

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **LANGLEY MILL CHURCH OF ENGLAND INFANT SCHOOL**

Langley Mill, Nottingham

LEA area: Derbyshire

Unique reference number: 112827

Headteacher: Mrs Julie Butler

Lead inspector: Mr David Carrington

Dates of inspection: 24<sup>th</sup> – 26<sup>th</sup> May 2004

Inspection number: 256689

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant  
School category: Voluntary Controlled  
Age range of pupils: 4 to 7  
Gender of pupils: Mixed  
Number on roll: 88

School address: Sedgwick Street  
Langley Mill  
Nottingham  
Postcode: NG16 4DT

Telephone number: 01773 713429  
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Appropriate authority: The governing body  
Name of chair of governors: Mrs A Redshaw

Date of previous inspection: 5<sup>th</sup> May 1998

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Langley Mill Church of England Infant School is a small, voluntary controlled school. It is located almost midway between Derby and Nottingham, a little to the east of Heanor. There are 88 pupils in school aged four to seven, and 43 children in the nursery, who attend on a part time basis. Most of the pupils live in the area immediately around the school. Nearly all of the pupils are from white British family backgrounds and no pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is below average and no pupils have statements. It is a *Healthy Eating School*, has earned *Investors in People* status and has been awarded the *Basic Skills Quality Mark*. Children start in nursery with well below average levels of skill and knowledge, especially in speaking and personal development.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
15414	Mr David Carrington	Lead inspector	Mathematics, science, information and communication technology, geography, history.
	Mr John Bayliss	Lay inspector	
1189	Mrs Sharon Brown	Team inspector	English, art and design, design and technology, music, physical education, religious education special educational needs, areas of learning for children in the Foundation Stage.

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

Langley Mill Church of England Infant School is a happy place of learning where there is **satisfactory** provision overall with some strengths. Achievement is good in Years 1 and 2 and standards are average overall by the age of seven. The quality of teaching and learning is good. The headteacher gives good leadership to the school and has good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. She has pinpointed the key areas for improvement accurately. The school gives **satisfactory** value for money.

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

- Standards are average in reading, mathematics, science, information and communication technology (ICT) and religious education.
- Pupils' achievement is good.
- Standards are below average in writing and there are not enough opportunities to write at length in other subjects.
- The headteacher leads the school well and has set the school on the right course for improvement in the areas where this is needed.
- There are inconsistencies in provision in the Foundation Stage.
- Pupils' attitudes are good, they behave well and relationships are very good. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is effective.
- Assessment is unsatisfactory and pupils do not have enough opportunities to identify how they can improve their work.
- Attendance is below average.

The school has made **satisfactory** improvement since its previous inspection in 1998. However, work has still to be completed in the improvement of writing. The school has made good improvement to the accommodation, higher attaining pupils are achieving well and pupils with special educational needs are supported effectively and also achieve well. Leadership and management are of overall better quality than they were in 1998. Standards are now rising after a period when they were in decline.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

As the following table shows, standards were average in reading and mathematics in the Year 2 national tests in 2003. Standards were well below average in writing. The proportion of pupils achieving the higher level 3 last year was above average overall. Boys have done significantly better than girls in recent years in reading and mathematics. These school trends were opposite the national picture in reading and writing but not mathematics.

#### Year 2 results in 2003

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
Reading	A	D	C	A
Writing	C	E	E	D
Mathematics	D	D	C	A

*Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average. Similar schools are those with similar entitlement to free school meals.*

Overall, achievement is **good**.

- Children in nursery are achieving well in their work and are working confidently. Those in reception are achieving satisfactorily.
- Achievement is good in infant classes and standards in Year 2 are average in all subjects apart from writing, where they are below average. There is too much use of worksheets, which caps achievement, as pupils often complete the same work regardless of whether they are high, middle or lower attaining.
- Attendance levels are below average. The school works well to encourage better patterns of attendance but some parents do not respond, which results in too much unnecessary absence.
- Pupils are interested in their work, behaviour is good and relationships are very good.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is good overall, with strengths in moral and social education.

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The overall quality of education is **good**, especially in the case of teaching and learning in the infant classes.

- Teaching quality is **good**. However, it is satisfactory in reception, but good in nursery and Years 1 and 2. The chief strength is teachers' insistence on good behaviour. The aspect in need of most improvement is lesson planning, which is not sharply enough focused on the knowledge and skills to be learned by different groups of pupils.
- Learning is good. Pupils are interested in the activities and work productively. There are no major differences in the learning of boys and girls. The learning of children in the nursery is good and it is satisfactory in reception.
- Assessment is unsatisfactory. Whilst systems are working soundly in English and mathematics, assessment is not consistent in other subjects. The information gained from assessment is not used effectively enough in planning work for groups of pupils.
- The curriculum is satisfactory. The curriculum covers all the subjects it should, and the balance of time spent on different subjects is appropriate.
- The partnership with parents and the community is satisfactory. Some parents do not take much interest in their children's education, which the school is working hard to change. The school is caring for the pupils and there is a good learning atmosphere.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

- The overall quality of leadership, management and governance is satisfactory. However, the headteacher leads the school well, and has set it on the right course for improvement in the short space of time she has been in post.
- Governors are supportive and committed and understand the school's performance soundly. They usefully help shape the direction of the school and have growing confidence to ask critical questions about the school's successes and weaknesses.
- School self-evaluation is good, though subject leaders do not have a full enough role in this work.

## PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents and pupils hold positive views of the school. Parents think teaching and learning is good and that pupils do well in their work. In general, this is a true reflection of the quality of education. The pupils like their school, though they would like improved outdoor play and workspace.

## IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Maintain the effort to raise standards and boost achievement in writing, including writing in other subjects, especially by reducing the use of worksheets.
- Make the systems of assessment more focused, rigorous and consistently implemented, and involve subject leaders more in the evaluation of standards and achievement.

- Work for more consistency in provision in the Foundation Stage.
- Continue to promote improved attendance.

## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

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

Standards this year are **average** in Year 2 and pupils achieve **satisfactorily** through the school.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Last year, results were average in reading and mathematics in the Year 2 national tests, and were well below average in writing.
- This year, standards in Year 2 are average in all subjects apart from writing, where they are below average.
- Achievement is good in Years 1 and 2.
- Children in nursery are achieving well in their work and are working confidently. Those in reception are achieving satisfactorily.
- There is too much use of worksheets, which caps achievement in writing.
- Boys have done significantly better than girls in recent years in the reading and mathematics tests.

#### Commentary

1. Standards, apart from writing, hold up well in relation to those in similar schools and are well above average. Compared to the national average, pupils in Year 2, in the 2003 national tests, attained average levels in reading and mathematics. Their results were well below average in writing.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	16.3 (15.2)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	13.4 (12.7)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	16.8 (15.9)	16.3 (16.5)

*There were 33 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

2. The proportion of pupils achieving the higher level 3 in 2003 were above average overall, with well above average proportions in reading and mathematics. Boys have done significantly better than girls in recent years in reading and mathematics. The school trends in achievement by boys were opposite the national picture in reading and writing but not mathematics. There was a fall in standards in 2002, with an upward swing in 2003.
3. The current Year 2 pupils are reaching average standards in reading, mathematics, science, information and communication technology (ICT) and religious education. This marks good achievement from their below average starting point when they joined the nursery. However, standards in writing are not as high. Overall, they are below average. The school has recognised that results in writing have been too low for some time and has put a series of measures in place to raise standards. These include more rigorous assessment, target setting and evaluation, with improved teaching of writing based on a carefully planned programme of staff training. These measures are beginning to show positive results, but the over-use of worksheets and insufficient use of other subjects as a means of promoting improved writing skills are two factors that are impacting adversely on improvement.
4. Outside of writing, pupils in Years 1 and 2 make good progress as they build knowledge, skills and understanding. This is especially marked in ICT, where the good cross-curricular links

enable pupils to learn new skills effectively and apply them to a range of different work. Like ICT, achievement in mathematics has also improved since the previous inspection. Work to develop basic skills is good and the school's numeracy strategy is successful in equipping pupils with a good foundation for later stages in education. The current Year 1 group have the potential to reach above average standards in English, mathematics and science by the time they leave school at the end of Year 2.

5. When children start in the nursery their knowledge and skill level is well below average. The programme of experiences in the nursery is of good quality and the children settle well to their learning. They are confident, enthusiastic learners who have formed very good relationships with the other children and the staff and who seize on the opportunities provided with enthusiasm and well-channelled energy. They are achieving well across all six areas of learning. Reception children are achieving soundly. However, there are quite obvious differences in the curriculum and teaching methods in reception compared to those in the nursery. Whilst these allow the children to make satisfactory gains in learning, the rate of achievement is not as brisk as in nursery. There is a need to build on the strengths of provision in nursery to ensure consistent quality across the Foundation Stage.
6. Over the past few years boys have performed better in national tests than the girls. This trend in school has been opposite the national picture in reading and writing but not mathematics. Inspectors saw no significant difference in the achievement of boys and girls in lessons. They also found no gender differences in pupils' past work. In general, girls are just as involved and motivated in learning as the boys and work as productively.

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

Throughout the school attitudes to learning and behaviour are **good**. The overall quality of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is **good**. Overall attendance levels are **below average**, though punctuality is satisfactory.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There is a strong focus on the social and moral development of the pupils that results in an orderly calm atmosphere in and around the school.
- Pupils enjoy school, getting on well with each other and demonstrating an interest in what they are doing and trying hard to do their best. They think the school is a good one.
- The school's ethos of equal and fair treatment for all promotes very good relationships. Pupils work and play well together and care for each other.
- Attendance is unsatisfactory when compared with the national position despite good strategies for recording, monitoring and improving it.
- Too many parents have a relaxed attitude to the importance of regular attendance.

### **Commentary**

7. Very good social and moral development is at the centre of much of what the school does. Provision is stronger now than when the school was inspected in 1998 when it was good. Very high standards are set for behaviour and almost all pupils respond well to them as they did previously. Parents have few concerns about behaviour and there is no evidence of other than very minor bullying that is dealt with immediately. Behaviour management strategies are effective with all adults acting in a consistent way to deal with the few pupils whose self-discipline and social skills are not well developed, or have recognised behavioural problems. There have been no exclusions in recent times.
8. School rules are very clear and pupils are regularly reminded, in assemblies and elsewhere, of the importance of good behaviour. The very large majority of pupils understand how their actions affect others and they respect the school rules that they think are fair. There is a calm

constructive atmosphere in and around the school with pupils behaving responsibly treating each other and the school premises with respect. Pupils readily grasp the opportunities to show initiative and display personal responsibility. All the pupils readily involve themselves in charitable activities showing recognition of the need to help those less fortunate than themselves. Inspectors confirm the view of parents that the school is helping their children to become mature and responsible members of the community.

9. Relationships between pupils, and between pupils and teachers, are very good. All pupils whatever their age, gender or background get on very well and nothing was seen to suggest that when the very occasional incident of inappropriate behaviour occurs it is oppressive. There is no evidence of vindictive bullying or sexism within the school. The pupils' response to instructions from teachers is almost always good. In general pupils are courteous and polite being friendly with adults, interested in talking to visitors to the school, but never in a disrespectful way. Teachers and support staff present very good role models promoting the principles of right from wrong and dealing with the occasional instances of inappropriate behaviour consistently well. Learning support assistants and mid-day supervisory staff relate well to the pupils. They provide good support in classrooms and during lunchtimes that has a positive effect on learning, behaviour and safety. Break and lunchtimes are pleasant social occasions.
10. Boys and girls whatever their ability are equally enthusiastic about school activities, trying hard and endeavouring to do their best even when, occasionally, the lesson is less stimulating than it might be. They have good attitudes to learning as found when the school was inspected previously. Although there is often some initial reticence to becoming involved, most pupils enjoy taking part in question and answer sessions, during which they are happy to take turns without inappropriate shouting out. However, many have weak speaking skills so that their participation in these sessions is sometimes hesitant and they do not play as full a part as they might. Those that do get involved, and eventually this is the large majority because of the sensitive support given by adults, show a good level of interest in what they are doing and happily involve themselves in whatever activity is presented to them. The pupils enjoy school, finding lessons interesting and fun. They are proud of their school and would happily recommend it to friends. The way in which the pupils approach their work in lessons and elsewhere, the result of the school's successful strategies, makes a positive contribution to the standards that are achieved as the pupils move through their school life.
11. The school tries very hard to improve attendance with good procedures in place. Morning registration routines are efficient in all classes and there is a prompt start to the day. The large majority of pupils attend school regularly, being punctual in the mornings, and truancy is not a problem. Records of attendance are properly maintained and comply with statutory requirements. The recording of unauthorised absence is rigorous.
12. However, despite the school's best efforts, including some support from its educational social worker, pupils' attendance has fallen since the school was inspected previously and is now below average because too many do not attend as regularly as they should.

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

Authorised absence	
School data:	7.9
National data:	5.4

Unauthorised absence	
School data:	0.7
National data:	0.4

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

13. Parents are regularly reminded of the importance of attendance but a number have a relaxed attitude to its importance and fail to support the school's efforts. They keep their children away from school without explanation, hence the high level of unauthorised absence, or for trivial

reasons and some organise holidays during term time. A number of initiatives, including rewards for good attendance much liked by pupils, are having an effect in maintaining attendance levels but without more parental support improving the situation is a considerable challenge for school managers. Absence is a concern to the school because it reduces progress for those involved as they miss areas of learning and consequently have gaps in their knowledge and understanding.

14. The school makes appropriate provision for the spiritual and cultural development of the pupils, as it did when inspected previously. Assemblies focus on good attitudes with constant reinforcement of the positive ethos of the school. Through these assemblies and class discussions, for example in personal, social and health education lessons, the pupils are taught to reflect on their own and others' actions, show consideration for others, listen to others and learn to respect their views. Pupils gain a satisfactory insight into their own and other cultural traditions through work in religious education lessons, art and design, music, history and geography lessons but too few opportunities are provided for first hand experiences of cultures other than their own.

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

**The quality of education is sound.** The quality of teaching and learning is good. The curriculum is of appropriate breadth and balance in the main. There is a satisfactory partnership with parents and the community and the school takes good care of pupils' health and welfare.

### Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning quality is **good**. Assessment is **unsatisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning quality is good overall.
- Assessment is unsatisfactory. The information gained from assessment is not used effectively enough in planning work for groups of pupils.
- The most effective teaching and learning are in nursery and Years 1 and 2.
- The aspects of teaching that require most improvement is lesson planning and the match of work to pupils' different attainment levels.
- Pupils are interested in their work and complete the tasks productively.

### Commentary

15. Two-thirds of the 24 lessons observed by inspectors were of good or very good teaching quality, as the following table shows. There was no unsatisfactory teaching observed.

#### **Overall evaluation**

#### **Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 24 lessons**

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	2	14	8	0	0	0

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

16. When the scrutiny of pupils' past work is taken into account, it is evident that teaching and learning quality is good overall. There are some inconsistencies in this pattern, however, and the most effective teaching and learning is found in the nursery and Year 1 and 2 classes. In each of these, the quality is good, and in the nursery and Year 1 all teaching observed was of

good or better quality. The very good lessons observed were in Year 1 and 2. Most of the satisfactory lessons were seen in reception.

17. During the inspection, the reception children's regular teacher was ill. Whilst some good teaching was observed in this year group over the two-and-a-half days, longer term evidence supports the judgement that it is satisfactory overall. The difference with the quality elsewhere in school is due to the quality of lesson planning and the range of experiences provided. Much of the work in reception is geared to the ten subjects of the national curriculum and religious education, rather than the six areas of learning as successfully provided in the nursery. The children miss out, therefore, on some important steps in learning as it becomes too formal, too soon. There is clearly a need for practice in the two Foundation Stage classes to be brought into line and for the strengths in the nursery to be spread more widely.
18. Lesson planning is also in need of enhancement in other classes. At present it is not sharply enough focused on the knowledge and skills to be learned by groups of pupils. Whilst the activities to be completed by the higher, middle and lower attaining pupils is indicated in planning, it is not made clear what level of skills and knowledge is at the root of this work. This means that assessment of achievement is less sharp than it could be. In other respects, teaching in most classes consists of a series of strengths including the absolute insistence on good standards of work and productive learning. Good encouragement is given to the pupils and teaching methods are effective in building skills and knowledge. Basic skills of reading and mathematics are taught well, though improvements can be made to the teaching of writing. In general, there is too much use of worksheets in most subjects. This prevents the consistent development of writing skills in many instances and caps achievement because there are some times when all pupils, regardless of attainment level, complete the same worksheet.
19. Pupils are well motivated towards their learning and they work productively. They are developing the skills of collaborative and independent work soundly. They could be provided with more responsibility for their own work. The reduction of the use of worksheets will serve to further pupils' responsibility in learning. Despite this, some good instances of pupils showing initiative were observed. A good example was the outdoor activities session in the nursery, where having completed a balancing activity set up by the staff, the children designed their own pathway for subsequent attempt and added or removed blocks to make the work safer or, where needed, simpler.
20. The overall quality of assessment is unsatisfactory. It has been improved soundly in English and mathematics during the recent past and is satisfactory in these subjects, but there is work still to be done in other subjects to provide a system of assessment that accurately identifies the building of knowledge and skills, and which can serve as the basis of more rigorous tracking of achievement. At present, the data produced by assessment is not used effectively enough in matching work to the different needs of the pupils, especially higher attainers, though the individual programmes of work for pupils with special educational needs are well focused in Year1 and 2.
21. Pupils do not have enough opportunities to discover how well they are learning. This is because marking is not informative enough about ways to improve and there are few opportunities for pupils to reflect on, and evaluate their learning as it proceeds. This is especially the case at the end of lessons where too few opportunities are taken for pupils to reflect on progress and considering the next steps for learning. Senior managers are aware of the need to improve assessment and plans for this are built into the school improvement plan. Work is well under way, and staff are committed to make assessment a sharpened tool for promoting improved achievement.

## The curriculum

The curriculum is **satisfactory** overall. Sound opportunities for enrichment are provided through extra-curricular activities, visitors and visits. Accommodation and resources are satisfactory overall.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Provision in the nursery is good but there are inconsistencies in the provision for children in the reception class.
- Provision for personal, social and health education is good.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good.
- There are not enough planned opportunities for pupils to write at length in English and other subjects of the curriculum.

## Commentary

22. Children receive a good start in the nursery because of the good range of activities and resources that promote children's development well in all areas of learning. Although satisfactory overall, there are shortcomings in the reception class in the activities and resources provided, particularly in the provision for indoor and outdoor play.
23. The school provides a satisfactory curriculum overall. National guidelines have been adopted for all subjects, and are used satisfactorily to support teachers' planning. The literacy and numeracy strategies are implemented satisfactorily and the school has been awarded the *Basic Skills Quality Mark* for its improvement to its provision for these aspects. The school recognises the need to improve standards in pupils' writing but this is not sufficiently addressed through planning to ensure extended writing opportunities are provided in other subjects in addition to English.
24. Good strategies are in place in Years 1 and 2 for pupils' social and educational inclusion, enabling higher attaining pupils to achieve well on the whole and pupils with special educational needs to be supported effectively. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good and helps them to be fully involved in lessons. Individual education plans give clear measurable targets in Years 1 and 2 although in the reception class targets are not always specific enough.
25. The curriculum in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory overall. In the nursery it is well organised with a good range of practical activities and approaches, and good opportunities for children to learn through well-structured play. These children achieve well as a result. By contrast, whilst the curriculum in the reception class is satisfactory, planning is based on the National Curriculum rather than the early learning goals of the Foundation Stage. Learning is not effective enough when the activities and resources lack imagination, and there are limited opportunities for children to make choices or to work independently. The heavy reliance on worksheets in this class results in less interesting activities at times, which do not excite and motivate children to learn.
26. Support for learning outside the school day is satisfactory. The school offers recorder club and football for boys and girls, with a professional football coach. An arts week in the summer term involves the whole school in a wide range of creative activities with visiting artists and musicians, such as an African drummer. A highlight of the year, this year was a whole school visit to the theatre to see 'Sleeping Beauty' which provided a good stimulus for learning in the classroom, especially good story writing. Such activities promote pupils' interest and learning well.
27. There is a satisfactory number of staff to meet the curriculum, although a significant number are fairly new to the profession and some are part-time. Support for pupils with special educational needs is good. Accommodation is satisfactory and there has been good improvement with the addition of a purpose built hall, which allows gymnastics to be taught safely and effectively. There is a lack of access to all parts of the school for pupils with physical disabilities. The playgrounds and field provision are good. The site and buildings are kept in very good condition by the dedicated team of cleaners. Resources are satisfactory

overall, although there are shortcomings in the Foundation Stage for the reception children, including resources for outdoor play provision.

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

The way in which the school provides for the care, welfare and health and safety of its pupils is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The way pupils are looked after, whatever their backgrounds, enhances the quality of education by ensuring that they can work in an orderly, caring and safe environment.
- Staff know the pupils well and put this knowledge to good use in supporting welfare and other needs.
- Support for those new to the school, whether in the nursery or elsewhere, is good so that they settle happily into their school life.
- Parents are appreciative of the care and support provided for their children
- There is little formal recording of pupils' personal development but informal arrangements are good.
- Pupils are happy at school feeling safe and well looked after.

### **Commentary**

28. When last inspected support, welfare and guidance were judged to be satisfactory. They have improved and are now good. There is a welcoming feeling about the school immediately on entering it that is not changed on better acquaintance. The school takes especial care to ensure that all pupils are treated equally and given proper support appropriate to individual need whatever their background or personal circumstances. Teachers and support staff are sensitive to the needs of pupils with learning, behavioural or other difficulties.
29. Langley Mill is a caring school that is sensitive to, and respects, the wide-ranging needs of its pupils and works hard to meet them. Pastoral care lies at the heart of much of what it does. Proper procedures are in place to ensure pupils' health and safety, including those necessary to ensure the well being of the pupils during physical education lessons, and there is good support for children starting their school life. First aid and fire safety arrangements are properly in place. Pupils suffering minor accidents or sickness receive immediate kindly help that quickly and successfully deals with the situation. Contact with parents, when necessary, is speedy and supportive. No health and safety hazards were observed during the inspection, an improvement on previously when several risks were reported.
30. Pupils, whatever their needs, have ready access to support, advice and guidance from adults. The pupils like their teachers and happily turn to them when they need comfort, help or advice secure in the knowledge that their needs will be met sympathetically. For example the support and guidance provided for pupils who have special educational and other identified needs is effective in ensuring that their work is matched carefully to the individual targets set for them. Pupils' views, as communicated through lessons are respected and taken notice of. Formal assessment records of both academic and personal development have some weaknesses. However, they are complemented by informal arrangements that benefit from adults' very good knowledge of pupils, and in some cases their families, as individuals. There is regular discussion amongst staff about the personal needs of individual pupils. Taken together these arrangements ensure that pupils' needs, whatever they are, are recognised and properly met so that they can develop to their full potential both academically and as responsible members of the wider community.

## Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school's links with parents, with the community and with other schools and colleges are **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents appreciate what the school is doing for their children. They think it is a good one.
- Not enough parents support the work of the school either in school or at home.

### Commentary

31. The overall satisfactory situation reported when the school was inspected previously has been maintained although community links and those with business are not as strong as they were judged to be then. Parents' satisfaction with what the school provides for their children has stayed at a good level. They think the school is a good one having no significant concerns about what the school provides for their children. The school's 'open door' policy works well so that parents are happy approaching the school with questions and any problems. Their concerns or suggestions are dealt with sensitively and professionally. Arrangements for settling their children into school life are much appreciated.
32. The school's links with its parents are satisfactory but the impact of parents' involvement in the work of the school is less than it would wish. The school recognises the importance of good relationships with parents, works hard to promote its partnership with them and is anxious to seek their views. It is reaching out to them endeavouring to build positive relationships for mutual benefit. It is not for want of trying that so far too few parents actively involve themselves in the work of the school. Some success is being achieved through initiatives such as the parents' workshops and the work being done to encourage parent participation in the nursery but the response is still low. A few parents help directly in school, and there is generally satisfactory support for homework, but overall the impact of parents' involvement in the work of the school continues to be an area for development, although the school recognises that many parents lack confidence to support the school through more involvement in their children's learning.
33. The quality of information provided by the school is satisfactory with some good features such as the information provided in the nursery booklet that gives parents good advice on how to ensure a smooth introduction to school life. A satisfactory range of information is provided on a regular basis. Parent/teacher meetings are held twice a year and parents receive a written report on progress in the summer term. Informative newsletters are sent home regularly. Pupils' annual reports are satisfactory overall but there is a general lack of information for parents about how well their children are doing compared with accepted standards other than at the end of Year 2 when the results of the statutory assessment tests are provided. The school prospectus and the governors' annual report together provide parents with much useful information about school activities and how parents can support its work but their presentation is somewhat formal and opportunities are missed to properly celebrate school successes. Plans are in hand to review the content and presentation of both documents to make them more attractive to parents.
34. Overall links with partner schools and other establishments are satisfactory. Arrangements for the smooth transfer of pupils to the next stage of their education are satisfactory. The school's links with the local and wider community, though limited except for those with the local churches, are satisfactory for the age range within the school.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The headteacher's leadership is **good**. The leadership of other key staff and the quality of management and governance are **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The leadership of the headteacher is good. She has a clear vision for the school and is a key figure in school improvement and in the raising of standards.
- The headteacher is monitoring school performance well so that school managers are equipped to move the school forward by challenging what is happening.
- The governors fulfil their role soundly and support the school well, but they could plan and monitor school development in a more structured manner.
- There is a strong commitment to the promotion of equality and concern for the needs of individual pupils.
- The school supports the training of student teachers well.

### Commentary

35. The leadership provided by the headteacher is good. In the short time since her appointment, which followed a period of some instability, she has sensitively reviewed the work of the school and has pinpointed its strengths and weaknesses well. Policies have been reviewed and are generally of good quality, school specific and well focused, though several are still in the process of being implemented. There are, inevitably, some inconsistencies between policy and practice throughout the school but these are being resolved. The school's aims are centred on providing a setting in which the pupils can develop their best potential academically and socially. Parents are happy with the quality of the school's leadership.
36. The headteacher has an open style of management that encourages discussion and participation so that all involved feel ownership of the strategies being developed. She is managing in a quiet, thoughtful and committed way with a clear educational direction for the school. All members of staff have been involved in reaching a clear understanding of what is needed to move the school forward, building upon the successes of the past and identifying areas for development. This has established a strong team spirit with a shared commitment that augers well for the future. The school responded positively to the weaknesses identified at the time of the previous inspection all of which have been given the necessary attention with particular successes in the raising of standards and improvements in special needs provision and the standard of accommodation. The quality of writing continues to be a focus for attention. Strengths identified then have been maintained in care procedures, pupils' behaviour and attitudes to work and the provision for personal development. The positive ethos and the way in which the school ensures that everyone is treated equally, a weakness previously, are key features evident in the school philosophy. Overall improvement since the previous inspection has been satisfactory.
37. All involved with the management of the school are proud of what has been achieved so far but there is no complacency. Staff and governors have a clear view of what the school needs to do further to improve the quality of the pupils' education. The headteacher and governors, working increasingly closely together, are determined to do the best for all the pupils whatever their needs. Staff support each other to build on the school's strengths and positively tackle areas recognised as being in need of further development. There is a consistency of approach that ensures that the school's fundamental aims and values are reflected in everything that it does. This results in a well ordered and caring learning environment with good potential for improvement.

38. Arrangements for monitoring and evaluating the school's performance and taking effective action, which are satisfactory, have moved on from where they were and are developing well. Sound monitoring and evaluation of what is taught and the quality of teaching is taking place across the school. However, the small number of staff and the part time teaching commitment by the headteacher means that opportunities are more limited than in bigger schools. Identified needs are fed into the school's training programme. Monitoring of pupil performance tracks progress and the school has a range of strategies to identify successes and areas for further development. Nonetheless, there is scope for further development in this area as subject leaders, who for the most part are confident and are happily shouldering their considerable responsibilities, develop their skills and experience. Staff meet regularly to identify issues for whole-school development. This monitoring, together with that undertaken objectively by the headteacher as part of the school's self-assessment process, and the analysis of assessment and other data by teachers and governors, is informing school priorities appropriately. Areas needing attention are identified clearly and are fed directly into the school improvement plan. This is being reviewed now that the new management structure has bedded down. The draft school improvement plan has clearly identified the school's priorities as raising standards in writing, improving monitoring and evaluation, improving assessment procedures and improving attendance levels.
39. Induction and mentoring procedures for staff new to the school are good. Their needs are met sensitively with appropriate training and support. The school makes a good contribution to initial teacher training by providing opportunities for trainees to get practical classroom experience. Arrangements for staff performance management and their continuing professional development are as they should be. The school has had good success in eliminating the considerable amount of unsatisfactory teaching that was reported at the previous inspection. This is due to effective support for staff and the commitment shown by all adults observed during the inspection. The award of *Investors In People* status is a reflection of the good work that the school has undertaken to ensure all staff contribute effectively to the educational provision in school.
40. Though not enjoying its full complement of members, and with some inexperienced ones, the governing body fulfils its responsibilities satisfactorily overall, much as it did when inspected previously. Governors ensure that statutory requirements are met. There is a close and fruitful professional relationship between the Chair of Governors and the headteacher but elsewhere governors are less well involved. Until very recently there is little evidence of governors as a body having taken a broad enough view of the most effective way of improving standards but this is changing, albeit somewhat slowly. Governors are very supportive of the school and anxious to help it move forward showing a willingness to play their proper part in helping shape the direction of the school. Whilst being heavily reliant on the professional judgement of the headteacher, they are responding well to the opportunities to be more involved than in the past as the headteacher shares with them her views of the school and her vision for the future. Their role as critical friends is developing well, due to some effective training, with governors having an increasingly good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. At present, however, their arrangements to independently assess these are less effective than they might be. Monitoring systems could be more rigorous, in order to enable governors to form a more accurate picture of overall school performance.

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

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	325,865
Total expenditure	324,332
Expenditure per pupil	2,895

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	26,898
Balance carried forward to the next	28,431

41. The school has satisfactory procedures for ensuring that the financial resources available to it, which are broadly in line with those enjoyed by similar schools nationally, properly support the educational needs of its pupils. There has not been a recent external financial audit, despite a

change of headteacher. However, there is ample evidence to show that finance is being used effectively for the direct benefit of the pupils. There is a clear identification of priorities related to improving the quality of education and raising standards with a satisfactory awareness of the need to apply best value principles when deciding how to balance the needs of staffing, accommodation and resource provision drawing upon all the evidence available to determine need, including the views of parents and pupils. There is a clear cycle of financial planning and the monitoring of expenditure is secure. The use of the monies the school receives to help pupils with special educational or other needs is well directed. Overall the school has maintained the secure financial planning and efficient control of its budget identified when the school was last inspected. Clerical staff are conscientious, undertaking their duties in a quietly efficient manner that contributes significantly to the smooth day-to-day running of the school.

42. Overall, the school gives satisfactory value for money, however, the amount of money the school holds in reserve to protect it against unexpected happenings has been higher than suggested by good practice in recent years, the result of a very conservative approach to money management. Whilst no confirmed figures for the last financial year, 2003-04, are available the indications are that the pattern of overly prudent management was maintained. However since her appointment the headteacher, supported by governors, has determined that there should be a progressive release of some of the accumulated balances. Whilst maintaining prudent contingency planning, increases in the number of classroom based support staff have been agreed that are intended to be of direct benefit to pupils' learning. It is anticipated that by the end of the present financial year, 2004-05, financial reserves will be in line with recommended practice. This is a good example of positive financial planning balancing the need to be careful with providing properly for the needs of the pupils in school.

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

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

**The overall quality of provision in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory.**

#### **Commentary**

43. Children receive a sound start to their education in the Foundation Stage. The good provision in the nursery ensures the children receive a well-planned curriculum. Teaching in the nursery is good. There is a good balance between self-selected and adult directed activities with a strong emphasis on the development of literacy skills and recognition of the importance of learning through play. Whilst provision in the reception class is satisfactory overall, there are significant weaknesses. Planning does not reflect the curriculum for the Foundation Stage enough but follows the National Curriculum, including literacy and numeracy hours. Too much teacher direction and an over reliance on formal worksheets limits children's creativity and independent learning. Provision for outdoor play in the reception class is unsatisfactory. Assessment is satisfactory overall. Sound procedures are in place to assess the children's progress, but outcomes of assessment are not used well enough to respond to individual needs and plan the next stages of learning, particularly in the reception class. Marking is superficial in the reception class and does not help children focus on the next steps in their learning.
44. Children start in the nursery in September or January, depending on their birth date. They enter the reception class in the September or January preceding their fifth birthday. There are good induction procedures and parents are positive about the start children receive to their education. Overall attainment on entry to the nursery is well below average, especially in communication, language and literacy and mathematics. At the time of the inspection there were 43 children attending on a part time basis with places still available. Of the 28 children in the reception class, six children have been identified as having special educational needs.
45. Teaching and the range of learning opportunities are satisfactory overall. They are good in the nursery. As a result, children's achievement is good in the nursery and satisfactory in the reception class.
46. A weakness in planning in the Foundation Stage is that teachers in the nursery and reception class do not plan together to ensure good progression in learning and achievement of the early learning goals. Teachers' planning is good in the nursery. It is adequate in the reception class, but lacks sharpness because it does not identify clearly enough the small steps that children are expected to make towards the broader end-of-year learning goals nor does it provide sufficient opportunities for independent choice. Children in the nursery have continuous access to an attractive, secure and well-resourced outside area which supports their learning well. Provision for this aspect of physical development in the reception class is unsatisfactory. Progress in all areas of learning is satisfactory overall with good progress being made in the nursery. By the time they leave the reception class attainment is generally still below the level expected for children of this age. It is average though in personal, social and emotional development.

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

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

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

- Children are happy and settled in school and their attitudes and behaviour are good.
- Children gain confidence and independence, particularly in the nursery.

- There are not enough opportunities for children to select activities for themselves in the reception class.

### **Commentary**

47. Children's achievement is satisfactory. Most are on course to reach their goals by the end of the reception year. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall with good teaching in the nursery. Teachers and support staff ensure that children are made to feel welcome and offer good levels of individual care and support. This helps to build children's confidence and self-esteem.
48. Teachers expect children to behave well. As a result children quickly adjust to the routines and respond well to expectations. Almost all behave sensibly in their classrooms, in the outdoor area and when moving about the school. A very small number of children in the reception class, whose behaviour continues to be challenging, are managed satisfactorily on a day-to-day basis and there is good additional support from external agencies. However, targets in the individual education plans for children with special educational needs in the reception class are not precise enough to meet the specific needs of these children.
49. Children in the nursery are confident to make choices because they are given many opportunities to do so. A wide range of play activities is provided for them which encourages cooperation and collaborative play as well as engaging their imagination. This is less evident in the reception class where too many activities are teacher directed and lack sparkle. Most children take responsibility for tidying up. Children are friendly towards one another because they are encouraged to share and take turns. In the nursery the adults make use of the extended outdoor area to ensure that children have regular daily access to outdoor play, which makes a good contribution to their personal and social development. This is a weakness in the reception class.

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

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

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

- Good opportunities are provided for children to develop their speaking skills and appropriate attention given to early reading.
- There are missed opportunities for children to practise early writing sufficiently in imaginative situations such as in role-play areas.
- Over-reliance on worksheets in the reception class impedes the development of children's writing. Work is not planned sufficiently to reflect the Foundation Stage curriculum.

### **Commentary**

49. When children start in the nursery, skills in this area of learning are well below those expected for children of this age. Achievement is satisfactory overall and good in the nursery. However, many children are unlikely to meet their targets in communication, language and literacy by the time they start in Year 1. The overall quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory, being good in the nursery.
50. The regular activities of showing news stories and 'big books' such as 'Each, Peach, Pear, Plum' provide good opportunities for speaking and listening. Children enjoy these activities and respond with interest. They listen carefully to teachers and other adults as well as to each other and are gaining confidence in speaking in front of the whole class. However, responses are often short, one-word answers. A small proportion of higher attaining children in the reception class name and sound letters confidently and are beginning to build simple words

independently. Good teaching by the supply teacher during the inspection, developed children's competence in linking sounds to letters and developed their interest in books, building on the good practice in the nursery, through an appropriate range of activities. However, children's work over time in the reception class reveals a heavy reliance on worksheets, which are not inspiring, and offer little variety in writing tasks.

51. Writing skills are developed satisfactorily overall but are not as good in the reception class as in the nursery because opportunities for children to write in imaginative contexts are limited, for example, in the role play area there are missed opportunities in the travel agents and the café to make greater use of early writing when structuring the play. There is a lack of purposeful writing opportunities with the main focus being worksheets, which often fail to challenge higher attaining children. Most children write their name independently. A small number of higher attaining children are helped to write a simple sentence but usually the teacher scribes and the child copies underneath. In the reception class the literacy hour has not been adapted suitably to meet the needs of children with weak skills in communication, language and literacy.

### **Mathematical development**

Provision in mathematical development is **satisfactory**.

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

- A good range of practical activities and games are used successfully to develop children's mathematical knowledge and understanding, especially in the nursery.
- Planning is focused too much on National Curriculum work and does not provide the children with appropriate learning experiences.
- The over use of number worksheets in the reception class restricts the development of creativity and independent learning.

### **Commentary**

52. Children enter the Foundation Stage with mathematical skills well below average. They achieve satisfactorily overall as a result of sound teaching and learning. However, most children are unlikely to achieve their targets by the end of the reception year, as they start the work from the National Curriculum too early and do not complete their first steps in mathematical development. Games and practical activities are used successfully to encourage children and to practise mathematical skills. Children acquire a satisfactory range of number rhymes and songs but sometimes opportunities are missed to consolidate learning through these. Most children count to ten, higher attainers confidently, but lower attainers struggle beyond five. A significant number are unable to count to 20 accurately. Higher attainers understand mathematical language such as *one more than* and terms such as *full*, *half-full* and *empty*. An over use of number worksheets in the reception class is at the expense of creativity and independent learning. Most children recognise basic shapes, such as *square*, *circle* and *triangle*. Some opportunities are provided for mathematical development through role-play in the travel agents and travel café when they add up the customer's bill, but weaknesses in planning result in children in the reception class spending too long sitting on the carpet listening to the teacher. They then become restless and inattentive in some cases.

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

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

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

- Planning in the reception class does not reflect the Foundation Stage curriculum sufficiently.
- Good questioning by most adults extends children's thinking skills effectively.

## Commentary

53. Children enter the Foundation Stage with attainment below the level expected for their age. Teachers provide a satisfactory range of experiences that enable them to develop their knowledge about the world appropriately. Children learn about living things as they plant seeds. They are becoming familiar with an increasing number of stories from the Bible. They are familiar with the main Christian festivals and celebrations such as Christmas and Easter and are aware of the importance of the family. They know how to control the mouse to move the cursor when using the computer and create pictures using programs such as *Dazzle* with developing keyboard awareness. Children in the reception class design and make a bag for a teddy. With help they join materials using adhesive tape. They know about different forms of transport, such as farming vehicles in the nursery and holiday transport such as trains and buses in the reception class. Appropriate links are made to the language and mathematical areas of learning. Well directed questioning, particularly in the nursery by the nursery nurse focuses children's interest well when locating farm vehicles in the sand and contributes effectively to their learning. Most children are unlikely to achieve all the expected goals in this area of learning by the time they leave the reception class.

## Physical development

Provision in physical development is **satisfactory** overall.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The teacher provides a good range of experiences in the nursery, including outdoor play provision enabling children in the nursery to achieve well.
- Planning and provision for outdoor play in the reception class is unsatisfactory.

## Commentary

54. Children enter the Foundation Stage with the physical skills expected for their age. Good teaching and learning in the nursery enable children to achieve well. The teachers and support staff help children to develop their control of small manipulative skills appropriately. Most children cut, stick and paste with the expected level of skill, but for a significant number, pencil control is under-developed. In the nursery there is a good focus on independence to select and use a range of equipment that helps develop physical skills. The nursery outdoor area is good and children pull, push and pedal vehicles with confidence and appropriate coordination and control. Outdoor play opportunities for children in the reception class are very limited and the lack of opportunities and appropriate resources make this aspect of physical development unsatisfactory. Nevertheless, most children are likely to achieve their targets by the time they leave the reception class.

## Creative development

55. Work in creative development was sampled and there is evidence enough to judge that the curriculum is satisfactory.
56. There is satisfactory development of musical skills, although songs are sometimes taught hurriedly with insufficient focus on the skills to be developed. Appropriate experiences develop children's competence in using paint and other materials to make pictures. Children explore a satisfactory range of techniques and materials such as in painting, printing, collage and using malleable materials. Role-play based work is satisfactory overall but in the reception class there are missed opportunities to develop learning through play because of weaknesses in planning and structuring these activities.

## SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGE 1

### ENGLISH

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well overall as a result of good teaching and learning.
- Standards in writing are below average by the age of seven.
- The development of reading and listening skills is effective and standards are average.
- The use of too many worksheets restricts pupils' ability to write at length and there are too few planned opportunities for extended writing in other subjects.
- The skills of handwriting are not taught well enough and the over use of worksheets results in incorrect letter formation and joins.
- Marking does not always help pupils to know how to improve. It is not linked effectively to the target setting process.

#### Commentary

57. The overall improvement since the previous inspection has been satisfactory. Standards in reading by the age of seven are average, and in relation to similar schools are well above average. Results in writing were well below average and, when compared with similar schools, were still below average. Inspection findings concur with these results, with writing remaining the weakest aspect of English. The school has worked well on developing reading skills, including basic phonics and this is reflected in test results, though boys have tended to do significantly better than the girls in the Year 2 national tests in reading in recent years.
58. Achievement is good overall, given pupils' attainment when they first start school. Attainment in writing is below average and has not improved as rapidly as reading largely because of the over-dependence on worksheets, which is inhibiting pupils' ability to write at length. Achievement in writing is only satisfactory. The school has already identified writing as a major area for attention. Pupils' listening skills are good. Speaking skills are varied but are generally average. Where teachers insist on pupils answering in full sentences and encourage discussion and extended conversations, speaking skills improve.
59. Pupils start in Year 1 with below average standards in speaking and listening. Overall pupils achieve well during their time in school as a result of good teaching and standards are average by the age of seven. Most pupils speak clearly and confidently by the end of Year 2, although responses are often brief. Most teachers provide good opportunities for pupils to speak aloud to the class, for paired discussion and as a result, speaking skills improve.
60. Throughout the school, teachers develop children's positive attitude to books. There is a strong focus on the teaching of phonics, although pupils do not have many strategies such as the *look, cover, check* approach to help them improve these skills. The weakness in spelling is a further hindrance to pupils' writing. Pupils read regularly to an adult and most are supported with their reading at home, as indicated in well-maintained home/school reading diaries. Pupils are interested and try hard with their reading. Standards in reading are average.
61. In writing, standards are below average at the end of Year 2. The school has recognised the need to improve standards in writing and to encourage the use of writing across the curriculum. For example, pupils give an accurate account of the life cycle of a butterfly, linked to science, but such examples are few. There is scope for writing at length for a wider range of purpose across the curriculum.

62. Standards of presentation are very varied, but overall handwriting skills are below average for a significant number of pupils. Inconsistent letter size and incorrect joins are evident in the work of many Year 2 pupils. Although a common handwriting scheme is now in place, the skills are not taught carefully by all teachers, some of whom rely on worksheets to give practice instead. The school follows the National Literacy Strategy and consideration is now being given to ways in which it can be adapted to give increased opportunities for more quality extended writing.
63. The overall quality of teaching and learning is good in Years 1 and 2. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen. Good lessons were characterised by the teachers' knowledge and understanding of English, their high expectations of behaviour and of what they can do, and their management of the pupils. Teachers generally work effectively with learning support staff so that pupils with special educational needs make the same progress in relation to their capabilities, as others in the class. Marking is inconsistent with some marking being very superficial. It does not identify what pupils need to do to improve and is not linked well enough to target setting. This is a further factor influencing standards in writing.
64. Information and communication technology (ICT) is used satisfactorily to support pupils' learning. Subject leadership is sound, with a clear commitment to improvement. Strengths and weaknesses have been clearly identified. However, subject leaders do not have a full enough role in the monitoring and evaluation process. Assessment procedures are established, but the information obtained from these is not always used to adjust planning to meet the needs of individual pupils.

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

65. Overall satisfactory use is made of language and literacy across the curriculum. Skills in speaking and listening are used effectively to support discussion in class sessions, group work and paired discussions in most subjects. However, there are few planned opportunities for pupils to write at length in subjects such as history, science or religious education in order to develop these important skills further.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards are average at the age of seven.
- Achievement is good.
- Teaching and learning are of good quality.
- Mathematics is a well-led subject.
- There are good links to other subjects, including ICT.
- The system of assessment is satisfactory, though further work is needed to ensure it is a sharpened tool for checking that achievement is spot-on.

### **Commentary**

66. Pupils build skills, knowledge and understanding well overall, which results in good achievement from their below average starting point at the start of Year 1. In the Year 2 national tests in 2003 standards were average in mathematics and the proportion of pupils achieving the higher level 3 was well above average. The current Year 2 pupils are working at average levels in their mathematics work. Those in Year 1 are working at an above average level. The difference is due to the make-up of the two classes this year. There are more pupils working at the expected level in Year 1 than is usually found in infant schools and there is a wider spread of attainment in Year 2, with a significant proportion of pupils attaining below average standards.

67. Boys have out-performed the girls in mathematics during recent years. This trend was similar to the national picture in the same period. During the inspection, boys and girls were observed to show equal interest and motivation in lessons and they achieved at similar rates.
68. All attainment groups, including those pupils with special educational needs, who are supported well by teachers and the teaching assistants, share the good rate of achievement. The quality of teaching and learning is good. There is still work to do to hone mathematics planning into a focused tool that identifies exactly what level of knowledge and skill the main attainment groups will learn. At present, planning indicates what activities each group will undertake, but does not state the outcomes expected for each of these groups. However, there are many strengths of teaching, not least the strong insistence on good standards of behaviour and productive working. The pupils respond well to these good expectations and they work hard. Pupils work very effectively together because the quality of relationships is very good. This was observed in a good Year 1 lesson on symmetry that was observed where expectations were high and the pupils worked with a sense of fun. There is a good work ethic in mathematics lessons.
69. Mathematics is well led by the headteacher. She has good knowledge of its strengths and areas for development and has introduced an assessment system to track pupils' achievement through the school. This is satisfactory overall, though, as the school acknowledges in its strategic planning, further work is needed to sharpen its focus and to draw the results together and evaluate them more rigorously. At present, a lot of data is held, but the analysis of what this means is not as substantial as it might be. Marking is not informative enough in identifying for pupils how they can improve their work and the pupils have few opportunities to self evaluate their work at key points in the learning process. In contrast, the curriculum for mathematics is good and the school's strategy for numeracy is effective in raising standards.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

70. There is ample evidence of the development of mathematics knowledge and skills across the curriculum. This is most pronounced in science, ICT and design and technology. In these subjects, data handling and measuring skills are developed well and the overall promotion of numeracy skills is good. As an example, the science work in Year 2 on *what we eat* shows good development of the skills of data collection and representation by the use of pictograms.

## **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards are average at the end of Year 2 and achievement is satisfactory.
- Pupils' science knowledge is good, but the development of skills is slowed by the too-frequent use of worksheets.
- The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory
- The system of assessment is neither rigorous nor consistent enough.
- The subject leader is not involved enough in the evaluation of standards and achievement.

### **Commentary**

71. Science standards were well below average in the Year 2 teacher assessments in 2003. The proportion of pupils achieving the higher level 3 in the same assessments was average. This year, standards are average overall in Year 2. Achievement is satisfactory overall.

72. On the whole, pupils' science knowledge is developed soundly, though pupils' skills are not promoted as effectively. There is an over-use of worksheets in science that curtails achievement. In some cases, pupils of all academic backgrounds complete the same worksheet. The lower attainers are able to complete the task because of the good support given in lessons, often by teaching assistants. However, they do not complete assessed work as accurately, as this support is necessarily withheld at the time of the assessments. Higher attaining pupils complete such worksheet-based tasks with comparative ease and are left insufficiently challenged. The standard of writing in science is not as high as it could be because of the constraints imposed by the frequent use of worksheets.
73. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. In a Year 2 lesson observed where pupils drew plants from life and labelled the chief parts, teaching was good. The teacher made good use of the computer linked projector and provided a very good collection of plants for the pupils to observe. The focus on careful observation, thoughtful discussion of the similarities and differences of the plants and good questioning by the teacher led to good achievement in both knowledge and skills. The scrutiny of pupils' past work, however, shows that teaching in the longer term has been more satisfactory than good, largely due to the effect the completion of too many worksheets has on the development of the skills of observation, simple prediction and making conclusions.
74. The system of assessment in science has not been sharp enough to identify the strengths and weaknesses of pupils' knowledge and skills development. Much assessment takes place, but the results are not interrogated deeply enough to indicate whether or not pupils are achieving as well as expected. The results of assessment are also not used sufficiently in the planning of subsequent work, as there is not precise enough indication of skills and knowledge to be learned by different groups of pupils, just a list of activities for each. Marking, as in other subjects, lacks focus on ways for pupils to improve and there are not many chances in lessons for pupils to self-assess their own learning.
75. Science is led soundly but the subject leader has had insufficient opportunities to take responsibility for standards and the quality of provision and has not had sufficient opportunities to monitor science teaching and learning in other classes. These aspects of subject leadership have been targeted as key priorities for improvement by the school in its development planning.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

Provision in information and communication technology (ICT) is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards are average in all strands of ICT by the age of seven and achievement is good.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good.
- There are good links to other subjects.
- ICT is soundly led, though the subject leader does not have enough involvement in the evaluation of standards and achievement.
- Assessment is not focused, rigorous or consistent enough.

### **Commentary**

76. There has been good improvement to the provision made for ICT and the use made of the resources is clearly more frequent and well-focused than it was at the time of the 1998 inspection. Staff knowledge and confidence has also been improved well during this period. The pupils have benefited from the investment made in the subject and standards are now average at the end of Year 2 and achievement is good. Most ICT skills are taught by work in other subjects and the links across the curriculum, as discussed below, are good.

77. It is evident from lessons and pupils' past work that they have good learning experiences in all strands of the subject. For example, the pupils have learned something of how machines are controlled by their work with *Roamer*, the programmable vehicle, where the Year 2 pupils planned its movement around an obstacle course then programmed *Roamer* to reach its target. These pupils also studied which other equipment, such as washing machines, are controlled by computerised circuits. It is very evident that there is a good, well-planned curriculum for ICT that focuses on the development of skills and knowledge.
78. ICT skills and knowledge are taught effectively. The scrutiny of pupils' past work showed that as they develop skills, the pupils also learn that the use of a computer, as in the Year 2 work to produce bar charts to show the class birthdays, may be more efficient than the same operation completed by hand. Teachers make good use of ICT resources and the impact of the interactive whiteboards has been great in terms of pupils' learning as the work is immediate, alive and motivating. The pupils work productively in their ICT tasks and build skills and knowledge well.
79. There is a comprehensive system of assessment, though it has imperfections that the school is aware of and is in process of eliminating. At present, the ICT tracker sheet in use is focused on recording what work has been completed by each pupil and does not single-out the skills and knowledge being built. This is apparent in the Year 2 folder that shows a very similar level of work for each of the 28 pupils included. It is difficult to identify who is working at a higher, or lower, than average level from these records or to pinpoint which pupils are achieving better than, or worse than, expected.
80. ICT is well led. The improvements since 1998 are good evidence of vision and commitment by the subject leader through the intervening period. Whilst there could be more opportunities for the subject leader to take responsibility for standards and the quality of education in ICT, the subject has moved ahead well and there are good prospects for the future. Indeed, some of the work of the current Year 1 pupils indicates that there is a good chance of above average standards in Year 2 in 2004-5.

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

81. One of the strengths of the ICT provision in school is the use of computers across the curriculum. There are especially strong links to mathematics, science, art and design, design and technology and geography. For example, there has been some quite complex work in Year 2 on the use of branching diagrams to classify a group of animals according to key features. This work drew well on the science study of living things and extended pupils' knowledge of animal families and their key characteristics. In their art and design work, Year 1 have produced some colourful and attractive images using the flare tool in their graphics program. ICT is not, however, used sufficiently to support writing skills development.

### **HUMANITIES**

82. There was not much evidence to report on geography and history, other than the scrutiny of pupils' past work. Therefore, these two subjects are reported briefly here. There was more evidence for religious education and the report for this subject is, correspondingly, more detailed.

### **Geography**

83. In general, the standards in the work completed since September 2003 is of average standard in both Years 1 and 2. There is a good programme of work comparing the area around Langley Mill with other localities and there is originality in the comparison made with Mexico in Year 2, for example. There are also good links to pupils' personal, social and health education through the work on what the Year 2 pupils would change in their playground. In this, and the other work evaluated, achievement has been satisfactory, but it has often been reduced by the over-use of

worksheets. The impact of this is similar to that found in science, as discussed in detail above. There is now need in geography to develop independent and extended writing more. Similarly, the system of assessment is in need of improvement, though the school has recognised this in its development planning.

84. Geography is led satisfactorily, though the role of the subject leader is not very wide ranging and is not focused enough on standards and the quality of education. However, there is a good subject development plan for the subject that identifies the need to improve assessment and update the topic cycle. The action plan is well focused on these issues.

## History

85. The points raised about geography, above, relate also to history. In fact, there was less evidence of work in history than there was in geography during the inspection. This is in part due to the point in the cycle of planning that the school had reached at the end of the first half of the summer term.
86. Standards are broadly average in pupils' past work and achievement is satisfactory, though, again, curtailed by the over-use of worksheets. Pupils are gaining insights into key people and events during the periods they study, as is apparent from Year 2 pupils' work on the Stuarts. There is some good potential for the effective development of writing skills in imaginative work such as that to create pages from Samuel Pepy's diary. The marking of work in history is not focused enough on how pupils can improve their work; a feature that is shared with geography.
87. As in geography, the subject is soundly led, with the same need for more focus on standards and the quality of education. The subject development and action plans for history are derived from that for geography and contain the same issues.

## Religious education

The provision for religious education is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are average and achievement is satisfactory.
- Teaching is closely linked to the locally agreed syllabus.
- More use could be made of the rich diversity of culture and religion to support learning in the subject.

### Commentary

88. Only one lesson was observed in religious education. Comments are based on this lesson, examination of pupils' work, teachers' planning and discussion with pupils and teachers.
89. Standards are in line with the agreed syllabus expectations for seven-year-olds and achievement is satisfactory. Planning by all teachers reflects the locally agreed syllabus. Pupils with special educational needs are appropriately supported in lessons, enabling them to achieve as well as others in the class.
90. In Years 1 and 2 pupils develop a sound knowledge of festivals and celebrations in the Christian and other major world faiths. Coverage includes such themes as caring for others, signs and symbols and the natural world, which gives pupils a growing awareness of themselves as developing individuals and how other people feel and act. They know about stories from the Bible such as *Noah's Ark* and the *Nativity* and know that the Bible is divided into the Old and New Testament. In the Year 1 lesson pupils recalled stories of journeys from the Bible, such as Moses leading the Israelites across the Red Sea, which they know is a story from the Old Testament '*when Jesus wasn't born*', says one child. They recall the journey

made by Noah and know that Muslims make a special journey to Mecca. They are encouraged to recognise the similarities and differences between religions. In Year 2 links are made to history as pupils construct a simple time line of 'their journey through life' and to science as they explore seasons, life cycles and their senses.

91. In the lesson seen in Year 1 teaching was good. Skilful questioning by the teacher furthered pupils' understanding and consolidated their earlier learning. Good links to literacy developed their range of vocabulary. The story of the Good Samaritan was well-told capturing pupils' imagination so that they listened well and behaved very well. Themes such as 'friendship' encourage kindness and caring for each other. The lesson provided good opportunities for speaking aloud, although the pace flagged during the writing session because the writing task did not motivate the pupils well. There are missed opportunities for purposeful extended writing in religious education.
92. Teachers do not give enough attention to the rich diversity of cultures and religions, through displays or visitors to school, in order to broaden pupils' knowledge and understanding of a multicultural society.
93. The leadership and management of the subject is satisfactory overall but further development of the monitoring role is needed to check teaching and learning and standards achieved.

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

94. Owing to timetable arrangements, no lessons were seen in art and design and design and technology. Only one lesson was seen in physical education and two lessons in music. Scrutiny of work and teachers' planning indicates that standards in art and design, design and technology, music and physical education are similar to those expected for pupils' age. The indications are that pupils of all backgrounds achieve satisfactorily.
95. Teachers' planning is based on national guidelines and all aspects of the subjects are covered appropriately. Schemes of work are in place but assessment is not yet consistent or rigorous enough to inform planning, teaching and learning well and to track pupils' progress in these subjects. The leadership and management of the subjects are satisfactory but at present subject leaders are not involved enough in the evaluation of standards and achievement.

### **Art and design**

96. Work seen in displays and in the sample of past work was of a satisfactory standard. Collage work in Year 1 stimulated by the pupils' study of *Sleeping Beauty* and the Isle of Struay showed effective development of skills. Artwork links well with other subjects including the use of ICT. Pupils develop a range of paint techniques with printing, pattern work and blending techniques evident in their work.

### **Design and technology**

97. In their design and technology work, Year 1 pupils labelled a design to make a moving toy and also designed and made playground equipment. Year 2 pupils labelled designs for a plane with the materials to be used and its key features. Weaving work included descriptions of the technique. Felt puppets designed and made in Year 2 show satisfactory skills in cutting around a template, sticking and sewing.

### **Music**

98. In the lessons seen in music, teaching and learning were very good in Year 1 and good in Year 2. In the very good lesson, singing skills were very carefully taught, although this was less effective in Year 2. Pupils have a good range of songs and sing tunefully. Clear instructions

ensured pupils knew what to do and the lessons moved on at a good pace. Well-targeted questions extended pupils' knowledge of a range of instruments in Year 2 and pupils achieved well in groups to create simple compositions to accompany the story of *Noah's Ark*. The good subject knowledge and high expectations of behaviour were evident. Pupils were well motivated and engaged well in the lessons. The extra-curricular recorder group is successfully developing additional music skills and knowledge.

### **Physical education**

99. In the dance lesson seen in Year1, standards were average. Good teaching and learning resulted in good achievement. Effective use of time, good relationships and high expectations of behaviour and response were characteristics of this lesson. Well-chosen music motivated children well. They moved freely in a variety of ways and directions, responding well to the mood of the music. They worked well individually and in groups. Too little time was given to observing each other in order to improve performance. Since the last inspection a new hall has been built. This contributes positively to the provision for physical education. The football club is a positive feature, which has a good impact on standards in football.

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

100. Although there were no opportunities to observe lessons to promote specifically pupils' personal, social, health and citizenship education, it is clear that this area is a strength of the school and that the outcome can be seen in the very good relationships and good behaviour and attitudes of the pupils. The development of healthy eating habits is effective and the school has been awarded the deserved accolade of *Healthy Eating School*.
101. The youngest children in school, those in the nursery, are given good opportunities to develop independence in their activities and their initiative is promoted well. They are confident learners who respond well to other children and the adults in the nursery. They play and work with enjoyment and enthusiasm.
102. Older pupils develop well as people. They are interested in all that is presented to them in school. They listen and concentrate well and are keen to answer questions and suggest ideas. Pupils show concern for each other and are polite and friendly to all they meet. The staff of the school work successfully to promote the personal, social and health development of the pupils and work such as that in geography about the local area increases pupils' awareness of what is important about living in a community. The community of the school is a cornerstone of its good educational ethos and pupils take their part with good cheer. Langley Mill Church of England Infant School is a happy place of learning where the academic and personal development of pupils is, rightly, given equal emphasis.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>4</b>
How inclusive the school is	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	4
Value for money provided by the school	4
<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>4</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	3
<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>	<b>4</b>
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	5
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	4
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	4
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	4
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	4
The quality of the school's links with the community	4
The school's links with other schools and colleges	4
<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>4</b>
The governance of the school	4
The leadership of the headteacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	4
The effectiveness of management	4

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