

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **DECOY PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Newton Abbot

LEA area: Devon

Unique reference number: 113209

Headteacher: Mr L E Peach

Lead inspector: Mr Michael Pipes

Dates of inspection: 15 – 18 September 2003

Inspection number: 255960

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

|                              |   |
|------------------------------|---|
| Type of school:              | Primary                                 |
| School category:             | Community                               |
| Age range of pupils:         | 3–11                                    |
| Gender of pupils:            | Mixed                                   |
| Number on roll:              | 492                                     |
| School address:              | Deer Park Road<br>Decoy<br>Newton Abbot |
| Postcode:                    | TQ12 1DH                                |
| Telephone number:            | 01626 353282                            |
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| Appropriate authority:       | Governing Body                          |
| Name of chair of governors:  | Mr Rod Peers                            |
| Date of previous inspection: | 16 March 1998                           |

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Decoy Primary School, one of the largest in Devon, serves a mixed residential area. The attainment of its pupils on entry covers a wide range but is, overall, average. The school is over-subscribed, with very little pupil or staff mobility. There are very few pupils from other ethnic backgrounds. Two pupils speak English as an additional language, and are fluently bilingual. About one-sixth of the pupils are on the register of special educational needs, and seven, slightly above the national average, have a full statement and specific extra support. The nature of the intake is changing slowly. The percentage of the pupils entitled to a free school meal is rising and the perception of the headteacher is that the capability of the intake is declining very slightly.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

| Members of the inspection team |                |                | Subject responsibilities   |
|--------------------------------|----------------|----------------|--|
| 17651                          | Michael Pipes  | Lead inspector | Science<br>Music<br>Religious education<br>Special educational needs                 |
| 13762                          | Norman Shelley | Lay inspector  |  |
| 32136                          | Lesley Brookes | Team inspector | Foundation stage curriculum<br>Geography<br>History                                  |
| 17541                          | Fran Ashworth  | Team inspector | Mathematics<br>Information and communication technology<br>Design and technology     |
| 23056                          | Teresa Manzi   | Team inspector | English<br>English as an additional language<br>Art and design<br>Physical education |

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**Decoy Primary is a very good school. It gives excellent value for money.** There is a wide spread of pupil capability but, overall, the intake is average. Test results at the end of the infant stage are above average in reading and mathematics though, until recently, below average in writing. The 2002 test results showed that by the time the pupils left the school, standards, overall, were well above average in English and science, and above average in mathematics. The improvement in results at both Year 2 and Year 6 has been above the national trend recently. The quality of the teaching and learning is predominantly good, and very good in about a quarter of lessons. During the inspection no unsatisfactory teaching was seen. The pupils are very well behaved. This is a happy school with a clear sense of purpose, where the pupils' achievement is good. Despite well below average funding per pupil, the school, with the support of parents, and spending wisely, maintains adequate resources with some funding set aside for innovation.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The headteacher provides excellent leadership;
- Management is very good and the school gives excellent value for money;
- Standards have been rising recently at a rate above the national trend, and all pupils are now achieving well;
- The accommodation is poor in many respects;
- Very effective use is made of information and communication technology (ICT), both to support learning and to improve administration;
- Pupils' induction routines when they join the school, and leaving routines to the secondary phase, are exceptionally good.

When last inspected in 1998, the school was described as 'very good'. There were no key issues for improvement. The school continues to make good progress. It also continues to be very popular and is oversubscribed. The governors have a very good understanding of their responsibilities and fulfil them well. The pupils become mature and responsible and contribute effectively, for instance, through the School Council. Very good attention is paid to staff development and self-evaluation. There are very good internal mechanisms for ensuring continuing positive development and improvement.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

| Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with: | all schools |      |      | similar schools |
|---|-------------|------|------|-----------------|
|   | 2000        | 2001 | 2002 | 2002            |
| English   | A           | A    | A    | A               |
| mathematics   | B           | B    | B    | B               |
| science   | B           | C    | A    | A               |

*Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average  
Similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 2.*

**The pupils' achievement is good.** Children entering the nursery, or direct into the reception year, settle quickly and make progress. By the end of the infant years, the pupils of average and above average capability have above average skills in language, literacy, mathematics and ICT. Overall, the standards of work seen, early in the school year, were close to national expectations in the foundation and infant years. In the junior years, standards are above average, except in ICT where recent school advances came a little late for the older pupils. Assessment is very good, but with some variability in the quality of marking of the pupils' work. Nevertheless, with some teachers talking with the pupils rather than making written comments on their work, the progress of each pupil

is tracked accurately. The school's reports to parents are very good. The pupils with special educational needs, or with English as an additional language, achieve well. Throughout the school, pupils with special gifts and talents are recognised, encouraged and supported well.

**The pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are very good.** Their attitudes and behaviour gradually improve from good in the infant years to very good in the junior. The pupils' confidence and self-esteem become very good. Attendance is good, punctuality is very good, and there have been no recent exclusions.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The quality of education provided by the school is very good. The pupils achieve well by the time they leave the school because the teaching is good.** Their learning proceeds logically and at a good pace. This is due to the excellent medium and short-term planning which lays out what is to be covered. Stored on the teachers' laptops, this planning is reviewed regularly, based on assessment of progress and what has succeeded. Clear development targets are set for the pupils needing extra help. The teacher responsible and the designated governor monitor progress very effectively. The breadth of curricular opportunities is very good. The school provides a very good range and quality of enrichment activities including clubs, sports, visits and visitors. There are very good, planned cross-curricular links between subjects, the vehicle for which is often the advanced ICT applications introduced into the school recently. Partnership with the parents and links with the community are very good.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**Leadership and management are very good.** The headteacher is providing excellent leadership. The very good school improvement plan is clear, concise and realistic. The deputy head and subject leaders are very organised. All teachers know exactly what is expected of them. The governors manage their responsibilities very well. A few of the parents at the pre-inspection meeting wanted to be more informed about current priorities for development, but it was early in the school year, and past newsletters show that the school shares them openly.

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

The parents are very happy to have their children in this popular school. Some of them provide valuable help in school, and many contribute to the school in other ways. The answers in the pupil questionnaires were very positive. The pupils are very proud of their school. They contribute keenly to School Council deliberations and their requests for improvements are taken very seriously.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

In a very effective school where there are many more strengths than weaknesses, the following might usefully be added to the clear improvement plan:

- Improve marking where necessary to bring it up to the standard of the best;
- Improve the consistency and regularity of homework in the junior years.

## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

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

The achievement of the pupils who are admitted at the beginning of the infant years and stay through to transfer to secondary school is good. Overall attainment is average on entry to the school. Those pupils of average and above average capability attain above average standards by the end of the infant years. The results at the end of the infant years have risen significantly over the last three years. The pupils are well and systematically taught. In the junior years, demanding teaching raises standards and achievement. By the time the pupils leave the school, standards are well above average in English and science, and above average in mathematics. Recently, an increasing proportion of the pupils have been attaining the higher Level 5, but with the girls doing slightly better than the boys. Throughout the school, the pupils with special needs are well supported and encouraged.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is very well planned and effective in maintaining above-average standards.
- In the junior years a good level of intellectual demand leads to good achievement
- The higher-capability pupils do well in the junior years.
- Pupils with special needs benefit from individual improvement targets
- Raised expectations in writing are requiring increasing intellectual effort by the pupils.

#### Commentary

1. Pupils in the nursery and reception classes have very well organised teaching, and the learning is, in consequence, logical, sequential and effective. By the end of the reception year, most of the pupils will have met the early learning goals. The others will have been tracked and monitored, with good quality intervention and support to enable them to benefit from the infant years curriculum.
2. Through the infant years, the pupils make steady, and sometimes good, progress. There has been recent very good emphasis on improving reading. Writing is the prime focus in the very good current school improvement plan. In the last inspection report (1998), standards in Year 2 were judged to be above average in speaking, mathematics, singing and art. There have been improvements in reading, design and technology (D and T) and ICT to an above-average standard, and in art and design to a very good standard. It is in writing that the school is now beginning to require above average effort, and the intellectual demands show early signs of raising achievement and pupil satisfaction.

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

| Standards in: | School results | National results |
|---------------|----------------|------------------|
| reading       | 16.6 ( 14.7 )  | 15.8 (15.7 )     |
| writing       | 14.1(14.3)     | 14.4 (14.3 )     |
| mathematics   | 17.0 (15.3 )   | 16.5 (16.2 )     |

*There were 68 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

3. In the junior years, the expectations of application and intellectual effort are evident from very early in Year 3. Experienced teachers, with their sights already set on targets for the end of the junior years, question effectively to test understanding, and expectations are demanding. The pupils of lower capability, or receiving special needs help, are, however, fully and expertly



included in class-work. The deployment and use of teaching assistants is, on the whole, effective in helping these pupils. Through Years 3 to 6, achievement improves as the pupils become independent learners and take increasing responsibility for their own progress. In the upper years, the pupils are aware of the level at which they are working, and work with the teacher to set challenging but attainable targets. The school provides very clear and informative reports and the teachers are available informally most days for occasional consultations.

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

| Standards in: | School results | National results |
|---------------|----------------|------------------|
| English       | 29.3 ( 29.1 )  | 27.0 ( 27.0 )    |
| mathematics   | 28.3 ( 27.5 )  | 26.7 ( 26.6 )    |
| science       | 30.4 (28.9 )   | 28.3 (28.3 )     |

*There were 67 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

- At the time of the last (1998) inspection report, standards by the end of Year 6 were judged to be above average in speaking and listening, mathematics, science, art, design and technology (D and T), music, physical education (PE) and religious education (RE). They are now securely above average in English, and continue above average in mathematics, science, D and T, and music. Standards are improving rapidly in ICT: they are above average in Years 3 and 4, but average in the upper years because these pupils were later to benefit from the school's focus on this area.
- Results in the Year 6 national tests have improved recently at a rate above the national trend. A significant factor in this has been the increase in the proportion of the pupils attaining the higher Level 5. In 2002 over half the pupils reached the higher level in English and science, well above the national average, and over a third in mathematics, above the national average. Also, over the past five years, girls' results have improved more than the boys'. The school is aware of this and has been taking effective action based on its very good pupil tracking and statistical analysis techniques.

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

The pupils' attitudes to school, behaviour and personal development are very good. Attendance is good. The pupils are confident, self-assured, friendly and respectful. They enjoy coming to school and particularly appreciate sharing in decision making through the school council.

**Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils' attitudes to school and learning are very positive
- Relationships between pupils are very good
- Behaviour is very good
- Pupils become suitably mature and responsible by the time they leave school
- Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good
- Attendance is above the average for primary schools and punctuality is very good.

## Commentary

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

| Authorised absence |     | Unauthorised absence |     |
|--------------------|-----|----------------------|-----|
| School data        | 4.5 | School data          | 0.2 |
| National data      | 5.9 | National data        | 0.5 |

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

### Ethnic background of pupils

| Categories used in the Annual School Census |
|---|
| White – British                             |
| Mixed – White and Black Caribbean           |
| White – other                               |

### Exclusions in the last school year

| No of pupils on roll | Number of fixed period exclusions | Number of permanent exclusions |
|----------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 468                  | 0                                 | 0                              |
| 2                    | 0                                 | 0                              |
| 3                    | 0                                 | 0                              |

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

6. The pupils are very enthusiastic about their school and appreciate the friendly and supportive treatment that they receive from their teachers. They enjoy all of their experiences in school. Large numbers of pupils take part in the numerous clubs and activities that are available. In lessons, pupils work conscientiously and seek to do their best. Almost all pupils have a good record of attendance and arrive promptly for the start of school. Effective systems are in place to promote punctuality and monitor attendance.
7. Behaviour is almost always very good because it is expected of the pupils, and most of the teaching is stimulating and interesting. Their conduct during breaks is very responsible. Their efforts and conduct are recognised and celebrated. Effective strategies are applied to support the few pupils who, at times, have difficulties exercising self-control. Relationships between pupils are very good. Pupils are co-operative and mutually supportive. They get on very well together when at play and yet are suitably competitive when appropriate. Incidents of anti-social behaviour are rare. Pupils become suitably mature and responsible by the time they leave the school. They take full advantage of the School Council, which provides them with excellent opportunities to take responsibility for their own community. They take on well the special tasks they are offered, for example being a buddy to a new pupil joining the school.
8. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is very good. Art and music contribute well to their appreciation of the world around them. The pupils engage in a lot of reflection and write about, for example, faith; special places; parables and their experiences in school. They develop very well their understanding of the values of friends and family.
9. Pupils develop a clear understanding of right and wrong through the example of all the adults in the school. Expectations are prominently displayed and consistently reinforced. The ethos of care and consideration for others pervades the school at all levels.
10. The pupils' social development is very good because of the very wide range of experiences in which they participate. Extra-curricular activities and visits out of school are numerous and the residential experience at an outdoor centre is character building. Pupils develop respect for others and their opinions, and a good understanding of today's moral and social issues.

11. The pupils' cultural development is very well provided for through religious education lessons, which include investigation of various faiths and cultures. Guided reading schemes include a good range of literature that extends awareness of various lifestyles. Internet links are well used well to provide insight, for example about how people of other faiths worship. Pupils visit relevant places of interest related to their own and others' heritage. The many visitors to school, such as theatre groups, enrich pupils' cultural development.

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

The quality of education provided by the school is very good. The school is oversubscribed and national test results have improved steadily over the last few years, despite a dip in the Year 2 results in reading and mathematics from 1999 to 2001. To correct that setback, the school took swift and effective action. A reading strategy, involving parents in school for the first half-hour each day, has been very successful, and is being continued for the benefit of subsequent year groups. The success in the school's popularity and results, with a broad range of curricular and extra-curricular activities, has produced a confident, progressive, innovative and happy school.

### **Teaching and learning**

The quality of teaching is predominantly good, and the good quality of learning mirrors this. At the foundation stage, the teaching is good. The pupils are quickly confident and inquisitive. With very well structured lesson planning, learning progresses well, supported by very good assessment and recording. In the infant years, the teaching and learning continue to be good. A particular feature is the high expectations of application and industry. Teaching, learning and the pupils' achievement, stimulated by demands for intellectual effort, are good in the junior years.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The teachers' planning is excellent and in most lessons seen the delivery was at least good
- Assessment of the pupils' progress and attainment is very good
- Expectation and challenge are good, and suitably intellectually demanding in the junior years
- The needs of individuals, whatever their capability, are met well
- There is a need for more regular and consistent homework in the junior years.

### **Commentary**

12. The parents and pupils say that they judge the teaching to be good. The vast majority of the parents are pleased with the progress made by their children. The few express a slight residual longing for setting by ability and specific preparation for grammar school places in nearby Torquay. However, they acknowledge that the higher capability pupils are sufficiently challenged.
13. The range of capability, quite wide, is very well catered for in the teachers' planning, and teaching assistants make a valuable contribution, particularly with the lower capability pupils. There is no setting by ability, although there are two classes in each year group, and three in Year 6. The year teachers are, therefore, able to plan together, complementing each other's expertise. The well-judged expectations of the different groups of pupils in each class ensures that none is neglected. The higher-attaining pupils are stretched to good levels of attainment; the slower pupils are given well-structured systematic support. Some parents were a little concerned about the 'average' pupils, but focus on their progress during the inspection shows that they are no less well served.

14. The improving standards are clearly and closely related to the very good, concise and clear development plans updated each year. Restricted to about six areas related to need and innovation, the actions taken relate directly to classroom practice and teaching strategies. The need to improve reading in the infant years is a very good example of this in action. The same unremitting focus on writing is now having an equally dramatic effect. The teachers have prepared themselves through personal professional development, and their enthusiasm and determination is transmitted to the pupils. Expectations are high and the pupils are responding enthusiastically.
15. The inspection occurred early in the school year, but already some of the older pupils were showing good confidence and expertise as independent learners. There has been very rapid progress on introducing ICT as a tool for learning, both for the pupils and for the teachers. The very good assessment system, based on a local authority software package, is used to monitor, very effectively, progress and learning. The teachers in each year assess the impact of each lesson or section of the syllabus, and make amendments ready for the next year. Every teacher has a laptop and this planning is stored and retrieved electronically. The planning is available to supply teachers (as happened once during the inspection, when there was barely a hiccup in the progress made by the pupils). This excellent planning is a significant factor in the teachers' confidence and authority, leading to good, and often very good, teaching. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen during the inspection. The structure and quality of the pupils' learning reflected this planning, and was also predominantly good, sometimes very good.

**Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 57 lessons**

| Excellent | Very good | Good      | Satisfactory | Unsatisfactory | Poor      | Very Poor |
|-----------|-----------|-----------|--------------|----------------|-----------|-----------|
| 1 (2 %)   | 15 (26 %) | 26 (46 %) | 15 (26 %)    | Nil (0 %)      | Nil (0 %) | Nil (0 %) |

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

16. There are, however, some impediments to teaching and learning, outside the control of the headteacher and staff. The premises are poor. There is no space big enough for a whole-school assembly; there have to be four sittings at lunchtime, keeping many of the supervisors indoors and away from playground supervision. Some of the classrooms in the old block are too small. The library is far too small, and not big enough for class use. The assortment of temporary huts means that although outside toilets have been abolished, the school now has 'outside children', including seven-year-olds, who have to cross the yard.

**The curriculum**

Curricular provision is very good.

17. It meets statutory requirements and is enriched by the planned use of visits and visitors together with a very good range of extra-curricular activities. Added to this, the very good links between subjects help pupils learn and keep them interested.

**Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The curriculum is very well planned and led. High standards are expected.
- Innovation, as a result of very good analysis, means that needs are tackled well.
- Very good cross-curricular links and visits are planned.
- Preparation for the transfer to secondary school is excellent.
- A very good range of extra-curricular activities enriches the curriculum.
- Accommodation is poor for the main school. It is unsatisfactory for the Foundation Stage.

- The library is very small and stock is thin in some areas.

## **Commentary**

18. The curriculum for children in the Nursery and Reception classes is matched very well to the six areas of learning for the Foundation Stage. Very good planning ensures that these children are given exciting challenges and benefit from a broad curriculum. The curriculum for pupils in Years 1 to 6 is broad and includes all subjects of the National Curriculum. Sufficient time is given to each subject. Provision for religious education, sex and drugs education and for the pupil's personal, social and health education is satisfactory. The curriculum is fully inclusive and is equally appropriate for all pupils.
19. The curriculum co-ordinator has a very good picture of the whole school. She is an expert with the computer and data analysis. Thus, improvements to schemes of work and analysis of test results are used very well to plan schemes of work. The system of refining schemes as they are used is very efficient and appreciated by the staff. All in the school are keen to raise standards and thus are very willing to try a variety of strategies to do so. For instance, last year, half hour reading sessions were introduced at the start of day with parents, helping to raise standards. This year, the pupils' speaking and listening skills are a focus in order that their writing skills will be improved. All the time the teachers are seeking to refine and improve provision. Initiatives are proving successful.
20. The teachers plan very well together to meet individual pupils' needs. Very good planning and communication between staff means that the needs of all pupils are met. Pupils with special educational needs have clear and precise educational plans, which are well used by teachers. The school fully meets the Code of Practice for Special Educational Needs.
21. Overall, planning takes very good account of developing links between subjects and in using visits and visitors to make subjects come alive. For instance, to enrich history when studying the Tudors', an actor visited the school and the pupils remember many facts about the Plague; 'babies were hung on the wall to be out of the way of rats'.
22. The school provides very good extra-curricular activities for the older pupils and there is good provision for the infants. Teachers provide netball, football, skipping, scrabble, choir, orchestra and art. They also prepare pupils and take them to a variety of sporting tournaments and provide dramatic productions for parents.
23. There are excellent links with one secondary school and very good links with the others. Teachers from these schools visit and their expertise is used very well. There are computer links. When pupils move to the next stage of education within this school parents are informed well and pupils are asked to name several friends so that they always know someone in their new class.
24. The accommodation is poor. The school has grown and as a result there is a higgledy-piggledy arrangement of old and new buildings, spread over a very large site. Thus the toilets and library are a long way from the Infant classes; infants use the library infrequently. The school hall is too small to accommodate the whole school for assembly or to meet the needs of the oldest pupils for the normal range of equipment for gymnastic lessons. The library is attractive but very small. The school is aware that the book stock is thin in several favourite subjects, for example sports.
25. Teaching assistants are generally used well and have received training. The normal focus of the five special needs assistants is to give support to the lower-attaining pupils. There are sixteen other assistants who support groups in class in rotation.

## **Care, guidance and support**

The arrangements for pupils' care, welfare, health and safety are good and are well implemented. Support and guidance for academic and personal development are very good. The school seeks pupils' views and acts on them.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The procedures for health, safety and welfare are effective
- Pupils receive very good guidance and support for their academic and personal development
- The school respects and responds positively to the School Council's representations
- Poor accommodation adversely affects the quality of life for the pupils
- Some of the support staff have not been fully briefed about child protection procedures.

### **Commentary**

26. Regular safety checks are carried out and prompt attention is given to significant safety concerns. Safe practices are observed in lessons. Risk assessments are undertaken for trips out of school and for curricular activities but are not yet set up on the school's intranet system for easy reference and reminders for teachers. The number of adults qualified to administer first aid is adequate. All relevant specialist agencies provide appropriate services to the school. Child protection procedures are in place and are adhered to, but some non-teaching members of staff have not been fully briefed about the procedures.
27. The inadequacy of the accommodation poses problems. The hall is so small that four sittings are sometimes required at lunchtime and meals have to be eaten too hastily. When adverse weather prevents use of the grassed area pupils have to remain at play for a full hour in a very confined space and this inevitably puts a strain on them to sustain their normally very good conduct. Many classes are in outlying buildings and pupils have to go the main building to use toilets and other facilities. These matters are not in the best interests of pupils' welfare, but the school manages this situation commendably. At lunchtimes, the supervision is stretched but good, and pupils are encouraged to occupy themselves with useful activities.
28. Parents are right to be very impressed with the arrangements for induction of the children when they join the school. Those pupils who join at other than the usual time are quickly integrated into the school with the assistance of a specially appointed 'buddy'. Pupils feel valued and safe because of the way they are treated by all the adults in the school. Relationships between teachers and pupils are very good and pupils are confident to turn to them for help or comfort.
29. The school takes full account of pupils' views, which are mainly but not exclusively communicated through the very effective and respected School Council.
30. Pupils receive very good guidance about personal conduct and many opportunities and experiences are provided for personal development. They receive good support and guidance regarding academic development. Their targets are based on monitoring of their work. Older pupils have a clear understanding about how to improve although some say that they would like the marking of their work to be more constructive. They say that they are achieving as well as they can because their teachers encourage them and are approachable and helpful.

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

The partnership between school and parents is very good. The school's involvement with the community, other schools and colleges is very good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Parents express considerable confidence in the school and are very supportive

- Parents' views are sought and acted upon
- The information provided for parents is very good
- The community plays an important part in the school's provision
- Arrangements are excellent for the transfer of pupils to secondary school
- Some parents do not support their children sufficiently with their work at home
- Parental attendance at curricular workshops is low.

## Commentary

31. Parents are very pleased with the quality of education and care that is provided. They judge the leadership and management of the school to be good. They believe that their children make good progress because of the quality of the teaching. They say that their children are treated well and consequently enjoy school. Contrary to the views of a small minority of parents, inspectors judge that the school acts upon the views of parents, keeps them very well informed, and handles very well the comparatively few instances of anti-social pupil behaviour that occur.
32. Annual school reports provide very good information about the pupils' progress. They now include, in English and Mathematics, a clear assessment about how pupils achieve with regard to expectations for age. Parental attendance is high at consultation meetings, when pupils' targets and progress are discussed. The parents of pupils who have special education needs are fully involved in the review process.
33. A monthly newsletter is supplemented by a Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) newsletter, notice-boards that are well used, and advice each term about what is to be taught. A very attractive school web site is developing well. Teachers and head teacher are readily accessible daily.
34. The school uses a good range of methods to obtain parents' views, including using the very active PTA as a sounding board. It respects and acts on the views expressed and also responds promptly to individual concerns.
35. Many parents participate in the life of the school by assisting in classes and with reading. They provide practical help, for example mending books and helping with grounds maintenance and transport. Parental attendance at school performances is very good but is much lower at curricular workshops. Whilst the majority support their children with their work at home, the school states that a significant minority does not.
36. Visitors to the school, such as theatre groups, who share their expertise and experiences with the pupils, and a very wide range of visits out of school, including a residential at an outdoor centre, enhance pupils' learning and personal development. The environment is used extensively to supplement learning in lessons and pupils contribute to the community, for example by performing at a nursing home and raising funds for charities. Local groups use the school's premises.
37. Pupils are extremely well prepared for transfer to their secondary school. Special features are the curricular bridging projects that are in place and the opportunities for pupils to ask questions and discuss their concerns with secondary pupils through the established video conferencing links. Similar links are used for exchanges with a nearby primary school. The school also works very closely with a university in connection with initial teacher training and benefits considerably from the arrangements.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership of the headteacher is excellent, and of other key staff very good. The management of the school is very good. Governors provide very good leadership and commitment in their areas of

responsibility. The effective delegation of responsibilities and the administrative structure make the management of the school very good.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher’s leadership, balancing consultation with clear vision, is excellent
- The governors’ understanding of the school’s strengths and development needs is very good
- All staff understand their role and responsibility and the management of the school is very good
- The School Council gives the pupils a very good opportunity to contribute to decision making.

### Commentary

38. The headteacher joined the school two years ago, succeeding a head who had been in post for seventeen years. He inherited a very stable and successful school, with low staff turnover and a high reputation with the parents. Good resources had been built up and the finances were in good order. Working very well and closely with the deputy, who had been acting head for two terms, he set out a very clear development strategy, which included short and longer-term objectives. The governors and staff are united and very effective in pursuing these objectives. The most urgent short-term objective, to improve reading, has been met very successfully. The current year’s attainment objective, to improve writing, is also being met. In the longer term, there is an urgent need to improve the accommodation. Innovations in ICT have seen every teacher provided with a laptop for planning, and rapidly extended use of the technology by the pupils.
39. Subject leadership is effective. There have been some recent changes of responsibility, and subject expertise is being built up. Planning is a particular strength. Adopting, and modifying to local needs, the recommended national schemes of work, the teachers assess regularly what has, and has not, succeeded. The monitoring of performance data and taking swift action (as in reading, recently) are excellent. There is progressive improvement in planning, matching lessons to the diverse needs of the pupils.
40. The management of special needs is very good. The co-ordinator briefs the link governor fully, and each pupil is set targets for improvement, which are acknowledged and acted upon by the subject teachers. The majority of support is given by teaching assistants in the classroom, but specialist intervention is used when necessary.
41. The governors bring a good blend of experience, expertise and commitment to their responsibilities. They are fully involved and recognise their leadership responsibilities in shaping the vision and direction of the school. Their understanding of the school, in all its aspects, is excellent because they visit frequently and are very well briefed by the headteacher. The clear, concise and effective school improvement planning emanates from the governing body, briefed and persuaded by the head.
42. Financial planning and routine administration in the school are very well managed. The governors, with the senior staff, set priorities for expenditure, based on careful analysis of needs. For instance, a recent decision was taken to engage more classroom assistants to help with large classes, rather than spit two classes three ways for part of the time. The governors plan development expenditure with a keen eye to obtaining best value.

| Income and expenditure (£) |         |
|----------------------------|---------|
| Total income               | 842,525 |
| Total expenditure          | 864,734 |

| Balances (£)                        |        |
|-------------------------------------|--------|
| Balance from previous year          | 25,420 |
| Balance carried forward to the next | 3,211  |



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|                       |       |
|-----------------------|-------|
| Expenditure per pupil | 1,688 |
|-----------------------|-------|

43. The school is oversubscribed, but in the immediate area families have grown up and there is an ageing population. The school now admits pupils from further away, including some with special educational needs, as well as others seeking benefit from the school's reputation. The school welcomes, and makes good provision for, all of these pupils. There is a very positive atmosphere about including all the pupils fully in all aspects of the life of the school. There have been no recent exclusions; there is a strong will to make good provision for all the pupils.

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

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

The overall provision for the children in the Foundation Stage is **good**.

#### **Commentary**

44. The pupils in the nursery and reception classes receive a sound start to their education. Teaching is good in all areas, and some examples of very good practice were observed. High quality planning and assessment systems contribute very effectively to this. Good liaison between the nursery and the reception classes is developing, and the majority of the children in the separate nursery progress to the school's reception classes in September or January of the year in which they are five. Although standards on entry cover a broad spectrum, the majority of the children are assessed as being average. By the time they move into Year 1, most of the pupils will either achieve the Early Learning Goals in all six areas of the Foundation Stage curriculum, or be close to doing so.

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

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

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

- Children develop their levels of personal independence well.
- They work collaboratively.
- They concentrate for longer periods as they settle and become confident.

#### **Commentary**

45. The children quickly develop their confidence and establish good relationships with one another, the class teachers and the classroom assistants. They generally behave well and are encouraged to be considerate of others. All the teachers capture children's interest and attention by their enthusiasm, and by good use of resources. These qualities, together with intelligent and sensitive planning, ensure that concentration is fostered and maintained well. Early in the school year, activities designed to promote familiarity with the location of the varied resources are introduced, in order to increase the children's independence. All the children receive plenty of praise and encouragement. This is effective in building up their self-esteem and confidence.

### **COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY**

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

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

- The children's emergent writing is promoted well.
- Their speaking and listening skills are fostered effectively.
- Early reading skills are encouraged expertly.

#### **Commentary**

46. Good opportunities are provided for children to extend their speaking skills through all areas of learning. Sensitive adult input encourages them to talk about what they are doing. The adults

are patient with those who need more time to think about what they want to say, and this helps to boost the children's confidence. The children, when listening to stories, join in enthusiastically with the repetitive phrases. For most, reading ability is in its early stages. A handful of the children are beginning to read some simple words. All the classrooms have a good range of picture non-fiction books, which are accessible to the children. They listen to story tapes, and some are developing the confidence to use the equipment without adult help. Many are writing their names unaided. Good use is made of classroom computers to support children's early reading and writing skills.

## **MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

### **Main strengths**

- Children count with confidence.
- Their mathematical vocabulary is developing well.

### **Commentary**

47. The children are making good progress in their early understanding of number, shape and measure. One or two handle simple calculations with numbers to 5 and 10. Games and puzzles, specifically designed to support early understanding of number, are available. Some relate the number in their group to a numeral on a card or dice and are encouraged to help each other. Counting forms part of the day's introductory session in each classroom when the children count how many are present or absent. They compare how many have chosen to have a packed lunch or school dinner. The use of mathematical vocabulary, such as 'more' or 'less' is developing well. Children of all abilities are included fully and those needing extra help are made to feel successful and valued.

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

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

### **Main strengths**

- Children have good opportunities to explore and learn about their world in the classroom, outdoors and further afield.

### **Commentary**

48. Children make good progress in this area of learning because they have plenty of opportunities to experience a wide range of activities. They show a curiosity and interest in all activities presented to them, and make suitable gains in their learning. They quickly learn to use computers and are developing good control of the mouse. The children learn more about their world by handling and discussing a variety of objects. For example, the nursery children were observed grinding wheat grains with a pestle and mortar to make flour for their bread rolls. Such activities are used well to extend the children's vocabulary as they describe what they see and experience. Adults use questioning well to develop the children's vocabulary and ability to explain their thoughts and ideas, and to encourage them to think about their world and appreciate the wonder of it.

## PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **good**

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children have good opportunities to develop their physical skills on a range of large exercise equipment.
- They are developing their expertise in the use of pencils, scissors and other small tools.
- The large wheeled toys were not being used enough, despite very good weather.

### Commentary

49. Children in the nursery have almost continuous access to a fenced outdoor area adjacent to their building. It is in use as often as possible, although direct accessibility is hampered by a flight of steps. However, children in the reception classes have no direct access to a similar suitable area, although both classes use a small paved area near their rooms. Planned physical education sessions are used satisfactorily to develop children's large muscle skills and co-ordination. The large outdoor equipment, such as wheeled toys, was not out and in use during the inspection, but small groups of the reception children were being taught to use the new Timber Trail safely. Fine motor movements are developed well through the use of pencils, brushes, scissors, and small construction apparatus. Good use is made of timetabled sessions in the school hall. Children have good opportunities to manipulate a range of small equipment with dexterity.

## CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **good**.

### Main strengths

- Children have plenty of opportunities for imaginative play
- Access to a range of resources for creative work promotes freedom and independence.

### Commentary

50. Children have a wide range of opportunities to develop their creativity. Planning of this area is appropriate, giving children a range of artistic experiences. They use a variety of pencils, paints and collage satisfactorily to create images. They have painted recognisable portraits of family and friends and learnt about mixing paint. They learn to sing a number of songs and rhymes, and are given opportunities to listen to music as well as playing percussion instruments. They have many good opportunities to use their imagination through role-play, such as in the 'vet's clinic' and Three Bears Cottage.

## SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

### ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

#### Main strength and weaknesses

- Standards are above average at the end of both key stages. They have risen at a rate above the national trend since the last inspection. Achievement is good
- Last year a high percentage of Year 6 pupils did very well in the national tests
- Leadership is very good
- Analysis of test results and the scheme of work are used very well to modify provision
- There is very good planning for links with other subjects and for ways to enliven this subject and to meet the needs of individual pupils in lessons
- Teaching is good overall with examples of excellent and very good teaching for the older pupils
- The quality of marking, despite some very good examples, is inconsistent across the school
- There is too little homework for the older pupils
- The library is little used by the younger pupils.

#### Commentary

51. Standards in English, measured by recent national tests, have been above average at the end of Years 2 and 6. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Test results have improved at above the national rate over the past four years and last year a high proportion of pupils attained the higher Level 5 at the end of Year 6. Analysis of pupils' work confirms test results and shows that pupils are challenged to provide a good quantity of neat writing. High standards of writing are expected in other subjects such as history and science.
52. Standards of the pupils' speaking and listening skills are average in Year 2 and are above average by the end of Year 6. This improvement results from the school's current focus on improving this area by providing many opportunities for discussion and developing vocabulary. For instance, when working animatedly in pairs to change descriptive writing to dialogue, pupils changed the word 'said' to 'replied in a confused voice'.
53. Standards in reading are above average in the infant and junior years, partly because reading was the focus for improvement last year. Now all classes start the day with a reading session, which is very well organised and involves parents. This initiative is proving successful. For the younger pupils, sufficient emphasis is placed upon teaching sounds in words so that pupils have a variety of strategies to use when meeting new or difficult words.
54. Writing is the current key area for development and the school is using creative means to improve this skill. As a result, the 2003 Year 2 test results in writing rose significantly. Teachers are developing speaking and listening for the purpose of improving and extending the range of dialogue when writing. Very good use is made of visits and visitors in this context.
55. The quality of teaching is good overall with examples of excellent and very good teaching for the older pupils. In the best lessons seen there were high expectations, both of work rate and the quality of work produced. The teachers use assessment well to plan work and use the teaching assistants to help include all pupils. They listen to the whole class session rather than making a constructive contribution.
56. The quality of marking varies from being constructive and helpful to being regular, but just ticks. The pupils commented on this. Pupils would also like more and regular homework. The staff

have devised a very good 'progress book' but early in the year many pupils do not know their targets for improvement as these are not prominently displayed or written in 'child's language'. These needs have already been recognised. The very good leadership of this subject has led to constructive steps to improve standards.

57. There have been recent improvements to the library, but it is too far away from the Year 2 classes, in temporary buildings across the playground. Planned visits ensure that these pupils use the facility, but it is not conveniently near for occasional use. The school is also aware that some topics, such as sport, are under-represented in the library stock.

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

58. The National Literacy Strategy is implemented well and adapted appropriately to support effective learning. Cross-curricular links are strong. For instance, throughout the school, the teachers plan effectively to reinforce literacy learning in, for instance, ICT, science, history and art. This means that time is used very well and the pupils' reports, research and recording are of a high standard.

### **English as an additional language**

59. There are only two pupils who speak another language at home, both fully competent in English. When they first started school they were given sufficient support from the Local Education Authority Language unit. The school is aware of the needs of this minority and particularly that the whole school needs to be prepared for life in a multi-cultural society. Thus a good number of 'guided reading' books have been purchased with positive images of minorities. There is a good non-fiction books about various religions and festivals in the library but stories are under-represented. The schools' tracking system will be used to follow these pupils' progress once they start in Year 3. Currently they are making good progress.

## **MATHEMATICS**

The quality of provision for mathematics is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Planning is very good, guiding teachers to focus on what pupils need to learn each lesson
- Different ability groups are given work that is suited to their level of understanding
- Teachers are enthusiastic
- Teachers encourage a range of strategies and welcome pupils' own ideas
- Opportunities for pupils to use and apply mathematics early in the school year were restricted
- Marking and feedback to pupils vary considerably in quality between classes.

### **Commentary**

60. Standards are above average by the end of the infant years. The pupils make good progress because of the very good planning and good teaching. Pupils have a good range of strategies for addition and subtraction and work with numbers up to 100. They know some of the multiplication facts and use these or repeated subtraction to solve problems in division. They understand and use simple fractions. They are confident using their number and estimation skills when measuring. Some pupils successfully sort numbers in Venn and Carroll diagrams, using categories like odd, even, less than 50, multiples of 5. They record and display data using tally charts and bar charts and talk about what these charts show. They use co-ordinates to fix position.

61. Standards are also above average by the end of the junior years. Pupils have a wide range of mental and written strategies for all four rules and are confident with written multiplication and division. Many are confident in solving problems involving fractions, decimals, percentages and ratio. They use these number skills to solve problems when measuring. They are beginning to interpret a variety of charts and graphs and construct simple pie charts. Some of last year's able pupils tackled Goldbach's conjecture, a task usually set for secondary pupils.
62. Achievement is good. There is a very obvious progression in pupils' books, both in the difficulty of the work set and the pupils' ability to tackle it with success. In some lessons it is possible to see progress in the space of 15 minutes as pupils pick up clues from other pupils' answers and make the necessary intellectual effort. Pupils make very good progress in number and measures throughout the school. They make good progress with spatial ideas. Progress in data handling is good. Pupils make progress in using and applying their number skills in a limited range of situations. Able pupils have challenging work set and the pupils of lower capability are fully included and make good progress.
63. Teaching is never less than satisfactory. It is often good or very good in both key stages. The numeracy lesson structure and detailed planning has enabled all teachers to teach focused lessons, which meet the stated objectives. The teachers are enthusiastic and knowledgeable. Their planning is focused and detailed. They use attractive equipment, for example: flip-flaps and Buzz the Bee moving along the counting stick. Pupils are told what the lesson will be about and every moment of the hour is filled with things to do or to think about. Teachers encourage alternative strategies and accept pupils' own ideas and thoughts. In less successful lessons the mental work lacked pace, and sometimes the teacher did too much talking. Marking varies too much. Some books are thoroughly marked with useful comments to the pupils on how to improve. Other books were cursorily ticked and no comments written.
64. Mathematics is very well led, resourced and managed although there is a lack of storage space. The co-ordinator is a very good role model for teachers and leads very good planning, though is less involved in monitoring delivery. The senior team provides supportive monitoring of teaching, with help and advice available. There is a clear subject development plan. The poor accommodation is, however, out of the co-ordinator's control. Thirty-five pupils on the carpet in a tiny room inhibits the range of teaching strategies which can be used.
65. There has been good improvement since the last inspection. Mixed ability grouping has improved the results of average and just below average ability pupils. The parents recognise that the higher capability pupils do well, and that this is reflected in higher level attainment in end of phase national tests. There is a rising trend, above the national average, in the school's results.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

66. Mathematical skills, particularly in number and measures, are well developed in other areas of the curriculum. Pupils calculate using spreadsheets and represent ideas using a variety of charts and graphs in ICT. They improve their measuring skills in food technology and when drawing up plans and making models in design technology. They use percentages in reports derived from information on the Internet. They use co-ordinates and grids to identify positions on maps in geography and for enlargement in Art.

## SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Planning is very good, ensuring coverage and consistency between parallel classes
- The school has a good range of resources and uses ICT well
- Sometimes, explanations lack simplicity and clarity because of limited teacher expertise
- All pupils, some with support, are fully included.

### Commentary

67. At the time of the last inspection (1998) standards were average throughout the school. They had improved by 2002, but fell back a little in 2003. Nevertheless, there has been an overall improvement. In 2002, attainment at the end of Year 2 was close to the national average. In 2003, there was an improvement, especially in the area of scientific enquiry: devising, and making deductions from, experiments. Standards at the end of the junior years were well above average in 2002 and, in the previous two years, were above average. However, they were lower in 2003, and close to the national average.
68. The infant pupils make good progress and their attainment in Year 2 is above average. The planning is very good. Teachers understand the value of explaining carefully up to the point where the pupils may be encouraged to 'discover'. This added an element of confidence and self-esteem for the pupils in the lessons observed. The pupils achieve well in the infant years.
69. Too little teaching was seen, and it was too early in the school year, to make a general statement about standards in the current junior years. The quality of the teaching seen was good in the infant classes and satisfactory in the junior classes. The quality of learning reflected the teaching, and also the enthusiasm of the pupils; it was good, overall. One very good lesson was seen in Year 4, but in two others, including one in Year 6, the standards of attainment were only average. In both cases the scientific concepts, though seemingly straightforward, became more confused as the teacher and pupils discussed them. For instance, 'are solids, such as chocolate, always restricted to either melting or dissolving?'. The lack of a clear concluding definitive statement by the teacher, left some uncertainty, despite good planning and open, honest discussion. The opinions of all the pupils were listened to and respected: all were included fully.
70. The co-ordinator is new to the post, but the former holder of the post is still available to help. Medium-term planning is very good, ensuring systematic coverage and a logical sequence in learning. Resources have been built up to a good extent. They are stored well, labelled and easily accessible to staff. Good use is made of ICT for internet searches and word-processing, but the use of control technology and data processing is underdeveloped.

## INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

The quality of provision for information and communication technology is **very good**.

### Main strengths

- The school is well equipped with hardware and software
- Most teachers are enthusiastic, confident and knowledgeable
- Pupils enjoy the subject and work hard
- The ICT technician is an invaluable resource
- The use of ICT across the curriculum is a particular strength.



## Commentary

71. Standards by the end of the infant years are above average. Pupils use a range of tools when drawing. They use word-banks to help them write, and produce text with a range of punctuation and structures. They search and find information on CD ROMs. They begin to understand how databases work. They estimate distance and degree of turn, to make floor turtles move where they want them.
72. Standards in the junior years are above average. For example, there are pupils in Year 4 who routinely search the Internet for information for their projects. The majority of pupils in junior classes know how to log on to the network, find their way through the screens, identify the files they need and then work confidently with different screens. As they move through junior classes their manipulation of text becomes more sophisticated and they combine pictures with text to make illustrated reports. The skills learned with the floor turtle are developed further with a screen turtle to make more complex paths and shapes. They use music software to compose their own tunes. They understand how the questions in a branching database sort information. They search the Internet with increasing precision for material for projects and cut, copy and change pictures to suit their layout. In Years 5 and 6 they start to work with spreadsheets, entering formulae and graphing results. They are introduced to the ideas of control which link with their work in design and technology making model cars with control boxes.
73. Pupils achieve very well in both key stages. They obviously enjoy their lessons in the ICT suite and in nearly every lesson observed they could do something at the end of it, which they could not do when they started. For example, a Year 2 class learnt how to space text correctly and a Year 6 class learnt how to connect a control box and a switch to a device to make it turn on and off. The pupils' word processing skills improve noticeably as they get older. Pupils show more confidence in their use of ICT and produce reports for projects in other subjects using text and graphics. They are introduced to an increasing variety of software. As pupils get older they are allowed more opportunities to work independently on the computers around the school and do so with minimal supervision.
74. Teaching is good and learning mirrors this closely. Planning is very good, adapted from the computer-held plans to suit each class or year. The majority of lessons are good or very good because teachers are familiar with the software and confident with the hardware. Their demonstrations on the interactive whiteboard are powerful and immediate. The facility to transfer any pupil's working screen to the whiteboard to demonstrate good ideas, possibilities or problems is well used. The presence of the ICT technician means teachers can concentrate on teaching, but as well as sorting out problems he also helps and guides the teachers. Teaching assistants have good levels of knowledge and are well deployed to help anyone with a problem. The mathematics individual learning programme is well managed within each class enabling pupils to make progress at their own level.
75. ICT is very well led, resourced and managed. The headteacher and the co-ordinator are committed to improvement. The budget is well spent and there are clear plans for development. Problems are faced and solved. The headteacher provides supportive monitoring of teaching. The co-ordinator provides expertise and a confident role model for other teachers. The appointment of a technician has resulted in the expected improvements in standards.
76. There has been very good improvement since the last inspection. This subject has gone from a situation at the last inspection where no teaching was available for observation, to every class having not only a taught hour in the computer suite every week but also plentiful opportunities to use their ICT skills in other subjects. From a junior phase curriculum which did not cover all the required areas, there is now a broad curriculum giving pupils access to and experience of a wide range of software.

## Information and communication technology across the curriculum

77. This is a strength of the school. Pupils routinely use computers to search for information and to write reports. In Year 3 Literacy lessons they changed the font to indicate different characters in a play. In Year 4 history they created time-lines using cut and paste. In a Year 5 geography lesson, pupils used a commercial route-finder to work out their route to school. In a Year 6 art lesson, they used the interactive whiteboard and the digital camera to improve their drawing by focusing on specific areas of a picture. In addition to this, all curriculum plans are on the computer and so can be easily adapted by year groups when they decide which topics to cover and by class teachers when they are considering the maturity level, abilities and interests of their pupils.

## HUMANITIES

### Geography and history

Provision in geography and history is **good**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Effective links are made between the two subjects
- Cross-curricular links with other subjects are good
- The use of resources, particular visitors and external visits is a strength
- The pupils make good progress, achieve well and enjoy their learning.

#### Commentary

78. Standards in geography and history are as expected by the end of Year 2, but are higher by the end of Year 6. This demonstrates an improvement in standards since the last inspection.
79. Planning for both subjects is good and the ways in which strands of each subject are incorporated in the other are effective, ensuring development in pupils' skills and understanding. This is a continuing and effective development in the planning of the subjects, due to good liaison between the co-ordinators. Teaching in the history lessons seen was good overall, generally involving and inspiring the pupils. A study of work from last year showed good subject coverage, and that the pupils' skills and understanding developed as the year progressed. The subject co-ordinators have collated pupils' work in project files, which illustrate the breadth of coverage in both subjects, as well as the links between them and other subjects. For example, a residential trip to Dartmoor was the inspiration for collage and embroidery work, and poetry evolved from a visit to a granite quarry on Hay Tor. Pupils spoken to demonstrated good recall of topics covered in geography throughout their time at school.
80. In history, the younger pupils are studying Florence Nightingale and her influence on hospitals in the Crimean War. Through good use of role-play, pupils of lower ability are fully involved in the lesson and develop an understanding of hospital conditions at the time. More able pupils made intelligent comparisons between the Crimea and modern hospitals. Older pupils were learning about Celtic life, absorbed and thrilled by an activity where they pretended to be archaeologists, excavating artefacts from a tray of sand. Great excitement, as well as awe, greeted each find. A child, noting the decoration on a bracelet, observed that he had seen a similar pattern on items featured on a web site he had been exploring earlier in the day. Good use is made of varied resources, including the Internet, to support pupils' independent learning.
81. At the time of the inspection, no geography lessons were timetabled. Pupils spoke with interest and enthusiasm about the different topics covered in previous years and made it obvious that their external visits made a major contribution to their development of skills and understanding. Work from last year showed that younger pupils were learning about caring for the environment

and about the water cycle. Good links to science showed where pupils helped to design simple filters to clean water. Older pupils extended their knowledge of the features of rivers and their courses and understood how geographical features had an impact on the flow of water. Work seen is of good quality and well presented and displays and compilations of work show good coverage of a range of topics. Pupils use a range of resources for their research and are developing reporting skills. Local environmental studies are extended to cover world issues and pupils are developing a good understanding of man's impact on the planet.

82. Pupils show enthusiasm for both subjects and their attitudes are good. They enjoy their lessons and it is obvious that the well-planned programme of visitors and visits, particularly the residential visit to Dartmoor, are the highlights of the curriculum for them. Equally obvious is that this programme has a positive influence on their recall of facts and information learnt. Discussions with the pupils show that the carefully planned cross-curricular links are effective and that they understand, for example, how the geographical siting of a town can influence its past and future history. Work is marked regularly but does not consistently include sufficient developmental remarks to show pupils what they need to do to improve their work.

## Religious education

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good lesson planning ensures a balanced curriculum which conforms to the locally agreed syllabus
- The teachers show commitment and expertise, particularly when drawing moral conclusions
- Teaching makes a significant and valuable contribution to cultural and multi-cultural understanding
- Spiritual understanding is fostered well
- Some of the teaching seen was too teacher-centred.

### Commentary

83. Good planning lays the foundation for balanced coverage and satisfactory standards throughout the school. Standards are similar to those reported at the time of the last inspection. In the lessons seen, enjoyment dominated and intellectual demands were not a focus in the teaching; achievement was average. The pupils were acquiring knowledge and some insight. The pupils spoken to enjoy the subject, especially when drawing moral conclusions relating to their own experience. They benefit from learning about other cultures. Although it is not easy to arrange visits, the pupils make very good use of 'virtual visits' on the Internet to places like mosques and synagogues. The school also welcomes expert speakers and visitors from a range of faiths.
84. Overall, the quality of the teaching and learning seen was good. Based on effective planning, the lessons moved at a good pace with a good balance of activities. There was better intellectual effort in the lessons in the junior years, where the pupils grappled with the concept of parable and morality. In these respects, achievement in the junior classes was positive. The younger pupils enjoyed the stories and wrote enthusiastically about them.
85. There are ample resources, with good packs of materials, well stored and labelled, in trays for special lessons. There are some good displays, and attention to learning about faiths other than Christianity. Assemblies reinforce learning in this subject. There are very good links with other subjects, ranging from citizenship, included in the planning, to improving writing and using ICT. The subject is well managed and makes a significant contribution to the all-round and very good education the pupils receive.

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

### **Design and technology**

Provision in design and technology is **good**.

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

- Teachers' planning is good
- Pupils have good levels of knowledge and skill
- The resources are varied and interesting.

#### **Commentary**

86. Standards are above average in both key stages. There has been good improvement since the last inspection. Pupils fully understand and talk convincingly about the stages of the design process. They are confident with the appropriate technical vocabulary. By the end of the infant years pupils plan what they want to do, choose their materials and make their product. They are beginning to say how they could have improved their designs. By the end of the junior years, pupils produce detailed annotated drawings of different views and choose materials with ideas such as strength, stability, appearance or texture in mind. They refine their ideas as they go along, test their products and adapt if necessary.
87. Pupils show increasing skill levels as they get older. They have a full range of experiences: textiles; food; materials of all sorts; electrical and mechanical components. Their ability to develop ideas, to test fairly, to problem solve, to think about fitness for purpose, are refined as they build on what they have done before in each area.
88. Too little teaching was observed to make a judgement about the quality of teaching. However, the teachers share good ideas and new materials as they plan in pairs of year groups. The planning is very thorough, and teachers adapt the plans on the computer to make product evaluation sheets and design sheets which suit their own classes.
89. The subject is well led. The co-ordinator is experienced, enthusiastic and a keen advocate of her subject. The resources are extensive and exciting but the lack of designated accommodation for food technology restricts what can be done (the facilities in the Nursery are used at the moment). There is insufficient storage space, and ferrying equipment from block to block in the rain is unsatisfactory.

## Art and design

Provision in art is **very good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The standard of the pupils' work is very high. Pupils use a wide range of media.
- There are very good links between subjects and planned good use of visiting artists
- Leadership and management is good

### Commentary

90. Only one lesson was observed for art and design, this was in Year 6. It was a very effective lesson as the teacher was enthusiastic and used well-developed computer skills. Enterprising links with both subjects resulted in pupils being optimistic about improving their work. They were enthralled by the expert use of the schools' new resource of an interactive whiteboard. This was used to display digital photographs of pupils' life drawings. Display of pupils' work is very effective.
91. Throughout the school pupils use a wide variety of media such as pastels, charcoal and clay to create their images. They also use the computer to study and improve their work. Sketch-books, used throughout the school, show good progress. They also help teachers identify pupils who are talented. Very talented pupils are given the opportunity to work for a few days at the Local Education Authority Centre. The high standards noted during the last inspection have been maintained.
92. Cross-curricular links with history, literacy, science and other subjects are planned effectively. Using very good information technology resources, pupils examine and improve their 'life drawings'. Visiting artists, such as those who demonstrate printing techniques, develop pupils' skills very well so that they produce very commendable underwater pictures.
93. The leader of this subject has a good plan for improvement and is available to help other teachers.

### Example of outstanding practice

#### ICT used imaginatively in a Year 6 art lesson

The pupils were starting figure drawing. A dinner lady was sitting for them. They were using a grid to help them. The lower-attaining pupils were receiving very good help with scale and proportions. The teacher took digital photographs of samples of their work and displayed them, through her laptop, on the whiteboard. The class was enthralled to see and discuss their own and each other's work. The teacher raised achievement to a very good level because the pupils were so keen to learn and improve.

## Music

Provision in music is **good**

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The specialist expertise of three teachers on the staff is a strength

- There is a good range of extra opportunities for singing and playing
- The school has a regular programme of public performances
- Standards in the classes seen taught by non-specialists were not quite so high.

## Commentary

94. Standards, for the majority of the pupils who do not take part in extra musical activities, are satisfactory when taught by the class teacher, and significantly higher when taught by a subject specialist. This is because the finer points of learning, which would require intellectual effort, are better taught from a base of increased subject expertise. Achievement, when this extra effort is required, is good. Those who sing in the school choir or play an instrument are well served. Their standards and achievement are good. In all the classes seen, all the pupils were fully involved and showing commitment and enthusiasm.
95. The quality of the teaching is closely related to the subject expertise of the teacher. In a very good Year 5 lesson, the teacher knew what were the next steps to improve performance, and gave the pupils the satisfaction of improving and getting a good sense of achievement. In a Year 1 lesson, whilst there was a similar degree of commitment and good lesson planning, the expertise to show pupils how to improve was not so convincing. This teacher gave good praise and encouragement, but moved on from an interesting session with each half of the class clapping different but complementary rhythms, without the pupils quite mastering what was being attempted. Overall, nevertheless, the pupils progress well.
96. There is a well-equipped music room. There is a sufficient stock of well-maintained resources. There are records of a lot of music making in, and by, the school. Pupils with gifts or special talents are recognised and encouraged. The significant minority who choose to be more fully involved than just in the lessons, achieve well and make a valuable contribution to the school's reputation. The class teachers are said, by the co-ordinator, to enjoy teaching their own class, but the school is considering the possibility of organising the timetable to use the specialist teachers for this subject.

## Physical education

Provision in physical education is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are enthusiastic due to good teaching
- Leadership is good
- Participation in tournaments is successful
- The school hall is too small for lessons with the full range of equipment.

## Commentary

97. In the three lessons observed, all in the junior years, the pupils showed enthusiasm and standards were good in dance and games. Teachers ensure that everyone, including those with special educational needs, is involved and active. The one lesson observed briefly in the infants demonstrated that pupils work well on gymnastic activities, such as balancing and forming different shapes. Good relationships mean that pupils give and accept suggestions for improvement. School records indicate that attainment in swimming meets national expectations by Year 6.
98. Teachers are enthusiastic about this subject. They plan lessons well and in the better lessons demonstrate techniques effectively. They also use pupils' demonstrations to show others how to improve. Good relationships between teachers and pupils mean that the pupils take constructive criticism well.

99. The subject co-ordinator has provided a useful scheme of work and ensured that all aspects of the curriculum are covered. She has a good action plan for improvement and according to the school development plan, is soon to observe lessons.
100. The school has a good record of success in a variety of tournaments, such as swimming, netball, football and cross-country. Teachers give generously of their time to provide extra-curricular activities at the end of the school day.
101. The school hall is very small and demands upon it, including for lunch and assemblies, restrict each class to only a short lesson timetabled there. Also this hall is too small to accommodate a Year 6 class of larger pupils and the preferred equipment. Lessons depend on fine weather for using the good outside facilities for physical education lessons.

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

102. One timetabled lesson was observed. It was well planned and the standard of teaching and learning was good. Elements of this aspect were also observed and noted in religious education and other lessons.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

| <i>Inspection judgement</i>  | <i>Grade</i> |
|--|--------------|
| <b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>                       | <b>2</b>     |
| How inclusive the school is  | 2            |
| How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection | 3            |
| Value for money provided by the school                               | 1            |
| <b>Overall standards achieved</b>                                    | <b>3</b>     |
| Pupils' achievement  | 3            |
| <b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>        | <b>2</b>     |
| Attendance   | 3            |
| Attitudes  | 2            |
| Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions                        | 3            |
| Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development            | 2            |
| <b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>               | <b>2</b>     |
| The quality of teaching  | 3            |
| How well pupils learn  | 3            |
| The quality of assessment  | 2            |
| How well the curriculum meets pupils needs                           | 2            |
| Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities     | 2            |
| Accommodation and resources  | 5            |
| Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety                             | 3            |
| Support, advice and guidance for pupils                              | 2            |
| How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views                  | 2            |
| The effectiveness of the school's links with parents                 | 2            |
| The quality of the school's links with the community                 | 2            |
| The school's links with other schools and colleges                   | 2            |
| <b>The leadership and management of the school</b>                   | <b>2</b>     |
| The governance of the school   | 2            |
| The leadership of the headteacher                                    | 1            |
| The leadership of other key staff                                    | 2            |
| The effectiveness of management                                      | 2            |

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