

# **INSPECTION REPORT**

## **HEMPSTALLS PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Newcastle under Lyme

LEA area: Staffordshire

Unique reference number: 124111

Headteacher: Mr. K. Butlin

Lead inspector: Mrs. D. Brigstock

Dates of inspection: 15<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> September 2003

Inspection number: 256387

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:	4-11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	243
School address:	Collard Avenue Cross Heath Newcastle under Lyme
Postcode:	ST5 9LH
Telephone number:	(01782) 297768
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs. M. Bate
Date of previous inspection:	4/11/2001

## **CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL**

Hempstalls Primary School is an average sized primary school on the outskirts of Newcastle under Lyme. It has 243 pupils on roll, most of whom come from the immediate locality. Only a small number of pupils attend a nursery before starting school and attainment on entry is well below average. An above average number of pupils come from socially disadvantaged backgrounds. Three pupils have a Statement of Special Educational Need and nearly a quarter of pupils have been identified as having special educational needs, which is above the national average. The pupils are predominantly white and there are no pupils learning English as an additional language. In the last two years an above average number of pupils have joined the school other than at the usual time and a below average number of pupils have left.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
23067	Mrs. D. Brigstock	Lead inspector	English, Art, Music
11229	Dr. M. Freeman	Lay inspector	
22397	Mr. S. Fowler	Team inspector	Science, Information and Communication Technology, Design Technology, Physical Education
10144	Mrs. M. Marriot	Team inspector	Special Educational Needs, Mathematics, Geography, History
23055	Mrs. W. Lucas	Team Inspector	Foundation Stage, Religious Education

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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **OVERALL EVALUATION**

The school's **effectiveness** is **good**. It provides good value for money. Pupils enter the school with low attainment and standards at the end of Year 6 in 2003, compared to similar schools, rose from well below average in 2002 to average in English and mathematics. This was due to good teaching and effective assessment arrangements, particularly in Years 5 and 6. Overall, pupils' achievement is good. Parents, staff and pupils rightly have a lot of confidence in the new headteacher.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Standards of achievement are rising, particularly in Years 5 and 6, because of some very good teaching.
- The leadership and management of the headteacher and key staff are good, as is the governance of the school.
- The Nurture Group is very effective.
- The partnership between parents and the school is good and parents are pleased with the way the school has improved.
- Achievement of pupils with special educational needs (SEN) in Years 1 and 2 is unsatisfactory in English and mathematics.
- Standards in ICT in Years 1 and 2 are below average.
- Pupils' have limited independent research skills because of inadequacies in the library.
- The level of attendance remains below average despite very good efforts by the school to improve it.

The school's improvement since the last inspection is good. Standards have risen in English, mathematics and science. The quality of school development planning has also risen. The school budget is now managed carefully and the previous deficit has been eliminated. The quality of teaching is much better and the number of opportunities for pupils' independent learning is rising.

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED**

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
English	E	E	E	E
mathematics	E	E	E	E
science	E*	B	E	D

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

**Achievement** is currently **good** overall.

In 2003, the results improved and standards were average in English and mathematics compared to similar schools this year, but below average compared to schools nationally. Standards in science were well above average compared to similar schools and average compared to schools nationally. Achievement in Years 3 to 6 is good overall, and good in English, mathematics and science. Standards in Year 2 in English and mathematics are below average. Achievement is good overall, but at the moment pupils with SEN in this year group are not achieving well enough in English and mathematics, because they do not have enough support. Standards are average in science. Last year children in reception reached below average standards in terms of the goals they are expected to reach by the end of the year. Their achievement was satisfactory overall.

**Pupils' personal qualities** are **good** overall. Their attitudes and behaviour are good. Their moral and social development is good and spiritual and cultural development is satisfactory.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

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

**Teaching** and learning are **good** overall. During the inspection there was a high percentage of good, very good or outstanding teaching, but two unsatisfactory lessons were seen. These affected pupils with SEN in Years 1 and 2, and here management of pupils was unsatisfactory so behaviour and, thus, learning suffered. Teaching is particularly good in Years 5 and 6. In the best lessons teachers use a wide variety of methods to help pupils learn, and the work is tailored to their needs through the good use of assessment.

The curriculum is satisfactory throughout the school. It is enlivened by a good range of activities and visits. Provision for pupils with SEN is satisfactory overall. The Nurture Group is a shining example of how pupils with SEN can be included in the curriculum and also have additional support. Procedures for child protection and for health and safety are very good.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Leadership and management are **good**. The headteacher, governors, and key staff have a clear, shared vision of improvement for the school. The headteacher is supported by the deputy and other key staff well. The governors are well organised and fully involved in school improvement. Budget management is good and the School Development Plan is thorough, although it needs to be developed in more detail beyond this year. There is a strong commitment to including SEN pupils in all activities in the school.

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

Parents are pleased with their children's progress, and believe that they are made welcome in school if they have a problem or complaint. They are complimentary about the school's improvement. They have no significant concerns about the quality of their children's education. Pupils like school and agree that they have to work hard. They are very sure that they can get help from adults in school. A fifth of the children returning questionnaires thought other pupils did not behave as well as they should. However, pupils' behaviour is monitored closely. Playtimes and lunchtimes are managed very well and are safe times for pupils.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- improve SEN provision and the quality of teaching for lower attaining pupils in Years 1 and 2, as planned.
- raise standards in ICT in Years 1 and 2.
- develop pupils' opportunities for independent learning further by improving library facilities.
- continue with strategies aimed at improving attendance.

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

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

Standards are **below** average in Year 6 and in Year 2. Standards in English and mathematics are below average but in science they are average. Standards for children in Reception are **below** average but their achievement is satisfactory overall. Pupils' achievement is good throughout the school except for pupils with SEN in Years 1 and 2 where it is unsatisfactory in English and mathematics. Last year children from reception attained below average standards in the Early Learning Goals.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Achievement of higher and middle attaining pupils in Years 1 and 2 in English and mathematics is good.
- Achievement in Years 3 to 6 for all pupils is good in English, mathematics and science. Overall, standards in English and mathematics are rising.
- Achievement for pupils in Years 1 and 2 with SEN in English and mathematics is unsatisfactory.
- Standards in ICT in Years 1 and 2 are below average.

### **Commentary**

Pupils are awarded a number of points for each National Curriculum level they attain. These are then added together to give a points score for each school for each subject. Points scores give an indication of pupils' progress over time. For example if a school's points score is one point short of the national average then this is equivalent to one term's progress less for each pupil compared to the national picture.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	24.8 (24.8)	27 (27)
mathematics	24.5 (24.6)	26.7 (26.6)
science	27 (29.1)	28.3 (28.3)

*There were 45 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

1. Achievement is a measure of whether pupils are doing as well as they should. Achievement in Years 3 to 6 for all pupils is good in English, mathematics and science. The 2003 results were below average compared to schools nationally but standards are rising because the quality of teaching is good. This is due mainly to the influence and drive of the headteacher and deputy. They have raised teachers' and pupils' expectations and they monitor pupils' progress towards meeting their targets very closely. Meetings with individual teachers to discuss pupils' attainment and to set future targets are a key feature this success. The school analyses data from tests to highlight weaker areas, which are then targeted for additional teaching. This, and very good marking and assessment by teachers and classroom assistants is raising standards. In addition pupils' self-esteem has been raised by the implementation of a positive behaviour policy, leading to better attitudes towards learning. The standards attained by pupils currently in Years 2 and 6 are in line with those expected for pupils of their age.
2. The school sets challenging targets for pupils in English, mathematics and science which it meets. In 2003, pupils attained average standards in English and mathematics compared with similar schools which represents a good improvement from 2002. Writing is improving more quickly than reading. In science, in 2003, standards were well above average compared to



similar schools. In science, pupils throughout the school plan, organise and record investigations well and this is a good improvement from the last inspection. They use a good range of scientific vocabulary for their age. Pupils with SEN in Years 3 to 6 achieve well due to the good teaching and careful identification of their needs. As in English and mathematics, the use of assessment to improve pupils' performance is good.

3. There is now no significant gap between the attainment of boys and girls although there are significant gender imbalances in different year groups, which make direct comparisons of performance in tests unreliable.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	14.7 (15)	15.8 (15.7)
writing	14 (15.1)	14.4 (14.3)
mathematics	16.7 (17.3)	16.5 (16.2)

*There were 35 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

4. In Years 1 and 2, pupils are taught in three ability sets in English and mathematics. The higher and middle attaining pupils are attaining the standards expected for their age and their achievement is good. The lower attaining set contains a very large proportion of pupils with SEN who need more support than they get to keep them on task. For this group, standards are well below average and their achievement is unsatisfactory. They cannot construct sentences without help; have difficulty in copying from a board and in remembering to leave spaces between words. The school has identified the need to review the setting arrangements in Years 1 and 2 in the current School Development Plan (SDP) as they are not working well enough for pupils with SEN. The same setting arrangements are not used in science or other subjects where standards are rising and achievement is good. The school is taking positive steps to improve pupils' reading and spelling skills with the introduction of a whole school programme of phonics to teach pupils to read and spell in a more structured way, although this is at an early stage of development.
5. In mathematics there is a similar pattern. The higher and middle attaining pupils achieve well and their work in number is particularly good. They can solve simple problems and this supports their learning. The lower attaining pupils in Year 1 have work, which is targeted for their needs, but those with SEN do not have enough support in this class and produce very little recorded work. Pupils in this group have not attained the Early Learning Goals in mathematics and achievement for this group is unsatisfactory.
6. In ICT, pupils do not have enough time using computers to enable them to make the progress required to meet nationally expected standards of attainment, although with new hardware and the use of a computer room standards are improving. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 can use a 'Paint' programme and are learning how to program a 'roamer' to follow simple instructions.
7. On entry to the school, children have well below average skills in Communication, Language and Literacy. Their speech is often difficult to understand and their knowledge of books and numbers is poor. In personal and social development, the children enter with below average skills but quickly make up for lost ground and attain most of the goals they are expected to meet, although their speaking and questioning skills remain underdeveloped for their age and they have below average skills in mathematics, including a limited knowledge of the language used in numbers. In creative development, children attain the goals they are expected to meet. In physical development children enter school with good control when walking, running, and jumping. They have a good sense of balance. Controlling finer movements such as using a pencil or paintbrush are below average. In knowledge and understanding of the world

attainment is average and achievement is satisfactory. Children are learning to use computers and visit several places of interest which widen their understanding of the world. Their curiosity is stimulated well by the displays and interesting objects which they can explore.

8. Due to the good teaching and interesting curriculum that is provided in these classes, children's achievement, including for those with SEN, is satisfactory and sometimes good for all these areas of learning. Formal assessment procedures for children in Reception have not been fully developed and is a need identified by the school. However, the good knowledge that adults have of individual children means that planning for the next stages in learning is effective.
9. Standards seen in religious education (RE), throughout the school meet the requirements of the agreed local syllabus and pupils' achievement is good. Standards at the end of Years 2 and 6 seen in all other subjects of the curriculum meet national expectations. Achievement in these subjects is good.

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

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are **good**. Their social and cultural development is **good**. Pupils' spiritual and social development is **satisfactory**. Attendance is **unsatisfactory**, but the school's actions to improve attendance are **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils co-operate well and have good relationships with each other and with staff.
- The social and cultural development of pupils is good.
- The school has very good systems in place for encouraging good attendance, but the level of both authorised and unauthorised absence remains unsatisfactory.
- Independent learning skills using the library are unsatisfactory.

### **Commentary**

10. Good relationships and behaviour are evident throughout the school, particularly at playtimes and lunchtimes where pupils are actively encouraged to take part in group games and activities, which they enjoy. They take great care of the equipment provided. In almost all lessons, pupils' attitudes are at least satisfactory and usually good. They listen to and cooperate well with other pupils and adults. They enjoy the work they do and their attitudes towards their learning are good. In the two lessons where pupils' attitudes were unsatisfactory, a small group were restless and immature for their age. Children in Reception are enthusiastic to learn and take part in planned activities, for example, independently registering their names on a board and putting their belongings in the right places. In the first week, children were overawed at the range and variety of activities prepared for them, but they responded very quickly and became really enthusiastic about their learning. These children began school with below average skills in personal and social development, but their achievement is good and, taking into consideration the very short time they have had in school, and the visible progress they make, it is likely that most of them will meet the levels expected in the Early Learning Goals. Older pupils respond very positively to teachers' marking in their books, some replying to them with written thanks. When lessons are good, and this is most of the time, pupils respond to their teachers with interest and listen to them carefully. They take pride in the presentation of their work. Only very few pupils claim that they do not like coming to school. The school has made four temporary exclusions over the last year for different reasons and for different pupils. There is no pattern to these and the reasons for the exclusions were dealt with efficiently.
11. The moral and social development of pupils is good. The spiritual and cultural development of pupils is satisfactory. School assemblies, time for reflection and prayer, singing and listening to well chosen music throughout the day, promotes pupils' spirituality satisfactorily. The good, well-planned, clear behaviour and anti-bullying policies and strategies contribute effectively to

maintaining the generally good behaviour throughout the school. There is very little inappropriate behaviour, even though the school does have some pupils with challenging behaviour in its midst. Pupils decide their class rules at the beginning of the year and these are prominently displayed. Pupils respect each other's values and beliefs and the school is a happy and harmonious community which sets high expectations of its pupils. In cultural development, the school celebrates other religions, customs and ethnic groups in religious education, geography and history lessons and due regard is paid to this important aspect of modern life. For example, in English lessons in Year 4, pupils write about stories from other cultures such as the story of Rama and Sita during the festival of Diwali, the story of Osiris from Egypt and the story of 'The Shawl' from Mexico. Pupils' social development is good. All pupils, including the youngest children, are very willing to undertake responsible tasks, such as register monitor, giving out toast and drinks at playtime or belonging to the School Council. The School Council is very enterprising. It was entrusted with a large sum of money on loan from the school. It spent the money on playground equipment and games for use at lunch and playtimes and members take turns to count the equipment back into a storage trolley in good order. Within a year the Council had not only re-paid the loan, but also had a healthy account of its own made from running a shop in school to sell stationery and games to other pupils.

12. Pupils' independent learning skills are being fostered well in lessons where they work individually and in groups. They use reference books within the classrooms but their access to the library is unsatisfactory and this restricts the development of their independent research skills and their learning.
13. The school is making rigorous, sustained and increasingly effective efforts to improve attendance. Measures such as 100% Attendance Certificates, prizes in the form of gift tokens, rapid phone calls home on the first day of absence, constant reminders in the Parents' Newsletters and the effective use of the Education Welfare Officer are all making contributions to the gradual improvement of attendance and the reduction of unauthorised absence. Punctuality is satisfactory. The level of attendance is slowly rising but, nevertheless, the amount of authorised and unauthorised absence remains high because of the attitudes of a very small group of parents who do not comply with the school's procedures. Registers are marked promptly and accurately, stored securely and meet statutory obligations. They are monitored regularly by the office staff and the Education Welfare Officer and the school is quick to respond and involve parents in any cases of absence.

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

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	7.1	School data	0.7
National data	5.4	National data	0.5

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

#### ***Ethnic background of pupils***

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean
Asian or Asian British – Indian
Any other ethnic group

#### ***Exclusions in the last school year***

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
237	4	0
3	0	0
1	0	0
1	0	0

No ethnic group recorded	1	0	0
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*The table gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.*

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

Overall, the quality of education provided by the school **is good**. There is much very good teaching but a little is unsatisfactory. There are strengths in the care given to pupils, and the partnership with parents and the community.

### Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are good overall. Assessment in Years 1 to 6 is good.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching and learning in Reception and in Years 3 to 6 is good.
- The quality of teaching in Years 1 and 2 is good for the middle and higher attaining pupils, but unsatisfactory for pupils with SEN. in English and Maths
- The classroom assistants who run the Nurture Group on a day-to-day basis do very good work. This group is a very good example of how pupils with SEN are included in all that the school has to offer.

### Commentary

14. The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection. There are several reasons for this, which stem from the new leadership and management structure in the school. The headteacher has put a strong emphasis on raising the quality of teaching and standards of work through training teachers to use a wide variety of teaching methods which suit pupils' different learning styles, for example, by using pictures and drawing to map out work. This has been successful. The headteacher and deputy have led the way in monitoring the quality of teaching and learning, giving constructive feedback to teachers on how to improve their work further. This is a strong feature of the school. At the same time, the school procedures used by teachers to assess pupils' progress have been tightened and are effective, especially in Years 1 to 6. The senior management team monitors this aspect rigorously. Subject leaders and class teachers meet each half term to discuss how well pupils have met their targets, the future learning for individuals and groups, and how this is to be achieved. The result of these initiatives has been to raise teachers' expectations of how well pupils can achieve. Teachers give very clear, direct and lively explanations and instructions to pupils, which capture their interest and put them in the right frame of mind to learn. For example, in Reception a teacher demonstrated the letter sound that children were to learn with sound and actions, which instantly attracted children so that they wanted to join in the activity
15. Teachers plan their work together ensuring that all pupils have equal coverage of the curriculum whichever class they are in. They use classroom assistants well to work with different groups of pupils, giving them individual support and guidance in their learning. These are not always pupils with SEN.
16. Teachers' know their subjects well and their planning for lessons is clear and effective. It is tailored to the needs of individuals and groups of pupils, including those with SEN. Teachers' marking is good and refers to pupils' individual targets in all subjects, not just English and mathematics. So, for example, if a pupils' target was to remember to always use capital letters in writing, this would be referred to and monitored in writing in history or geography. Pupils are rewarded for meeting their targets with praise and stamps on their individual cards so that they have instant recognition for their achievement. Pupils respond to teachers' marking with their own comments or thanks and with improved work. The quality of homework given is good overall, but very good in Years 5 and 6. Simple but clear records are kept of homework, which is used to prepare for future learning in the subject. Pupils know why they are being given the

homework and in which lessons they will use it to help their classwork. A very large percentage of pupils agree that they find out new things in lessons, have to work hard and get help if they are stuck. They agree that teachers show them how to make their work better and most of them say that their lessons are interesting and fun. The older pupils are developing the capacity to work independently in pairs or in groups. This is an improvement from the last inspection. However, the use of the library for independent research is unsatisfactory because it is not accessible enough to pupils. There are plans to re-locate and re stock the library identified in the school development plan.

17. The use of recent training for teachers to raise standards is evident. For example, in Years 5 and 6 teachers use 'concept maps,' which are a mixture of drawing and word prompts, as an aid. In a very good English lesson, the teacher showed pupils how to use one to build the character of a story they were going to write. It focused their attention and acted as a reminder to them so that they didn't miss out important aspects. From a scrutiny of work, this has become common practice and pupils use these maps in other subjects as an aid for learning. Teachers use music, as a background to keep pupils focused, and conversations quiet. In a good lesson in Year 2, pupils used a 'meet and greet' activity at the beginning of the lesson. All pupils and their teacher shook hands and greeted each other with a sentence connective such as 'finally' or 'at last'. This activity gave them an active reminder to use these words to write sentences in the lesson.
18. Overall the quality of teaching in Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory. Here, pupils are set for English and mathematics to make 3 classes of higher, middle and lower attaining pupils. This has worked well for the middle and higher attaining groups where the quality of teaching and learning is good. The work set for them has been very specific and has resulted in the percentage of higher grades being raised in English, mathematics and science. The lowest attaining group contains a high proportion of pupils with SEN. Some of these pupils have problems with behaviour and in concentration and they cannot work independently of the teacher or classroom assistant. In one lesson, the quality of teaching was unsatisfactory and in another it was poor. There are not enough clues, for example words and numbers, around the classroom for pupils to help them to work more independently of adults. In one lesson, as the teacher tried to teach one group, another would stop work and demand her attention. The teacher was very patient, but the pace of the lesson slowed and lesson objectives were not met. This problem does not extend to other subjects in Years 1 and 2 where pupils are taught in mixed ability classes. In previous years, setting in Years 1 and 2 worked well and pupils' achievements were good. This year, the proportion of pupils with SEN is much higher and, despite the additional support and training provided, the current organisation is unsatisfactory. It is itemised for action in this year's School Development Plan and is now being addressed as a matter of urgency.
19. Classroom assistants, who are responsible for the day-to day running of the Nurture Group, teach very well. They are well qualified for their roles. Chosen pupils, all of whom have SEN, work in an environment, which stimulates their learning, raises their self-esteem, and promotes higher standards. Activities in lessons are well designed to meet pupils' targets in their individual education plans. Pupils are given good levels of praise and encouragement plus rewards for meeting their targets before moving on to the next stage in their learning. Concerns, problems and achievements are shared with parents leading to a good working partnership between parents and the school.

### ***Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 37 lessons***

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1 (3%)	9 (24%)	19 (51%)	6 (16%)	1 (3%)	1 (3%)	0 (0%)

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

Out of 37 lessons seen during the inspection 77% were good or better. This is a high percentage of good teaching, which is raising pupils' standards and is a considerable improvement from the last inspection.

## **The curriculum**

The curriculum in the foundation stage is good. The curriculum is satisfactory in the rest of the school. There is a good range of extra curricular activities, a very good Nurture Group and support for pupils with SEN in Years 3 to 6 is satisfactory. The accommodation of the school is good and resources are satisfactory.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The Nurture Group is a very good example of how pupils with SEN can be given individual support while still being included in the whole curriculum.
- There is a good range of extra-curricular activities
- Personal social and health education is good.
- The organisation of classes in Years 1 and 2 for English and mathematics is unsatisfactory for pupils with SEN.
- Library resources are unsatisfactory.

## **Commentary**

20. The provision of a Nurture Group is very good and a strength of the school. Pupils are supported with their learning outside of the school day with homework, which is well organised and managed and relevant to their learning. Work is very carefully tailored to pupils' individual needs and the partnerships between staff and parents are very good. Parents are very well informed of their children's progress. Pupils' stay in the Nurture group enhances their personal and social skills very well. The teaching in this group is very good and covers the whole curriculum.
21. The school has an appropriate curriculum, which is broad and balanced. There are many opportunities for the curriculum to be enriched, including a good number of extra curricular activities; for example football, netball, choir and an afternoon 'splash club.' All pupils participate in a good range of sports including football and swimming. Participation in the arts is encouraged. Visits enhance the quality of the curriculum and are carefully planned by the school although there are few visitors to support pupils' understanding of cultures other than their own. Links with the local special school are good.
22. Provision for personal, social and health education is good. Pupils have specific lessons on this area of the curriculum, enhanced by the 'House' days where pupils of all ages mix. At the beginning of each term pupils set their own behaviour targets. There is a flourishing school council that has members from every year group in the school. The council leads the school 'house' system. All pupils have equality of access and opportunity to the full curriculum.
23. Provision for pupils with SEN is satisfactory in the Foundation Stage and in Years 3 to 6 where classroom assistants are deployed very well and enhance the curriculum provision for their pupils. It is unsatisfactory in Years 1 and 2 because pupils are put into sets for teaching and learning in mathematics and English. This has resulted in a high proportion of pupils with SEN and those who have lower attainment being grouped into one class for these two subjects. There are too many pupils with SEN in this group. They do not have the skills or concentration to work independently for more than a few minutes, making classroom management and organisation too difficult for the teacher and teaching assistant to organise effectively. This arrangement has been identified by the school for urgent review in the SDP. Last year, setting in Years 3 to 6 was altered to make mixed ability classes for all subjects and has been successful in raising standards.

24. Accommodation is good. The school benefits from a large site which is immaculately kept by the school caretaker and cleaning staff. Resources are good in the Foundation Stage and satisfactory in Years 1 to 6. There are not enough books in the library and its location is inappropriate. This restricts opportunities for pupils to undertake independent research.

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

The school ensures pupils' care, welfare, health and safety very well. It provides them with good support, advice and guidance and pupils' involvement in the school's work and development is good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The school provides a very good Nurture Group for pupils with SEN from Year 1 to Year 6.
- There is very good pastoral care and welfare provision throughout the school and this is greatly appreciated by parents.
- Pupils are consulted well through their involvement in questionnaires where they comment on their learning environment and how they would make it better.

### **Commentary**

25. The Nurture Group develops these pupils' self-esteem through providing a stimulating, stable and secure environment in which they can learn. Pupils stay in the group between one and two terms depending on the nature of their needs. All these pupils have been identified as having SEN. Parents are fully involved and form a partnership in the education of their child. The success of the Nurture Group can be seen throughout the school. This is a good example of the caring ethos, which the school provides for all pupils from Year 1 to Year 6. Chosen children in the Foundation Stage are to join the Nurture Group later this term.
26. Child Protection measures are well organised and effective and there is good provision for health and safety within the school, including well-planned First Aid and Fire precautions. There are very good arrangements in place for supporting and guiding pupils. For example, individual class teachers play a valued and key role in this provision of care and guidance through discussions with pupils in Circle Time. Children in Reception are introduced to the school gradually and their first full day in school is a happy one. The House system and the active School Council all contribute effectively towards providing good pastoral care, support and personal development. Good care is taken of pupils at playtimes and during the lunch hour, where there are organised games available to ensure that nobody is left out. At playtimes, pupils are given food and drink and, throughout the day, they have access to drinking water in the classrooms.
27. Pupils are consulted through their School Council representatives, and their views are given careful consideration and valued by the school management. In addition, pupils have also been consulted about their classroom learning environments and how they feel about the school. Their responses form part of the SDP and feed into teachers' plans for their own Performance Management.
28. Good assessments of what pupils know and can do are a feature of the school. Although assessments in reception are more informal, teachers have a good knowledge of what these children know and can do. With these assessments in mind, teachers plan for the next steps in pupils' learning, guiding them effectively through the learning processes. Where pupils do not make the expected progress meetings are called between the senior management of the school and the teachers to find out why and to decide what will be done about it. This swift action helps pupils to achieve well.

## Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school's partnership with parents and the community is **good**. It has good links with local secondary schools and colleges and makes a good contribution to support programmes for parents and carers.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school has good links with parents who feel welcome in school.
- The school's provision for community learning programmes is well planned and run.
- Transfer arrangements to local secondary schools and induction for pupils new to the school are good.
- Parents of pupils with SEN are not involved enough in the review of the learning targets for their children.

### Commentary

29. The partnership with parents is constructive and the school makes sustained efforts in seeking and acting upon parents' opinions. Many parents commented favourably on the 'openness' and friendliness of the school and the helpfulness and accessibility of the headteacher and his staff. Parents feel that the school deals with any complaints and suggestions they may have swiftly and respectfully. Most parents are involved well with their children's learning at home. They receive good information about the curriculum and see homework diaries as valuable aids to their children's learning. The help pupils receive at home makes an effective contribution to their learning. Although attendance at the Annual Meeting of the Governing Body with parents is very poor, parents are generally very supportive of the school and a few help in school on a regular basis. The Parents' Staff and Friends Association works hard and is well supported by parents in general.
30. The information provided by the school to parents is good overall. The Annual Report of the Governing Body is clear and helpful, but omits some statutory information. The Prospectus is well produced, attractive and readable as are the bright and informative Weekly Newsletters to parents. The Annual Reports on Progress of children are well produced, informative and helpful to parents, as are the termly Parent/Teacher Consultation meetings, which are well attended and productive. Some parents belong to a committee dedicated to the school's improvement and they, in partnership with the governors and members of staff, are very active in raising the school's profile in the local community through marketing it amongst other local community groups.
31. The school plays an increasingly active role in the community and is becoming a valued focus for family and adult learning activities. There are several good initiatives in force, such as the Carers and Toddlers Playgroup and Family Learning courses, tailor made for the school by Newcastle College. The school also houses Sure Start support, and runs occasional workshops for parents, for example in literacy and numeracy, providing creche facilities when needed. The school has good productive links with the local community, such as local churches and Old Peoples' homes. The partnership with local schools is strong and well founded and makes transfer of pupils into secondary education much easier and more effective. Children entering the Reception class are given a phased induction so that their entry into full time education is a happy experience.
32. Although parents of pupils with SEN are provided with appropriate information about their children, they do not have enough input into writing and agreeing their children's individual learning targets. This aspect of school development is timetabled for development this year in the SDP.



## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are **good**. Governance is **good** and there are some significant improvements since the time of the previous inspection.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Improvement in the leadership and management of the school since the last inspection is good.
- The monitoring and evaluation of performance of teaching, learning and standards is good.
- Standards are rising in English, mathematics and science because of the staff training and development that the headteacher has led.
- The Governing Body is effective, particularly in involving the community in the school's work.
- Financial management is good.
- The management of provision for pupils with SEN in Years 1 and 2 in English and mathematics is unsatisfactory because their needs are not fully met.
- The role of some curriculum coordinators needs further development.

### Commentary

33. Overall, the improvement since the last inspection has been good and the school has tackled its key issues well. The new headteacher provides good leadership and is supported very well by the deputy headteacher and other senior staff. The headteacher and deputy have a clear vision for school improvement, shared by governors, and have created a positive climate for change by motivating staff and gaining the confidence of parents. They have generated a very strong team ethos within the school to which teachers and teaching assistants have responded positively.
34. The school's procedures for monitoring and evaluating what it does have improved since the last inspection and are now good. Subject leaders for English, mathematics and science are secure in their role and training for coordinators in the foundation subjects is underway. The headteacher, deputy and some senior staff monitor teaching regularly, keeping careful note of observations and providing useful feedback both to teachers and to governors. This has resulted in a change from setting to mixed ability classes in Years 3 to 6 this year plus the provision of additional classroom assistant support. This is proving effective in raising standards. In the SDP, school leaders recognise that this change is also needed in Years 1 and 2 because of the high proportion of pupils with SEN in this year group. They have provided additional classroom support and recognise that the review of setting in Years 1 and 2 is now urgent. The school's procedures for performance management are very thorough. As a result of its monitoring program, the school is looking much more critically at all aspects of school life and has identified the most important areas for development. The determination and capacity of the school to raise achievement is seen in the way that the headteacher is putting into place good assessment systems to support a rigorous approach to all aspects of monitoring and evaluation and its analysis of national test results. Pupil progress meetings are held on a regular basis and findings are used to identify groups of pupils needing additional support and to decide how their needs will be met. This detailed analysis of performance has contributed significantly to the improving standards of attainment within the school.
35. The governing body fulfils its statutory duties well. The governors are well informed and have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and the improvement it has made over the last three years. They are not complacent about recent improvements and are very active, through partnership with parents and the school improvement committee, in raising the profile of the school in the local community. Governors liaise closely with the school management, offer support and monitor developments in provision and standards. They have established a good committee structure and undertake their responsibilities properly. They are provided with very comprehensive reports from the headteacher, canvas the views of parents

and the local community, and, as a result, they are in a good position to plan for future school development.

36. The school has a very detailed and informative SDP for this current year and an Overview of Planning for Future Development document, both of which have a clear, measurable agenda for school improvement. There is a good system for drawing up the SDP, which involves considerable input from the Governing Body, parents, pupils and staff. Aspects are identified for maintenance, improvement or change and this helps the school to establish its main priorities and to allocate resources appropriately. Now that the headteacher has established his team and measured the progress made, the detail in the SDP needs to be extended for longer than a year. The action taken over the last year to develop the school has been good and, with the positive approach shown by the staff, it has good capacity for further improvement. The school has a clear cycle of financial planning, linked to the SDP, and the monitoring of expenditure is secure. Overall, the picture is much better than when the school was inspected previously, when the delegated budget had not been well managed. Priorities for improving the quality of education and raising standards are clear, and governors have developed comprehensive contingency plans for financial management over the next three years. The principles of best value are applied in a satisfactory way.
37. The SDP rightly identifies the need to review the current setting arrangements in Years 1 and 2 as a priority. The leadership altered the setting arrangements in Years 3 to 6 last year and are monitoring the effect this change has on pupils' learning. In previous years, setting in English and mathematics was beneficial to standards in Year 2 but the make up of the current Years 1 and 2 is different because of the high proportion of pupils with SEN. The setting arrangements are now unsatisfactory. Additional support has been given to this group but has not been effective enough.
38. The school's overall administration arrangements, and the day-to-day control of its finances, are good. The school office makes very effective use of new technology to support its work and the very committed school secretary makes a significant contribution to the effective running of the school. All grants are used appropriately.
39. Although subject co-ordinators are committed to school improvement, those responsible for the foundation subjects have not yet had sufficient opportunity to develop their management skills and to monitor standards of teaching and learning throughout the school. The school has recently secured additional funding from the LEA for this process to begin as part of the school's planned development. All classes within the school are mixed-aged classes and, where this occurs in Years 3 to 6, it is important to ensure that all teachers plan work accordingly. There are occasions, such as in science in Key Stage 1, where work is duplicated and pupils repeat the same task in two different years. Subject co-ordinators need to review curriculum planning to ensure that this does not happen.

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

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	641,895
Total expenditure	591,786
Expenditure per pupil	2.348

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	39,602
Balance carried forward to the next	50,109

The balance has been carried forward to maintain current staffing levels.

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

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

Provision is **satisfactory** overall. Children enter Reception with attainment that is well below average and a significant number have poorly developed language skills. The teachers concentrate on the development of language and social skills; as a result the children make a positive start to the reception class, and their achievement is satisfactory overall. When they achieve well it is because the teaching is good and the good curriculum provides a wide range of challenging, stimulating activities that are well matched to their needs. Teachers know their children well. However, detailed records which identify the level of attainment for each child, and the rate at which they progress through the stepping stones towards each of the early learning goals are not formally recorded, monitored and evaluated sufficiently to track the progress the children are making over time. All adults manage the children very well and the very good ratio of adults to children ensures that the needs of all are well met. There was no judgement on children in the Foundation Stage in the last inspection report.

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

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

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

- Good teaching ensures that the children are encouraged to take responsibility for their own actions at an early age.
- As can be seen with pupils now at the beginning of Year 1, the children reach standards expected for their age by the end of the year, even though standards were below average when they started.

#### **Commentary**

40. The teachers in both reception classes ensure that the environment provided and the ethos of the class help children to adapt quickly to school life and learn the correct way to behave. When needed, while gently supporting their self-esteem, the teacher reminds children how she wants them to behave. For example, during a literacy session when children are required to listen carefully to instructions, the teacher tells them how sitting still and watching her write will help them when they come to write for themselves. Teachers expect children to be responsible, taking every opportunity to encourage this. Some examples were seen during the inspection where children worked unsupervised for extended periods, behaving sensibly and sharing equipment. For example, when in the house to share a meal, children took it in turns to serve an adult with pizza, cake and fruit. They can work in pairs or alone, such as when one boy made several intricate models using construction equipment. Children have the opportunity to be with others from all age groups during 'House Days' and, have a representative from the class on the School Council helping to make decisions which will affect all children in the school. One child each day is chosen to be the "special person" for the day and given the opportunity to carry out special tasks of responsibility, for example, taking messages to other parts of the school. All children enjoy registering their daily presence on a chart.
41. Teachers and assistants encourage the development of social skills in a variety of ways. For example, when one child had finished playing in the sand he was encouraged to choose something different and to find a different friend to play with. In the outside area, children have the opportunity to play with one friend or join a group. Children with SEN are well integrated into the class and receive good support. They, and others, are helped to maintain concentration by the stimulating nature of the activities offered. For example a group of children cooperated very well when playing with toy frogs on a lily pad while they quietly sang 'Five Little Speckled Frogs' in unison and took it in turns to move the appropriate number of frogs. A number of children use

the normal conventions of politeness such as, “sorry”, “excuse me”, and “thank you”, without prompting. Visits to places of interest in the locality such as Merryfield Special School, extends their experiences and helps them to appreciate the needs of others. This approach ensures that the children achieve well as they learn to work with different people in a variety of situations, maintain attention, sit quietly when necessary and have a positive approach to new experiences.

## **COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Well-organised, lively lessons that engage all children in learning.
- Opportunities to experience a good variety of practical, interesting and stimulating activities which encourage children to talk to each other and to adults.
- Imaginative use of resources leads to a high level of interest from most children.

### **Commentary**

42. Few children are on course to attain this Early Learning Goal by the end of the Reception year. This is because most start school with such poorly developed language skills. They frequently speak in single words or use body language to communicate. Achievement is satisfactory, although standards are well below average and many children have developed insufficient language to express themselves clearly by the end of the reception year. Children develop their speaking and listening skills through role-play, for example, when preparing a meal in the house. Although most talk to themselves alongside others, a few are beginning to initiate conversations with each other and with adults. The many opportunities given by adults to share their news, for example, on arriving at school, encourage children to sustain attentive listening and respond with relevant comments.
43. The good teaching is characterised by a very good understanding of the needs of young children and the very well organised and exciting activities that motivate them. A particular strength is the range of different activities provided from which children are encouraged to choose. In a very good lesson, children were given the opportunity to improve their speaking and listening skills and their ability to remember the sequence of a story by repeating phrases in unison and carrying out actions as they went on an imaginary bear hunt. More frequent use throughout the day of modelling by adults showing how to speak in sentences would help to accelerate learning.
44. Good emphasis is placed on learning the conventions of writing. An imaginative example was observed when children were composing a reply to a letter from the headteacher. The children directed the teacher to start the letter with “Dear”, end with “Love”, and to begin writing on the left hand side of the paper. They also frequently use their fingers to draw letters in the air while “helping” a child to write, for example, the letter “c” on the class white board and they demonstrate phonic sounds they are learning through the Jolly Phonics Scheme, by drawing letters in the air. The development of reading also has a high priority and most children are at the early stages of recognising that print carries meaning. However, the majority are unable to distinguish between a letter and a word. The singing of nursery rhymes and action songs contributes positively to the development of these skills. Teachers encourage children to help them when reading from the Big Books. This reinforces early reading skills and motivates the children to try to read.
45. Children take home a book of their own choice each evening. Useful comments made by staff and most parents are recorded in a home/partnership book which enables staff and parents to support each child as they learn, in addition to helping to inform parents of the process involved

in learning to read. This arrangement has a positive effect on the way parents view the school and helps them to support the education of their child.

## **MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in mathematical development is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Adults use incidental opportunities well to develop mathematical language and skills.
- They use a variety of interesting resources, which stimulate the children.
- Children find it difficult to follow instructions without visual stimuli.

### **Commentary**

46. In the few lessons observed teaching and learning were good. Adults take every opportunity to develop the children's mathematical skills and particularly the development of mathematical language. The teachers use appropriate mathematical terms and ask questions when completing the register. For example, "How many more children are here today?" They encourage children to join in when they need to count the children who represent different coloured cars during a mathematical session. These activities support their learning and give them confidence and skill. The work scrutiny showed limited evidence of children gaining an understanding of space and measures by the time they leave the Reception year.
47. The good range of resources available helps maintain the children's interest. For example, the raised steps in the outside area are very popular and provide counting opportunities for children as they jump from one to another. The highest attainers are able to count to ten and know that 6 is one more than 5 while most children can read numbers to 5 from the class chart. They explore repeating patterns through a wide range of resources such as coloured cubes. They are introduced to the concept of shopping through the provision of paper and pencils in the home corner, with a number of children making a shopping list. Clearly written captions which indicate how many children are allowed to play at each activity stimulates children to read and they confidently remind each other of the rules. For example, when a third child arrived at the sand he was quickly reminded, "only two, not you". By the end of the reception year, standards are below what is expected, but achievement is satisfactory.

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

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teachers plan a wide range of stimulating activities which promote children's interest and learning well.
- Opportunities to use a wide range of tools are restricted.

### **Commentary**

48. No lesson with a specific focus on knowledge and understanding of the world was seen and so an overall judgement on the quality of teaching and learning has not been made. Nevertheless, pupils were observed undertaking small group activities in this area of learning, with sound assistance from adults. From observations of activities in the classroom and through looking at the work that pupils completed last year, plus teachers' planning documents, most children meet the Early Learning Goals by the end of the year and achievement is satisfactory. A number of children are using computers with skill but most need help in using the machines purposefully. The standards seen at the beginning of term were mostly below average. Most

activities were not teacher led but left scope for children to find their own way of using equipment as was shown by the boy who made a series of interesting models using the construction kit “mobilo.” During the year, children visit places of interest such as St. Michael's Church, the Water Gardens and Brampton Park which gives them an understanding of the wider world. Regular walks around the grounds enable them to learn about the natural environment and experience the changing seasons.

49. This half term children are developing an understanding of themselves, their family and their friends through the religious education programme. Knowledge of places is confined to knowing that some places are, “a long way” or “not far.” The children's curiosity is stimulated by the high quality displays both in the classrooms and in other areas of the school. For example, the entrance to the reception area was arranged to represent the sea. The sea display included sounds children would be likely to hear at the coast such as seagulls crying, high quality books, pictures and photographs, in addition to numerous natural objects such as shells, pebbles and driftwood.
50. The children are also encouraged to observe things carefully. While being ably helped by the learning support assistant, they study their reflection in a mirror before attempting to represent their faces in paint. Teachers and classroom assistants encourage children to handle objects where appropriate which fosters their curiosity and helps them to learn about the real world. Opportunities to use a variety of tools are more limited. This has the added impact of slowing the development of children's fine motor skills in physical development. Children do have good access to a variety of construction toys.

## **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in physical development is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The children can use their bodies with good control when they run or make large movements.
- Their fine control skills, such as holding pencils for writing and colouring in their pictures, are weaker.

### **Commentary**

51. The children are reaching standards in line with what is expected for their age in controlling larger movements. During the inspection, when playing outside, most children manoeuvred themselves across the swing bridges, crawled backwards and forwards through a long tunnel, used the raised stepping stones to stride from one to another, balanced and ran round, and peddled the bicycles at some speed. These actions were carried out with confidence, good balance and real enjoyment. During a lesson in the hall, they moved with some agility within their own space, changing direction to avoid collisions as necessary. Most children show a significant degree of confidence in their physical ability and they make good progress during lessons. They thoroughly enjoy being active and many are quite fearless and very well coordinated. Few need help if they fall over as they quickly pick themselves up and carry on without a fuss.
52. All children develop their manipulative skills by handling dough, scissors, paintbrushes and small toys. However, hand-eye coordination is sometimes weak, causing frustration for some children in their use of the computer. Teachers are well aware of the need for children to practise these skills and provide a variety of experiences where they are required to manipulate small objects and use malleable materials in order to improve their fine motor control. Plans include giving children opportunities to use a wide range of tools although this was not evident during the inspection.

53. On the current evidence it is likely that standards will be in line with those expected at the end of the reception year in gross motor control but below expectations in fine motor control. Their achievement is satisfactory overall.

## **CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in creative development is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Good opportunities to experience role-play.
- Good quality resources.
- Limited opportunity to develop skills through the use of various tools.
- Limited opportunities to experiment with different media particularly in art.

### **Commentary**

54. It was not possible to make an overall judgement of standards in this area of learning as too few examples of work were seen. The children generally gain a satisfactory range of experiences through which to explore shape, colour and texture. They use objects such as print blocks and happily use a range of colours to paint a picture of themselves. They make models out of junk material and represent a face using paper plates and textiles. They paint pictures to illustrate events and ideas but these show limited detail. Opportunities to experiment and develop their own ideas using different media such as clay, are more limited.
55. The children learn an increasing repertoire of songs and rhymes. They sing enthusiastically if not tunefully during assembly time. They show interest, and learn to use a range of percussion instruments. Music is used to support learning in other areas of the curriculum as during a mathematical session children used a variety of percussion instruments in order to make a beat represent a number.
56. The children's creativity is particularly well stimulated in the role-play areas and they use the areas well. Teachers plan their time well to include sessions in the house, for example, where they interact with the children and pose appropriate questions to inspire creative play. These activities contribute well to the children's social and emotional development in addition to their creative development and language development as they learn to play together, to share the equipment, and to cooperate with each other and with adults.

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

### **ENGLISH**

Provision in English is **satisfactory**

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards of work are rising.
- The quality of teaching is good in Years 3 to 6 and in classes for the middle and higher attaining pupils in Years 1 and 2 and as a result pupils' achievement is good
- Achievement for the pupils with SEN in Years 1 and 2 is unsatisfactory.
- Library provision is unsatisfactory.

### **Commentary**

57. In the 2003 National Curriculum tests, standards improved significantly from the previous year and were average compared to similar schools. However, overall, standards are still below

average compared to schools nationally. In Year 2, standards are below average. Pupils' achievement from a low base, on entry to the school, is good overall and for the higher attaining pupils it is very good.

58. Standards in writing are below average in Year 6. Pupils are developing their written skills well through having carefully planned series of lessons, which build on previous learning and are based on the National Literacy Strategy. Pupils in Year 6 use 'drafting' books particularly well to record their plans for written work and to make improvements. They write good character sketches although they still occasionally make some simple grammatical errors. The higher and middle attaining pupils use punctuation well including paragraphing and are attaining the standards expected for their age. They use colourful language and interesting openings to stories and colourful descriptions of characters, e.g. "She had gingernut hair and pea-green round eyes." Lower attaining pupils still make simple mistakes in spelling and punctuation. Pupils' speaking and listening skills are average for their age. They listen intently to teachers' questions and answer them in complete sentences. Reading is below average overall. The best readers belong to local libraries and read fluently. Middle attaining pupils do not read expressively and lower attaining pupils are not fluent and some cannot answer questions about their books accurately. The use of the library for independent research is not good enough. The location of the library, the number of books available and the lack of a reference system make opportunities for independent research within it unsatisfactory. The school has good plans to move the library to a more central location in the school, buy more books and open it up to the local community.
59. In Year 2, standards in writing are below average. In the current Year 2, the middle and higher attaining pupils achieve well and their use of speech, exclamation and question marks in their writing is good for their age. Setting in Years 1 and 2 has resulted in too many pupils with SEN in one class who cannot work independently and have insufficient support to help them learn. This group's speaking and listening skills are poor and they can't remember lists of three or four instructions accurately. They are still learning how to write single letters and their spacing of words is not consistent. Some cannot copy simple sentences from the board.
60. Pupils' presentation is good throughout the school and teachers set a good example by using good handwriting in the comments they make in books. By Year 3 almost all pupils are using joined handwriting, which is neat and legible. In Year 2 the higher attaining pupils are learning to join their letters successfully. From the evidence in home/school reading books, those pupils who have the most support from home are making the most progress in reading. Other pupils are improving their reading skills through following a structured programme of learning the names and sounds of letters which has been introduced this year. However, reading skills overall are below average.
61. Out of nine lessons inspected, four were very good, three were good, one was satisfactory and one was unsatisfactory. There was no unsatisfactory teaching in Years 3 to 6. Teachers' expectations of what their pupils can achieve have been raised by the leadership of the headteacher, deputy and subject coordinator. In good and very good lessons, teachers use their knowledge of 'accelerated learning', 'concept mapping', music and a wide range of different activities including drama to promote learning to make lessons more interesting and go with a 'zing'. The quality of marking is good throughout the school; teachers refer to pupils' individual targets, question the content of the work and challenge pupils to improve further, encouraging the creative use of language and vivid choice of words. The outcome of this is rapid improvement in standards, particularly in Years 5 and 6. Teachers' partnership with classroom assistants to support reading is effective. Pupils have guided reading in groups with their teacher at least once a week and, in Years 1 and 2, they are withdrawn to have 1:1 reading time with classroom assistants although the latter may be better employed giving support to the lower attaining set in English and mathematics. In the unsatisfactory lesson, pupils with SEN were unable to do the work planned from a Big Book because it was too difficult for them to read and some of them became restless and stopped work. Achievement for this group was unsatisfactory.



62. Subject leadership is good. The subject coordinator has detailed plans for the development of English including the review of setting arrangements in Years 1 and 2 and improving library provision. Lesson observations have pinpointed areas for improvement, and teachers' training needs are also identified and catered for. The coordinator analyses the data she collects well to help write targets for individual and groups of pupils to achieve. Some of these groups are made up of higher attaining pupils who are challenged to do even better. This is effective in raising standards of achievement for these pupils.
63. There has been good improvement since the last inspection as standards at the end of Year 6 and the quality of leadership have risen. The school was asked to increase pupils' opportunities for independent learning and has done this. Pupils work in pairs and in groups to form their ideas. They work collaboratively and sometimes independently to map out their plans for writing.

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

64. English skills are used well in other subject areas. A scrutiny of work showed that there are good links in Years 5 and 6 with, for example, RE, where teachers continued to emphasise the skills learned in literacy, and PSHE where pupils designed and wrote a pamphlet called 'Healthy Heart.' Pupils practise their writing skills in history, and in design and technology in Year 4 when they wrote lists of instructions using bullet points on how to make, for example, a fruit flan, beans on toast and a cup of tea. There is little evidence in pupils' English books of the use of ICT.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards are rising.
- Teachers use the numeracy strategy to plan lessons well.
- Assessment is well used, particularly in Years 3 to 6.
- Teaching assistants are used very effectively and support the learning well.
- Very good leadership and management of the subject.
- The provision for pupils with SEN is unsatisfactory in Years 1 and 2

### **Commentary**

65. In the 2003 National Curriculum tests, standards improved significantly from the previous year and were average compared to similar schools. However, overall, standards are still below average compared to schools nationally. In Year 2, the proportion of pupils attaining the expected levels for their age was lower than in 2002 and standards are below average. Pupils' achievement is good overall in Years 3 to 6 and satisfactory in Years 1 and 2. There has been improvement in standards since the last inspection.
66. Teachers are following the guidance of the numeracy strategy well. The school day begins with mathematics. Pupils quietly begin to answer appropriate questions from the board. Immediately after the register has been taken teachers begin the mathematics lesson with a 'brain break' where, sometimes, they 'meet and greet' each other in the same mathematics group. They shake hands and ask each other a question. For example, in Years 5 and 6, pupils gave a 2 digit number to be multiplied by 20, others gave a 2 digit number to be multiplied by 100. The teacher and classroom assistant gave appropriate questions as they met and greeted lower attaining pupils and those with SEN. These activities make pupils alert and interested. They put them in a good frame of mind for learning.

67. The quality of teaching in the six lessons seen was good or better in four, satisfactory in one and poor in one. There was no unsatisfactory teaching in Years 3 to 6. The strength in the good teaching seen was the variety of skills used to teach number. Teachers engage pupils' thinking skills well and this ensures good achievement. Work is marked carefully with helpful comments, which guide pupils enabling them to improve their work and meet the targets set for them. Teaching assistants support learning well through giving more individual attention within groups of children in classes. They use the same standard of marking and assessment as class teachers and are very knowledgeable about pupils' targets and what they have to learn to meet them.
68. In Years 1 and 2, the organisation of pupils and their classes is unsatisfactory. Pupils with SEN and lower attaining pupils are grouped together in one class and pupils with SEN are underachieving. The variety of methods used to teach is not suitable for the needs of these pupils. For example some pupils were asked to work for too long a time without the support of their teacher. This is because she was busy helping other groups of pupils who required the same amount of support. The need to re-organise this class has been identified in the SDP and through monitoring by the mathematics manager, who has already put into place steps to solve the problem.
69. Both standards, and the quality of teaching and learning have improved since the last inspection. This improvement is a result of the very strong curriculum leadership. The curriculum manager has a very good knowledge and understanding of the subjects and assessment procedures and she has tracked standards with care. She monitors the quality of teaching and the additional support given to teachers through her training has resulted in improved teaching. In Years 3 to 6, pupils who are less secure are identified and offered support. Their learning needs are carefully planned by class teachers and learning support assistants and pupils receive an appropriate curriculum which this has led to higher standards.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

Mathematics is well used in ICT. For example, pupils in lessons use mathematics programs on the classroom computers to extend and develop their skills knowledge and understanding, for example in a subtraction program in Years 3 and 4.

### **SCIENCE**

The provision in science is **good**.

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

- Pupils' achievement is good.
- The use of data analysis is good.
- The planning, organising and recording of experiments is good.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good.
- More opportunities are needed for pupils to use and apply their skills and knowledge independently.
- Curricular provision in Years 1 and 2 needs to be better planned.

#### **Commentary**

70. Standards of attainment in science at the end of both key stages are average compared to schools nationally and this represents good achievement over time. The 2003 National Curriculum test results at the end of Year 6 show that pupils are attaining well above average standards compared to similar schools. They are the best that the school has ever achieved. The standards attained by pupils currently in Years 2 are average. This represents good

achievement over time as many of these pupils entered school with very low standards of attainment. One of the key issues of the previous report was to continue to raise standards of achievement and this has been addressed successfully in science.

71. The school has implemented comprehensive assessment procedures, including thorough data analysis, and this is now playing a key role in the improvement of standards. For example, a former weakness was that pupils were not confident enough in their understanding of scientific language. As a direct result of this analysis, each year group has been given a list of scientific vocabulary to master and this has led to a significant increase in the number of pupils achieving higher grades in the recent National Curriculum tests. The very good emphasis placed upon assessment and data analysis has had a positive impact on standards. It ensures that there is a clear overview of attainment throughout the school and enables teachers to track the progress of individuals and groups of pupils effectively and to target support accordingly. For example, pupils with SEN receive very good support from teaching assistants in Years 3 to 6.
72. At the time of the previous inspection, pupils had a reasonable breadth of knowledge in science, but their understanding of how to plan, organise and record investigations was below average. This weakness has now become a strength within science, as pupils now plan and record their work extremely well. Pupils in all classes set out their work systematically and there are opportunities for pupils to predict, experiment and to draw conclusions from their experiments. For example, pupils in Year 6 had investigated ways in which they could change the size of a shadow and this involved selecting appropriate apparatus for their task. Their investigation was set out clearly, diagrams were produced and labelled attractively and appropriate conclusions were drawn. Pupils also use their predicting skills confidently and the provision for experimental and investigative science is a strength of the curriculum. Pupils in Year 2, for instance, were very accurate in predicting whether woodlice would prefer light or dark places and could give reasons for their predictions. They show a good awareness of the concept of a “fair- test”.
73. The quality of teaching and learning is good throughout the school with some very good features. For example, teachers and pupils in Year 2 were discussing healthy food and balanced diet. This led to very effective teaching and learning, with strong cross-curricular links to physical education, personal and social education and literacy. Pupils gained a very good knowledge of health-related matters and could talk about different foods and place them in the appropriate food group. In the very best lessons, teachers use questioning very well to probe and enhance pupils’ understanding. For example, in a Year 6 lesson when pupils were investigating light and shadow, the teacher encouraged her pupils to use precise scientific language such as “opaque” and “translucent” to explain what had occurred. This lesson also began with a very effective use of marking where pupils were invited to reflect on the teachers’ written comments in their books and then to write a sentence in response. Pupils clearly enjoy science lessons and take a pride in their work, shown in the very high standards of presentation, particularly in Years 3 to 6. Teachers provide opportunities for pupils to record data in various ways, such as tables, graphs and charts, and this enables pupils to make good use of their numeracy skills. However, the use of ICT to support pupils’ learning in science is under-developed.
74. The planning, organising and recording of investigations has improved since the time of the previous inspection, although these investigations are usually teacher-directed. However, it is rare to see examples of pupils using the school library or the Internet to develop their research skills or for individual pupils to carry out their own experiments. This was a key issue at the time of the previous inspection and one that has not been addressed effectively.
75. The co-ordinator gives sound leadership to the subject and has contributed to the improved standards in science seen throughout the school. The school has now adopted the government-recommended scheme of work and the co-ordinator has carried out detailed analysis of performance within his curricular area and implemented measures to improve standards of attainment. There is good use of assessment in science; regular assessment tasks are undertaken and the results of annual tests are analysed. The co-ordinator is aware

that the curriculum plans for mixed age classes need to be reviewed in order to ensure that pupils do not duplicate work that has been covered in a previous year. He also needs to ensure future development by monitoring the quality of teaching within science and by increasing the use of ICT to support pupils' learning.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

### **Information and Communication Technology**

Provision in information and communication technology is **satisfactory**.

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

- Standards in Years 3 to 6 are improving.
- Provision of resources is good.
- The increased use of classroom computers is effective.
- Standards of attainment in Years 1 and 2 are below average.
- There is not enough use of information and communication technology to support independent learning.

#### **Commentary**

76. At the time of the last inspection, pupils' standards at the end of both key stages were judged to be below average overall, although they were improving because of the increased use of the school's dedicated computer room. This improvement has been maintained and all classes are now timetabled to use the computer room on a regular, weekly basis. There is also an additional opportunity for classes to request to hold literacy and numeracy lessons within the suite. This improved provision has contributed to the increased confidence shown by pupils in Years 3 to 6 and led to an improvement in standards. For example, in one lesson, pupils in Year 6 were able to develop a hyperlink between two pages of text for a question and answer exercise before creating their own PowerPoint presentations. They worked confidently and competently as they used the computer to create, amend and improve their work helped by the skills cards that the teacher had produced. Pupils were enthusiastic and keen to use computers and willing to support each other's learning. Pupils' achievement is good.
77. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 apply mathematical and technological skills to create spreadsheets and graphs to present their findings. For example, pupils in Year 6 used spreadsheets to calculate area and perimeter of shapes, whilst Year 5 pupils developed databases to solve imaginary crimes. Pupils clearly enjoy these lessons and work successfully as individuals and in mixed-ability groups and this promotes their social development. Good planning allows pupils to work at their own pace and good levels of co-operation result. All aspects of the subject are covered and pupils are now attaining standards that reflect national expectations.
78. There has been an improvement in resources since the time of the previous inspection, which has been partly financed by a grant from the National Grid for Learning. There are now eighteen computers that are networked within the computer suite and additional computers within each classroom. As a result, the ratio of computers to pupils is now higher than in many primary schools. The school makes good use of digital cameras and computer-generated pupil pictures are evident in a number of classrooms. The training of most teachers has been carried out and this has increased their subject expertise and confidence and contributed significantly to improving standards of teaching and learning within the school.
79. Although standards of attainment in Years 1 and 2 are improving and achievement is satisfactory, they remain below national expectations. In some lessons, computers are used. For example, in one art lesson, pupils in Years 1 and 2 were using "Paint" program to develop pictures based on concentric circles in the style of the artist, Kandinsky. In another classroom,

pupils gained the first experience of controlling the programmable “roamer” and were quick to understand both the need for clear instructions and the principle of clearing the memory. However, the scrutiny of work reveals that pupils do not have a sufficiently wide range of computer experiences to enable them to make sufficiently good progress to attain nationally expected standards.

80. A scheme of work based on good whole-school curriculum guidelines is now taught and this places an emphasis on the systematic development of computer skills. However, there is insufficient evidence of pupils being provided with opportunities for independent research. The co-ordinator has not yet monitored standards of teaching and learning within the subject and, as yet, there is no system for keeping a clear record of pupils’ skills to guide teachers when planning lessons.
81. There is a very clear policy for Internet use within the school and the school is well aware of its obligations to pupils about safety and security when using the Internet. However, there are few examples of pupils actually supporting their research work or establishing e-mail links with other audiences by using the Internet. The SDP includes a budget for release time to enable the co-ordinator to identify detailed links between ICT and other curricular areas. The school has used its funding well to develop the computer suite and resources have improved considerably in the last two years. There is also funding for five new computers and a programme that will provide additional support for pupils with SEN.

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

82. At the time of the previous inspection, insufficient use was made of the computers that are housed in the classrooms and this was a missed opportunity for pupils to reinforce their knowledge and skills. This is no longer a weakness and classroom computers are often used to support other areas of the curriculum. During the week of the inspection, for example, pupils in Years 3 and 4, as part of their history topic, were using word-processing skills to persuade people to live in Athens and Sparta, whilst pupils in Years 1 and 2 were using a numeracy programme to solve number problems from one to ten. Classroom computers are now an important resource for learning. Almost all pupils are highly motivated by the developments in this subject and discuss their work confidently and enthusiastically.

### **HUMANITIES**

83. Religious education was inspected individually and is reported in full below. Inspectors also saw two lessons in history, both of which were in Years 3 to 6, and one lesson in geography in Years 1 and 2. Other evidence was collected in a scrutiny of work.
84. One of the lessons seen in history was satisfactory and the other was good. Here the very good planning included role-play as pupils re-enacted 'Clogger and his family.' Pupils asked the different family members some very good questions, designed to help them to write a letter to the prime minister, Mr. Baldwin. Pupils' achievement during this lesson was very good.
85. The geography lesson seen in Years 1 and 2 effectively introduced St. Lucia. The teacher used role-play effectively as pupils took an “aeroplane ride” to the island. The very skilful teaching developed pupils’ understanding of how to identify the geographical features of an island.
86. Both history and geography are well managed subjects and the subject leader has introduced a similar system of assessment, using target cards, as is used for English, mathematics and science, which teachers are implementing for the first time. The system has the potential to become a successful record of pupils’ knowledge in both subjects.

## **Religious Education**

Provision in religious education is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Resources are good.
- A good range of themes ensures pupils are interested.
- Teachers are knowledgeable.
- Presentation is often poor and there is an inconsistent use of handwriting and punctuation in written work.
- Pupil progress across the school is monitored by the coordinator but not yet evaluated.

### **Commentary**

87. Standards of attainment at Years 2 and 6 are in line with the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. Pupils, including those with SEN, achieve satisfactorily. As part of the implementation of the action plan from the previous inspection, the school has successfully continued to work at improving standards in religious education. A whole school curriculum plan map has been put into place, which is used by all staff to plan interesting lessons through a range of topics. Few lessons were observed and so no reliable judgement can be made on teaching but what was seen was judged to be good. Judgements are therefore based on discussions with pupils and key staff and teachers' planning. The scrutiny of work showed pupils were encouraged to express their view on different subjects but the presentation of written work was frequently well below that expected for their age. The subject contributes well to the development of research and communication skills in literacy. The subject manager has worked well with the LEA advisory service to provide a programme which staff find useful. Staff have had a comprehensive training programme which has resulted in them becoming knowledgeable and confident to teach religious education.

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

Design and technology was not inspected on this inspection. Art and design, physical education and music were sampled. Two lessons were seen on art and design. The teaching seen was satisfactory overall in this subject.

88. Two music lessons were seen, one in Year 4 and one in Year 6. Both lessons were judged to be good. In both lessons, the teachers gave good, brisk introductions and had good knowledge and understanding of the subject. Their enthusiasm and expertise engaged pupils well and due to this and the good level of pupil participation, pupils' learning was good. Standards in both lessons met national expectations and achievement was good. A discussion was also held with the coordinator and her action plans, which from part of the SDP, were studied. The music coordinator has exciting plans to make the school's provision better, which involve harnessing the expertise of other teachers who are competent in music. Leadership is good in this subject.
89. Only one PE lesson was seen as more observations would have meant that individual teachers were over-visited. The lesson seen was satisfactory. The school has good resources for physical education that include two halls, large playgrounds, a large field and an indoor swimming pool. The physical education programme is enriched by various additional activities, such as clubs for football, netball, hockey, cricket, rounders, athletics and cross-country running.

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

Provision in Personal, Social and Health education was sampled on the inspection. One good lesson was seen in Year 4.

84. The school has made improvement in pupils' personal education a priority and has been successful. PSHE is firmly embedded into the wider curriculum as well as being timetabled through weekly Circle Time for each class. Pupils learn to control and recognise their emotions and feelings. For example, in a lesson that was sampled in Years 1 and 2, the teacher modelled different emotions using facial expressions and provided pupils with different coloured paper faces to draw a range of emotions. In another complete lesson, pupils discussed acts of kindness and the different feelings people had for each other very sensibly, in a story about 'Dogger.' Pupils learn about how to stay healthy and fit in physical education and science. PSHE is a very strong element of learning in the Nurture group and has been effective in raising pupils' self-esteem leading to better achievement. The School Council is a very good example of pupils learning how to be good citizens. Its members are drawn from each year group in the school and they wear their badges with pride.

## **PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS**

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>3</b>
How inclusive the school is	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	3
<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>5</b>
Pupils' achievement	3
<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>	<b>3</b>
Attendance	5
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	4
<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>	<b>3</b>
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3
<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>3</b>
The governance of the school	3
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).*