

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **EATON BRAY LOWER SCHOOL**

Eaton Bray

LEA area: Bedfordshire

Unique reference number: 109447

Headteacher: Mrs R Jacklin

Lead inspector: Mr J Earish

Dates of inspection: 26<sup>th</sup> – 28<sup>th</sup> April 2004

Inspection number: 256030

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 to 9 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	99
School address:	School Lane Eaton Bray
Postcode:	LU6 2DT
Telephone number:	01525 220468
Fax number:	01525 223057
Appropriate authority:	Local Education Authority
Name of chair of governors:	Mr M Griffiths
Date of previous inspection:	8 <sup>th</sup> June 1998

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Eaton Bray Lower School is situated on the outskirts of the rural community of Eaton Bray, and is smaller than other primary schools nationally. There are 86 boys and girls attending full-time and 13 children attending part-time. Their ages range from four to nine years, and they are taught in four mixed age classes. The school is popular with parents, and caters for pupils from the village and surrounding static Travellers' sites. Some children have previously attended playgroup or Nursery, although a significant number, including those from the Travellers' sites, have received no pre-school experience. Just under 15 per cent of pupils are identified as having special educational needs. This proportion is broadly in line with the national average. The range of pupils' needs includes social, emotional and behavioural difficulties and severe learning disabilities. The percentage of pupils with statements of special educational needs, at 2.1 per cent, is below national figures. Just under 15 per cent of pupils are eligible for free school meals, and this is broadly in line with the national average. Very few pupils come from ethnic minorities, although there are currently 18 pupils from the Traveller community. All pupils have English as their first language. Attainment on entry to the school is well below average but each year group has different proportions of higher and lower attaining pupils.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
23216	J Earish	<i>Lead inspector</i>	Science; Information and Communication Technology; Physical Education.
32655	J Bostock	<i>Lay inspector</i>	
10214	B Milton	<i>Team inspector</i>	English; Design and Technology; Geography; History; Music; Special Education Needs.
21816	B Thomas	<i>Team inspector</i>	Foundation Stage Curriculum; Mathematics; Art; Religious Education.

The inspection contractor was:

VT Education  
Old Garden House  
The Lanterns  
Bridge Lane  
London  
SW11 3AD

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**Eaton Bray Lower School is a very good school** that caters very well for all its pupils, whatever their abilities, backgrounds, age or gender. The teaching is of a consistently high standard and results in very good achievement by all groups of pupils. The school provides very good value for money.

**The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:**

- Teaching throughout the school is very good and pupils of all abilities achieve very well.
- The school is very well led and managed, and the leadership of the headteacher is excellent.
- Standards are well above what is expected for pupils aged nine in English, and above expectations in mathematics, science and information and communication technology (ICT). Standards in art and design are very good.
- All groups of pupils, whatever their ability, background, age or gender, have excellent access to a very good range of learning opportunities.

There has been very good improvement since the last inspection. The issues identified in the last report have been tackled very well, so that former weaknesses are now among the many strengths of the school. Teaching is much better, with a very much higher proportion of very good teaching. Standards are now good when pupils leave the school at the end of Year 4. In ICT, the improvement in standards has been very good.

### 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	C	A	A
writing	C	C	B	B
mathematics	E	D	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*

Inspectors judge pupils' achievement by looking at the progress they make over their time in schools as well as how well they do in lessons. **Pupils' overall achievement is very good.** Children join the school with a very wide range of capabilities, but, taken overall, their attainments are well below average. Children develop very well within the Reception class and make rapid progress as a result of the very well planned curriculum and very good teaching. However, despite very good progress, children will not achieve the Early Learning Goals<sup>1</sup> in all aspects of their development. Pupils continue to achieve very well, and, by the end of Year 2, standards are above average, overall, in reading, writing, speaking and listening, and ICT. In science and mathematics, standards are average. By the time pupils transfer to middle schools at the end of Year 4, the standards they attain are well above those expected nationally of pupils of a similar age in English, and are above the expected standards in mathematics, science and ICT. In art and design, standards are very high.

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<sup>1</sup> Early Learning Goals - these are expectations for most children to reach by the end of the Foundation Stage. They refer mainly to achievements children make in connection with communication language and literacy, mathematical development, personal, social and emotional development, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical and creative development. There are many goals for each area of learning. In language and literacy, for example, pupils should be able to write their own names and other things such as labels and begin to write simple sentences.

**Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral and social development, are very good.** Throughout the school, pupils' attitudes to learning, their relationships and their behaviour are all very good, and have a positive effect on both the quality of their education and the standards of work they achieve. Pupils have a good understanding of what they need to do to improve, particularly in English and mathematics because they have their own personal targets to work towards.

Attendance is unsatisfactory. This is due to fluctuations in the attendance of some Traveller children. The school has very good procedures for promoting good attendance and systematically analyses any trends and patterns of absence that may occur. It works very closely with outside agencies, and is doing everything it can to improve performance. It has been successful at reducing the rate of unauthorised absence, which is now significantly better. A high incidence of illness during the last academic year contributed to a lowering in the attendance rate.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The quality of education is very good. Teaching and learning are very good,** with a consistently high proportion of very good teaching throughout the school. Teachers have very good knowledge of the subjects they teach, and work very well with the teaching assistants to ensure that lessons are interesting and capture pupils' imaginations. Higher attaining pupils have challenging tasks set for them in all classes, and Traveller children are very well integrated into the school and achieve very well. Pupils with special educational needs are also very well supported and make very good progress toward their individual goals.

Pupils benefit from a very wide range of learning opportunities. The school has been innovative in extending lunch breaks so that all pupils have equal access to a very good range of clubs and activities, including a homework club.

Very good links with parents have been maintained. Teachers and teaching assistants know, support and care for pupils very well, and pupils are made to feel valued and involved in running the school. There are effective links with other schools to ensure that pupils are well prepared for the next stage in their education.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**Leadership and management are very good overall.** The energy and enthusiasm of the headteacher, teachers and governors has helped to build an inclusive school where all are equally involved, where teaching is of a consistently high standard and where children of all abilities are achieving very well. The school is very good at identifying areas for improvement and at seeking ways to overcome weaknesses and address disadvantage. It has been particularly effective in raising standards in reading, writing and ICT since the last inspection. Governors are very supportive of the school and have a very clear understanding of what the school does very well and how they can help improve things further. Statutory requirements are fully met.

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

Parents express very positive views about the school. They particularly like the quality of teaching, the way children are treated fairly, and how easy it is to ask questions, discuss problems or air complaints. The inspection team fully agrees with them.

Pupils say they enjoy their lessons, and feel safe and secure. They feel reassured that adults quickly sort out any misbehaviour or bullying.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

There are no significant areas for improvement.



## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

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

Pupils' overall **achievement is very good**. Children join the school with a very wide range of capabilities, but, taken overall, they are well below average. By the time pupils transfer to middle schools at the end of Year 4, standards are well above what is expected for pupils of a similar age in English, and above expectations in mathematics, science and ICT. In art and design, standards are very good.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Pupils' very good achievement benefits from the school's commitment to educational inclusion and to the promotion of equality in all that it does.
- Children receive a very good start to their education in the Foundation Stage.
- Standards are well above expectations in English, and above expectations in mathematics, science and ICT by the time pupils transfer to middle schools at the end of Year 4.
- Standards in art and design are very good.

#### Commentary

1. The school's commitment to educational inclusion, and the promotion of equality in all that it does are key factors in the very good achievement of all groups of pupils. It caters for children from a wide variety of backgrounds, including a high proportion of Traveller children, and each classroom is a friendly, stimulating and challenging environment in which individual interests, talents and differences are respected and celebrated. Teachers identify precise learning objectives, grouping children and pupils carefully, varying the activities, choosing the best methods, and constantly monitoring how pupils are progressing. Higher attaining pupils have challenging tasks set for them, and Traveller children are very well integrated into the school and achieve very well. Pupils with special educational needs are also very well supported and make very good progress toward their individual goals. These features, together with the teachers' enthusiasm and high expectations, make a significant contribution to pupils' very good achievement.

2. Children receive a very good start to their education in the Reception Class. Very good induction procedures serve to ease the children's transition from home to school. They also serve to establish very good links with parents, who are very positive about the start their children receive to their education. Teaching is consistently very good, and children also benefit from a very well planned curriculum and from very effective support from all the adults involved. There is a very good balance between self-selected and adult-directed activities, with a strong emphasis on the development of literacy skills. However, despite very good progress, children will not achieve the Early Learning Goals in all aspects of their development.

3. The table below shows the average point scores attained in the Year 2 tests in 2003. One point represents about one term's progress, so the table shows, for example, that last year's pupils were on average two terms ahead of all pupils nationally in reading.

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

<b>Standards in:</b>	<b>School results</b>	<b>National results</b>
Reading	17.6 (16.4)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	15.7 (14.4)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	16.4 (16.0)	16.3 (16.5)

*There were 19 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

4. Standards achieved in the national tests in 2003 for pupils aged seven were well above the national average in reading, above average in writing, and average in mathematics. When compared with schools in a similar context, standards are broadly similar. Conclusions from these results may not be reliable, since the group of pupils assessed is small and a considerable percentage change can be caused by a movement of one level by one pupil. Similarly an analysis of trends over the past four years shows considerable variations. This is because the year-on-year differences in the attainment of small numbers of pupils are magnified when each individual pupil represents a large proportion of the total. However, these are much better results than for the previous two years.

5. Inspection evidence shows that pupils in the present Year 2 are above average in reading, writing, speaking and listening, and average in mathematics. A recent initiative to raise standards in mathematics has been successful, so that standards are rising rapidly. There are no national tests in science in Year 2, but inspection evidence shows standards as being average. By the time pupils transfer to middle schools at the end of Year 4, standards are well above what is expected for pupils of a similar age in English, and above expectations in mathematics and science. This is a significant improvement on the standards reported at the time of the last inspection, when standards were satisfactory in Year 2 and Year 4, and progress was satisfactory overall.

6. Inspectors were unable to conduct a detailed inspection of all the areas of the curriculum in the time available, although all subjects were at least sampled. However, evidence shows that standards in ICT are now good across the school. This finding reflects the very good progress made since the last inspection when standards were judged to be unsatisfactory. The new ICT suite has significantly increased the time available for individual pupils to practise new skills so they can then use them to support work in other subjects. Standards are well above average in art and design. This is due to the very good quality of teaching and learning and to the very good opportunities pupils have to work in a broad range of media that captures their interest and enthusiasm.

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

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are **very good**. Provision for pupils' personal development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural elements, is **very good** overall. Attendance is **unsatisfactory**.

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

- Pupils' attitudes to school and to their work are very good.
- Pupils behave very well.
- Relationships between pupils and between pupils and staff are very good as a result of the school's caring ethos and the very good examples set by the staff.
- The school provides a wide range of experiences, with the result that pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is very good.
- The school works very hard to improve attendance but is not supported by all parents.

### **Commentary**

7. Pupils come to school happy and confident. They settle quickly to their lessons, are very keen to answer questions, listen very attentively, concentrate very well on tasks and work very hard. Pupils are enthusiastic about their work and are keen to learn. Many take part in extra clubs and activities, especially those run during the extended lunch break. Pupils say that the school is a friendly place where teachers make learning fun. Parents are happy that their children like school, know how to behave well, and respond well to encouragement to grow up in a mature way.

8. The atmosphere in the school is calm and orderly. In lessons, pupils behave very well because they have very good relationships with their teachers and want to work hard for them. The ethos of the school is very good and staff are consistent in their expectations of pupils' very good behaviour. There was no evidence of bullying, racism, or bad behaviour during the period of the inspection. Parents and pupils agreed with this, and said their children feel safe in school. Most feel that bullying is dealt with well because adults are friendly and helpful when they have concerns.

9. Relationships between all members of the school community are very good. The school operates as a harmonious community in which pupils of different ages, gender, backgrounds and ability work and play happily together. The ability of the teaching and support staff to work as a very effective team provides a very good role model for pupils and makes a strong contribution to the very positive relationships within the school. Parents and pupils appreciate the teachers' commitment and the time that they give out of school hours to organise clubs and activities. Pupils take part in an extensive range of extra-curricular activities, particularly those organised during the extended lunch break. The openness, warmth and mutual respect, which permeate the school, promote a purposeful climate in which effective learning can take place.

10. Overall, pupils are making very good progress in their personal development and are taking responsibility for their own learning as they become older. Their moral and social development is also very good: pupils know and understand what is expected of them through the school's code of conduct. Pupils are able to listen carefully to the views of others, and they respect others' opinions. They also take on responsibilities such as looking after the toys and games at break time and organising the equipment for assemblies. They act as register 'monitors', and they help organise summer luncheons and entertainments for older members of the community. They are also involved in fund-raising activities, which benefit several charities as well as the school.

**Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%) 2002/3**

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	7.9	School data	0.8
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.*

11. Attendance levels have been unsatisfactory for several years, but unauthorised absence has been greatly reduced in recent months. The school has analysed attendance figures and has found that, over the past four years, the rate of attendance has been adversely affected by one group of the Traveller pupils. A high incidence of illness during the last full academic year is an additional factor that must be considered when interpreting the most recent attendance data.

12. The school continually monitors the rate of attendance and, in conjunction with the local authority, is doing everything it can to improve performance. This includes writing to parents to explain the importance of good attendance, visiting parents at home, encouraging parents to bring their children to school, working very closely with Educational Welfare Officers and the Department for Social Services, telephoning parents or carers on the first day of absence, and organising late patrols. However, a small number of parents do not support the school well enough in this aspect of its work. The school has an agreement with the Educational Welfare Officer that more rigorous action will be taken in future to follow up on poor attendance. There have been no exclusions in the last two years.

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is **very good**. Very good teaching enables all pupils to make significant gains in their learning and **achieve very well**. There is a very clear understanding of the purpose and use of assessment across the school.

### Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching is **very good** overall and pupils learn very well. Procedures for the monitoring and assessment of pupils' work are **very good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Teaching and learning are very good in all classes.
- Teachers ensure that all groups of pupils have equal opportunities to learn and achieve very well.
- Teachers plan lessons very well and ensure that work is well matched to pupils' differing needs.
- Procedures for the monitoring and assessment of pupils' academic performance are very good.
- The teaching assistants play a very valuable role in giving pupils appropriate help and support.
- The school ensures that all pupils have equal opportunities to consolidate their learning through homework tasks.

### Commentary

13. The quality of teaching and learning is consistently very good. This is an improvement on the findings of the previous report when the quality of teaching and learning was good overall, with just over 1 in 10 lessons being very good. In addition, assessment was identified as an area for improvement. Assessment procedures needed to be developed so that teachers were able to identify strengths and weaknesses and provide more challenging work for pupils. This has since been accomplished successfully, and assessment is now very good in all classes. Almost all pupils say that they enjoy their work and that lessons are interesting and fun. Parents also unanimously expressed the view that the teaching is a real strength of the school.

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 22 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0	20	2	0	0	0	0

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

14. Teaching and learning are consistently very good in all classes. This is because teachers have fully embraced the principles of educational inclusion and ensure that all pupils have equality of opportunity. They plan activities that are very well matched to individual needs irrespective of age, ability, social background, gender or ethnicity. The combination of very good teaching and a very positive attitude to learning ensures that pupils make very good progress in the majority of lessons and achieve very well.

15. The very good quality of teaching in the Foundation Stage reflects very good subject knowledge and skilled management. The teacher and teaching assistants have high expectations in regard to both work and behaviour, as well as a very good understanding of the curriculum and of how children of this age learn. Activities are carefully chosen to provide a broad, innovative curriculum that engages pupils' attention, reflects their differing backgrounds and stimulates an enthusiasm for learning. There are very good systems in Reception for keeping track of each child's progress, and

the information is very well used when planning future work for all groups and abilities. The very good teaching and learning throughout the rest of the school is again underpinned by very good lesson-planning which identifies tasks that challenge all groups of pupils and take account of their individual backgrounds and abilities. Additionally, the teaching assistants are involved effectively in class planning, and they play a very valuable role in giving pupils appropriate help and support during lessons. They are very well deployed to make the best use of their strengths and they have benefited from a variety of training linked to their responsibilities.

16. Teachers use very good assessment procedures to track progress and match tasks to the needs of all pupils. They record the National Curriculum Levels each pupil is expected to reach each year, and review these regularly. Pupils also have their own personal targets to work towards, a strategy that gives them a good understanding of their own learning and of what they need to do to improve. These are recorded in their exercise books and shared with parents. The school uses the information gleaned from assessment to track the progress of groups and individuals such as higher attaining pupils, those with special educational needs (SEN), and children from Traveller families. Careful and thorough analysis of the data helps to identify any areas of underachievement, and in turn informs the School Development Plan and the programme for staff training. This constructive use of assessment for setting appropriate work for pupils of all abilities makes a major contribution to raising standards.

17. Teachers use homework very well to consolidate new skills and extend pupils' learning. In addition, the teachers run a homework club during the extended lunchtime so that all pupils have an equal opportunity to complete tasks and to seek help and advice from adults.

## The Curriculum

Equality of access and opportunity for all pupils is **excellent**. The curriculum provides a **very good** range of learning opportunities. There are **very good** opportunities for enrichment. The quality of both accommodation and resources is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses:

- The school is very successful in providing excellent equality of access and opportunity for all its pupils.
- The quality of the curriculum has improved in a number of ways since the previous inspection.
- All pupils have the chance to benefit from a very good range of enrichment activities.
- The curriculum benefits pupils' personal, social and health education (PSHE) well.

## Commentary

18. The school has fully embraced the principles of educational inclusion and makes excellent provision to ensure that all pupils have full access to all subjects and activities irrespective of their background, ability, gender or ethnicity. The curriculum is very well planned, balanced and innovative. Teachers use the curriculum very well as a basis for interesting lessons that help to motivate pupils, foster their enthusiasm and so enhance their quality of learning and achievement.

19. A two-year planning cycle ensures that the needs of different ability groups in the mixed age classes are fully met and that pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding are systematically developed. Pupils with SEN are provided with individual education plans of very good quality. Their targets are clearly focused on their identified needs, and are adjusted in the light of regular assessments. This means that they make the best possible progress as their needs change. Provision for children who come from the Travelling community is also very good. The school is very careful to ensure that the curriculum reflects parts of their cultural heritage. Clubs are run during the extended lunchtime so that all pupils have an opportunity to take part.

20. A number of improvements have been made to the curriculum since the last inspection, including provision for ICT and subject planning. The curriculum for the Foundation Stage is now very good and a strength of the school. Children work from a very good, well-planned, imaginative curriculum. It fully meets the needs of all the children starting in the Reception class, some of whom have little previous experience of learning. As a result, children achieve very well and enjoy learning. The curriculum for pupils in Years 1 to 4 is also very good and is an important factor in their very good achievement. In particular, provision for ICT has improved and is now very good. This was a key issue for improvement at the last inspection. The new computer suite is used effectively. Lessons in other subjects are regularly taught in the suite, enabling pupils to learn ICT skills through a wide range of purposeful tasks. Planning for subjects is now well founded on nationally recommended guidance, and pupils are well prepared for the next stages in their education.

21. Learning is successfully extended through a very good range of special events and visits that are used very well to broaden pupils' experience and focus their learning. These include 'Curriculum Focus' days, Book and Arts Weeks, visiting artists and craftsmen, puppeteers, illustrators and theatre groups. Pupils say they enjoy these activities and that it really motivates them to learn. Pupils also have opportunities to experience a wide range of sporting and artistic activities that are mostly organised during the extended lunchtime so that all can take part. Provision includes clubs for country dancing, Premier soccer, art, science, ICT, maths and nature, and there is also a homework club.

22. The provision for pupils' PSHE, including sex education and issues to do with substance misuse, is very good. This helps to ensure pupils' very positive attitudes towards school, as well as helping them to understand how to keep well, and understand their responsibilities towards one another.

23. There are enough suitably qualified teachers to ensure that the curriculum is taught effectively. The very knowledgeable learning support staff are well deployed, and play a very good supporting role in lessons, particularly with lower attaining groups. The accommodation has also improved since the last inspection. Developments include a new ICT suite, a new administration area, the imaginative adaptation of the school grounds to provide opportunities for outdoor and adventurous activities.

### **Care, Guidance and Support**

The school provides pupils with **very good** support, advice and guidance. Arrangements for ensuring pupils' care, welfare, and safety are **very good** overall. The school takes **good** account of pupils' views.

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

- The school cares very well for every pupil.
- There are very good arrangements for the induction of pupils, including those arriving during the school year.
- Pupils are very well supported and guided because the school monitors them very well.
- The school's very good management of health and safety arrangements ensures that the welfare of pupils and staff is well protected.

## Commentary

24. The school looks after its pupils very well: it has very good procedures for their health, safety and welfare, and it is committed to supporting every pupil whatever their background or ability. Pupils are very well cared for and have a trusting, secure and confident relationship with their class teachers and teaching assistants. They know there is a trusted person they can turn to if they need help and support. Supervision is good during break and lunch times. Virtually all parents consider that good care is taken of their children and that they can always talk to teachers if they have any concerns.

25. Induction arrangements for pupils are very good. Parents and children visit the school for a half-day, and meet staff and other pupils. Parents receive advice and support about administrative procedures, and children are advised about road safety. In addition, the Reception class teacher visits all those children who attend local nurseries and playgroups before they join the school. The school recognises that there is high mobility for some groups of pupils, and takes every care to ensure that the induction of new starters at times other than the normal time is effective, reassuring and helpful. These pupils settle in well to school, because the school is caring and because adults have very good relationships with them.

26. The school has well-established systems to monitor pupils' academic and personal progress and to reward their achievements. Teachers know their pupils very well, take great interest in their progress, and give very good advice and encouragement. Pupils' successes are celebrated in class and in whole-school assemblies to which parents are invited. Parents enjoy these opportunities to share in their children's successes, and all say that their children are always treated fairly.

27. Risk assessments of the school's facilities and trips are carried out thoroughly. All necessary routine health and safety checks are managed well, with scheduled checks, servicing and maintenance carried out in a regular and organised way. Playground equipment is safe, the grounds are well maintained and attractive, and internal equipment and facilities are also kept in good order.

## Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school's links with parents are **very good**. Links with the community and with other schools are **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Parents are satisfied with their children's education and the partnership that the school has with them.
- The information provided for parents is very good.
- The home/school association is very active in fund-raising and arranging activities for parents and pupils.
- Links with partner institutions are good and support staff and pupils very well.

## Commentary

28. Partnership with parents has been improved since the last inspection and is now very good. The school has very good relationships with parents, and these are reflected in the very positive comments about the school made by parents in the questionnaires, at the pre-inspection meeting with the registered inspector, and in interviews during the inspection. Parents are pleased with the school and the education that their children receive. They feel that the school is led and managed well, and that their children are treated fairly and receive good quality teaching which helps them to make good progress. They report that teachers are approachable and that it is easy to discuss any concerns with them.

29. The school communicates well with parents through regular newsletters, parents' evenings and informal discussions. Parents are advised regularly about what pupils will be learning so that they can support and assist them with their tasks. Learning targets are also carefully recorded so that all understand what children have to achieve. In addition, parents appreciate the good quality of the prospectus, which includes information about how parents can help their children learn at home. The pupils' annual reports are very good overall, and are clearly written and easy to understand. There are two parents' evenings a year, which are very well attended, as well as an open day so that parents can see their children's work. Most parents feel well informed about the progress of their children. Parents are encouraged to attend regular assemblies celebrating pupils' good work. The governors' report is also very informative and meets statutory requirements.

30. The school is well supported by the home/school association, which makes a significant contribution to the finances as well as the life and work of the school. Parents also help support children in classrooms and with extra-curricular activities such as swimming and science. In addition, parents have started initiatives to help others work with their children at home, for example by making 'story sacks', and by offering help and advice on how they can be used.

31. Productive links with a Beacon school Nursery and with a local primary school mean that good practice can be shared. An Advanced Skills Teacher (AST) also provides support to teachers and teaching assistants. The school's links with local nurseries and playgroups ensure that children are well prepared for the next stages in their education. There are also good links with the local middle schools. Staff and children from the middle schools meet with the oldest pupils before they move at the end of Year 4, while pupils have the opportunity to visit their chosen middle school during the summer term. The school works closely with the Traveller Education Service to support the transfer of Traveller pupils at the end of Year 4.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

**Leadership and management are very good overall.** The headteacher provides **excellent** leadership. The leadership by the deputy headteacher and subject co-ordinators is **very good**. The school is very well managed, and self-evaluation is well established. The governing body make a **very good** contribution to the leadership of the school and its success.

### Main strengths and weaknesses:

- The headteacher provides excellent leadership, and has clarity of vision and sense of purpose.
- Teamwork is a very strong feature of the school.
- Self-evaluation is well established within the culture of the school.
- Governors take a keen interest in the work of the school, and contribute substantially to its effectiveness.
- The school's strategic plan and the annual improvement plan are of very good quality and clearly map out future development.

### Commentary

32. The excellent leadership of the headteacher provides the climate for learning and the drive and direction for raising achievement in the school. She is personally committed to building an effective partnership between the school, the home and the community through her clear vision and high aspirations for all adults and pupils. She works very effectively in partnership with the deputy, teachers and governors in striving to achieve the highest quality education for every child entrusted to their care. This is exemplified in her commitment to educational inclusion, and the promotion of equality in all that the school does. For example, she has undertaken some academic research into the preferred learning styles for different groups of pupils within the school. This information has been used to extend the range of teaching styles and learning opportunities that teachers use.



33. Teamwork between all adults is a very strong feature of this school and an essential element in the distinctive happy school ethos. There is a high level of commitment to the development of the school by all members of the school community, including staff, governors and parents. They give of their best and work together with a shared sense of vision and pride. For example, the school secretary is hardworking and efficient, and enables teachers to focus on their work in the classrooms rather than spend time on routine administrative tasks. The site manager maintains the school to a very high standard, supports teachers in the classrooms, and is also a governor. Parents make 'story sacks' to help others work with their children at home, and teaching assistants play a valuable role in providing pupils with help and support during lessons.

34. The previous report identified areas of weakness to do with monitoring and evaluating teaching and the curriculum, the role of co-ordinators and the strategic responsibilities of governors. Progress has been very good, and all of these weaknesses have now been successfully addressed. The headteacher has delegated effectively to governors and staff, and is making very good use of their skills. Teachers and governors now have a very good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses, as well as the cyclical nature of both performance management and school planning. All teachers are involved in checking progress against targets, watching for trends in performance indicators, and seeing that strategies are being implemented. In addition, they gauge effectiveness, and interpret how well things are going by monitoring and acting on differential achievement by different groups of pupils. This in turn drives school development planning, which is of very good quality. It takes account not only of how all subjects in the curriculum will be covered progressively, but also of the values and attitudes the school is seeking to develop in the pupils.

35. The governing body is very supportive and successfully fulfils its role as critical friend to the school. It is very well organised and fulfils its legal responsibilities by means of an effective committee structure. Governors take a keen interest in the work of the school and contribute substantially to its effectiveness. They have a very clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school, and are very active in holding the school to account for its performance and discussing ways in which standards might be improved. They ensure that statutory policies and guidelines are implemented and monitored, including those for race equality.

36. The school had a carry forward figure of just under 6 per cent for the year April 2002 to March 2003. The projected carry forward figure for the most recent financial year is around ten per cent. A program of cost cutting was implemented during the year based on a careful analysis of financial data that was incomplete, but beyond the control of the school. This resulted in a larger than expected carry forward figure. However, this additional money will be used for the recruitment and training of additional teaching assistants to enhance the support for pupils in the classroom. The new carry forward figure will be within national guidelines.

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

<b>Income and expenditure (£)</b>	
Total income	299,671.00
Total expenditure	308,203.00
Expenditure per pupil	2,880.40

<b>Balances (£)</b>	
Balance from previous year	24,994.00
Balance carried forward to the next	16,462.00

37. Governors, through their committees, apply the principle of best value. They keep a close watch on spending, and compare the school's results critically with those of other schools nationally and locally. A wide range of indicators, including the very good quality of teaching, learning and achievement, the very good quality of leadership overall and the very good improvement made since the last inspection, shows that the school is effective and, when its expenditure per pupil is considered, it provides very good value for money.

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

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

38. Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is **very good**. When they come into school the children have a very wide range of skills and abilities. Some children attend the local playgroup, but pre-school experience for the children who belong to the Travelling community is very limited. Attainment on entry is well below average overall. During their time in the Reception class, children learn very well because of the very good teaching. Planning is very good, assessments are used very well to plan the next stages of learning, and children are well prepared to start work in Year 1. This ensures that all groups of children, including those with SEN, higher attainers and members of the Traveller community, achieve very well. The leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are very good.

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

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

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

- Achievement is very good because of the very good teaching and learning.
- Teachers have high expectations of good behaviour, and relationships are very good.
- Classroom routines are very well established.
- Children have many opportunities to develop confidence and independence.

#### **Commentary**

39. Children enter the school with under developed social skills, and many have very limited pre-school experience. These skills develop very well within the Reception class and progress is rapid as a result of the very well planned curriculum, very good teaching, very good relationships and very high expectations of behaviour. Children quickly learn to follow classroom routines and feel safe and confident. They listen carefully to instructions and participate enthusiastically in all class activities. Adults provide very good role models for children, and encourage them to share, take turns and put up their hands when responding to questions. There are many opportunities for the children to choose their own activities, and they are expected to take responsibility for clearing their own workspace at the end of tasks. A good balance is struck in the time spent by children working on their own, in small groups or with an adult. Children enjoy school and show real interest in what they are doing. However, despite very good progress, some children will not achieve the Early Learning Goals in this aspect of their development.

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

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

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

- Achievement is very good because teaching and learning are focused on developing children's language and literacy skills through an interesting curriculum.
- Every opportunity is taken to develop the children's language skills.

## Commentary

40. Children enter the Foundation Stage with a wide range of ability and experience. Some are more able, but many have speech and language difficulties. While most will not achieve all their learning goals in these aspects of their development by the end of the year, a few children will do so as a result of the very well planned activities and very good teaching.

41. The Early Reading project is very well taught. Work is very well planned and carefully matched to the ability of each child. Children are taught to listen carefully as they practise letter sounds and sight vocabulary at regular intervals throughout the day. Very good relationships between children and adults mean that less confident children are encouraged to participate. Children enjoy listening to stories, and adults use these opportunities well to develop vocabulary and early reading skills. Most children can write their own name, and a few are moving on to simple words. Letters are usually formed correctly, and adults emphasise the correct sitting position and ways of holding the pencil.

## MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

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

### Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Achievement is very good because teaching and learning develop children's mathematical skills through a practical curriculum.
- Work is well planned, so that children of all abilities are fully included in the lessons.

## Commentary

42. Children enter school with a wide range of skills, many having limited experience in using and applying mathematical knowledge. This aspect of the Foundation Stage curriculum is very well taught because exciting practical activities are used to promote mathematical understanding. While most children will not achieve the learning goals by the end of the year, a significant minority will do so. All adults use a wide range of teaching methods and resources to help children develop a practical understanding of all aspects of mathematics. For example, when weighing the ingredients during cooking, they make links to other areas of the curriculum so that the tasks are meaningful to the children. However, some children still find it very difficult to concentrate fully on an activity without adult support.

## KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

### Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Children achieve very well because of very good teaching which is focused on developing children's skills through an excellent practical, imaginative curriculum.
- Children have many opportunities to use computers.

## Commentary

43. Children make very good progress in their knowledge and understanding of the world. Teaching and learning are very good, with a focus on first-hand, practical activities mainly linked to a wide range of outside trips and visitors. The majority of children will achieve their learning goals in this aspect of the curriculum by the end of the year, and a few will exceed them.

44. The teacher provides a very wide and interesting range of experiences. These experiences help the children to become confident investigators and stimulate their curiosity about the world around them. For example, during one lesson the children found at least 20 snails in the school garden, and the teacher carefully linked this discovery to the previous lesson about African land snails. The experience prompted a range of questions such as 'Why do snails leave trails?' and 'How do they move in and out of their shells?' Computer skills are very well taught on a daily basis, and are used to good effect to support teaching and learning. Children confidently use the mouse and keyboard in a range of settings. Teachers and support staff are effective in teaching children that some families within the community have similar beliefs to theirs, but that others do not. They do this by celebrating Christian festivals and those of other communities, by reading stories, and by discussion.

## **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

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

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

- There are frequent opportunities during the day for children to develop their physical skills inside and outside the classroom.
- Children enjoy physical activities.

### **Commentary**

45. Children receive regular opportunities for physical activities such as running, jumping, climbing and balancing, both in time-tabled lessons in the school hall and during the regular opportunities for physical activity in the very well organised outdoor learning area. They are beginning to show an awareness of space, of themselves and others, and experiment with different ways of moving, although they are unable to sustain these activities. Some children find it difficult controlling their bodies as they jump forwards and backwards, and many find it difficult to keep in time with the music, even when they recognise a change in pace. Consequently, despite good teaching, many will not achieve the Early Learning Goals by the time they start Year 1.

46. Children are given frequent opportunities during the school day to use paintbrushes, pencils, scissors, construction sets, needles for sewing and garden tools for planting in order to develop their co-ordination skills. The management of the children is very good, and this ensures their safety when using apparatus and tools.

## **CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

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

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

- Children achieve well because they are taught very well and experience a wide range of creative activities.
- All adults value children's creativity and are skilful at helping them to respond creatively to their familiar surroundings.

## Commentary

47. Children enter Reception with limited creative skills and responses, with many well below the standards expected for their age. Teaching is very good, and children's creative talents are developed very well. Staff are very skilful at enabling children to respond sensitively and creatively to what they see, hear, feel and imagine through a range of interesting topics and imaginative play. Children have access to a very good range of materials, with many opportunities each day to paint, draw and make models. They show real pleasure as they try to express themselves when printing and painting their 'imaginary garden' collage. All the children enjoy their music lessons, experimenting with instruments to explore the different sounds. They had great fun accompanying their singing of '*Potato, potato, come and dig my sweet potato.*' The role-play area provides very good opportunities for children to play co-operatively and develop their imagination. They extend their language skills, for example by re-enacting familiar situations in the Traveller's caravan and by making up their own. Such experiences make a good contribution to children's spiritual, social and cultural development.

## SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

### ENGLISH

Provision in English is **very good**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Pupils achieve very well and make very good progress in their learning.
- There is a very well planned curriculum, which ensures that the basic skills are taught.
- Teaching and learning are always very good.
- Pupils with SEN, the more able and those with other specialist needs, receive very good support and achieve very well.
- Assessment procedures are very good and are very well used to set targets to help pupils improve their work.
- The subject is very well led and managed.

### Commentary

48. Standards by the end of Year 2 are above average. Nearly all pupils reach the expected level and a significant percentage achieves higher standards. By the end of Year 4, standards are well above the national expectations for this age group. Standards have improved significantly since the last inspection, with a higher proportion of pupils in Year 2 reaching the expected Level 2 and the higher Level 3. The headteacher's focus on curriculum planning, target setting, the quality of teaching and the very positive attitudes of the pupils have all played their part in bringing about this improvement in standards.

49. Pupils achieve very well because the basic skills are consistently very well taught and learning is very good. All pupils are provided with frequent opportunities to read, and are encouraged to take books home. Guided reading is used in lessons, and younger pupils are heard read on a regular basis. A 'Story Sack' scheme, well run and organised by parents, provides pupils with additional reading support. By Year 4, the majority of pupils are enthusiastic readers and read for a wide range of purposes. Very good planning for writing tasks ensures that pupils are given the scope to write in different ways for a range of audiences. For example, in a Year 2/3 lesson, Year 2 pupils wrote an evaluation of a book, whilst Year 3 pupils composed a letter to an author. This ensured that pupils of different ages and abilities in mixed age classes were provided with challenging tasks. Year 4 pupils learn about persuasive texts and set out to design their own advertisements. Good speaking and listening are encouraged at all times.

50. The quality of teaching and learning is consistently very good. Teachers always share lesson objectives with the pupils, often spending time reinforcing work undertaken in previous lessons and using this to introduce new ideas. They make very good use of questions to consolidate ideas, to review previous work and to challenge pupils' thinking. Learning is lively and interesting, with pupils showing very good levels of concentration and a desire to please their teacher and complete their work. The literacy hour is used very well. All sessions include direct teaching as well as opportunities for pupils to work in groups and on their own, and plenary sessions are used to very good effect to give pupils the opportunity to discuss their work with the rest of the class. Teaching assistants and parent helpers work closely to provide very good learning opportunities for all groups of pupils. Those with SEN receive very good support within the lessons. The more able are well challenged and extension work is provided for them. In addition, a teacher from the local authority Traveller Education Service works effectively alongside the class teacher providing additional support for some Traveller children.

51. Assessment procedures have been very well developed, and these enable teachers to gain a clear picture of how pupils are progressing in reading and writing. Teachers use the information obtained from assessments to track the progress of groups and individuals, for example, the higher attaining pupils, those with SEN, and children from Traveller families. Careful and thorough analysis of the data helps to identify any areas of underachievement, and, in turn, informs the subject development plan.

52. Leadership and management in the subject are very good. The headteacher co-ordinates English and has developed the curriculum very well, supporting its implementation by providing a good range of additional resources. Monitoring activities which lead to effective action ensure that there is consistency in provision. The library has been well developed and is a pleasant environment with a good range of non-fiction books.

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

53. Teachers develop pupils' literacy skills very well in other subjects. They create opportunities for pupils to use spoken language in most lessons, and this process helps pupils to develop their ideas and to share them with others. The headteacher is keen to promote speaking as part of the school ethos and there were impressive spoken contributions from pupils of all ages in front of a good number of parents during the 'Sharing Assembly' that took place during the inspection. Pupils' writing skills are used frequently and effectively to extend learning in subjects such as history, geography, science, and ICT.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **very good**.

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

- Standards have improved steadily since the last inspection.
- All pupils achieve very well.
- Teaching and learning are very good, with a strong focus on developing pupils' numeracy skills.
- Support staff are used very well and are very effective in promoting learning for all pupils.
- The co-ordinator leads the subject effectively and has a very clear view of what needs to be done to move the subject forward.
- Individual targets are sometimes too broad.

## Commentary

54. Standards are average in mathematics at the end of Year 2, and are above those expected for the age group by the end of Year 4. The school has worked hard to raise standards in mathematics since the last inspection. The proportion of pupils achieving Level 4 by the time they leave school at the end of Year 4 has risen dramatically as a result of very good teaching. All groups of pupils are now achieving very well. This is due to improvements to the curriculum, teachers' planning, the use of assessment information and the introduction of the 'Springboard' mathematics programme to help children who are experiencing difficulties with mathematical ideas. In addition, pupils have access to a 'maths club' and to a good range of mathematical games to use at home with their parents.

55. The quality of teaching and learning is consistently very good. Teachers are very secure in their knowledge of the National Numeracy Strategy. All lessons are very carefully planned, with clear learning objectives and a strong emphasis on mental calculation. Teachers and teaching assistants have high expectations of all groups of pupils. They ensure that all pupils use a very good range of learning strategies to solve problems, including mental calculation. They also ensure that pupils use the correct mathematical terminology from an early age. Pupils are very well supported and feel secure enough to discuss their ideas without fear of failure. As a consequence, all pupils, including the youngest, have a clear understanding of what they are expected to learn.

56. Teachers evaluate their lessons very well, including an assessment of what each pupil has achieved. Plenary sessions are also used to very good effect to assess what pupils have learned and understood. Teachers use the information gleaned from these assessments when they plan new work, ensuring that pupils build on their previous achievements and that pupils of differing abilities have work that is matched to their individual needs. Skills are consistently very well taught and tasks are challenging. Consequently, all groups of pupils, including those with SEN, the more able and Travellers' children, achieve very well. However, although pupils have targets for learning, these are sometimes too broad.

57. The school has a good number of teaching assistants, who are valued members of the team. They are very effective at giving pupils help and support, for example, by supporting small groups of pupils to ensure that their needs are met while the teacher works with other groups. In addition, they provide the teacher with valuable insights into how individual pupils are learning, and carefully record their observations so that teachers can track the progress of groups and individuals.

58. Leadership and management are very good. The co-ordinator has a very good understanding of the strengths and areas for development in the subject, and has devised an action plan, which is having a positive effect on standards. For example, she has worked hard to raise the profile of mathematics in the school by arranging a 'Maths Day', running a 'Maths Club' and providing mathematical games for pupils to take home and practise with their parents. In addition, the school is constantly seeking ways to improve the quality of teaching and learning, and is participating in the Early Numeracy Research Project with a view to helping teachers to gain new insights into how pupils learn.

### Mathematics across the curriculum

59. Mathematical skills are developed well in other subjects. In ICT, for example, pupils use pie charts and bar graphs to analyse surveys. Charts, graphs and tables are used in science to record and analyse data. Pupils practise measuring carefully and accurately in practical activities during design and technology.

## SCIENCE

Provision in science is **very good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Standards are average by the end of Year 2 and above average by the time pupils leave the school in Year 4.
- The curriculum is very good and places a strong emphasis on investigational and experimental science.
- Pupils are very enthusiastic about science; they are inquisitive and achieve very well.
- Assessment procedures are very good.

### Commentary

60. The emphasis that the school places on practical and investigative activities is a key factor leading to the satisfactory standards achieved by pupils at the age of seven and the higher than average standards achieved by the age of nine, at the end of Year 4. This is an improvement on the findings of the last inspection, when standards were judged to be satisfactory overall. There is a strong commitment to educational inclusion. Teachers have high expectations of what pupils can do, and boys and girls of all backgrounds and abilities are very well supported and achieve very well in relation to their prior attainment.

61. Pupils are very enthusiastic about science and say it is one of their most interesting lessons. They enjoy designing their own experiments and researching new ideas. Pupils also enjoy the science club because they can '*discover more about the world and how things work*'. They have a good understanding of a wide range of scientific ideas. For example, a mixed group of the oldest pupils were able to explain in some detail the differences between a tennis ball on Earth and one located on the moon. Pupils explained that the mass of the balls would stay the same, but the one on Earth would weigh more because gravity was stronger here than on the moon. They then suggested that time might vary across the universe in the same way, and speculated that it might be possible to go forward and backwards in time. One boy said he had been doing research and had found out that there may be worm holes in the universe connecting different times and space. However, he added that he did not quite yet understand how it worked...*and would the inspector be able to explain it to him!*

62. Although it was not possible to see science being taught during the inspection, the scrutiny of work shows that teachers capture pupils' enthusiasm by planning many challenging opportunities for them to learn through practical activities. The curriculum is of very good quality, with many opportunities for pupils to carry out their own experiments and to plan their own investigations. Pupils are shown how to record their findings, to analyse them, and draw simple conclusions. Teachers have high expectations of what pupils can do, and they mark work carefully, suggesting ways in which it might be improved.

63. Assessment procedures have improved, and are now of very good quality. Pupils undertake regular assessments, and the analysis of the information obtained enables the school to track the progress of individual pupils, classes and year groups. Teachers also use the information to inform their planning, so that work is well matched to the needs of differing ability groups. In addition, the results of statutory tasks are analysed to identify any areas of weakness, and these, in their turn, inform both the School Development Plan and the programme for developing staff skills and competencies.



## INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in ICT is **very good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Very good progress has been made since the last inspection.
- All groups of pupils are achieving very well.
- The subject is very well led, and progress is carefully monitored.
- Information and communication technology (ICT) is used very well in other subjects to enrich learning.

### Commentary

64. The school's considerable investment in a new computer suite is enabling pupils to use ICT effectively across the curriculum. The success of this strategy owes much to the very good leadership and management of ICT. A scrutiny of work and talking with pupils show they are offered very good levels of challenge to develop their skills. Standards were judged to be below average across the school at the last inspection. This has changed dramatically over the last few years, and standards are now above average by the end of Year 2 and Year 4. All groups of pupils are achieving very well.

65. At the time of the last inspection an area of weakness was identified as: *'The need to raise standards and rates of progress in information and communication technology by ensuring that there is adequate hardware and software available and sufficient time allocated to teaching all aspects of the National Curriculum Programmes of Study'*. Progress has been very good. Improvements in ICT have been one of the school's priorities, and new skills have been introduced successfully. The school now exceeds the government targets for computers in school, and has a ratio of one computer for every five children.

66. As well as teaching ICT skills through weekly timetabled lessons in the computer suite, teachers have identified opportunities in other subjects for pupils to develop the skills they have been taught. The scheme of work is now of good quality, and the new ICT suite is significantly increasing the time available for individual pupils to practise new skills and to ICT competencies. This practice is having a positive effect on the quality of learning and the rate at which pupils make progress. In addition, concerned that some pupils have limited access to computers outside school time, teachers have organised an ICT club at lunchtime.

67. There were limited opportunities to see the direct teaching of ICT, and there is, therefore, insufficient evidence to make secure overall judgements on the quality of teaching and learning. However, it is clear from teachers' planning that they ensure that all groups of pupils have equal access to suitably challenging activities.

### Information and communication technology across the curriculum

68. Information and communication technology (ICT) is used well to support learning in other subjects. Opportunities for ICT are now being identified in English, mathematics and science, as well as in the Foundation subjects, and the range of activities offered to all pupils is now good. For example, pupils use their word-processing skills to write for a range of purposes, including the writing of notices, letters, stories and arguments. The oldest pupils produce a school magazine containing both text and images. The Internet is widely used for research and communication purposes. For example, e-mail is used to contact Luton University in order to find out about the Hindu Religion. Pupils are able to store and analyse data in mathematics, and confidently control a screen icon using the computer language 'Super Logo'.

## HISTORY AND GEOGRAPHY

69. Work was only sampled in **history and geography**. It is therefore not possible to form an overall judgement about provision in these subjects. However, discussions with pupils and the examination of books and of work on display indicate that standards in **geography and history** are broadly average at the end of Year 2 and Year 4.

70. The school makes very good use of the local community to support work in **geography**. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 compare their own locality with Whitney Bay and look for similarities and differences. This work is further developed in Years 3 and 4, when pupils develop the skills of geographical enquiry in connection with a study of a local housing development. They use a variety of maps of varying scale, and design their own surveys. These studies are successfully extended beyond the immediate locality when surveying traffic in Leighton Buzzard and making comparisons with a small rural village in France.

71. By the end of Year 2, pupils can compare the past with the present using a range of everyday objects. They have studied the development of ships over time and have a good knowledge of a number of historical figures such as Florence Nightingale. The older pupils in Years 3 and 4 have successfully used books, artefacts and the Internet to find out what life was like for children during World War II. The curriculum is enriched by a planned programme of visits and visitors, for example when visiting St Albans to study the Romans in Britain.

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Provision in religious education is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Pupils are encouraged to discuss what they have learned in religious education and relate it to their everyday lives.
- The subject makes a positive contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The curriculum meets the needs of all pupils.

### Commentary

72. Standards of attainment are in line with expectations of the locally Agreed Syllabus at the end of Year 2, and in line with the expectations for the pupils aged nine years by the end of Year 4. All groups of pupils achieve well throughout the school.

73. Only one lesson was observed, so it is not possible to make a judgement on the quality of teaching overall. However, the one lesson seen was very well taught and pupils gained a good understanding and knowledge of Hinduism. The teacher skilfully built upon previous learning so that pupils developed an understanding of the Hindu concept of god in many forms. Pupils listened attentively as the teacher compared this concept with the many roles she had played in her life. This led to much discussion, and pupils realised that we all play different roles at different times. The teacher showed great sensitivity to the contributions made by pupils from the Travelling community, showing how well this school is working to break down prejudices. Religious education makes a positive contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

74. The scrutiny of work shows that the events in the Bible studied in Years 3 and 4 have helped pupils learn facts, explore assumptions and undertake research. Much of the work covered in religious education lessons centres upon discussions. For example pupils have considered 'What

*does it mean to be a Christian? What did Jesus think of himself? What was it like, and how did people feel, watching the procession on Palm Sunday and the crucifixion on Good Friday?’* This indicates that pupils are being given opportunities to discover the meaning behind religions as well as learning facts, and are able to relate what they learn to their everyday lives.

75. The curriculum is planned on a two-year cycle to accommodate the needs of all groups of pupils in the mixed age classes. Teachers’ planning ensures that topics are covered at an appropriate time and complement other areas of study.

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

76. It is not possible to make a secure judgement about provision in design and technology, music and physical education. In addition to observing lessons, inspectors talked to teachers about their work, spoke to pupils about what they had learned, and examined pupils’ work.

77. The school recognises its lack of musical expertise, and has successfully addressed this by employing a teacher from another school to teach **music**. One lesson was observed in Year 4, although all the school was heard singing in assemblies. In the only lesson seen, pupils’ singing technique improved because of good teaching and the very good role model provided by the teacher. Singing was tuneful, and the teacher put great emphasis on diction. Listening skills were well developed through copying and repeating rhythms, and pupils developed their knowledge of musical notation. When pupils sing altogether in assembly it is very tuneful and reflects well on the work being undertaken in lessons.

78. Pupils experience a varied **physical education** curriculum, including aspects of gymnastics, dance, athletics, swimming and team games. The standards in swimming by Year 4 are above average, and all pupils benefit from sessions in the local swimming pool during the summer term. The quality of teaching and learning in the two lessons seen was very good. Pupils were very enthusiastic about physical activity, and their behaviour was excellent. The teachers had high expectations of what pupils could achieve, and continually challenged them to improve their skills and techniques. All pupils had equality of access to all activities, and were very well supported.

79. In **design and technology**, pupils design, make and evaluate their work from an early age. Year 4 pupils, for example, have designed and made their own musical instruments, which they ‘played’ in a sharing assembly for parents and other pupils. Good emphasis is placed on healthy eating when studying the importance of food groups in nutrition, and when designing and making sandwiches. In the only design and technology lesson seen, the quality of teaching and learning was very good. The activities were very carefully matched to the broad range of abilities in the mixed age class, and pupils made very good progress at developing their skills of cutting, shaping and joining fabrics.

### **Art and design**

Provision in art and design is **very good**.

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

- Standards are very good, and all groups of pupils are achieving very well.
- The curriculum is of very good quality.
- Pupils enjoy art and design activities.
- The co-ordinator celebrates and values the work of all pupils.
- There are very good systems for assessing and recording pupils’ progress from one year to the next.

## Commentary

80. Judgements are based on a scrutiny of pupils' work, teachers' planning, discussions with staff and pupils, and the small number of lessons observed. Standards are well above average across the school, and all groups of pupils are achieving very well. The quality of teaching and learning in the lessons seen was very good.

81. The curriculum is broad and balanced. All pupils have very good opportunities to work in a variety of media, consistently producing work of a very good standard, which is thoughtfully and carefully displayed around the school. The curriculum is further enriched by the use of ICT for research, by opportunities for pupils to work alongside visiting artists, and by visits within the locality to explore the impact of art and design on the environment. Pupils thoroughly enjoy these activities and talk enthusiastically about art and design lessons and art club as amongst their favourite activities. The extensive range of pupils' work across the school represents very good achievement and reflects the pupils' very good attitudes to the subject.

82. The co-ordinator has introduced some innovative ideas to encourage and celebrate pupils' artistic awareness. These include a temporary 'Art Gallery' of pupils' work in the school hall, where parents and other children can discuss, and appreciate, their artistic endeavours. The co-ordinator is committed to raising standards and providing all pupils with as wide a range of artistic experiences as possible throughout their time at the school. There is a very good system in place for assessing and recording pupils' skills. This means that areas of weakness can be identified, and teachers can then plan activities that are well matched to pupils' individual needs. Portfolios of very good artwork from each year group are available to all staff to help them check on standards and progress.

## PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Provision for PSHE and citizenship is **very good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Pupils are learning to play an active role as citizens.
- Pupils' views are valued.
- The school respects and values human diversity found within its community.

## Commentary

83. The programme for PSHE is very good and includes work on diet, sex and relationships, drugs, and safety. Pupils are successfully learning to play an active role as citizens. They are very well informed about the need for rules in school and the community, and are involved in establishing the code of behaviour. Pupils have a very good grasp of the consequences of anti-social behaviour and the need for tolerance. Their views are heard and respected, and their opinions are regularly sought through questionnaires and interviews with the headteacher.

84. Staff, governors and pupils work and learn together in an ethos where every member of the school's diverse community is valued and respected, a principle which is very well promoted through PSHE lessons and through other activities. For example, teachers give pupils opportunities to work together in an informal setting in order to discover their own strengths and natural talents, for example, by organising clubs at lunchtime. In addition, teachers are aware that all children need a quiet place to work on their own outside school hours. They have, therefore, organised a lunchtime homework club three times a week so that all pupils have equal opportunities to seek help and to develop self-discipline and reliance, as well as a sense of pride in what they can achieve on their own.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<b>Grade</b>
<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>2</b>
How inclusive the school is	1
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	2
Value for money provided by the school	2
<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>3</b>
Pupils' achievement	2
<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>2</b>
The quality of teaching	2
How well pupils learn	2
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	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
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	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3
<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).*