

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **LIME WALK PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Hemel Hempstead

LEA area: Hertfordshire

Unique reference number: 117333

Headteacher: Mr G M Everington

Lead inspector: Mrs C R Worthington

Dates of inspection: 15-18 September 2003

Inspection number: 256737

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 -11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	214
School address:	Lime Walk Bennetts End Hemel Hempstead HP3 9LN
Telephone number:	01442 262341
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Chairman of governors:	Mr D Sell
Date of previous inspection:	8 June 1998

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Lime Walk is a mixed primary school for children between the ages of three and eleven, serving the Bennetts End area of Hemel Hempstead. It is average in size, with 201 full-time pupils organised into seven classes, plus a part-time Nursery class catering for 26 children. A small percentage of pupils do not speak English as their first language. Many of the others have underdeveloped language skills on entry to the school and the overall standard on entry is below average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs, particularly those with emotional and behavioural difficulty, is greater than most schools. The significant difficulties include dyslexia, general learning, and emotional and behavioural. The immediate locality has pockets of significant social and economic disadvantage. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is broadly average. Pupil mobility<sup>1</sup> is higher than average. It is difficult to recruit and retain staff because of local housing costs.

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<sup>1</sup> The term 'pupil mobility' refers to the pupils who join or leave the school at other than the usual times of admission or transfer, which at this school are the ages of three and eleven.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
20609	Carol Worthington	Lead inspector	Science, Information and Communication Technology, Design and Technology, Music
19320	Beryl Attaway	Lay inspector	
21103	Valerie Ives	Team inspector	English, Art and Design, Geography, History, Physical Education, the Foundation Stage of Learning
10611	Martin James	Team inspector	Special Educational Needs, Mathematics, Citizenship, Religious Education

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

It is a **good** school. The headteacher gives very good leadership and is supported well by the senior management and governors. Teaching is good. Because of this and the good assessment systems, all pupils make good progress and achieve well. They attain average standards in English and mathematics by Year 6, having started with below average standards in the reception class. The school gives **good** value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Well above average standards in music, and above average standards in science, and art and design.
- Below average standards of speaking and listening, skills of mathematics investigation, and physical education.
- The headteacher provides very good leadership.
- The school's systems for self-evaluation are very good.
- Good provision for the foundation stage and for pupils with special educational needs.
- Very good quality of education provided for pupils in Year 6
- Very good opportunities for extra-curricular enrichment.

The school was previously inspected in June 1998. Since then, the school has made **very good** improvement. All key issues have been addressed. Standards in English, science and information and communication technology (ICT) have risen. The Foundation Stage has been developed well, and curriculum provision is now good from Nursery to Year 6. Leadership, management and teaching have also improved.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
English	B	E	D	<b>C</b>
Mathematics	C	C	C	<b>C</b>
Science	A	B	B	<b>A</b>

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

Achievement is good across the school. Current standards in Year 6 are average in English, mathematics and above average in science. Pupils' progress is good compared to their attainment on entry. In the 2002 tests in Year 2, standards were average in reading, writing and mathematics and were above average when compared with similar schools. In the Foundation Stage, most children achieve well and reach the early learning goals by the end of the Reception year. There are no significant differences between boys' and girls' achievement; the few pupils whose first language is not English do well. The school's extensive assessment data show that almost all pupils achieve well during their time at the school, including those with special educational needs.

Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are fostered well through good provision. The school works hard to establish routines and work habits from the start, and provides many opportunities for pupils to take responsibility through clubs and the 'buddy' system. Behaviour is good. Attendance is satisfactory and punctuality is good.

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is **good**. Teaching is **good** and children learn well as a result. The most consistently good teaching was seen in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 2, though two unsatisfactory lessons were seen in the latter. In Year 6, a high proportion of the teaching was very good. The teaching of science, music and art and design is particularly strong. Most children make good progress in reading, especially as they enter school with, at best, below average language skills. Writing is improving, but more attention needs to be paid to speaking and listening.

The curriculum is **good** and provides very good opportunities for enrichment through clubs and societies. Provision for music in Key Stage 2 is outstanding and pupils gain pride and self-esteem through the many activities which take music into the community.

Pastoral care is a significant strength; all children are valued and the school guides them well. It strives to meet all their needs but induction procedures for pupils transferring from other schools are not sufficiently rigorous and do not include assessment on entry to the school.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are **good**. The headteacher is a strong leader. He and the senior management team all provide good role models in the quality of their teaching and their sharing of expertise. The school is well managed; the self-evaluation process is very good and results in constant improvement. The governing body fulfils its duties well, having good knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses, and a very good grasp of its statutory duties.

## PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents' views gathered through the questionnaire and parents' meeting were very positive, though there were one or two concerns about individual children relating to events last year, and about homework inconsistencies that have now been satisfactorily addressed by the school. Pupils spoken to formally and informally had overwhelmingly positive views, particularly about the school's ethos, their responsibilities, the extra-curricular activities, and the appropriately challenging nature of homework.

## IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The most important improvements needed have all been identified by the school in its self-evaluation process:

- The standards of speaking and listening, and mathematics problem solving.
- The standard of physical education.

Some other points for improvement were identified by the inspection team.

- There is no formal induction for older new pupils, and no written information for parents about modern teaching techniques used in school.
- The behaviour policy should be implemented consistently.
- Lunchtime play equipment should be used regularly.
- Year 6 pupils do not have easy access to toilets.

## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

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

Achievement across the school is **good**. Pupils leave the school with average standards in reading, writing and mathematics and above average in science having entered the school aged five with below average attainment.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in music are well above average and they are above average in science and art and design.
- Good achievement across the school has enabled the pupils to reach average standards in literacy.
- Standards are below average in speaking and listening, problem solving in mathematics and physical education.

#### Commentary

1. The school's performance in the National Curriculum tests for 11 year-olds in 2002 was below average for English, average for mathematics and above average for science. When compared with schools of similar intake, standards are average in English and mathematics and above average in science. Measuring the Year 6 pupils' achievement by comparing their attainment in the National Curriculum tests with their performance when in Year 2 is significantly affected by pupil mobility during this time. The school's catchment area is one where many families live temporarily. The school's figures for the prior attainment of its pupils clearly show that children make good progress in English and mathematics, and very good progress in science. The school does well when compared with similar schools in Hertfordshire. There is no significant difference between the achievement of boys and girls. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well; the few who have English as a second language achieve well in most areas according to their capability, but not always in literacy, despite the school's best efforts in developing it. In the Foundation Stage, most children achieve well to reach the early learning goals by the time they begin Year 1. When they enter the Nursery, many children are well below average in their acquisition of language. They progress well to achieve average results by the age of eleven in English and mathematics and above average results in science. In the tests and tasks for seven year-olds, the school does well to achieve average scores for reading, writing and mathematics. When compared with similar schools, all of these are above average.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	25.9 (25.7)	27.0 (27.0)
Mathematics	27.4 (26.3)	26.6 (26.7)
Science	29.4 (28.9)	28.3 (28.3)

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



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

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	15.9(13.7)	15.8 (15.4)
Writing	14.3 (13.2)	14.4 (14.3)
Mathematics	16.6 (13.4)	16.5 (16.2)

*There were 30 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

- Evidence from the inspection shows that standards are rising because of the school's focus over the last few years on improving pupils' vocabulary. Standards in English are currently in line with the national average in Year 2 and Year 6, except in speaking and listening, which are still below. Many pupils do not read widely at home and their vocabulary is limited. The school is addressing this by an increased emphasis on speaking and listening, which is having a significant effect on pupils' achievement. Written work is being improved by concentrating on learning specific vocabulary for different subjects, by the use of writing frames to structure pupils' thoughts as they write, and by the use of literacy targets from Year 2 onwards, which are regularly reviewed so that pupils know how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve. By Year 6, pupils are competent in literacy, which shows good achievement for most of them since they entered the school, including those with special educational needs. Reading is improving, but not all teachers provide suitable material for children who have limited experience. In a literacy lesson, for example, pupils were expected to remember the beginnings of books they had read, which, for several, was a much too difficult task.
- Standards seen in mathematics during the inspection support the general rise in standards in Years 1 and 2 and the maintenance of average standards in Years 3 to 6, since they were judged to be average in both. The National Numeracy Strategy is having a good effect, particularly in mental arithmetic. Teachers use assessment well to re-plan lessons during the week so pupils achieve well and attain a sound general competency in numeracy which is developed further in science and design and technology in particular. The school has identified mathematics investigation as an area for improvement, with which the inspection team agrees. Pupils' limited grasp of language is a barrier to higher achievement here.
- Current standards in science mirror the 2002 test results in Year 6, which were above average. In Year 2, inspection evidence also points to above average attainment in the high percentage of children gaining the expected Level 2. In Years 3 to 6, pupils make good progress to Year 5, which becomes very good in Year 6 where the science co-ordinator is the class teacher. Her knowledge and sharing of expertise with other staff is a major factor in the improvement in standards from below average at the last inspection. Pupils make especially good progress in learning how to use the skills of scientific enquiry in the context of the knowledge and understanding of biological, physical and material concepts.
- Standards in ICT are average throughout the school and show improvement since the previous inspection. Pupils have lessons to improve their skills and use computers widely, such as word-processing in epic stories, producing 'Power Point' presentations, using software for composing in music, spreadsheets and angle work in mathematics, and designing puppets in design and technology. There are examples of the use of ICT in research and of specific equipment such as sensors in science, but no evidence of longer research projects by pupils.
- Standards in religious education are in line with those of the agreed syllabus. Standards in other subjects were judged where there was sufficient evidence. Two subjects stand out, music, which is well above average in Years 3 to 6, and art and design which is above average throughout the

school. In both subjects, pupils' achievement is very good. In physical education, there was not enough evidence to judge standards.

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

Pupils have a **good** attitude to school.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils have a good attitude to school.
- Behaviour overall is good.
- Relationships are good.
- There have been no exclusions.
- Responsibilities raise pupils' self-esteem well.
- Music makes a significant contribution to pupils' spiritual development.
- Too many pupils take holidays in term time.

### **Commentary**

7. Current figures suggest that attendance has fallen by one percentage point since last year and, although not yet analysed, this is similar to the increase in holidays taken in term time. The school frequently reminds parents and pupils of the importance of good attendance; this is supported by stringent monitoring of absences. There have been no exclusions.
8. Pupils' attitudes to school are good and the setting of early morning work enables children to settle in well at the start of the school day. Ninety-seven per cent of parents agree their children like school. Good lesson pace and involvement enables pupils to maintain their interest, such as in the reading of a story to Year 1 pupils. The good use of learning support assistants, together with extended work for the more able pupils, contributes well to pupils' enjoyment of school.
9. There is a good choice of extra-curricular activities, described by pupils as 'fun'; some clubs are always over-subscribed. Children like the openness of the activities and that they do not have to be obviously talented to join, for example, one of the music groups. This contributes well to raising pupils' self-esteem and establishes the importance of commitment.
10. Behaviour overall is good, although a few pupils find it difficult to settle into school after the summer holidays. For some pupils, expectations at home are different from those in school; staff work hard to ensure the school's expectations are fulfilled. The behaviour policy is good, but the school does not ensure there is a whole school approach to its implementation and that the same high expectations are consistently applied. Behaviour problems at lunchtime have lessened by the allocation of a dinner supervisor for each class. Responsibilities, such as lunchtime 'buddies', are undertaken enthusiastically, and this has had a dramatic effect on behaviour. Lunchtime play equipment is not used regularly, so creative play is not encouraged and children energies are not challenged. Parents' definition of bullying varies, but the school does maintain detailed records of reported instances and there are good monitoring procedures in place. Pupils said they felt that any bullying was dealt with quickly and effectively. Rewards are given for school and external achievements and good monitoring ensures every pupil receives at least one award each year; this is good practice.
11. Pupils' personal development is good and Year 6 pupils demonstrate a high level of maturity; this prepares them well for their transfer to secondary education. Initiative is encouraged and pupils respond positively by organising charity events such as *Children in Need*. The independence and collaboration of Year 6 pupils are promoted well through the Young Enterprise scheme and this

makes a significant cross-curricular contribution to their learning. Good quality records are maintained of each pupil's personal development. Relationships between pupils are good, similar to the last inspection. They work well in mixed gender and racial groups, listening and discussing different ideas.

12. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, as at the last inspection. Opportunities to join music groups and perform for members of the local community make a significant contribution to this aspect of school life and to pupils' understanding of others' needs. The Easter concert for the elderly held in school is very popular and the children enjoy acting as hosts. Parents, children and local shopkeepers provide prizes and the combination of the different generations singing old songs is described as a 'wonderful, moving experience'. The Jesus and Me Club (JAM) is attended by most junior pupils during the year. Outside visits to places of worship, camping and visits to the Isle Wight extend pupils' social and cultural knowledge.

## Attendance

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

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	5.1	School data	0.1
National data	5.4	National data	0.5

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

## Exclusions

There were no exclusions last year

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is **good**. A good curriculum is taught well and provides very good opportunities for enrichment through clubs and societies. Pastoral care is also good, but pupils who enter the school other than at the beginning of the Foundation Stage are not assessed. Parents are, therefore, unable to tell how much value has been added to their education.

## Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching is **good** and children make good progress in learning. They achieve well, according to their capability. There are notable strengths in Year 6, where over half the lessons seen were very good or excellent. In the Foundation Stage, most lessons were good; in Years 1 and 2, most were satisfactory or better, and in Years 3 to 6, most were good or better; one was excellent but two were unsatisfactory. Evidence from the scrutiny of pupils work showed that learning is good throughout the school as a result of good teaching.

### *Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 40 lessons*

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1 (2.5 %)	6 (15 %)	19 (47.5 %)	12 (30 %)	2 (5 %)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

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

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers generally have high expectations of behaviour, insisting on the establishment of routines to instil good working habits.
- The teaching of pupils in year 6 allows them to make good progress
- Children get a good start to their schooling in the foundation stage.
- The teaching of science, music and art and design is very good.
- Teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good.
- The collection of assessment data and their use is very good.
- Not all teachers have sufficient expertise in literacy to match work precisely to their pupils' needs.
- The school behaviour policy is not consistently reinforced in all classes.
- Teachers' skills and knowledge in physical education are not secure enough.

## Commentary

13. At the beginning of the school year, teachers were establishing their high expectations of behaviour. The school has a high proportion of pupils with special educational needs relating to emotional and behavioural difficulties. Teachers create ground rules immediately on entry to the Foundation Stage. In the Nursery, for example, interesting activities such as jigsaws and domino games are laid out in the morning so that children are involved straight away with an adult supervising the activity and they become absorbed in learning. In reception, children are given plenty of opportunities to relate to one another. They understand the need to listen to others when they discuss their work in circle time, knowing they speak one at a time and listen carefully the rest of the time. As they move into Years 1 and 2, these methods are reinforced towards good behaviour. Attentive listening and taking turns are converted to team or table points in some classes, which have a good motivating effect, but there are differences between teachers, so pupils do not always know what to expect from one class to another.
14. Teachers have good expertise in the primary curriculum and this results in good progress. An excellent lesson was seen in art and design where very good use was made of resources to stimulate and motivate pupils' interest and attention in building up a cave drawing onto a difficult background. The teacher made learning exciting through the information she gave pupils through the slides she showed. Very good opportunities were taken to stimulate pupils' spiritual development through their looking at cave paintings. Skilful questioning made pupils think, which inspired their interest and thorough involvement. They imagined why animals were drawn on cave walls. They prepared a sandpaper background in their sketchbooks by applying a mixture of sand and PVC, and drew their versions of cave-type drawings, amazed by their results. The teaching assistant was well deployed with pupils with special education needs. Attainment of all children was above the average expectation.
15. Teaching is a particular strength in music in Years 3 to 6. The school has fortunately been able to participate in the Hertfordshire string initiative and pupils in Years 3 and 4 benefit weekly from expert teaching from music specialists. Many pupils continue with individual lessons and achieve good marks in Associated Board examinations. The music co-ordinator has good expertise herself, and ensures that the high standard is maintained.
16. The school has problems in recruiting and retaining staff because of the very expensive housing in the area. It constantly has to repeat training for new staff. Some teachers consequently have less expertise in adapting national initiatives, such as the National Literacy Strategy, to the needs of the pupils, which sometimes results in less than satisfactory lessons. When pupils were not motivated by a teacher's less than interesting examples of story beginnings, for example, they failed to make satisfactory progress.

17. The school has identified the teaching of physical education as one area for improvement. Only two lessons were seen, one in Year 2 and one in Year 6, but this was enough to confirm the school's evaluation that standards are below average and that teachers need to improve their expertise in this subject.
18. There has been particularly good training in teaching science investigation skills which has resulted in all teachers using the accompanying science booklets. The use of the booklet has established a consistent pathway of progress in scientific enquiry work. Standards in science, music and art and design are high due to teachers' good expertise gained from training, led by the subject co-ordinators.
19. Teachers plan a good variety of different activities to motivate children and most lessons contain work, which is challenging to all abilities, including pupils with special educational needs and the gifted and talented. In a few instances, there was not enough challenge for higher ability pupils.
20. Teachers' assessment of English, mathematics and science is very good. They mark work thoroughly and promptly, and use the results of this to plan their next lessons. Pupils are given literacy target cards which they use in all lessons. These are particularly useful in enabling pupils to know what they have to do to improve their work not only in literacy, but also in all other subjects when writing. They appreciate the prompt marking given and the target cards, which they see as very useful and helping them to know how well they are doing and how to improve.
21. Teachers also use writing frames well, particularly in science investigation and for evaluation in design and technology, and make sure that pupils learn and understand subject-specific terms, which widen their vocabulary well. The good promotion of literacy through the whole curriculum is having a positive effect on standards in all subjects and enabling children to achieve their potential. Several pupils with English as their second language are of higher ability in English; some are identified as gifted and talented.
22. Teachers develop numeracy well through science, design and technology, and geography. Information and communication technology skills are developing satisfactorily and used well across the curriculum
23. Some parents feel that homework is not consistent throughout the school. Year 5 and 6 pupils themselves thought that the amount was about right, and that if it is given over a weekend, it should be completed on Friday night to give them the weekend free. There is a school policy and homework timetable which are similar to most schools of this type, and all evidence seen shows that they are followed satisfactorily

## **The curriculum**

The provision for children in the Foundation Stage throughout the school is **good**. This is an improvement since the time of the previous inspection.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The provision made for science, music and art and design is very good.
- Provision for children in the Nursery and reception classes is good.
- Provision made for pupils with special educational needs is good.
- The school provides a very good range of extra-curricular activities and educational visits.
- The good quality and use made of the school grounds.
- There are weaknesses in the provision for improving pupils' speaking and listening in English, problem-solving in mathematics and aspects of physical education.

- Some aspects of the accommodation provided for staff and pupils are limited.

## Commentary

24. Through careful and detailed planning, together with good subject knowledge on the part of teachers, the school makes a significant provision for science, music and art and design. The curriculum for these subjects is both interesting and stimulating, and goes well beyond that usually provided. The 'string initiative' used in the school in music, for example, has brought forth a group of pupils who are both keen and very competent in the subject. The provision for all these subjects has led to the higher than expected standards that are now being seen.
25. The curriculum for children in Nursery and reception is good. Detailed plans are in place, which successfully incorporate all the areas of learning that should be taught to children before they enter Year 1. Lesson planning is comprehensive, and children have access to a wide range of interesting activities and learning experiences. A most stimulating and varied curriculum is the result, which enables the children to achieve well.
26. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. Clear procedures closely follow the Code of Practice on the identification and assessment of such pupils. The Code has been carefully and effectively implemented. Individual education plans provided for pupils are of good quality. Care is taken to ensure that work provided is closely suited to pupils' needs, so they are involved in the full range of school activities.
27. The school provides a very good range of extra-curricular activities. The school welcomes many visitors, including the clergy, the police, and members of the medical profession and poets, as well as drama and music groups. A wide range of educational visits is arranged to places such as St. Alban's Abbey and other places of worship, and residential trips are arranged for older pupils. These activities make a significant contribution to pupils' personal and social development, as well as to their learning in various subjects.
28. The school has extensive, attractive and very well maintained grounds. Given fair weather, the school is able to make good use of this resource, both for pupils to enjoy, as well as to support their learning in subjects such as science.
29. Whilst the school has a number of strengths in its subject provision, there are also shortcomings in some curriculum areas. A number of pupils have difficulties mastering the skills of speaking and listening in English, and similarly some find difficulties in tackling problem-solving activities in mathematics. Both arise from these pupils' poor language ability. In mathematics, for example, whilst these pupils can successfully carry out number activities, they are unsure how to proceed when the questions are presented in words. Weaknesses also exist in the overall provision for physical education. There has been some indistinct planning for the subject in the past, and a lack of teacher expertise. Pupils' skills and performance have been correspondingly weak. All these areas have been recognised by the school, and are priorities in the current development plan.
30. The school has made significant improvements to its accommodation in recent years, but still suffers, to some extent, from the original design. Classrooms are rather small for the numbers of pupils present and the provision of worktops and storage space is very limited. The school copes very well in the circumstances. However, the main shortcoming is in the lack of toilet facilities available for pupils in the outside classroom. Staff and pupils alike are particularly inconvenienced in times of poor weather.

## Care, guidance and support

The care of pupils is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Child protection procedures are good.
- The school listens well to pupils' views.
- Relationships with adults are very good.
- Induction arrangements for the youngest pupils are good with open sessions for Nursery and infant parents once they start school.
- There are no set induction procedures for pupils who join the school in later years.
- There is no policy for safety procedures for pupils using the Internet.

### Commentary

31. The level of care and guidance pupils receive is good and has improved since the last inspection. They work and play in a caring atmosphere where each child is valued. All legal requirements are met and risk assessments are carried out in line with local education authority guidelines. Access for the disabled has been addressed well and the school's accessibility plan is almost completed. These improvements benefit not only pupils, but also the community which regularly uses the school.
32. Child protection arrangements are good and the co-ordinator and staff know procedures well. Issues are discussed at weekly staff meetings, and this provides good on-going care for all pupils. Following parental concerns, lunchtime supervision arrangements have been improved; incidents are recorded and monitored closely. The Year 6 'buddies' were seen making a very good contribution to pupils' safety at lunchtime. Safety procedures for pupils using the Internet are not well developed. A few parents attended a parenting course, focusing on how to deal with difficult children, and this benefits parents, pupils and the school.
33. Health education is taught well through the curriculum. The introduction of water bottles in each class is good practice, but not being used to demonstrate to pupils in a practical way the importance of healthy living.
34. Relationships between pupils and staff are very good; pupils say that it is easy to talk to both teaching and non-teaching staff if they have a problem. They believe they are well supported if they cannot understand what has been taught. They say the school raises their self esteem through teaching and that they become confident, for example through a raised understanding of mathematics. The learning support assistants make an additional and valuable contribution to relationships. Conversations with staff and external agencies indicate the expectations of good quality relationships are set by the headteacher. A very small minority of parents said there is a belief that it is wrong to tell the teacher and that their children bottle up problems. The school has put procedures in place to prevent this and to encourage parents to talk to the headteacher. The school listens attentively to pupils' ideas, regularly seeking their views through questionnaires.
35. There are good induction procedures in place for the Nursery and reception pupils, and booklets are produced for parents of children going from Year 2 to Year 3. The teacher's home visit helps to identify the emotional needs of the children and this ensures they settle quickly into school life. The weekly open sessions for Nursery and infant parents and younger siblings are very successful and help break down barriers. Parents cannot join the open sessions send their children in the care of those who can; this is good practice as all are included. However, there are no set induction procedures for pupils who join the school in later years and this does not support

well enough their transfer into unfamiliar surroundings. Moreover, they are not assessed on entry so the value added to their education while at Lime Walk cannot be calculated.

36. Support for pupils with special educational needs is good, and staff concentration on individuality enables some of these pupils to become independent. There is good two-way sharing of expertise on certain conditions, and the school works closely with parents. The special educational needs co-ordinator spends much time talking to parents and provides on-going training for staff.

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

Links with parents have improved since the last inspection and are now **good**. They are provided with good quality information. The advance sharing of topics gives good support to pupils' learning. The open door policy is effective and welcomed by parents. There is high attendance at consultation evenings; the school ensures no parent is excluded due to disability or language ability. An annual questionnaire enables all parents to express their views. Links with the local community are very good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Parents receive good quality information.
- Pupils' annual reports are very good.
- Parents are invited to express their views through an annual questionnaire.
- The school ensures no parent is excluded from discussion of their child's progress.
- Links with the local community are very good.
- Parents are not informed of the latest teaching techniques used in school.

### **Commentary**

37. The quality of links with parents is good, compared to satisfactory at the last inspection. There is now good two-way communication between home and school, through personal contact and good quality information such as the regular newsletter. The termly sharing of curriculum information is good practice, enabling parents to support their children and the school. Most parents have signed the home-school agreement. Pupils' annual reports are very good and give parents a very clear picture of what their child has achieved during the year; targets are included. Parents have the opportunity to respond. The 'open-door' policy and the annual parent questionnaire enable parents' views to be heard clearly. The school responds to parents' suggestions.
38. Attendance at the two consultation evenings is high and the school tries hard to contact the few who do not attend. The school ensures parents who do not speak English as their first language are fully included in their child's progress. Parents of reception children appreciate the support they receive in understanding how their children are taught to read and write. The school has organised events for parents of older pupils, but these have been poorly attended. Some parents indicate that they want to know more about teaching methods so they can better support their children at home.
39. In preparing homework timetables, class teachers try to be responsive to parents' concerns about the timing of homework. Problems that occurred in the last academic year concerning completion of homework over weekends have been addressed; the timing of homework is monitored by the headteacher. The school would like to see a more consistent approach to homework from parents and is to seek their views so that a programme can be designed that meets the needs of both parents and the work of the school. The homework book is a useful aid in giving parents the opportunity to comment on homework. Pupils' learning is supported further by teachers telling



parents in advance the topics to be studied so that parents may send books or other material in to school to benefit the whole class.

40. A number of parents and grandparents regularly help in a variety of ways in school and this makes an important contribution to pupils' learning. They are briefed on how to contribute to learning, for example, in the nursery and the reception classes by helping children develop their ability in speaking and listening.
41. The school association has an enthusiastic committee that gives good support and organises well attended fund raising events during the year. The school's links with the community are very good. Pupils benefit from the formation of a local consortium of primary schools to provide additional inter-school activities. Local clubs make good use of the school in the evenings and at weekends and pupils are encouraged to join these clubs. Shell BP invited children to visit their local depot and BT has provided training for teachers in information, communication and technology skills.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

The leadership and management of the school are both **good**. Governance is good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The headteacher gives very good leadership.
- The school's evaluation of its performance is very good.
- Management by the headteacher and senior management team is good.
- Governors know the school's strengths and weaknesses well.

### **Commentary**

42. The headteacher has led the school through a period of very good improvement since the last inspection. He knows the children and their families well, and has high aspirations for them, which are endorsed by all members of the management team. The headteacher and staff work well together and strive to improve the confidence and self esteem of the relatively high proportion of children with special needs relating to emotional and behavioural difficulties and poor language skills. They create a school ethos in which all are valued for their contribution, and there is a continual focus on improving children's achievement. The few children who are from a minority ethnic background are also fully included, and some are designated as gifted and talented in English.
43. The school development planning is very good, and has improved considerably since the last inspection. The school's aims to do the best it can for its pupils are quite clear. The monitoring of its performance is rigorous and involves all staff and governors; it seeks the opinions of parents and pupils, and uses the results of its self-evaluation very well to plan for further improvement. The inspection team were able to verify all the school's targets for improvement, and found only a few other issues. Leadership inspires and motivates staff to do better; effective teams of teaching, administrative, and ancillary staff are in place and working well. Performance management is used well to further staff development, and the school is committed to the training of new teachers through its graduate training scheme and effective support of newly qualified teachers. It is hoped that this will alleviate in part the difficulty it has in attracting teachers to the school.

### Example of outstanding practice

**Teaching assistants play a very effective role in the teaching teams, and there is an excellent scheme in place to enable their expertise to be used to the full, not only in their own classroom, but by being given responsibilities for whole school aspects such as display.**

There are clear guidelines about the proportion of time that teaching assistants spend on pupil support and teacher support, and further guidance on the type of pupil guidance needed for the particular class. Their role in assessment is defined, particularly with regard to pupils' targets. This excellent practice enables teaching assistants to play an important, trained and informed role in the education of the children. It is all the more important since the school finds it difficult to recruit and retain qualified teachers because of the high cost of housing. Newly qualified teachers are assigned experienced teaching assistants which helps them whilst becoming accustomed to the school's practice.

44. The management, by the special educational needs coordinator, of the provision for pupils with learning difficulties, has improved, and is now good. The new Code of Practice has been successfully introduced. Pupils are identified quickly, through a variety of procedures, and placed on the special needs register, which the school has chosen to retain. Pupils are provided with individual education plans which set clear targets for improvement. These plans are reviewed each term, with new targets being set if appropriate. The special needs co-ordinator keeps extensive records and the progress made by the pupils is carefully checked. The governor appointed to monitor the school's provision for pupils with special educational needs, carries out her work efficiently and thoughtfully.
45. The governors play a full role in performance management by setting targets for the headteacher which are directly related to the improvement of standards. They also ensure that all statutory requirements are met and that the school's policies are fully inclusive with regard to children with special educational needs, disability, gender and ethnicity. Governors keep a tight rein on finances and plan very astutely to manage resources well. The principles of best value are applied very well though competitive tendering for goods and services, comparison of the school standards with those of others, and the consultation of parents and pupils. Governors are very supportive of the school and give good service overall, but could be clearer on their longer term aims for the school and also challenge the headteacher and management to improve standards further.

### Financial information

#### *Financial information for the year April 2001 to March 2002*

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	492975
Total expenditure	501376
Expenditure per pupil	2161

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	29641
Balance carried forward	21240

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

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

Children enter the school with below average social and communication skills. They can count by rote, usually to ten, but they are unable to explore mathematics in a wider way because of their limited language skills. However, with the effective provision and good teaching in these areas of learning, the majority of the children achieve the early learning goals by the end of the reception year. This represents good achievement.

There was insufficient time to inspect children's knowledge and understanding of the world or their creative development fully. No judgement is given about standards. Scrutiny of the children's past work indicates that there is good coverage and variety of work provided and a lesson on information and communication technology was very well taught. Past work in art and design and a well taught lesson indicate good provision in this area of learning. No teaching of music was observed. However, songs are used very effectively to support other areas of learning, such as literacy and numeracy.

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

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

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

- Overall good teaching, with very good aspects.
- Clearly planned learning opportunities develop the children's social skills.
- There is a stimulating, well-organised and managed environment.

#### **Commentary**

46. The good teaching in both the nursery and the reception has a clear impact on the children's learning. All staff, including the nursery nurse and classroom assistants, create a calm, secure and purposeful learning environment in which the children thrive and become confident learners. New children are settled in thoughtfully and successfully. They are happy to come to school. With helpful encouragement and sensitive handling they begin to form positive relationships with one another and with adults. Children considered how to help each other by sharing things, for example, during a well-organised and thoughtful assembly time. They become aware of routines and successfully adjust to learning in a whole class group. They gradually develop independence.

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

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

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

- Overall good teaching, with very good aspects.
- Teachers ask questions and explain well, helping the children to understand better.
- There is a stimulating, well-organised and managed environment.
- Resources are well chosen to stimulate interest and motivate learning.

## Commentary

47. There are ample opportunities provided for the children in both the nursery and reception classes to develop these skills. Very skilful and clear questioning techniques, for example, help the children to think about what they are doing and to talk to each other and to adults. All the other areas of learning benefit from this. 'Snack time' is used very significantly to improve children's speaking and listening by asking them to recall what they have learned that morning. A nursery child said, *'In the green zone, I went into the train on a journey'*. Very thoughtful stories are carefully chosen to increase children's literacy. Children in the nursery and reception classes enjoyed joining in a story about a train ride, for example: objects that were seen from the window were available for the children to place on a large drawn area. This effectively added to their vocabulary and reinforced their understanding of the story.

## MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision for mathematical development is **good**

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Overall good teaching, with very good aspects.
- Lessons are well planned with clear aims that are shared with the children.
- Good collaboration of staff.
- Good use of songs to reinforce understanding.
- Resources are well chosen to stimulate interest and motivate learning.

## Commentary

48. The overall good teaching effectively builds on what the children know and provides many well planned opportunities to enhance their learning. Teaching is clear and precise so that the children know what is expected of them, and work is effectively planned to meet the needs of all the children. Learning is productive because the children have many practical opportunities to enhance their understanding and useful challenges to build on what they have learned. They are usefully introduced to solid shapes with practical resources, for example, to stimulate interest and successfully support their learning about numbers and shapes. The good collaboration between the teachers, nursery nurse and the teaching assistants effectively reinforces the children's learning.

## PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Overall good teaching.
- Good use of the outdoor play area and the school hall.
- Carefully planned learning opportunities to develop the children's skills.
- Teachers manage classes purposefully so that the children concentrate on their learning.

## Commentary

49. The overall good teaching ensures that the children are thoroughly involved in building up their physical skills through practical activities that are provided in the hall and in the outside play area.

Careful planning helps the children, for example, to become aware of the effects of exercise on the heart: practical activities add to their increasing awareness of space through hopping, running and finding a space. All the staff have a very sensitive awareness of the children's safety. The well-chosen resources provide effective opportunities for the children to cut, stick and join objects together, as was seen in the junk models on display, and to build on their skills to control and manipulate objects.

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

### **ENGLISH**

Provision in English is **good**. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection.

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

- Good leadership and management by the co-ordinator.
- Very good teaching in year 6.
- Lessons are well planned with clear aims that are shared with the pupils.
- There is careful analysis of test results across the school.
- The school's gives appropriate priority on improving pupils' speaking and listening and writing across the school.
- Not all teachers are secure in teaching the subject.
- Pupils' speaking and listening skills are below average.
- There is no policy for developing literacy through other subjects.

#### **Commentary**

50. The 2002 National Curriculum test results showed that by the age of seven, pupils' attainment was in line with the national average, while that of pupils aged 11 was below average. Compared with similar schools, standards were above average for seven year-olds and average for 11 year-olds. Indications are that standards dropped in the 2003 national tests but look set to improve by the end of 2004. Inspection evidence finds standards in English are currently in line with the national averages in Year 2 and Year 6, except in speaking and listening, which are still below. Speaking and listening and writing have been correctly identified as areas for improvement in the school development plan and the school is working effectively to improve these areas further.
51. The subject is well led and efficiently managed. This is a great improvement since the last inspection. Guidelines have been put in place to ensure that pupils' build consistently on their skills from year to year; successful initiatives and accurate identification of priority areas for improvement are made to help the school move forward.
52. Most teaching is good; there was one instance of unsatisfactory teaching observed during the inspection. The very good teaching in Year 6 has a very positive impact on the pupils' learning and how well they achieve. Pupils are provided with worthwhile opportunities to develop ideas for persuasive writing, for example. In one lesson when teaching was unsatisfactory, there was a lack of stimulating resources to inspire pupils' interest and focus their attention. Pupils experienced difficulty in discussing and comparing different ways of story openings because they did not have any books in front of them and an example on the overhead projector was unclear.
53. The subject is well led and efficiently managed. This is a great improvement since the last inspection. Guidelines have been put in place to ensure that pupils' build consistently on their

skills from year to year; successful initiatives and accurate identification of priority areas for improvement are made to help the school move forward.

54. A number of appropriate guidelines and materials have been purchased to support and develop the pupils' speaking and listening. In all year groups the pupils are expected to discuss their ideas and feelings during a specified circle time, while their peers are encouraged to listen to them. Good questioning probes pupils' understanding and provides practical opportunities for them to talk about their work. In Year 6, for example, pupils worked effectively with partners to discuss and prepare an argument.

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

55. Pupils' language and literacy skills, particularly oral, are not well developed but are beginning to be appropriately developed across the curriculum and this now needs to be consolidated into a policy. Valuable opportunities are provided in geography, history and science to record, for example, facts, experiments and descriptive writing. A good example of this was seen in Year 5 work in science where pupils considered how long it would take for artificial puddles to evaporate.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils' achievement is good.
- Pupils' understanding of work in number is good.
- The quality of teaching and learning are good.
- Pupils have good attitudes.
- The assessment of pupils' work is good.
- The good role played by the co-ordinator.
- Pupils have difficulties in tackling problem solving activities.
- The standard of some presentation of work could be better.

### **Commentary**

56. In 2002, pupils aged 11 achieved average results in the National Curriculum tests. This has been the case for the last three years. Seven year-olds achieved results in line with the national average and above that of similar schools. National tables for comparisons of tests taken in 2003 have not yet been released. Provision has improved since the time of the previous inspection, for example, in teaching, planning and in the monitoring by the coordinator of the work being undertaken.
57. In Year 2, pupils are confident in handling numbers, and they have a clear understanding of addition and subtraction. Most can undertake a range of multiplication and division exercises. By Year 6, most pupils confidently undertake work in all four aspects of number, including those involving decimals. Most recall individual multiplication and division facts to ten times ten. Most pupils have a clear understanding of fractions, and can reduce a fraction to its lowest terms.
58. The overall quality of teaching and learning is good. Lessons are carefully planned and based on the National Numeracy Strategy. In particular, teachers make most careful allowance for the provision of problem solving activities, being aware that this is an area of weakness for many pupils. They are also careful to ensure that all pupils receive work that is suited to their particular

needs. All teachers make good use of mental activities at the beginning of lessons, and they are also aware of the need to continue to extend pupils' mathematical vocabulary, being careful to address this issue during lessons.

59. Teachers have good subject knowledge, provide clear instruction and give much well directed support throughout. Pupils are kept busy, and suitable help is provided both by teachers and learning support assistants. As a result, most pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good gains in their overall mathematical ability. Teachers have appropriate summary sessions at the end of lessons to check pupils' understanding and celebrate some of the work done.
60. Teachers work hard to develop pupils' literacy so that they are able to do better in problem-solving activities. Many seven-year-olds have difficulty in finding the correct language to explain their work clearly, or to provide appropriate written answers when required. Some 11-year-old pupils continue to have difficulties in tackling problem-solving activities because of limitations in their understanding of mathematical language. In particular, they often find it difficult to identify the correct form of computation required to answer a problem. Whilst the overall standard of pupils' work is sound, this is not always matched by the presentation of their work. Many take care with the appearance of their books, and indeed some take a pride in their appearance; others, however, are less careful.
61. Teachers assess pupils' work well. Regular tests are undertaken, and an extensive amount of information is provided to show both pupils' current attainment and the progress they have made. Pupils are provided with targets for improving their work, which are regularly reviewed. The assessment of work is also used well to ensure that pupils are provided with work that is suited to their particular needs.
62. Pupils throughout the school clearly enjoy the work, the mental activities in particular. They settle to their written and practical tasks with interest and enthusiasm, they work well with other pupils when required, and they make suitable efforts to accomplish their tasks. Whilst a small number are sometimes slow to settle, most pupils are well behaved, and this enables them to concentrate well and make suitable progress.
63. The co-ordinator has played a significant role in raising and maintaining standards, and her leadership is good. She regularly monitors the work in progress and, through the successful use of assessment, keeps a close eye on the standards being achieved and the overall provision being made. The co-ordinator is fully aware of pupils' current performance, and she is also putting in place the means to address the weaknesses in problem solving. She has also helped to ensure that pupils' mathematical skills are used and developed across the curriculum in subjects such as science and design and technology.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

Numeracy is developed well through science, design and technology, and geography.

## SCIENCE

Provision in science is **very good**

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average.
- Teachers' very good planning and preparation of lessons, including very good use of teaching assistants.
- The teaching of scientific enquiry is very good.
- Literacy and numeracy are developed particularly well.
- The use of ict is underdeveloped.

### Commentary

64. Standards in science as shown by National Curriculum tests for 11-year-olds in 2002 were above average when compared with all schools, and well above when compared with schools of similar intake and prior attainment. Test results for 2003 are at a similar level but national tables for comparisons have not yet been released. Teachers' assessments of seven-year-olds in 2002 were also above average, and the 2003 assessments are very similar.
65. The standards seen during the inspection matched the National Curriculum test results. Pupils in Year 6 are already above the national standard in their current work. The skills of scientific enquiry are being developed particularly well owing to the school's focus on these, and very good progress is being made throughout the key stage. Teaching and learning are very good. In Year 6, pupils were observed during a practical lesson on dissolving sugar in water. Due to the teacher and her assistant's very good lesson preparation, many pupils were able to work independently in their groups to predict which sample of sugar would dissolve quickest, devise and carry out a fair test and draw conclusions from it. By the end of the lesson, higher ability pupils formulated general statements such as 'the more it is stirred, the quicker it dissolves'. They understood the difference between predictions and guesswork, which gives them a very good grounding for future work. Pupils in Year 2 successfully identified parts of a flowering plant and drew them with accurate labels.
66. All available evidence from work samples and lesson observations shows that pupils achieve well throughout the school as a result of the teaching of skills of scientific enquiry in the context of knowledge and understanding. Teachers work very well with their teaching assistants, which benefits the pupils considerably and enables them to succeed.
67. Literacy and numeracy are developed particularly well in science. In both key stages, teachers make very good use of writing frames to help structure pupils' thoughts; key scientific terminology is also emphasised from simple words, such as 'root' and 'stem' in Years 1 and 2 to the more complex 'solute' and 'solvent' in Years 3 to 6. Pupils learn how to draw and interpret graphs accurately, for example bar charts in Year 4 and line graphs in Year 6. They use scientific units of measure and force, for instance, with accuracy.
68. Since the previous inspection, standards have risen from below average to above average; science is now a considerable strength in the school. Much of this is due to the very good leadership and management of the subject. The co-ordinator has worked hard to raise standards; she has led training and 'sharing good practice' sessions. She effectively monitors the pupils' work and the teachers' planning, and observes lessons. The focus on scientific enquiry has already resulted in an above average standard. A key feature of this is the use of science booklets which guide pupils through complete investigations from initial predictions to



conclusions. Pupils feel secure in their teachers' expertise and can measure their own progress. They much enjoy science and have a good attitude to learning. They achieve well.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

Provision in ICT is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils achieve well.
- Flexibility of timetabling and resources allows for efficient use.
- Skills are being taught well and extended in the curriculum.
- Pupils are not given sufficient research topics individual research topics.

### **Commentary**

69. Standards in ICT are average by the end of both key stages, which is a good improvement since the previous inspection. All pupils achieve well since standards are rising from a much lower level; there is no difference between the achievement of any group of pupils, such as those with special educational needs, or boys and girls. The school has invested well in hardware, which can be used flexibly, either in a computer suite or in the classroom, using laptops. It also ensures that all children get a worthwhile amount of individual work time by timetabling half a class at a time to the computer facilities. However, they are not given sufficient research topics.
70. Pupils make good progress particularly in Years 3 to 6 and have learned to use most of the major classes of ICT software by the time they leave school. Year 6 pupils, for example, learn to use Power Point in studies of hobbies and interests. In the work samples from Year 4 and 5, a good variety of work was seen; pupils sort information and draw pie and line graphs, learning to interpret them. Year 5 pupils have used spreadsheets to cost four meals at a burger bar, and the Internet to find out about weather, carrying out complex searches and planning an ideal classroom. Children in Years 1 and 2 make good use of the 'My world' software to dress teddy, to plan a bedroom for the three bears and to draw flowering plants.
71. Two lessons were seen and both were satisfactory. One in Year 2 was characterised by good planning for a variety of activities which enabled pupils to learn and consolidate their simple programming work using a 'roamer' robot. In Year 4, the teacher's good introduction to the lesson enabled pupils to focus well on the lesson objectives to familiarise them with the 'paintbrush' tool on a graphics programme, but there was not enough challenge for pupils with more skill and ability.
72. Leadership of the subject is good. The headteacher is currently the ICT co-ordinator. Much thought has been given to the purchase and planning of the use of resources and the school is making good use of the facilities it has to raise standards for all children.

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

73. Information and communication technology skills are developing satisfactorily and are beginning to be used across the curriculum. There is little as yet in history and geography, but they have been used successfully for epic stories in literacy and in music.

## HUMANITIES

### GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY

There was insufficient time to inspect these subjects thoroughly. Geography was not on the timetable. Only one lesson of history was observed in Year 1. From the scrutiny of a small amount of pupils' past work and discussion with the co-ordinator, it is clear that an appropriate variety of work is covered. Not enough evidence is available to judge the standards or the overall quality of teaching and learning.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The spacious grounds enhance the school setting and provide the pupils with many effective opportunities for practical activities outside.
- Good links with literacy and numeracy.
- Good support from planned year group visits to support the curriculum.
- Good use of residential visits to support pupils' learning in years 5 and 6.
- Ict is not used sufficiently to support the pupils' learning.
- There are under-developed research skills.

#### Commentary

74. The examination of pupils' past work shows that there are good links to literacy and numeracy within some lessons. In Year 6, for example, pupils create 'The Greek Times' in the form of a newspaper, while in Year 2 pupils produce a written account of their first day in Scutari as Florence Nightingale. In geography, the pupils in Year 6 investigate erosion and calculate the loss of land and then average it over a specified time, while in Year 2 pupils make a bar graph to show the number of times 'Barnaby Bear' uses different forms of transport on his travels. There was no evidence found to show that ICT is used effectively in these subjects. Pupils' research skills are under-developed so they cannot, for example, analyse key features of a historical period or explaining events and make links.
75. Visits to places of interest make a good contribution to the pupils' learning in both subjects and positively enhance the curriculum. Visitors into the school further enhance the curriculum.

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' knowledge of Christianity is good.
- Pupils have a good understanding of the need to belong to a variety of groups, especially their families.
- Pupils have a good understanding of the need to be tolerant of others.
- The attitudes of pupils towards the subject are good.
- Pupils' knowledge of other world faiths is not as good as it could be.
- Teachers' use of planning and assessment is underdeveloped.

#### Commentary

76. Standards by the end of both key stages are broadly in line with those expected by the local agreed syllabus. Overall, pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Provision is similar to that reported at the time of the previous inspection.

77. Pupils throughout the school have a secure knowledge of various aspects of Christianity. By Year 2, they know stories about Jesus, and they explain about the importance, for example, of the Bible and the Church. By Year 6, pupils are confident in discussing aspects of Christian life, such as the relevance of the cross and the various church festivals.
78. Pupils understand the need to belong to a variety of groups, and they recognise, in particular, the importance of their own family and friends. All pupils are happy to explain the importance of love and friendship within these groups. Pupils are also aware of the need for caring, both of themselves and of others. Pupils understand the need for rules in many aspects of group and family life, and pupils in Year 5 can explain how Moses received the Ten Commandments, the rules which were of particular relevance to the Jews.
79. During lessons, pupils are generally keen to provide a variety of thoughtful answers and observations. Just occasionally, a very small number of pupils show less interest in offering their contributions. Overall, however, pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good, and they are keen to complete their tasks, as well as to talk about their work, when asked. The very popular JAM club has a significant effect on pupils' attitudes to the subject.
80. Through the school pupils are introduced to all the major world faiths. Younger children learn about Islam, and older pupils learn about Sikhism, Buddhism and Hinduism. Holy books, religious buildings and important figures, for instance, are discussed, and pupils clearly understand the need to be tolerant of other people's dress, ritual and way of life. However, whilst pupils know a suitable amount of information, overall, they are not always able to relate the different facts to the appropriate religion.
81. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Lessons throughout the school are generally well planned, and interesting ideas and information are often presented to pupils. Teachers have sound subject knowledge, and through clear instruction, all pupils make satisfactory gains in their knowledge and understanding. However, whilst due emphasis is laid on the study of different religions, not enough care is taken to ensure that pupils' knowledge is secure, especially in relating the different facts to the appropriate faith.

## CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

### ART AND DESIGN

Provision for art and design is **very good**. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above those expected.
- Pupils' past work shows very good learning of a large number of techniques using a wide variety of materials'
- Excellent teaching in year 6.
- Very skilful, committed and knowledgeable leadership and management.
- Effective learning from first-hand experience of working with famous artists.

#### Commentary

82. Overall, the quality of teaching is very good with some excellent features and, as a direct consequence, pupils achieve well across the school. Pupils' work in sketchbooks and portfolios shows that they practise a wide variety of skills and techniques. Enriching links, through the

dedication and diligence of the co-ordinator, have been made with local artists and art galleries where the pupils have had inspiring first-hand experience in using techniques and drawings in the style of other artists.

83. Excellent teaching is characterised by clear expertise and the lucid demonstration of techniques to achieve the desired effect. Such very skilful teaching has an extremely beneficial impact on the pupils' learning. It inspires their interest and thorough involvement in the subject. There is an excellent accumulation of skills in which the pupils are amazed by their results. Pupils are always ready to apply intellectual and creative effort in class, as a result of their own positive attitudes and the good relationships that teachers maintain and foster. They show interest and sustain concentration well. They understand what they are doing and know how to improve their work because of the clear explanations and instructions that their teachers give them.
84. The subject is very well managed and enthusiastically led. The weaknesses remain the same as at the time of the last inspection: no direct observations of teaching have been timetabled, nor are there formal assessment procedures. However, the co-ordinator collects examples of work from each class, informally discusses the skills and techniques used, and monitors and annotates plans.

## DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

Provision is **satisfactory**. Only one lesson was observed during the inspection. Too little evidence was available to make a judgement on standards. The curriculum is covered satisfactorily, judging by the products seen. Pupils are designing, making and evaluating their products, such as in the creation of biscuits in Year 5. Good cross-curricular links are made with science in the making of musical instruments regarding pitch and sound vibration, and of working models of lighthouses. From the work displayed, it is evident that the finishing of products is sometimes careless. In the lesson seen, pupils did not pay enough attention either to their work or to their teacher, despite the well planned activity.

## MUSIC

Provision in music is **very good**. There was insufficient evidence to judge standards for seven-year-olds. Only one lesson was seen Year 2 in which pupils achieved average standards.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils attain well above average standards by the age of 11 and they achieve very well.
- Very good use is made of the local education authority string initiative.
- Music enriches pupils' cultural development and inspires confidence and self-esteem.
- The work of the co-ordinator is very good.

### Commentary

85. In Years 3 to 6, the school is fortunate to be a participant in Hertfordshire's string initiative in which all pupils in Years 3 and 4 are learning a bowed stringed instrument in a weekly session. Year 4 pupils were observed during the inspection week. Half a class at a time had an intensive lesson from two qualified visiting teachers. There was an appropriate mix of instruments arranged like an orchestra: five violins, four violas, four 'cellos, and two double basses. Pupils showed they knew their instruments well, responding to the teachers' questioning with confident knowledge about particular pitched strings and demonstrating competently to each other. Their self-assurance in leading the rest of the orchestra in 'follow my leader' was remarkable.

86. In a Year 6 lesson, these high standards were also demonstrated when the teacher (also the music co-ordinator) used a piece of composition software as a teaching aid to help pupils visualise the subdivision of crotchet beats into quavers to feel the pulse and rhythm through the use of a screen projection. Her demonstrations on the guitar and piano enabled pupils to understand chord and discord. Her high ambitions were realised by the end of the lesson when every pupil - from those sight reading the melody to those keeping one-note rhythm - took part in the instrumental ensemble.
87. All pupils achieve very well in Years 3 to 6 because of the great emphasis the school places on music, seen as a way of instilling confidence, responsibility and self-esteem. A well above average number of pupils continue with instrumental lessons in Years 5 and 6, most gaining good grades in their Associated Board examinations. All pupils reach an above average standard of singing by the age of 11. The many choir members, both boys and girls, achieve very high standards in the numerous performances they do in and out of school. They sing in tune and their rhythmic accuracy is very good. Choir practice is very well attended and remarkable for the number of boys present, many of them eager to take solo parts in concerts. Whole-school singing is enthusiastic. In the singing assembly seen, pupils in Years 3 to 6 performed a three-part round, led by pupils themselves. Good use is made of the gifted and talented pupils to lead orchestra and percussion sessions in class lessons.
88. The music co-ordinator leads and manages the subject very well. She is dynamic and enthusiastic, and gives generously of her time rehearsing instrumental groups and the choir, and this has been a tremendous influence on her young musicians. She has introduced a scheme to enable non-specialist teachers to teach the subject with sufficient knowledge to help children to do well. This is particularly useful in Years 1 and 2, where it allowed good cross-curricular links with science in a lesson in which children much enjoyed singing about music 'minibeasts'.
89. Parents recognise music as a major strength, and appreciate the links with the community that the school achieves by giving concerts in local venues and by entertaining senior citizens at Easter.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Provision for physical education is **unsatisfactory**

Physical education has been correctly identified by the school as an area for improvement. There is insufficient evidence to judge standards in gymnastics, dance and games across the school. Standards in swimming meet the requirement for pupils to be able to swim 25 metres by the end of Year 6.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The purchase of new guidelines to support the teaching has ensured the consistent building up of skills from year to year.
- Additional activities provided outside the school day are very good.
- Teachers' skills and knowledge are not secure enough for teaching the subject, particularly in gymnastics.
- Pupils do not evaluate their work critically or make suggestions about the work of others.

### Commentary

90. Some teachers are not fully confident in teaching the subject, although that was not the case in the three lessons observed. New schemes and guidelines to support the teaching of gymnastics effectively have recently been purchased, but these have been in place for too short a time for

there to be any impact on the teaching and learning. In two out of the three lessons observed the quality of teaching was good. In a good dance lesson in Year 6, the teacher's pleasant and encouraging manner resulted in a positive response from the pupils, who enjoyed creating their own dance sequences: they worked well together in groups. Positive encouragement promotes the pupils' self esteem and confidence, and ensures that they sustain concentration and behave well in lessons. In Year 2, the good teaching makes certain that ground rules are established and reinforced throughout the lesson to ensure the safe use of the apparatus. Good use is made of the pupils to demonstrate skills in Year 2. However, too few opportunities are provided throughout the school for pupils to evaluate and appraise critically either their own or the work of their classmates with a view to improving their own performance. As a result, opportunities to develop pupils' speaking and listening are missed.

91. There is very good provision for additional activities that take place after school. There are very good links with the community. The school has successfully participated in a Year 4 football festival, for example, and is usefully involved in the competitive leagues for netball and football.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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