Suitable ranges of activities and adequate time allowances are provided to enable pupils to meet the National Curriculum expectations for geography and history and to reflect the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus for religious education.
66. In **geography**, standards are as expected for pupils' ages. In Year 2, pupils have studied islands, compared life on different islands to their own and drawn simple maps. They are familiar with symbols for directions, and keys to objects on a map. In Year 1, pupils study houses and homes in the locality and in different places around the world, and draw simple maps and plans. In Year 2 this local study is extended to a comparison of Clowne and Chesterfield.
67. Standards in **history** are close to those expected for pupils' ages. In the two lessons seen, the quality of teaching and learning were satisfactory. In a Year 1 lesson, the pupils learnt about toys old and new. They showed interest by the questions they asked and a good understanding of the similarities and differences between the past and present. The teacher placed a good emphasis on introducing the right vocabulary so the more-able pupils could write a few words about what they had learnt. Good resources promoted good discussion among the pupils, but their attention waned during a fairly long whole-class session. In a Year 2 lesson, the pupils also used a good range of resources to find out information about the past, including books and an ICT program called *Magic Grandad*. Past work in both year groups shows pupils have studied various events including the Great Fire of London and famous people such as Florence Nightingale and Guy Fawkes. Because work is predominantly done on work sheets, there were too few opportunities to link it with literacy, particularly writing.
68. In **religious education**, standards are about the same as those expected for pupils' ages. The curriculum follows the locally agreed syllabus and the well-planned programme of assemblies offers very good support to the subject. Past work shows that pupils are learning about stories from the Bible and Year 2 pupils show a sound knowledge of the life of Jesus and have written some good accounts of His birth. Visits from members of local churches enrich the curriculum and pupils are developing an understanding of the important festivals of different faiths.

## CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

69. Two lessons were observed in physical education, but it was not possible to see the full range of the curriculum. Only one lesson was seen in each of art and design and design and technology. No lessons were observed in music. As a result, it is not possible to make judgements about overall provision in any of these subjects. In art and design and design and technology, a reasonable selection of pupils' work was available from which to make judgements about standards. Teachers' planning and the views of subject leaders were also taken into account.
70. Standards in **art and design** are as expected for pupils' ages, and they experience a satisfactory range of work, which helps them to build their skills steadily. For example, Year 1 pupils' pencil drawings of houses in the locality, linked well to a wider topic on House and Homes, show that they are being encouraged to observe carefully and to include detail in their drawings. Focusing on colour-mixing skills, and drawing on the work of famous artists such as Turner, pupils painted landscapes and seascapes, which are of good quality. Teachers use a good range of resources, including examples of the work of famous artists and craftspeople, to stimulate pupils' imagination. Good use is also made of visiting artists such as Professor Pop-Up, who taught Year 1 pupils how to make puppets and masks. The pupils' animal masks show considerable variety, including a striking tiger and an imaginative octopus, along with good skills in making and decorating. Art is used well to enhance other subjects, as seen in the observational drawings of daffodils linked to work in science, and the striking Fire of London paintings linked to work in history.
71. The quality of teaching was satisfactory in the Year 1 lesson observed. A good introduction used a range of resources to stimulate the pupils' thinking about colour, with challenging questions about things associated with different colours. The whole-class session, however, lasted rather too long

and, whilst a good variety of practical activities was planned, some of the colouring tasks lacked challenge and did not relate well enough to the learning objective for the lesson.

72. Year 2 pupils also complete a good range of work, using a variety of media and developing their art skills steadily. Linked to work in geography about a Mexican village, pupils made and decorated colourful masks, using paint and collage. More-able pupils extended this by making papier maché masks. After looking at the way in which Tudor artists painted portraits, Year 2 pupils painted their own portraits in the same style, capturing the detail of the costumes of that era effectively. During the inspection, Year 2 worked with pupils at the junior school on a project led by Junction Arts. They made life-size shelters by weaving long branches of willow. They decorated them with animals and mobiles made by bending and shaping the willow, adding other materials to enhance the decoration. This was a lively and very challenging day's activity that created a high level of interest and creativity amongst the pupils. Working co-operatively with older children also made a very good contribution to the pupils' social development. Management of the subject is satisfactory, with a clear view of the strengths gained by linking art with other subjects, whilst recognising the need to develop art skills in their own right.
73. In **design and technology**, standards are as expected for pupils' ages. Teaching was very good in a Year 1/2 lesson observed, based on a unit of work called 'Joseph's Coat'. The teacher's enthusiasm and good subject knowledge resulted in exciting and challenging work for the pupils. The very good teaching of skills and support by adults enabled all pupils to design, make and use paper patterns. This was followed by cutting, shaping and joining fabric to make simple garments. During this year, the subject leader is evaluating the quality of work across the school and collecting a helpful selection of work samples to assess standards and guide teachers. A wide range of materials and resources are available to support pupils' learning. Teachers' planning, based on detailed schemes of work, shows that pupils receive an appropriate curriculum with opportunities to design, make and evaluate a range of products.
74. In **music**, very little evidence was gathered. There are clear and detailed plans for class music lessons. Pupils sang enthusiastically in the assemblies seen, responding particularly well to the spirited lead provided by the headteacher's singing and guitar playing. They listened with interest to the music that was played at the beginning and end of each assembly, and many could identify some of the instruments. A few pupils are learning to play the recorder and, though they are still at the very early stages, they were very keen to show inspectors their skills. Year 2 pupils enjoyed making music using a computer program, led by visiting members of a local arts' group. Management of the subject is satisfactory, and keen to provide lots of opportunities for music making. Staff have a good range of musical expertise, which was evident in activities from the nursery to Year 2. The music room provides good facilities. Pupils' social skills are developed well through concerts and performances in school, which are much enjoyed by parents.
75. In the two lessons seen, standards in **physical education** were close to those expected for pupils' ages and the quality of teaching was good in one and satisfactory in the other. A Year 2 gymnastics/games lesson demonstrated that pupils work enthusiastically and co-operatively in pairs and small groups. In a Year 2 dance/drama lesson, the teacher skillfully used stories and music to stimulate pupils to use movement imaginatively to communicate feelings. In both lessons, teachers gave appropriate attention to health and safety aspects. The subject leader is evaluating lessons this year and providing guidance to teachers in assessing standards. Extra-curricula activities planned include the introduction of a dance club for Year 2 pupils.

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

76. No lessons were seen in this subject and there was no past work completed by the pupils that could be used to evaluate the standards achieved. As a result, it was not possible to make judgements about pupils' achievements or the quality of teaching and learning. The curriculum section of this report evaluates provision for pupils' personal, social and health education as **good**.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>3</b>
How inclusive the school is	3
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>3</b>
Pupils' achievement	3
<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>	<b>2</b>
Attendance	5
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	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	4
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
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	2
<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>3</b>
The governance of the school	4
The leadership of the headteacher	2
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).*

