

# INSPECTION REPORT

**GILBERT HEATHCOTE NURSERY AND INFANT  
SCHOOL**

Chesterfield

LEA area: Derbyshire

Unique reference number: 112662

Headteacher: Mrs Susan Armenante

Lead inspector: Mr C Kessell

Dates of inspection: 9<sup>th</sup> - 11<sup>th</sup> February 2004

Inspection number: 256207

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

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## **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Type of school:	Infant
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 to 7 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	148
School address:	Newbold Moor Sheffield Road Chesterfield Derbyshire
Postcode:	S41 8NF
Telephone number:	01246 450634
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr David Wilders
Date of previous inspection:	18 <sup>th</sup> May 1998

## **CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL**

Gilbert Heathcote Infant and Nursery School is smaller than most other schools of its type and serves a mixed community of private and rented accommodation. About 58 per cent of the pupils come from outside its designated catchment area. Nearly all pupils come from white ethnic backgrounds, although a very small number of other minority ethnic groups are also represented. There are no pupils with English as an additional language. The school has not received any travellers, refugees or asylum seekers. The number of pupils who leave or join the school during the academic year is about average. At 34 per cent, the proportion of pupils who are entitled to free school meals is above the national average. Ten per cent of pupils are assessed as having special educational needs; this is below average. One pupil has a statement of special educational need. Children start school with attainment that is about average for their age. Attainment is below average for those pupils who enter the Nursery. In 2001, the school was re-awarded 'Investor in People' status and in 2003, the 'Eco Schools' Bronze Award.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
20695	Mr C Kessell	<i>Lead inspector</i>	Mathematics; Information and communication technology; Geography; History; Religious education.
9189	Mr J Horwood	<i>Lay inspector</i>	
18709	Ms N Bee	<i>Team inspector</i>	English; The Foundation Stage curriculum; Special educational needs; English as an additional language.
27324	Mrs D Crow	<i>Team inspector</i>	Science; Art and design; Design and technology; Music; Physical education; Personal, social and health education.

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# PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

## OVERALL EVALUATION

**This school provides a good education for its pupils** and provides good value for money. Pupils' achievement is good overall. Standards in Year 2 are above average in reading, writing and mathematics. Teaching and learning are good. The leadership and management of the headteacher and key staff are good. Many aspects of the headteacher's leadership are very good. The care provided by the school is very good, and the pupils' personal development is also a strong feature.

### The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:<sup>1</sup>

- Pupils are achieving good standards in English and mathematics by the end of Year 2.
- The headteacher's leadership has many strengths: her strategic thinking is very clear and she has high aspirations for the school. Communication through the school is very good.
- Teaching and learning are good, particularly in English and mathematics and for the children in the Foundation Stage<sup>2</sup>. However, on occasions more attention could be paid to the needs of different ability groups and the teachers' marking of pupils' work could be more effective.
- Provision for pupils' personal development is good. As a result, pupils have positive attitudes to learning and behave well.
- Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety are managed very well by the teaching and non-teaching staff.

Improvement since the school's previous inspection has been good. Academic standards are higher and the school's trend of improvement is above the trend found nationally. The pupils now make better progress in information and communication technology (ICT), which was an issue at the last inspection, and the school's long-term curriculum plan, is well matched to the demands of the National Curriculum. Recent improvements in the accommodation have successfully developed the school environment, and more improvements are planned by the school and governors. The headteacher and staff are ensuring that the school continues to move forward.

## STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
reading	E	C	A	A*
writing	E	A	A	A
mathematics	E	B	A	A*

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

**Pupils' achievement is good** in relation to their attainment when they started school. The data, shown above, indicates that in the national tests for 2003, standards were well above average in reading, writing and mathematics when compared to all schools. Standards were also well above average in these three areas of learning when compared to similar schools. Standards in reading and mathematics were in the top five per cent. Recent national test results show that boys perform better than girls. This is different from the trend found nationally. Children in the Foundation Stage achieve well, and many are likely to achieve the Early Learning Goals<sup>3</sup> by the end of Reception,

<sup>1</sup> The strengths and weaknesses are listed in order of significance.

<sup>2</sup> The Foundation Stage caters for children from the age of three to the end of the Reception Year.

<sup>3</sup> The Early Learning Goals are what children should achieve by the time they reach the end of Reception Year.

despite entering Nursery with levels of attainment that are below the expected levels. Current standards in Year 2 are above average in reading, writing and mathematics. Standards in science, religious education and ICT are similar to those expected for pupils of this age. The other subjects of the curriculum were not part of the inspection focus.

**Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good.** Pupils have good attitudes to learning and are well behaved. Attendance and punctuality are good.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

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

**Teaching and learning are good.** Teachers have a good understanding of the subjects they teach and motivate pupils well. Pupils are enthusiastic learners, and work well, both independently and in groups. Lessons are well managed, and teachers have high expectations in terms of academic performance and behaviour. Pupils are given plenty of opportunities to develop their writing skills in other areas of the curriculum. However, in some lessons, not enough attention is paid to ensuring that different ability groups are provided with appropriate levels of work. Teachers' marking is not always sufficiently informative and helpful to pupils. A minority of pupils need to listen more carefully to their teachers and to each other.

The curriculum provided by the school is satisfactory. Out-of-class activities enrich the curriculum well. The school's partnerships with parents are very good. Very good care is provided for the pupils.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**Leadership and management are good overall.** The teaching and non-teaching staff work very effectively as a team. The headteacher and other staff provide good leadership both of the curriculum and of teaching. Performance data is monitored well and the school's self-evaluation of its performance is good. The professional development of the staff is very well linked to the school's development planning. The work of the governors is satisfactory. The school fulfils its statutory requirements.

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

Parents are very satisfied with the work of the school in all areas. They particularly like the arrangements for settling children into school, the fairness with which staff treat children, the good teaching and the good range of activities provided. They feel that their children are encouraged to be mature and responsible, and that they enjoy coming to school. The inspection team fully agrees with them.

Pupils like everything about their school, but a significant number think that not all children behave well. The inspection team consider that where behaviour is inappropriate it is well dealt with.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- continue to develop lesson planning to ensure that pupils of different abilities consistently get the right levels of work, by using assessment information more effectively;
- improve the quality of teachers' marking, so as to help pupils know how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve the standard of their work.



## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

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

Pupils' achievement is good overall. Standards in English and mathematics are above average. Boys tend to perform better than girls in national tests.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Pupils' achievement in reading, writing and mathematics is above average. This represents good progress against the pupils' prior attainment.
- Some pupils with special educational needs (SEN) do not always make the same good progress as their classmates.
- Standards in ICT have improved since the previous inspection.

#### Commentary

1. Standards have improved in reading, writing and mathematics since the previous inspection. The school's trend of improvement in Year 2 from 1999 to 2003 was above the national trend. Much of this improvement has coincided with the time spent at the school by the current headteacher. The majority of parents are happy with the progress that their children make. When responding to the pre-inspection questionnaire, 98 per cent of the parents who replied agreed that their children made good progress. The inspection team would support this view. The pupils also believe that they have to work hard.

2. It all starts in the Foundation Stage, in which children in the Nursery and the Reception classes achieve well. Children enter the Nursery with below average attainment, but achievement is good, and by the time they enter Reception, many children are nearer the levels expected for their age. In both Reception classes, the majority of children are on course to reach the expected levels in most areas.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	17.0 (15.6)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	16.3 (15.5)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	17.8 (17.1)	16.3 (16.5)

*There were 25 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

3. The national test results in 2003 for pupils in Year 2 indicated that, when compared to all schools, standards were well above average in reading, writing and mathematics. The pupils' average points scores<sup>4</sup> improved on 2002. Although it is unlikely that the current Year 2 pupils will achieve the average points scores of the 2003 year group, the levels should be high enough to represent above average standards; this represents good achievement for the current Year 2 pupils.

4. National data indicates that the gap in performance between boys and girls in the school is different from that found nationally. Taking the three years 2001 to 2003 together, boys have outperformed girls. The school is very aware of this situation, and their own analysis of predicted results for the future, indicates that this difference is likely to be reversed and will then match the pattern found nationally.

<sup>4</sup> Average points scores - the average points scores table compares the school's performance with the national results. The calculations are arrived at, by using the total of all test scores gained by pupils and dividing the total by the number of pupils with a test result. This calculation is carried out for each area of learning tested.

5. Pupils with complex SEN achieve well. This is because they work to a programme which is accurately suited to their needs. In addition, the quality of the support for them is good. At times, other pupils who are identified as having difficulties in acquiring basic literacy and mathematical skills, are not set tasks which accurately match their needs; this can affect the progress that these pupils make.
6. In Year 2, standards in science, religious education and ICT are similar to the expected levels. Although other subjects were not part of the inspection focus, there was sufficient evidence to indicate that standards in geography are also at the expected levels. The standards in ICT represent an improvement since the previous inspection, when they were judged to be lower than typically found.

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

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good. Attendance and punctuality are good. Personal development including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good overall.

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

- Pupils' positive attitudes to learning, their good behaviour in the classroom and their good attendance help them to achieve well.
- Relationships between pupils, and between pupils and staff are good, and often very good.
- Pupils acquire good social skills and an understanding of moral issues through good guidance from caring teachers.

### **Commentary**

7. Children in the Foundation Stage show positive attitudes to learning. Induction procedures are good, which enables the children to settle quickly into the school. In the Nursery, most children readily separate from their parents and carers. Children select activities confidently. All enjoy their time in school. Personal and social skills are consistently well promoted in the Nursery and the Reception classes. This results in good independent skills being developed. By the time they enter Reception, most children work well together, and they develop good relationships with each other and with the adults who help them. Behaviour is good.
8. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 show good attitudes to learning in most lessons. They listen attentively, are keen to answer questions and undertake tasks enthusiastically. This is the result of good teaching, through which teachers maintain a high level of interest within a good learning environment. Pupils are often fascinated by topics presented in lessons and in assemblies. Occasionally, a very small minority of pupils can present challenging behaviour that affects the learning of others. The school has a range of successful strategies to manage these pupils.
9. Standards of behaviour are good in the classroom, and very good in assembly. In the dining room and in the playground, behaviour is good. No harassment of any kind was seen, and pupils played harmoniously in the well-equipped playground. The caring ethos of the school helps pupils to know right from wrong and to show consideration for others. Both parents and pupils confirmed that if any bullying does occur, it is very well dealt with. There have been no exclusions in the past year.
10. From the day they start school, children are encouraged to become independent, and they willingly take on a range of responsibilities appropriate to their age. Pupils of all ages take turns in returning the registers to the office, and take part in the school council activities. Social skills are continuously developed through the range of activities available to pupils.

11. Pupils play and work very well together in groups. Younger pupils are taught at an early stage to take turns and to listen to others. Staff give a positive lead in engendering good relationships: they give praise and encouragement at every opportunity, and act as good role models.

12. There are very few pupils from ethnic minority groups, so the school ensures that pupils experience the traditions of a range of other cultures by occasionally bringing visitors into the school, and by celebrating festivals of different faiths.

13. The ethos of the school, supported by assemblies and religious education lessons, helps to promote spiritual development. During assemblies there are good opportunities for reflection, whereas these were limited at the time of the previous inspection. Close relationships with adults in the school enable social guidance to be continually addressed throughout the day. Within lessons, teachers explain moral issues and ensure that pupils understand right from wrong. They also successfully teach the need to show respect for others.

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

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	5.3	School data	0.1
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*

14. Although attendance levels are similar to those found nationally, as they were at the time of the previous inspection, punctuality has improved and is no longer an issue. Registration procedures are efficient, and records of attendance comply with statutory requirements. The school regularly emphasises the importance of attendance and punctuality, and parents respond well to this.

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

The school provides a good education for its pupils. Teaching and learning are good. Assessment procedures are good. The use of assessment is satisfactory. The curriculum is satisfactory and is enriched well by a good range of out-of-class activities.

#### **Teaching and learning**

Teaching and learning are both good. Although assessment procedures are good, the information provided is not always used as well as it could be to provide an appropriate level of work for different ability groups. This is an area for development.

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

- Teachers have a good understanding of areas of learning and subjects.
- Pupils learn at a good rate particularly in English and mathematics.
- Pupils are enthusiastic about learning, and work well both independently and in groups.
- Some of the work provided for different ability groups could be better matched to their needs.
- Teachers' marking could be more helpful to the pupils, and the information provided by assessment used more effectively.
- Pupils' understanding of their targets in English and mathematics contributes little to their learning.

## Commentary

15. Teaching is good in the Nursery and in the Reception classes. Learning support assistants work well with teachers, develop good relationships with children and provide good support. Information collected on individuals is used well to plan activities that meet the needs of all children. This results in children developing positive attitudes to learning, and working with enthusiasm and enjoyment. Learning is good. Using the national guidance, all teachers develop profiles which clearly track the progress of individual children through all areas of learning.

### **Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 20 lessons**

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	2	15	3	0	0	0

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

16. Parents are pleased with the quality of teaching in the school. This was reflected in the comments made at the pre-inspection meeting, and the fact that, in response to the pre-inspection questionnaire, 96 per cent of parents agreed that teaching is good. The inspection team supports this view. Good teaching results in progress being made, and leads to above average standards in English and mathematics. Pupils believe that they have to work hard; analysis of pupils' previous work would suggest that they do. Parents believe that the needs of different ability groups are well catered for; in many lessons this is the case, but in others, these needs could be met to a greater extent.

17. Because of teachers' high expectations, much is demanded of pupils, both in terms of their behaviour and of their academic performance. However, the demands made on some pupils are unrealistic, and they would benefit from a more accurate match of work to their needs. For example, pupils are provided with good opportunities to write, but often the same is expected of a lower attaining pupil as of a higher attaining pupil. In some lessons, higher attaining pupils cover work that they find too easy, and they would benefit from work offering greater challenge. Despite this weakness in teaching, pupils of all abilities are enthusiastic learners and tackle their work with enthusiasm. Much of what the teachers attempt is successful, and this is reflected in the school's national test results. However, in some instances, the match of work to pupils' abilities or needs could be more accurate. In science, work is sometimes not sufficiently well planned to match the ability of pupils, particularly higher attaining pupils.

18. Information collected on pupils with SEN is used satisfactorily to develop detailed individual education plans. However, sometimes teachers do not use this information when they plan lessons. As a result, pupils sometimes find work too difficult. In addition, when teachers mark pupils' work, they do not consistently give adequate guidance about how to improve upon it. Learning is adversely affected when this happens. Most pupils with SEN are satisfactorily supported by learning support assistants, and pupils with more complex needs are well supported. This enables pupils with SEN to take part in all planned activities.

19. Pupils find their lessons interesting, and they are clear that they are always finding out new things. Teachers have secure subject knowledge, and they make good use of the national strategies for literacy and numeracy. Despite some literacy and numeracy lessons being longer than recommended, teachers ensure that there is a good balance between introducing the lesson, the main activity and a session at the end, in which pupils can discuss what they have done and teachers can review the learning. Discussion is encouraged, and many teachers try to involve the maximum number of pupils of all abilities. This results in pupils being keen to participate in activities, and to present their ideas and views to the rest of the class. As Year 2 pupils took turns to count in 3s, 4s or 5s, the class teacher asked their classmates if they were 'right or nearly right?' This approach ensured that pupils did not feel discouraged by being wrong. In general, classroom

relationships are very strong and enhance learning. There are the odd occasions when pupils are allowed to call out. When this happens, listening skills are not promoted and learning is less effective. In the very good lessons observed, a very good pace for learning was maintained, and no time was wasted, because pupils knew exactly what was expected of them.

20. Thorough assessment procedures have been developed, and teachers are able to predict grades and then track all pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Performance information is generally used well to form ability groups within classes. This enables teachers to move individuals and groups of pupils on to the next stage of learning more effectively. Satisfactory assessment procedures are in place for all other subjects of the curriculum. However, in some subjects, such as science, they have only recently been introduced.

21. Information collected on individual pupils enables the teacher to identify the levels of the National Curriculum at which they working for each subject. However, teachers do not always use this information effectively when they plan some lessons, particularly when pupils are expected to complete written tasks. When this happens, the same work is given to the whole class and some pupils are set work which is too difficult, whilst others need more challenging tasks. Learning for all abilities, including those pupils with SEN is adversely affected when this happens. Pupils begin to develop an idea of how well they are doing, but this understanding could be better. Although marking is generally supportive, it varies in quality, and does not consistently inform the pupils of how well they are doing and of what they need to do to improve. Pupils are given targets to help them to improve in literacy and mathematics, but these are not effectively reinforced in lessons or in teachers' marking. The result is that many pupils are unsure of their targets. Target setting is not effectively contributing to raising standards.

## **The Curriculum**

The school provides a satisfactory curriculum, which includes a good range of activities outside the classroom that support learning. The school's accommodation and resources are satisfactory.

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

- The curriculum provided for children in the Foundation Stage is good.
- Provision for personal, social and health education (PSHE) is good.
- The school provides good opportunities for enriching pupils' learning.
- Pupils in Year 2 are well prepared for transfer to the junior school.

## **Commentary**

22. The provision for the children in the Foundation Stage is good. There is much emphasis on the promotion of personal, social and emotional development in all activities. Resources are satisfactory, and they support all areas of learning. Activities are interesting and thoroughly planned according to the national guidance. The outside area is secure, and it is satisfactorily used to promote learning for children in Nursery and Reception. In particular, the Reception staff work hard to plan weekly outdoor activities, as their classrooms do not have direct access to the outside area.

23. The curriculum provided for pupils in Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory and meets statutory requirements. The school has concentrated on developing literacy and numeracy, which has been very effective in raising standards in these areas. Curriculum development has been a significant feature of the school improvement plan. The headteacher provides good opportunities for teachers of mixed age classes to plan together during the school day; these planning sessions take place each week. This is effective in ensuring there is continuity and progression in learning for pupils of different ages.

24. The provision for ICT has improved since the last inspection. Teachers have a better knowledge and understanding of the subject, and the school has increased its resources for ICT.

25. The provision for pupils with SEN is satisfactory. Provision is good for pupils with more complex needs, because adults support them well, and develop programmes that are accurately matched to individual needs. This enables them to access all areas of the curriculum. Individual education plans for other pupils have targets that focus mainly on language, mathematics or behaviour. These plans are reviewed regularly and parents are satisfactorily informed.

26. There are good links with the local junior school, to which most pupils transfer at the end of Year 2. The headteachers of the infant and the junior schools meet regularly, and joint staff meetings are arranged. Teachers of Years 2 and 3 meet before pupils transfer to the junior school. In addition, each Year 2 pupil is paired with a pupil in Year 5. These arrangements ensure that pupils are well prepared and supported for transfer to the next stage of education.

27. The school makes good provision for pupils' personal, social and health education (PSHE). These are taught as a discrete subject, and in the lessons observed during the inspection, teaching and learning were good and pupils achieved well. Aspects of pupils' personal development, such as addressing their worries and concerns, are dealt with caringly and sympathetically.

28. The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons, to which all pupils have equal access. Teaching assistants organise and run these activities well; they are well attended, both at lunchtime and after school. Activities include learning to play the recorder, gardening, a variety of games, and art and craft activities. Pupils' learning is enriched by visits out of school, such as to a farm, and visitors to the school, such as theatre companies.

29. The lack of resources for the teaching of some subjects was raised as an issue in the previous inspection. These have improved, and resources for all subjects are now at least satisfactory. There have also been improvements to the accommodation since the previous inspection, including the development of a library and new play area.

## **Care, guidance and support**

The school makes very good provision for ensuring pupils' care, welfare, health and safety. It provides pupils with satisfactory support, advice and guidance. Pupils' involvement in the work of the school and in its development is satisfactory.

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

- Pupils are happy, and work in a healthy and safe environment.
- Pupils have excellent relationships with the headteacher and readily confide in her, as well as in their class teacher.
- Pupils are introduced well to school life.
- The good advice and guidance offered is not always informed by consistent assessment of work.

## **Commentary**

30. The school provides a happy environment that is conducive to learning. It has very good procedures to ensure the health and safety of pupils, and these are well managed by dedicated and caring staff. Child protection procedures are fully in place, with the headteacher being the named child protection officer. Pupils' healthy and safe living is well promoted through the PSHE programme, and also by the school council looking closely at environmental issues at the school. First-aid provision is very good, due to the considerable expertise amongst the staff. There are good arrangements for looking after pupils who are unwell.

31. Teachers know the pupils and their families very well, are sensitive to their needs and are thus able to provide good support and guidance. Inconsistencies in some of the marking and assessment in some classes, means that guidance is not always well informed. Good relationships between pupils and staff encourage pupils to raise any concerns they may have, knowing that they will be dealt with sympathetically.

32. Parents feel that pupils with SEN are well integrated, and the inspection team agrees with this view. However, information collected about individuals is not always used to match work accurately to pupils' needs.

33. Induction arrangements are good, and ensure that children settle happily into the Nursery and Reception; parents are very pleased with the short time it takes for this to happen. All children are well supported and looked after by the adults who work with them. The close liaison with the junior school enables pupils to be well prepared for transferring to it.

34. Seeking pupils' views and involving them in the work of the school are at an early stage. The school council was introduced last year, with three members from each class together with some teachers, parents and governors. Their initial project involved looking at environmental issues. Given the provision the school has made for the council, it has the potential to become very effective.

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

The school has very good links with parents and with other schools. There are good links with the community.

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

- Parents are very well informed about the school and about their children's progress.
- The good contribution parents make to their children's learning at school and at home, makes a positive contribution to achievement.
- The very good links with other schools ensure that pupils transfer happily to the next stage of education.

#### **Commentary**

35. Parents are very well informed about the school through the prospectus and frequent letters. Whilst there is not a regular newsletter, parents are kept informed through direct contact when they bring their children into school each morning. They are also well informed about their children's progress through consultation evenings and good annual reports. The school has an 'open door' policy, and parents are welcome to discuss concerns at any time.

36. The governors' annual report to parents is a useful document, containing items of interest in addition to information that meets statutory requirements.

37. Parents are very satisfied with the school. They think that their children settle well and that, they are both treated fairly by the staff and taught well by them. They feel that their children are encouraged to be mature and responsible, and they appreciate the good range of extra-curricular activities that are offered. Some parents said that children had been bullied, but indications are that this is very rare, and that it is dealt with well at a very early stage.

38. Parents make a good contribution to children's learning by providing very good help in the classroom, and on trips and visits. The school recently contacted parents to ask for help during the school day, and 22 parents came forward to offer support. Parents also raise significant funds for the school through the active Parent and Teacher Association. Most parents identified the very good guidance they receive on how to help their child with work at home as an aspect of the very good partnership they have with the school.

39. Links with the community are good. Pupils benefit from visitors to the school, such as the local vicar, and have some trips into the community. The environmental project carried out by the school council has also made pupils more aware of community issues.

40. Good links with the local secondary school are built up through the local cluster of schools. Activities include the headteacher going into the secondary school to help with mock interviews, and students from the secondary school coming into the school on work placements. Pastoral and curriculum links with the junior school are well established, facilitating a smooth transfer for pupils. All these initiatives contribute positively to the standards attained and to good achievement.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Leadership and management are good overall. Many subjects and areas of school are well led and managed. Governance of the school is satisfactory.

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

- The headteacher's leadership provides very clear strategic thinking and high aspirations; she enables all staff to work very well together.
- The professional development of staff is valued very highly and linked well to school development.
- The role of the subject co-ordinator has been developed well in the school.

### **Commentary**

41. Parents feel that the school is well led and managed, and the inspection team would support these views. Although the headteacher is ambitious for the school and there is a continuous drive for improvement, she leads in a friendly, supportive and open manner that encourages good teamwork and the sharing of a common purpose. Communication within the school is very good, and there is a clear, shared vision for the future. Staff give the impression of being happy in the school, and although school processes and procedures are rigorous, there is a light-hearted, friendly atmosphere that fosters good teaching and learning. The headteacher's leadership is reflective, and good use is made of data to consider what the school does well and what needs to be improved. It is significant that the recent improvement in standards in the school coincides with the current headteacher's time at the school. When compared to similar schools, Gilbert Heathcote does very well.

42. Staff with subject or aspect responsibilities lead and manage well. This has also contributed to high standards and to improvements since the previous inspection. The co-ordinator role has been developed well by the headteacher, and all co-ordinators have been involved in analysis of pupils' work, classroom observations and curriculum monitoring. Subjects have been successfully reviewed and appropriate action plans produced. The professional development of all staff has a very high priority in the school, and performance management has been very well linked to the demands of the school improvement plan. This very clearly identifies where the school is moving strategically and reflects the school's high aspirations for its pupils. The improvement plan is reviewed regularly and rigorously. The needs of all staff are carefully considered. A good example of this is the headteacher's practice of taking year groups for singing, so as to provide teachers with an opportunity to plan the curriculum together. This ensures that no member of the teaching staff should feel isolated when planning work, and promotes continuity across the mixed-age classes.

43. The Foundation Stage is well led. Clear systems, which everyone understands and works within, enable all adults to work successfully as a team. This results in the children in Nursery and Reception achieving well.

44. The management and integration of pupils with complex special educational needs is good. However, there are no clear monitoring procedures for the small number of pupils who have been



identified as having difficulty in acquiring basic literacy and numeracy skills. This is not satisfactory, and it results at times in a few pupils being given work which is too difficult for them. Overall, the co-ordinator for special educational needs (SENCO) manages the area satisfactorily, and keeps clear documentation on all identified pupils. Funding for SEN is used appropriately.

45. Governors make an appropriate contribution to the work of the school, both as members of various committees and as individuals properly undertaking their responsibilities. A number of governors are new to their positions, but are anxious to understand and fulfil their responsibilities. They have a secure understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses: they correctly acknowledge high standards, strong teamwork, and good teaching and learning as notable features of the school. They appreciate that there is still work to be undertaken in developing the school's accommodation, and that the school must remain vigilant regarding pupils' attendance and punctuality. Governors feel ownership of the school improvement plan, and a significant number of them have spent time in school observing lessons. They have a good understanding of what is happening in the school, and they are in an effective position to support and challenge the school.

46. The school has satisfactory procedures for ensuring that the financial resources available to it are properly used to provide for the needs of its pupils. The school's expenditure per pupil is about average, and the school's balance carry forward is at the recommended level.

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

<b>Income and expenditure (£)</b>	
Total income	324,133.00
Total expenditure	307,240.00
Expenditure per pupil	1,976.00

<b>Balances (£)</b>	
Balance from previous year	10,720.00
Balance carried forward to the next	16,773.00

47. Financial comparisons with other schools have not been rigorously made as part of best value principles, and this is an area for development. However, the need to be competitive when securing goods and services is fully understood. Governors meet their statutory duty to agree and regularly monitor the school budget. They have priorities as regards maintaining the current number of classes and continuing to improve the accommodation; these should be fulfilled with careful use of the contingency funding and additional funding from growing pupil numbers. There is a clear cycle of financial planning that is appropriately linked to the school improvement plan.

48. The school's administrative arrangements and day-to-day control of its finances are secure. All the recommendations of the school's most recent audit report have been fulfilled. The school clerk performs her duties in a friendly, supportive and efficient way. She contributes well to the smooth running of the school.

## **PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING, AND SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2**

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

49. **Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is good.** The school has maintained this high standard of education for its youngest children since the previous inspection. Induction procedures are good, and ensure that the children settle in happily and enjoy coming to school. The majority of children in the current Reception classes are of average attainment. Information collected when children enter the Nursery, shows that they are below the levels of attainment expected in aspects of communication, language and literacy, personal and social skills, and mathematical development. These are similar to the levels of attainment reported at the previous inspection. Most children achieve well during their time in the Foundation Stage, because teaching is good. Assessment procedures are good. All adults continuously collect useful information about children, and this is well used to place them into ability groups and to move them to the next step of learning. The school uses the national guidance to develop profiles, and these clearly show the progress that each child makes. Children with SEN are well supported and this enables them to take part in all activities. There is a secure outdoors area, which is satisfactorily used to promote learning in most areas, and is regularly used by children in the Nursery and in Reception. Resources are satisfactory for the promotion of learning in all areas.

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

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

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

- Teaching is good, and all adults consistently promote this in all activities.
- All adults support learning well, as they interact sensitively when children work in small groups or individually.
- Personal development is reinforced well.
- Children develop positive attitudes to learning and achieve well.
- Behaviour is good.

#### **Commentary**

50. Good provision enables most children to reach at least the expected levels by the end of their time in Reception. All adults have high expectations regarding behaviour, and as a result, behaviour is good. A few children who display challenging behaviour are dealt with firmly, but kindly, and are not allowed to interrupt the learning of others. Most children are confident and get on well with the adults with whom they come into contact. Teaching is good, and learning support assistants enhance learning considerably in all three classes. Achievement is good, because the children show positive attitudes to learning and enjoy coming to school. They work well together in pairs and small groups, and they begin to develop the skills necessary to work independently. In the Nursery, most children take turns and interact positively, both with each other and with the adults who help them. Children begin to understand that they are expected to help to tidy away at the end of each session. Personal independence is well developed; for example, in the Nursery, from an early age, the children are encouraged to attempt to put on their aprons when painting, and they wash their hands after painting or using glue. When they need help, most children are confident enough to ask for it. In Reception, children get themselves a drink of water when they need one. They experience celebrations such as Christmas and Chinese New Year. The children in the Nursery recently tasted noodles and tried to eat them with chopsticks. They thought this was very hard!

## COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

### Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Teaching is good, in particular the teaching of basic writing skills.
- Adults support children well, enabling those of all abilities to achieve well.

### Commentary

51. Most children are on course to attain the expected levels by the end of their time in Reception; a significant number are likely to exceed these levels. Teaching is good, and in particular, all teachers teach basic writing skills well. In the Nursery and in the Reception classes, children are shown clearly what they need to do to form letters correctly, and they are given many opportunities to develop writing skills. This results in most children attempting writing activities confidently and enthusiastically. Children in the Nursery were seen enthusiastically making their own books after listening to the story 'Who's in the shed?' In Reception, children wrote letters to the 'Stripy Fish' after listening to the story about the 'Rainbow Fish'. Writing tasks are well planned to enable children of all abilities to succeed. There are good opportunities for children to begin to develop their knowledge of initial sounds as they learn the correct way to form letters and to identify the initial sound of familiar objects. All adults have high expectations as regards listening carefully at all times, and this results in children listening well and responding accurately during class discussions. In all three classes, children have many opportunities to develop speaking skills. The result of this is that Nursery children develop their confidence as they talk about stories that they have listened to. In the Reception classes, most children speak confidently during class discussions; for example, a charming example was heard as the children discussed whether or not they had had a 'nice playtime'. They spoke of the importance of being a good friend. In the Nursery and Reception classes, children were seen carefully selecting books from the well-organised mini-library areas. Most children confidently identify and read their own names. Achievement is good as the children move through the Foundation Stage.

## MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision for mathematical development is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Relationships are good and enable children to work well together as they develop number skills.
- Children achieve well.
- Children are well supported by all the adults with whom they work.
- The teaching of mathematics is good.

### Commentary

52. Teaching is good. Basic mathematical vocabulary such as 'longer' and 'shorter', and the names of numbers are reinforced well. In all three classes, the teaching staff and other adults support the children well. This results in children of all abilities achieving well. Children in the Nursery were seen enthusiastically counting farm animals as they developed an idea of 'four'. During a class discussion, some Nursery children identified basic two-dimensional shapes, such as squares and circles. One higher attaining child said, 'A square has four sides'. This knowledge is built upon in Reception, as children cut out shapes from coloured 'Play-doh', and then count them as they match the spoken number with the written form. In all classes, children complete jigsaws to

reinforce the sequence of numbers. In Reception, children accurately identify and name two-dimensional shapes. They use simple equipment, firstly to follow the pattern and then to continue it. Resources such as these give the children many opportunities to articulate their thinking, thus developing their mathematical understanding. Relationships are good, and in all classes, children work well together. By the end of Reception, most children are on course to reach at least the expected levels, with some children likely to exceed them.

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

There was too little evidence to make a judgement on the quality of the provision or of teaching in this area.

### **Commentary**

53. Little direct teaching was observed in this area. Children in the Nursery made sheds from cardboard, with doors that they could open. They were well supported by an adult, which enabled them to achieve well. This activity was linked closely with the story to which they had previously listened. All children worked hard and most listened appropriately to the instructions that they were given. In a Reception class, children achieved well as they learnt about how materials change. Their responses were positive as they learned about what happens to water when it freezes, and how eggs change when they are boiled. Previous work showed that children in Reception have begun to develop ideas of three-dimensional shapes as they made underwater pictures inside cardboard boxes. Activities are well planned and imaginatively thought out in order to support this area. In the few activities seen, children achieved the expected levels for their ages. No direct teaching of computer skills was seen. However, displays of previous work show that children in all classes have satisfactory opportunities to produce pictures using art programs on the computer. These show the expected levels of attainment in the Nursery and Reception classes. In the Nursery, photographic evidence shows that the children have had opportunities to use the digital camera.

## **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in physical development is **good**.

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

- Teaching to promote physical development is good.
- Adults support children effectively, enabling all to achieve well.
- Activities in this area reinforce skills and knowledge taught in other areas.

### **Commentary**

54. Planning shows that the outside area is used satisfactorily to promote this area for children in the Nursery and those in Reception. One lesson was seen in which children in the Nursery confidently and enthusiastically rode three-wheeled bicycles, whilst others took part in other activities: sand play, painting walls with water to reinforce vocabulary such as 'straight' and 'curvy' lines, and using construction toys such as 'Lego'. Learning was satisfactory during this lesson and the teacher and the learning support assistant interacted effectively within the groups. All children regularly use the school hall to develop physical skills. In the one lesson seen, Reception children achieved well as they developed skills needed to perform an 'underwater dance'. They listened attentively and showed good concentration. Children were effectively supported by teaching and non-teaching staff, which enabled those of all abilities to achieve well. Nursery children were seen using vegetables to print. They received sensitive support from a learning support assistant, and this enabled these youngest children in the school to achieve well. In Reception, children were seen handling paintbrushes and pencils with satisfactory control. In all classes, children play imaginatively

and confidently with construction toys, and have opportunities to use soft materials such as 'Play-doh' and clay. In the Nursery, children satisfactorily rolled and cut 'Play-doh' as they pretended to 'make their dinner'. Children achieve well, and most are on course to reach the expected levels, with a few likely to exceed them.

## **CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in creative development is **good**.

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

- Teaching to promote creative development is good.
- Learning support assistants provide good support for both teachers and children..
- Children enjoy all aspects of this area of learning, working well together at activities.
- The area reinforces personal and social development well.

### **Commentary**

55. Teaching is good. All adults support children well, enabling them to succeed. Satisfactory areas designated for imaginary play have been developed in the classrooms; for example, in the Nursery, children change their footwear and put on 'space boots' and 'helmets', as they play in 'The Spaceship'. Personal skills are reinforced well as they do this. In Reception, children visit 'The Veterinary Surgery'. However, a few children were confused as to what this actually was. Most children use their imagination satisfactorily as they express their own ideas and communicate their feelings during play. However, a few children in each class have difficulty in doing this, and are unlikely to reach the expected levels. In all classes, the children have many opportunities to experiment with colour as they use paints and crayons. They show increasing control as they use different shapes to print. Lower attaining children in Nursery and Reception receive good support, which enables them to succeed. Reception children were seen achieving well during a music lesson. As they created 'Old MacDonald's band' they showed a satisfactory understanding of the names of musical instruments. In addition, most children played them with satisfactory control. Achievement is good, and most children are on course to reach at least the expected levels by the end of Reception; a number are likely to exceed these levels.

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

### **ENGLISH**

Provision in English is **good**.

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

- Pupils achieve well.
- Standards in reading and writing are above average at the end of Year 2.
- Teaching is good and sometimes very good.
- Pupils show positive attitudes to the subject.
- Listening skills are not always effectively promoted.
- Information collected on individual pupils is not always used effectively when planning lessons.
- Marking does not consistently inform pupils of what they need to do to improve.

## Commentary

56. By the end of Year 2, standards in reading and writing are above average. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. Speaking and listening skills are average. Pupils achieve well. Most pupils read, write and speak with enthusiasm and confidence. When reading, they sound out words of which they are unsure. A few pupils are confused about the distinction between fiction and non-fiction texts. As they write, they develop their ideas into sequences of sentences, which are sometimes punctuated with capital letters and full stops. Pupils have many opportunities to write for different purposes, such as in stories, lists or poems. Higher attaining pupils write clearly and imaginatively; for example, when writing a poem about water:

*Drip, drop,  
The water will stop  
Splish, splosh  
We're having to dash  
Puddle, puddle  
I'm in a muddle  
Soaking wet  
I'm not dry yet.*

57. Although there are many examples of pupils learning how to join their letters, they do not often apply this skill in their writing.

58. Teaching is good. All teachers have good subject knowledge, and use resources well to promote learning; for example, whiteboards are used effectively to reinforce and teach spelling skills. Teachers generally have high expectations regarding behaviour in lessons. Challenging behaviour is dealt with well, and pupils are not allowed to interrupt the learning of others. Teachers have effective systems in place to assess how well pupils are doing in reading and writing. These strengths in teaching enable most pupils to achieve well. However, teachers do not always use the information collected about individuals when they plan lessons. This sometimes results in a few pupils, including those with SEN, being set work that is too difficult for them. Some teachers do not consistently promote listening skill effectively: pupils are sometimes allowed to speak too loudly, and this interrupts learning; a few pupils do not listen when adults or other children are talking. At times, shortcomings in teaching such as these affect learning. Teachers have begun to identify targets for individuals and groups of pupils, but many pupils are unsure of these. At present, target setting is not contributing to the standards achieved. Although marking is inconsistent, the best examples clearly inform pupils of what they need to do to improve.

59. Very good teaching was seen in a lesson with the Year 2 class, in which activities were carefully planned to match pupils' different abilities. The teacher had very high expectations regarding completing the tasks in a given amount of time. She expected pupils to use their developing dictionary skills to spell words correctly and present their writing neatly. The pupils responded positively to these instructions, and after listening carefully, they concentrated hard on the activities and achieved very well. Higher attaining pupils, who were well supported by a volunteer helper, all managed to attempt the extension activity, which was to write a dialogue using speech marks. The plenary, the last part of the lesson, was used well to reinforce the learning objective, which focused on text that is spoken in stories such as 'Little Red Riding Hood'. In the better lessons, pupils' attitudes to learning are good. They work hard and listen attentively to advice that they are given by the adults who work in their classes.

60. The subject is well led and managed. The co-ordinator and the head teacher have been involved in monitoring the quality of teaching and learning. This contributes to the above average standards that are achieved. They are both aware of the standards reached and how well the pupils are doing. The library, which houses the small ICT suite, is a reader-friendly environment,

in which books are neatly stored and easily accessible to the pupils. Pupils are encouraged to visit the library each week to borrow books. The co-ordinator has looked at books used to support literacy lessons and catalogued them to fit into the teachers' planning. This makes it easier for teachers when they plan lessons.

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

61. The use of literacy skills in other subjects is satisfactory. There are many opportunities to write across the curriculum; for example, in religious education and science. In music, pupils labelled diagrams to describe their musical instruments, which they later made. However, teachers do not always promote the need to write neatly, nor do they reinforce basic writing skills that have been previously taught in literacy lessons. Often in the wider curriculum, all pupils are expected to write in response to the same task. This is not appropriate for some pupils. Pupils have satisfactory opportunities to use skills taught in literacy when they work on the computers.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

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

- Standards are above average in Year 2.
- The pupils achieve well.
- The subject is well led and managed.

### **Commentary**

62. Standards in mathematics are above average for pupils in Year 2. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. Pupils achieve well in the subject as a result of good teaching and learning, and of a strong focus on the progress individual pupils make against expected targets. The subject is well led and managed. This also contributes well to the good standards achieved by pupils. The subject co-ordinator is a good role model in the classroom. Trends over time indicate that boys do better than girls in mathematics to a greater degree than found nationally. The subject co-ordinator is very aware of this situation, and her analysis of current year groups in the school indicates that the trend is likely to be reversed as a result of a change in the characteristics of year-groups. Although many pupils with SEN achieve as well as their classmates, this is not consistent. On some occasions, these pupils are given too little support or inappropriate levels of work; for example, analysis of pupils work revealed examples of pupils with SEN who were writing numbers incorrectly, but were not being shown how to improve. This is a weakness in some teaching.

63. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is good, despite the weakness identified above. All numeracy lessons observed during the inspection were good or very good, and the range of work that had been covered by the pupils in Year 2 was particularly impressive. This is a result of high expectations. The continuity of work between the mixed-age classes is secure. The recommendations of the National Numeracy Strategy are used to good effect by the school. Lessons are lively, with good, clear introductions by class teachers to ensure that pupils have a good understanding of what they should do and what is expected of them. In lessons seen, pupils talked confidently about their work, showed obvious enjoyment in their learning and took pride in how much work they had done. Appropriate attention is paid to the range of different abilities found in classes, and teachers try to ensure that ability groups are provided with appropriate levels of work. This works better in some lessons than others: on occasion, pupils are given work that is too easy for them, or which they find too difficult.

64. The marking of pupils' work could be more informative. Although work is marked regularly, pupils could be provided with more information about how to improve, and they could be challenged further by teachers' responses. Pupils have targets appropriate to their needs, but discussions with pupils revealed that they were confused by these; their understanding of how to improve had not been fully exploited through marking or through the target setting process. However, pupils are enthusiastic about the subject and work well in lessons, whether independently or in groups. Most numeracy lessons exceed the recommended length, but good use of time by teachers, together with pupils' enthusiasm, justify this. Pupils maintain their concentration and effort. Pupils in the Year 2 class were observed 'roaring' their enthusiasm as they began their main activities. Good teaching enhances pupils' motivation.

65. The subject co-ordinator has an expert understanding of the subject. She has undertaken good analyses of performance data, and the progress of pupils is monitored rigorously against academic targets, which are reviewed regularly. She has a good understanding of what is happening in the school through good monitoring of teaching and learning. The school's current focus on problem solving is a result of her analysis of national tests. Lower attaining pupils are provided with extra support outside of the classroom. This initiative, which involves extra tuition in practical activities, also contributes effectively to the majority of pupils' achievement of the expected levels for their age.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

66. Numeracy skills are promoted effectively in other lessons. Pupils in Year 2 discussed producing repeating patterns in ICT, and also undertook parking and traffic surveys in geography. In science, pupils measure and record temperature, and count their pulse, as part of their studies of the human body. They also collect data relating to the weather.

## **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

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

- Many pupils achieve well.
- Sometimes work is not sufficiently matched to pupils' abilities and, as a result, some pupils do not achieve as well as they could.
- Teachers provide many activities which pupils' find interesting and which help to develop their knowledge, understanding and investigative skills.
- Teachers do not always tell pupils what they should do to improve their own work.
- The subject is well led by the co-ordinator.

### **Commentary**

67. Standards in science are average, as were those reported in the previous inspection. Many pupils enter school with below average knowledge and understanding, and these pupils achieve well in relation to their prior attainment. Discussions with pupils in Year 2, show that they have a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of life processes and living things, materials and their properties, and physical processes.

68. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Teachers' knowledge and understanding of the subject are secure, and underpin the interesting range of activities offered; these stimulate interest and curiosity, and effectively develop pupils' investigative skills. Samples of work seen show that, by the end of Year 2, pupils have conducted investigations; for example, these include finding out how ice cubes melt, how some materials are changed by heating and how to construct a simple electrical circuit. Pupils with SEN receive appropriate support from teaching assistants and make



similar progress to that of their classmates. Teaching is at its best when matched to pupils' abilities. However this matching is inconsistent, and sometimes pupils, particularly the more able, do not always achieve as well as they could. The marking of pupils' work does not often show pupils ways in which they can improve or give them their own small targets to work towards; this would allow them to take more responsibility for their own learning.

69. The subject co-ordinator has good scientific knowledge and understanding, and has attended appropriate training to update her skills. She has a clear sense of direction and is keen to develop the subject further. Since the last inspection, she has reviewed resources for teaching and learning and improved them. However, science has not yet been a whole-school focus, and attention to the areas she has identified for improvement has not had an impact across the school. Although new procedures are being introduced to assess pupils' learning, they are not yet being fully utilised to ensure that all pupils are consistently challenged.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

Provision in ICT is **satisfactory**.

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

- The subject has developed well since the previous inspection and standards are higher.
- The subject co-ordinator manages the subject well.

### **Commentary**

70. Standards in ICT are similar to those expected nationally for pupils in Year 2. The majority of pupils achieve at least satisfactorily, and many achieve well, in relation to their prior attainment. This is an improvement on the previous inspection, when standards were lower than they should have been and the pupils did not make sufficient progress. There are a number of reasons for this improvement: teachers have benefited from professional development in the subject and are confident about their teaching; resources have improved; the subject is well managed; ICT has been a specific focus for the school, and this has been successful in improving both provision and standards.

71. The older pupils talk confidently about ICT, and are provided with an appropriate range of experiences to develop their knowledge and understanding, together with the specific skills required. Class teachers introduce their pupils to specific units of work that are based on a national scheme, and then the pupils are provided with opportunities to develop their understanding of the unit over a set period of time. In addition to this, pupils are provided with intensive support in the school ICT suite to develop specific skills. Teaching assistants satisfactorily manage these sessions. The Year 2 pupils spoke clearly about programs they had recently used; for example, as part of their work in geography, they had used the Internet to download pictures of the Scottish island of Iona and printed these. They had e-mailed the school in Iona and received a reply, and during the inspection, two Year 2 pupils were continuing this correspondence.

72. The school is on target to meet the government's recommendations for the ratio of computers to pupils, although the school's ratio is slightly below this level at present. Good action planning has ensured that improvement since the previous inspection has been good. The subject co-ordinator has good subject knowledge, and a secure and realistic understanding of what is happening in the school. The weaknesses revealed by her monitoring of teaching during the previous academic year, led to the school's decision to offer pupils specific support in developing ICT skills. Although little direct teaching was observed during the inspection, evidence from the analysis of pupils' previous work and discussions with pupils, indicates that teaching and learning are at least satisfactory. There was far more evidence of the subject than at the time of the previous inspection. The subject co-ordinator has also used her expertise to run a course in basic ICT skills for parents. This successfully contributed to the very good links that the school has with parents.

## Information and communication technology across the curriculum

73. Information and communication technology is used satisfactorily across the curriculum to support other subjects. During the inspection, Year 2 pupils were observed beginning to use ICT to improve text, using 'delete' and 'insert' functions. Literacy skills were developed well as the pupils discussed how to improve readability. Analysis of previous work provided examples of pupils producing repeating patterns, pictures in the style of Mondrian and, in further links with art, firework pictures. In some literacy and numeracy lessons observed, opportunities were not taken to use ICT. Teachers do not identify when ICT is going to be used in other subjects as part of their planning, and this is an area for development.

## HUMANITIES

74. **Geography and history** were not part of the inspection focus. No lessons were observed in either subject, but discussions were undertaken with pupils in Year 2 and previous work was analysed.

75. Pupils talked very confidently and knowledgeably about their most recent work in geography. They were able to identify a good range of differences between Chesterfield and the Scottish island of Iona. They particularly focused on differences in size, traffic and industry. They commented on Iona being surrounded by water, which made it an island, and how the ferry was important to the lives of the islanders. As part of their written work, pupils wrote to their peers in Iona describing the main features of Chesterfield. This particular topic was also well promoted through interesting displays in the school hall, about which pupils talked enthusiastically.

76. Analysis of previous work indicated that pupils get many opportunities in geography to record the results of surveys and to complete worksheets that reinforce their learning. The amount of recorded work is quite impressive. However, pupils of different abilities are often expected to undertake the same work, and this is a weakness in teaching. Although the pupils in Year 2 were able to provide some information about the importance of Remembrance Day, they had not covered any history topics recently. However, their sense of chronology is similar to that expected for their age.

## Religious education

Provision in religious education is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses:

- The subject is well led and managed by the subject co-ordinator.
- Religious education contributes well to the pupils' personal development.
- Pupils are provided with many opportunities to write about the subject.
- Pupils of different abilities are set the same tasks.

## Commentary

77. Pupils' knowledge and understanding in Year 2 is similar to that expected for pupils of their age. All pupils achieve satisfactorily, and many achieve well in relation to their prior attainment. The subject is well led and managed by the subject co-ordinator, who has recently introduced a new scheme of work. As a result, the subject is a significant feature of the school development plan.

78. Discussions with Year 2 pupils indicated that they are very respectful of ideas and beliefs that are not familiar to them. They discussed with great enthusiasm the differences between Christianity

and Judaism, the two major religions studied. They were particularly articulate about a presentation on Judaism by a parent.

79. The one religious education lesson observed during the inspection was good. The pupils developed their knowledge and understanding well as they looked at the significance of signs and symbols to Christians and Jews. The class teacher skilfully introduced the lesson by looking at signs familiar to the pupils, such as those associated with football teams and shops. This imaginative and motivating start reinforced the sense that a sign can indicate 'belonging' or 'being a member of'. This then led to pupils identifying the cross as important to Christians; they related this to the many crosses found on Iona, the island studied by the pupils in geography. Finally, the pupils were introduced to the Star of David and to the idea that symbols can indicate a 'pride in belonging'. Although only one lesson was observed, evidence from pupils' books suggests that teaching and learning are consistently good. However, although pupils are given many opportunities to write about the subject, too often higher attaining pupils are expected to undertake the same tasks as lower attaining pupils; this is a weakness.

80. The co-ordinator is knowledgeable about the subject. The school is currently in a stage of transition to a new curriculum, and to new assessment processes. It is too early to judge how successful these will be, and the school acknowledges that they are still reviewing the new arrangements.

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

81. No lessons were seen in **art and design, design and technology and physical education**. These subjects were not part of the inspection focus. It is not possible, therefore, to make judgements on provision or teaching and learning. The curriculum for these subjects allows teachers to plan appropriately. Past work was submitted by the school for analysis, and some pupils were observed singing.

82. Examples of work on display throughout the school and discussion with pupils in Year 2, show that pupils have experienced a suitable variety of media and techniques in **art and design**. These include painting, printing, sketching and drawing, as well as three-dimensional work in clay and collage. Pupils described with enthusiasm how they had undertaken self-portraits. However, none knew the names of any famous artists. Pupils have produced some interesting work in their sketchbooks, such as observational pencil drawings of a 'bumpy twig'. ICT is sometimes used well to support work in art and design.

83. Two good singing lessons were seen. For their age, pupils sing well; they are enthusiastic and sing in tune. They develop a good repertoire of songs, and the headteacher, who is the music co-ordinator and pianist, accompanies the singing well. The headteacher used music on CD effectively, to add variety to the activities and to help pupils to develop rhythm. Pupils enjoyed moving their bodies and clapping their hands in time to the music, and most managed to do this successfully. Older pupils made good attempts at singing songs with a difficult range of high and low notes, such as the Beatles' song 'What would you do?' They also began to put expression into their singing; for example, many pupils tried hard to express the sentiments of the song 'Streets of London'. Pupils have regular opportunities during the school year to perform songs to an audience.

84. Year 2 pupils have the opportunity to learn to play the recorder, as an extra-curricular activity. Suitable opportunities are provided for pupils to listen to a range of music, as was seen in an assembly during the inspection, in which children listened attentively to African music.

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

### **Personal, social and health education**

85. The caring school ethos supports pupils' personal development well. Specific PSHE lessons provide good opportunities for pupils to share feelings and to discuss different topics. The two lessons seen were both good: they helped pupils to build confidence, and to have respect for themselves and each other. Pupils in a Year 2 class were beginning to understand how their behaviour affects others and to appreciate the benefits of living in a harmonious community. They were able to express their views sensibly and confidently. This represents good achievement, as many pupils enter school with below average skills. Pupils have the opportunity to be involved in the school council, which enables them to investigate and debate issues of concern. The school's status as an 'Eco-School' allows pupils to consider their wider social responsibilities, such as helping to preserve the environment.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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