

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **LOWDHAM C of E PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Lowdham, Nottinghamshire

LEA area: Nottinghamshire

Unique reference number: 122806

Headteacher: Mr R Amies

Lead inspector: Mrs R Spencer

Dates of inspection: 13<sup>th</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup> October 2003

Inspection number: 256787

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:	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils:	4 – 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	182
School address:	Main Street Lowdham Nottingham
Postcode:	NG14 7BE
Telephone number:	0115 9663358
Fax number:	0115 9664245
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr M Ellcock
Date of previous inspection:	June 1998

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The school is situated on the outskirts of the Nottingham commuter belt in the village of Lowdham. With 182 pupils (103 boys and 79 girls) it is smaller than most primary schools. Twenty-eight pupils are in the Foundation Stage (the reception class). Almost all of the pupils are of white British heritage. No pupil speaks English as an additional language. Nearly 55 per cent of pupils come from high social class households and attainment on entry for most pupils is above average. The percentages of pupils who have special educational needs, and those who are eligible for free meals, are below the national average. It is a stable community. It is a popular school and the numbers are rising with a waiting list. The governing body has been recently strengthened and the majority of staff members have been appointed in the last two years. The school has recently been awarded the Investors in People award.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
2766	Rashida Spencer	Lead inspector	Science Art and design
13526	Richard Barnard	Lay inspector	
20655	Beryl Rimmer	Team inspector	English Information and communication technology Design and technology Geography Foundation Stage
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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

There has been a significant improvement in the quality and standard of education in the last two years associated with major changes in staffing. The strengthened governing body now provides clear strategic leadership and direction. **This is now a satisfactory school** that offers satisfactory value for money. Standards are rising and are generally above average by the end of Years 2 and 6. Overall, the quality of teaching is satisfactory and, with some variation from year to year, **pupils achieve satisfactorily**.

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

- Standards are above average in English and mathematics by the end of Years 2 and 6 and in science by the end of Year 6
- The quality of teaching is inconsistent partly because the monitoring of teaching and learning is not sufficiently rigorous or challenging
- Very effective teaching results in pupils in Years 1, 4, 5 and 6 achieving well
- The governing body is very good
- Children's achievement in the Foundation Stage is not high enough
- Higher attaining boys and pupils with average or below average capability do not achieve as well as they should
- Excellent parental support for pupils' learning makes a significant impact on overall standards
- The school is at the heart of the local community and pastoral leadership is caring and effective

After the school was last inspected in 1998 it suffered a major loss of confidence by pupils, parents and the community and standards dropped substantially. In the last two years the school has put itself back on track, it has again become a more effective school and standards are now higher than they were at the time of the last inspection. Except for the key issue about monitoring, which has not been fully tackled, the school has satisfactorily addressed most of the issues raised in the last inspection report.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	All schools			Similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
English	A	D	A	A
Mathematics	C	E	C	C
Science	E	E	C	D

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

Significant disruptions to pupils' learning in the recent past are largely responsible for variations in the national test results from year to year. In the Foundation Stage, though the children are on course to exceed the early learning goals set for them in all areas of learning, there is insufficient challenge and expectations are not high enough and, as a result, the children's achievements are unsatisfactory. In Year 2, inspectors found that standards are above average in reading, writing, mathematics and ICT. In Year 6, standards are above average in English, mathematics and science and well above average in ICT. Test results from 2003 and inspection findings indicate that standards in Year 6 are improving and pupils are likely to attain standards that are well above average by the time they leave school. Overall, pupils' achievement across the school is inconsistent. Effective teaching in Years 1, 4, 5 and 6 results in good achievement but pupils make only satisfactory progress in Years 2 and 3 where the quality of provision is lower.

Pupils have very good attitudes to school. They are excellently supported by their parents and set exemplary standards in punctuality and attendance. Their desire to improve their knowledge, understanding and motivation to learn is very high. The **spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is good**. Moral and social aspects are provided for very effectively.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**Overall, the quality of education is satisfactory; the quality of teaching is also satisfactory.** A significant proportion of very good teaching was observed in Years 1, 4, 5 and 6. Teachers' planning is inconsistent and expectations are not high enough for the different ability groups in the Foundation Stage and Years 2 and 3. English, mathematics and ICT are taught well, and teaching effectively promotes pupils' interest in reading and English and their technical vocabulary. Problem solving and investigation skills are taught very well in mathematics throughout the school, and in science in the juniors. Very high standards are reached in developing pupils' application of ICT skills across the curriculum. Relationships, the pace of lessons, junior class teachers' secure subject knowledge and the preparation and use of resources are particular strengths. In some classes more could be done to match tasks to the lower attaining pupils and engage higher attaining boys in their learning more actively.

The broad, balanced and relevant curriculum is of satisfactory quality, though there are significant strengths in ICT provision and external environmental resources and a weakness in art and design. Numeracy skills are developed well but some basic literacy skills are not taught early and thoroughly enough.

Following the loss of confidence in the school by parents and the local community since the last inspection, the school has worked hard and has succeeded in establishing a very effective partnership with parents. The school provides very good care for the pupils.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

The headteacher provides good pastoral leadership and, while there has been considerable improvement in other aspects of the leadership, it is still not sufficiently robust in monitoring teaching and challenging weaknesses. The governors and headteacher are well supported by the senior management team who now make a very committed and energetic unit to further increase the pace of improvement and to strive for higher standards. The governors carry out their leadership roles very well. Overall, management is satisfactory though aspects of management, such as performance management and professional development for staff, are good. Financial control and routine administration are good.

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

The large majority of parents hold the school in high regard and acknowledge the significant improvements that have been made in the last 18 months. Pupils cannot wait for school to start. They love coming to school and learning.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- Raise the quality of teaching in the whole school to the level of the best by celebrating and disseminating very good teaching practice.
- Improve strategies to monitor, evaluate and robustly challenge weaknesses in teaching and learning.
- Improve the Foundation Stage provision, teaching, learning and achievement.
- Improve planning and teaching strategies to increase the attainment of below average attaining pupils and higher attaining boys.

## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

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

Currently, standards in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science are above average and in information and communication technology (ICT) are well above average. Pupils achieve well in Years 1, 4, 5 and 6, satisfactorily in Years 2 and 3 and unsatisfactorily in the Foundation Stage. Girls achieve better than boys in the junior classes.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Year 6 pupils should reach well above average standards in English, mathematics, science and ICT by the end of the year
- Pupils are articulate throughout the school and read fluently
- Standards have risen since the last inspection
- Children in the reception class learn steadily but they do not achieve well enough
- The good progress made by pupils in Year 1 slows over the next two years
- Some pupils do not present their work neatly enough and their handwriting is inconsistent.

#### Commentary

##### The Foundation Stage

##### *Standards at the end of the Foundation Stage*

Standards in relation to the early learning goals by the end of <b>reception</b> in:	
Personal, social and emotional development	<b>Good</b>
Communication, language and literacy	<b>Good</b>
Mathematical development	<b>Good</b>
Knowledge and understanding of the world	<b>Good</b>
Physical development	<b>Good</b>
Creative development	<b>Good</b>

*Inspectors make judgements in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor.*

1. Recognised tests procedures and the teacher's own assessments show that children enter school with standards of attainment that are normally above those expected for their age and in a substantial minority of cases, well above in nearly all areas. Children learn steadily so that their attainment remains above average by the time they enter Year 1. The excellent support provided at home enables the children to absorb new learning very effectively but their progress is only satisfactory and children do not achieve as well they could because the planned activities do not always build on what the children already know and can do. In one lesson, for example, all children practiced forming the letters "i" and "t", in spite of the fact that many already write them and their names accurately. The children show maturity and language skills well above what would be expected at this age. On a table where they were sharing one brush to paint the letters a child asked; "Would it be helpful to have another brush?" In the same lesson, pupils, when asked to join their group, one boy said, 'I cannot do the letter 'i' without an adult's help'.

## Years 1 and 2

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	17.7 (16.3)	15.8 (15.7)
Writing	15.8 (15.3)	14.4 (14.3)
Mathematics	17.9 (16.2)	16.5 (16.2)

*There were 27 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

2. In the 2002 national tests and assessments, pupils' standards in English and mathematics were well above average and average for science. The preliminary 2003 results for pupils now in Year 3 show higher standards in English and science but attainment in mathematics was lower than in 2002. Pupils achieve well in Year 1 because pupils of all abilities are provided with work that challenges and interests them, enabling them to make good progress. In Year 2, however, pupils with average or below average abilities do not make the progress they are capable of because the work is less well matched to their needs. In a mathematics lesson, for example, while the most able pupils had an interesting investigation, others, among a range of tasks, had the task of colouring in shapes on a clown - a very easy task for them. Overall, pupils in Year 2 make satisfactory progress.

## Years 3 to 6

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	28.8 (26.0)	27.0 (27.0)
Mathematics	27.2(25.3)	26.7 (26.6)
Science	28.3 (27.0)	28.3 (28.3)

*There were 27 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

3. In the 2002 national tests, pupils attained above the national average standards in English and well above average for mathematics. With all pupils attaining at least the expected Level 4 and two-thirds achieving the higher Level 5, science results were very high. The provisional results for 2003 indicate higher attainment in all three subjects, in line with the expectation that pupils will reach well above average standards by the end of the year. There is an emphasis on mathematical and scientific investigation in the older classes and this has had a positive impact on raising standards in these subjects. Pupils' books show that most make good progress and achieve well, applying their learning very effectively. In some lessons, however, boys are not as involved in discussion as the girls and the teachers do not do enough to ensure that all pupils contribute. This results in some pupils not achieving as well as they should be. Although more able pupils make good progress, gifted and talented pupils make only satisfactory progress overall as the school's programme for supporting these pupils is not yet well established. Pupils with special educational needs achieve satisfactorily in Year 3 and well in Years 4, 5 and 6.
4. The key strengths in English are very good speaking and listening skills and a wide and mature vocabulary throughout the school. Standards in reading are also well above average throughout the school. Pupils use these talents to write creatively but spelling, grammar and punctuation skills as well as handwriting are not as good as they could be throughout the school. This is particularly evident in pupils' day-to-day work as they are capable of very well presented final copies of their work. Pupils generally achieve well in mathematics, apart from those with average or below average skills in the infants. The way some pupils write down their calculations in the

juniors sometimes hinders calculation, particularly in their “jotters”. Scientific investigation is good throughout the school but in two lessons observed in the lower part of the school the planning did not reflect the capability and learning needs of the pupils. The very good curriculum for ICT and the teachers’ high expectations enable the pupils throughout the school to achieve very well. This is reflected in the way pupils apply ICT very effectively to other subjects. The good use of language and the use of ICT in history, for example, results in above average levels of debate, historical skills, particularly research skills, and empathy with people in the past.

5. The achievements of pupils with special educational needs are similar to those of other pupils in their class. The good systems of support enable them to achieve the targets in their individual education plans. The teachers in the oldest three classes plan work that challenges these pupils so that they make good progress. Provision for gifted and talented pupils is in its embryonic stages and is developing satisfactorily. Geography and design and technology were not inspected.

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

6. Pupils are keen to come to school to learn, which is reflected in the very high levels of attendance and very good standards of behaviour. Their personal development is very good due to their own motivation and confidence and the good provision by the school for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils are very confident, curious, self-motivated and self-assured from an early age
- Relationships throughout the school are very good
- Pupils’ very good personal development helps them to further develop their self-esteem and awareness of the needs and feelings of others
- In some junior lessons boys are not fully engaged in their work
- The confidence of some below average achievers is not developed sufficiently
- Attendance levels are well above average and pupils are very seldom late

### **Commentary**

7. When they enter school children know how to behave and that they have come to school to learn and they maintain these positive attitudes with the excellent support of parents throughout their time at school. Parents and pupils themselves say they enjoy school and this is evident in the very high attendance levels, very good interest they show towards the life of the school and their very keen attitude to the range of activities provided. Their interest and confidence is reflected especially well in English lessons when they keenly ask questions of their teachers to extend their learning and in their independence in carrying out investigations in science. On some occasions boys display less interest in their lessons when the work fails to gain their interest. The same applies in some lessons to groups identified as below average achievers when the work set does not challenge them sufficiently and they find it too easy.
8. Children in the Foundation Stage are keen to express themselves and offer opinions but they do not always have enough opportunities to do so. They are socially well developed and share resources without fuss. The school builds well on pupils’ positive attitudes through the good provision for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Older pupils are very willing to help around school with a wide range of responsibilities, for example, helping younger ones in the playground or supervising games at wet playtimes. One older boy showed great concern and kindness for a Reception pupil when getting him to sit in a safe place behind a goal when watching the older ones play football. Pupils understand the difference between right and wrong and how their actions can impact on others. Their collections for an extremely wide range of charities show their feelings for those who are worse off than themselves. Their keen participation in the school council helps develop their awareness of citizenship, representing the views of

others and having a say in the life of the school. Good provision ensures pupils are well aware of the multi-racial nature of life in Britain. Appreciation of drama is promoted well.

9. Relationships throughout the school are very good. Pupils co-operate very well with each other in pairs and groups throughout the school, helping them develop their learning skills very well. Pupils behave very well in lessons, in assemblies and in the playground. They respond well to and appreciate the two simple school rules. Pupils exhibit compliant behaviour even when lessons are at a slow pace. Pupils and parents have no worries about bullying, racist or sexist behaviour and attitudes and systems are in place to deal with any potential issues quickly. Standards of behaviour, personal development and levels of attendance have improved since the previous inspection.

## Attendance

### Attendance in the latest complete reporting year 2002 (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	4.4	School data	0.0
National data	5.4	National data	0.5

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

Attendance and punctuality are very good. Procedures to record and monitor attendance are good and parents follow them to the letter, ensuring that there are no cases of unauthorised absence. Parents and pupils appreciate the importance of regular and prompt attendance in relation to education.

### Ethnic background of pupils

### Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	177	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	1	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	1	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	1	0	0
Any other ethnic group	1	0	0

*The table gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.*

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The overall quality of education is satisfactory. The quality of teaching and learning varies throughout the school from excellent to unsatisfactory. The overall quality of the curriculum is satisfactory, though important aspects of it are better.

### Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall with good and better teaching in Years 1, 4, 5 and 6. Teaching is satisfactory in Years 3 and 4 and unsatisfactory in the reception class. ICT, mathematics and English are taught well at all stages, and science is taught well in the junior

classes. The good teaching results in good achievement for most pupils of all abilities. The main shortcoming of teaching is the lack of expectation and challenge.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers' expectation and challenge are high in English, mathematics and science in Years 1, 4, 5 and 6
- Relationships are very good and pupils' motivation to learn is infectious
- In teaching ICT across the curriculum, teachers' ability and confidence are high
- Time and resources are used very efficiently and the pace is brisk in most classes
- Assessment of the core subjects successfully identifies areas for further focus
- In literacy, some basic skills are not taught in a sufficiently measured and structured way
- In the least satisfactory lessons, insufficient account is taken of prior learning
- Enthusiastic and interesting delivery sometimes captures pupils' interest and imagination
- Over-direction, and too much teacher talk, limits learning and slows down the rate of progress in some classes

### Commentary

#### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in [number] lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
2	5	9	9	2	0	0

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

- Teaching in the reception class is unsatisfactory overall. Pupils' personal, social and emotional development is very well promoted. There are good relationships and children enjoy coming to school. Teaching has high expectations of good manners and behaviour to good effect. There is, however, insufficient challenge and motivation in the uninspiring range of activities provided, for these bright and able children.
- Effective teaching in Years 1, 4, 5 and 6 results in high standards and pupils achieve well. Teachers in these classes have a very secure knowledge and understanding of the National Curriculum requirements and the levels at which to pitch the work. Their often lively and imaginative delivery captures and holds pupils' attention and excites these well-informed and curious youngsters. They ask demanding questions and pupils know the answers required are not simple but require cause and effect responses. This was well demonstrated in mathematics in Year 6, science in Year 4 and English in Year 5. Teaching in Years 2 and 3 is satisfactory and pupils make steady progress but do not achieve as highly as they are capable of. Pupils attain good standards in English, mathematics and ICT, but planning for pupils' ability is not well considered and matched to pupils' prior learning. This has an adverse impact on the lower attaining pupils in Year 2 and higher attaining pupils in Year 3. Teachers are enthusiastic about raising standards but some of the tasks identified for pupils who are at the lower end of the middle group are not demanding and become time filling colouring activities. Some of the higher attaining boys have the potential to achieve highly but some of the tasks do not engage or interest them actively enough. Sometimes, particularly in subjects like science, they do not intervene when they should to move learning along. In Year 4 both boys and girls and in Year 6 boys rise to challenges and enjoy the questioning and demanding tasks set for them.
- Generally, most recommendations of the National Numeracy and Literacy Strategies have been integrated successfully into teaching. However, aspects of literacy, such as the teaching of some of the basic skills in grammar, spelling and handwriting are not yet well embedded. Discussions with pupils show that they read with enthusiasm and enjoyment, but asking if they know what a verb or adjective is drew blank responses.

13. Most teachers have a secure knowledge of most subjects and, where there are weaknesses, for example in science and art and design, well-organised in-service training is provided or is planned. In classes where teaching is good, based on secure subject knowledge, the quality of questioning is open and encourages pupils to think, reflect and consider cause and effect. As seen in Year 4 science and ICT lessons, a Year 6 mathematics lesson and a Year 5 English lesson, the increase in pupils' knowledge, understanding and overall learning was immediately evident. Closed questioning and too much direct talking in satisfactory lessons limits, and sometimes impedes, pupils' learning.
14. Most teachers use well-planned resources and time very effectively and efficiently. Lesson objectives are clear, the pace is brisk and their enthusiastic and imaginative delivery captures and retains pupils' interest and enjoyment. Planning for shared Year 3 teaching is well organised. Styles and expectations are different, shortcomings are known by the school and further enhanced support has been identified.
15. Teachers assess pupils' learning regularly and are beginning to use this information in their medium-term planning. Marking is inconsistent in a few classes. There are very good examples of marking which clarified pupils' barrier to learning, for example, in science in Year 6. Such marking is based on secure subject knowledge. In other classes, marking does not help pupils to improve their work. A system of setting of individual learning targets is also inconsistent. In some subjects, like English, targets are very clear and specific; in others they are too general to help pupils' learning. Generally, expectations regarding handwriting and presentation of work are not high enough.
16. The quality of learning is good. Pupils' self-motivation and desire to learn are very high. Parental expectations that pupils will learn provide an audience of children from reception to Year 6 that is very keen, curious and has an immense thirst for knowledge. Pupils' aspiration and knowledge levels are high which means that, where teaching is good or better, they rise to the challenge with enjoyment and self-confidence. The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection. Its capacity to further improve depends on the introduction of an authoritative system of monitoring and evaluation.

## **The curriculum**

The overall quality of the curriculum is satisfactory and is supported by good provision in ICT and very good provision of extra-curricular activities, visits and visitors. The range of outside facilities is very good and the quality of the resources and accommodation is satisfactory overall.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- ICT provision is exciting and innovative
- Provision for history and physical education is good but for art and design is unsatisfactory
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good

## **Commentary**

17. The new staff, particularly in the junior classes, bring secure knowledge and understanding of the National Curriculum requirements and have the capacity to improve further. Overall, in the junior classes planning meets the needs of pupils, particularly the higher attainers. Insufficient attention has been paid to below average pupils who need more specific reinforcement of basic literacy skills, and to higher attaining boys. The school has identified pupils who are gifted and talented and the provision is at an embryonic stage. Equal opportunities are managed well by the headteacher.
18. The school makes sound provision for pupils with special educational needs in the infants. The provision for the juniors is good. The individual education plans for pupils with special educational

needs are good throughout the school. They are regularly reviewed and accurately reflect the pupils' needs. Generally the teaching assistants support the pupils well. They are more effective in Year 1 and the older junior classes because the teachers plan work that more accurately reflects individual pupil's needs, maintaining an appropriate level of challenge. The identification of pupils with special educational needs is effective and the special educational needs co-ordinator supports the teachers well as they construct individual education plans for their pupils. Outside specialists are consulted and support is requested appropriately. Parents and carers are fully informed and involved in the systems of support and their child's progress. The co-ordinator has not monitored provision within the classes, resulting in variable support for pupils with special educational needs throughout the school.

19. In the previous inspection, the school was asked to address a number of issues. The curriculum was not subject focussed, the organisation of mixed-age classes caused parental concern, the Foundation Stage did not have sufficient depth and variety and a number of schemes of work and policies were missing. The school has successfully addressed most of these issues. While the Foundation Stage curriculum has improved since the last inspection, there are still weaknesses in the provision. Except for the music, art and design and special educational needs policies, which are being reviewed, all others are now being used efficiently and, as a result, medium-term plans have improved. The extra-curricular activities, which were previously of limited range, are now extensive. Overall, the school has made good progress in addressing these issues.

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

Procedures to ensure pupils' care, welfare, health and safety are good. Good support, advice and guidance are provided for each pupil. The school involves pupils' well in its work and development.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There is a strong ethos of care and members of staff know pupils well
- Child protection procedures and awareness are good
- Induction arrangements are good.

### **Commentary**

20. All members of staff provide strong pastoral care that ensures every pupil feels valued and cared for. Parents agree that the school takes good care of their children. Good induction arrangements and continuing care and support ensure that the youngest children quickly settle into school and make good progress in their personal development. Sensible child protection procedures supported by a good level of awareness, sound evaluation of health and safety risks and good first aid procedures and supervision of pupils at breaks and lunchtimes enable pupils to develop and work in confidence. Personal and academic development is supported well as teachers know their pupils well. Good support and advice ensures that pupils are confident about their move to secondary school. Pupils feel that they have a good say in the life of the school through good consultation arrangements such as the school council. Very good relationships with staff give pupils the confidence to raise questions and discuss issues with them. Standards have been improved on the satisfactory levels described in the previous inspection.

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

Parents' excellent support and encouragement has a major impact on pupils' learning. The school supports parental help well, establishing a very strong partnership. Links with other schools are effective and with the community very effective.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Parental help in school and their financial support is extensive

- The school maintains an excellent website which is frequently accessed by parents to improve very good school-home communications
- Community links are very strong
- Reports on progress for the reception class contain insufficient information.

### **Commentary**

21. The excellent support from parents and the high value parents place on their children's education has a major impact on the relationship between the parents and the school. Parents encourage their children through supporting homework and helping them read and use libraries and computers. Their very good help in the classroom is valued and, in particular, parents' financial contribution to developing the grounds and resources makes a very good contribution to improving facilities for pupils. The school successfully builds on parental support, for example, through regular newsletters keeping parents very well informed about school life and how to help pupils with their learning at home. The use of the school website is especially effective, for example, in giving homework for parents and pupils to download. Annual reports give very good information on pupils' standards and progress except for the Reception class where they contain little detail and only general comments. The school hall and grounds are used extensively for a range of local services for children and adults. An effective partnership ensures pupils are well prepared for their move to secondary school. Provision has improved on that described in the previous inspection report.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory overall. Governance is very good and the leadership and management of the headteacher and senior staff are satisfactory.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The governing body provides robust challenge and well-considered direction for the school
- The capacity for further improvement is good, driven by the commitment of the governing body, headteacher and staff
- There is a lack of systematic monitoring of teaching and learning and its impact on achievement
- The headteacher provides a caring ethos based on firm principles
- The school has ambition and goals but these lack a long-term management vision.

### **Commentary**

22. The governors are committed and have a secure understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. This helps them to provide challenge and support for the senior management team and provide a clear direction for the school. These qualities are exemplified by, firstly, their determination to set targets and monitor the performance of the senior management team and, secondly, their involvement in the school improvement plan. They have established an efficient sub-committee structure that enables them to fulfil their statutory duties well. They are well informed about the policies for sex education, race equality, drugs education and special educational needs and are at an early stage of monitoring these.

23. The long established headteacher has dedicated his life to the school. He has made the school a central focus for the community and has re-established the recently damaged very good links with the parents. He has ensured that all the school's extensive resources are fully accessible to them. His style is genial and enabling in bringing about change and improvement but the pace is slow and the challenge, where there are weaknesses, is not sufficiently direct or urgent. However, he has overseen many aspects of improvement since the last inspection and has managed a very difficult staffing situation satisfactorily. He has empowered the senior management team to manage and organise the whole-school curriculum and assessment. The school improvement plan is focused but is not clearly linked to the strengths and weaknesses in teaching, learning and

achievement. Very thorough analyses of assessment provide a good basis for establishing a programme of monitoring but this is not systematic or regular enough. Consequently, planning priorities are not as sharp as they should be.

24. The management of special educational needs is good. The special needs co-ordinator is responsible for assessment, hence is able to pinpoint the specific learning needs of individual pupils. All staff embrace the principles of inclusion satisfactorily but are not always mindful enough about matching teaching plans and activities accurately to the needs of some pupils.
25. Performance management is well embedded. All staff have specific academic and pastoral targets. The headteacher has a generous policy of supporting individual personal professional needs. The balance between the school's needs and personal needs can be better achieved once the school improvement plan is more securely based on strengths and weaknesses in the subjects and aspects that are part of the school's work. There are emerging strengths in this area; for example, there has been extensive training in ICT to improve teachers' skills and confidence. The training has had a positive impact and ICT standards have improved and are now very good. The school has recently achieved an Investors in People Award and this provides an example of the enormous effort the headteacher and staff are making.
26. The school has satisfactorily addressed most of the issues identified in the previous inspection report. However, progress on the issue relating to the regular monitoring of teaching and learning is only reasonable with room for considerable further improvement.

**Financial information**

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

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	425,946	Balance from previous year	6,095
Total expenditure	421,064	Balance carried forward to the next	10,976
Expenditure per pupil	2,288		

27. Financial planning and management are good. The governors and headteacher have a clear grasp of finances and funding issues. The school has a small and sensible budget surplus that, together with an accurate estimate of future numbers, enables the school to meet its educational priorities from a secure financial base. Principles of best value are understood and applied effectively especially in providing cost-effective services in order to maximise funds available to be spent for the direct benefit of pupils and in consulting parents and pupils on issues. Day-to-day administrative and financial management systems are sound. Governors and the headteacher receive accurate and up to date financial monitoring information.

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

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

28. Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory overall. Provision is good in personal, social and emotional and physical development. It is satisfactory in mathematics and creative development but unsatisfactory in communication, language and literary development and in knowledge and understanding of the world.
29. By the time they transfer to Year 1, standards are likely to be above average. The school's assessment information shows that on entry to the reception class, children have well above average reading skills and score highly in all areas of learning. They are on course to reach beyond the expected early learning goals in their personal and social development, communication, language and literacy, mathematical, creative and physical development and in their knowledge and understanding of the world.
30. Teaching is unsatisfactory overall. Insufficient account is taken of children's prior learning in some areas. Children achieve well in their personal, social and emotional development because teaching in this area of learning is good. In some other areas, expectations of learning are not always high enough and there are weaknesses in aspects of the teaching of communication, language and literacy, mathematics and knowledge and understanding of the world. It is satisfactory in creative and physical development.
31. The school has worked hard to establish a secure curriculum for the Foundation Stage since the last inspection. There has been a substantial improvement from a low base and parents are very pleased with the improved resources. The curriculum provision is satisfactory for an average intake but children in this school are above average and the school now needs to more accurately meet the capabilities of these children. Whilst there is now a suitable range of enjoyable experiences across all areas of learning, activities lack sufficient challenge and stimulation. As a result, achievement is unsatisfactory in many areas.
32. Procedures for assessing children's progress are good but they are not used sufficiently well to tailor the activities to meet children's needs and abilities. Leadership of the Foundation Stage is satisfactory. It has provided considerable support to aid teaching but could identify more clearly ways in which these able children could build more effectively on what they already know, understand and can do. There has been substantial improvement since the last inspection and the school needs to build on this progress.

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

Provision is good overall.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Relationships are good and expectations of behaviour are high
- Teaching is good

### **Commentary**

33. Children achieve well and most exceed the goals expected of them by the end of the reception year. The teaching is good. Children enjoy coming to school and they settle well because of the good relationships between parents and staff and the good liaison between the playgroup and the school. Daily routines, rules and expectations are quickly established and children's behaviour is very good. The teacher and adult helpers have high expectations of good manners and behaviour. They emphasise the importance of listening and taking turns and children are polite and respond

well to directions. Children have well developed social skills, opening doors for others naturally and needing no reminders to use conventions such as 'please' and 'thank you'. There is a suitable balance between child-initiated activities and those directed by adults. Children are confident to choose their own activities and share without fuss. Adults develop independent skills well and children have made good progress in a short time in managing to dress and undress for physical activities, for example.

## **Communication, language and literacy**

Provision is **unsatisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- More able children are not challenged enough
- Standards in reading are good and there are good opportunities for children to talk and plan together
- There are too few interesting or stimulating opportunities for writing development.

### **Commentary**

34. In spite of unsatisfactory teaching children exceed the expected learning goals at the end of the reception year because of their high levels of ability in entry. Achievement is unsatisfactory. Children have good opportunities to interact with one another during play activities. They speak audibly and clearly and readily engage in conversation. Whilst acting out a favourite nursery rhyme, such as 'Five and Twenty Blackbirds' they plan what their characters will do and say, effectively negotiating roles with a good command of language. The school effectively encourages parental support and involvement in children's reading from an early stage. This is a significant factor in the high standards gained by the time they leave reception. Children's books and written work are well organised and presented. However, children have limited opportunities for writing independently on a regular daily basis and for a wide enough range of purposes. Children who are beginning to write independent sentences, hold their pencils correctly and form letters well. They spend a considerable length of time practising a narrow range of basic skills and lack regular opportunities to write for a range of purposes. Activities lack appropriate challenge for these able children and the rate of learning is too slow. The implementation of the literacy strategy is not well adapted so that tasks are closely matched to children's prior learning.

## **Mathematical development**

Provision is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Expectations of higher attaining children are too low
- Children develop a good knowledge of mathematical language.

### **Commentary**

35. Children are likely to exceed the early learning goals and be working within the national curriculum levels by the time they leave the reception year. This is because of high levels of attainment on entry to the school. Children achieve at a lower rate than they should because expectations of their learning are not consistently high enough. Teaching is broadly satisfactory. Children enjoy a suitable variety of planned practical activities and record their learning in a systematic and structured way, based appropriately on the National Numeracy Strategy. Teaching emphasises number vocabulary well and provides good opportunities during daily routines for counting and checking. Children are keen to use numbers. They count, recognise and order numbers to a high level of competence and understanding at the start of their reception

year. They manipulate numbers, with the help of suitable resources. Children know how to find 'one more' or 'one less' and use vocabulary such as 'longer' and 'shorter' under the guidance of adults. Most are familiar with the names of basic shapes, recognising them readily in the environment. There is a high degree of control and children have too few opportunities to put their learning into practice through a wide enough range of stimulating, independent activities. Too often the teacher's focus is on the activity, rather than the learning that is taking place. Adults do not find out how much children already know and too often pitch comments and questions at a low level. They are not always clear about the purpose of a lesson or activity, beyond providing an enjoyable experience.

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

There is **unsatisfactory provision** for this area of learning.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There is insufficient challenge and stimulation and the range of activities is too narrow
- Children's knowledge of other cultures is developed well

### **Commentary**

36. Children are likely to exceed the learning goals expected of them by the end of the reception year. Teaching is unsatisfactory and children do not achieve as well as they should. Children have a well-developed knowledge and understanding of the world when they enter the school. They talk confidently about themselves, knowing their birthdays, where they live and where they like to go on holiday. Whilst exploring a computer programme, children operate the controls skilfully. Individuals are enthusiastic to show images of their visit to a garden centre on screen. They recognise, comment on and explain features such as road signs, fields and hedges and talk about how plants grow. In lessons, children experiment with a range of materials such as sand, water and malleable materials, including dough and cornflower mixtures. They find out about the people and places around them and develop their understanding of other cultures well. The activities provided for these able children, however, are not stimulating or wide ranging enough and do not build sufficiently on what they already know, understand and can do. The emphasis on the topic of nursery rhymes sometimes places restrictions on children's learning rather than enhancing it. Activities are rather limited and narrow with unclear learning objectives. They do not engage children's interest sufficiently to further develop their enthusiasm for learning. Children show little excitement or curiosity because teacher expectations are not high enough.

## **Physical development**

Provision is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The range of opportunities and resources is good
- Skills are not always developed incrementally.

### **Commentary**

37. The children achieve appropriately because of satisfactory teaching and children exceed the goals expected of them by the end of the reception year. The school is developing its resources to enhance the outdoor facilities further. Children have opportunities for vigorous activity in allocated hall time, during playtime and have access to a secure area where they use large and small equipment, including wheeled toys. They benefit from a large play house, newly introduced, on which they can climb under, over and through, developing their confidence and imagination well. Initial assessment procedures indicate very high levels of aptitude in physical skills on entry to school and this is supported by inspection evidence. In the one lesson seen, children are very well co-ordinated and move with confidence and agility. They have a good awareness of space, of themselves and one another. As they scuttle and run forwards, backwards and sideways in response to the teacher's directions, children show increasing control of their movements. During

other activities, children show good levels of fine motor control when they manipulate pencils, crayons and small tools. They concentrate well on attaching small plastic legs and antennae to pieces of dough to represent insects and spiders.

### **Creative development**

Provision is satisfactory

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Suitable resources support children's creative development.
- Teaching of art does not sufficiently stimulate children's creativity or imagination.

### **Commentary**

38. Children are likely to exceed the early learning goals by the end of the reception year. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. Children have appropriate opportunities to experiment with colour, texture and shape. They experiment with paint and make suitable gains in using a variety of tools; they handle pencils well and produce lively drawings, illustrations and paintings. Children quickly become independent in finding their own paper and paint and cleaning up afterwards during planned sessions. There are, however, too few opportunities for children to regularly explore and extend their painting and creative skills. Planning shows suitable opportunities for singing and children build up a repertoire of nursery rhymes and songs. Children enjoy taking part in role-play and negotiate roles of kings, queens and maids with good levels of interest and imagination.

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

### **ENGLISH**

Provision in English is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching is mostly good, with high levels of subject expertise, and pupils achieve well
- The curriculum is well organised
- Pupils are very articulate speakers, confident, fluent readers and write imaginatively with good expression by the end of Year 6
- More able pupils are challenged well in Years 4, 5 and 6
- Work for lower attaining pupils in Year 3 and for the more able in Year 2 is not always matched closely enough to their ability

### **Commentary**

39. Pupils enter the school with above average language skills, particularly in speaking and reading. The school develops these well. By the time they reach the end of Year 6, most pupils are confident and articulate speakers reaching standards well above those usually found. During discussions, pupils respond to questions and express their thoughts and ideas logically and coherently, with a good command of language and a wide vocabulary. Teachers provide good role models.

40. Reading standards are well above average at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Systematic teaching of phonics, together with a structured, colour coded scheme results in pupils of all abilities gaining basic skills effectively. Good teaching promotes the enjoyment of reading well. By the end of Year 6, pupils are avid readers. They read aloud with confidence, accuracy and good levels of understanding. Pupils benefit from an extensive range of good quality literature. Pupils talk about various authors with good levels of knowledge of their styles. They listen spellbound during their

shared reading of an extract from Roald Dahl's 'The Great Mouse Plot'. They are encouraged to find out more about the author, developing their knowledge and understanding well.

41. Standards in writing are above average. There is a secure foundation for learning basic skills in Years 1 and 2. Work is well organised, consistently marked, with positive and evaluative comments. This provides a sound structure for pupils to make steady progress through the curriculum. The majority of pupils write mostly accurate sentences with attempts at spelling showing a good knowledge of sounds. They build appropriately on their prior learning. By the end of Year 2, while most pupils do reach the standards expected, not enough are challenged sufficiently and they do not reach the higher levels of which they are capable. Teaching does not provide enough varied opportunities to extend, or consolidate, basic skills according to individual needs. Opportunities for independent, extended writing are rather limited in scope. The school recognises this as an area for development and in Year 3, pupils are encouraged to write at length. The most able pupils are successfully challenged and motivated to produce lively, interesting and descriptive writing. However, some have not yet gained skills or confidence and make many errors of spelling, punctuation and sentence construction. They are not building sufficiently well on what they already know and understand and progress is limited.
42. Standards are above average in writing by the end of Year 6 because of the good teaching evident in Years 4, 5 and 6. Pupils gain a good level of understanding of literary techniques, which they use effectively to enhance the quality of their writing. In Year 4, pupils know how to use similes, personification and powerful verbs. Their ability to create suspense and redraft leads to high quality work. Year 5 pupils write confidently and freely with good use of descriptive language. For example, in a diary account of her recent holiday, a girl writes...
43. *'Regretting how much sleep I got last night, I finally woke up...Slowly, I wriggled into my cold, damp jodhpurs...'*
44. In Year 6, pupils make extensive use of their jotters and experiment with language to good effect. Imaginative teaching continues to reinforce the strategies for expressive writing too, while developing technical skills appropriately. Levels of grammatical accuracy are not as high as they should be. Displayed work and pupils' written work contains mistakes that remain uncorrected. Nevertheless, a high percentage of pupils reach standards well above average because of the teacher's high expectations, good subject knowledge and the stimulating variety of interesting activities within lessons. In the lessons seen in Years 4, 5 and 6, teachers provide good levels of challenge and support for pupils with all levels of ability.
45. There is good support for pupils with special educational needs who are fully integrated in lessons.
46. Pupils have good attitudes to their work and are proud of their achievements. Good examples of their work are celebrated by inclusion on the school's web site.
47. Recent staff changes have led to a lack of clear leadership for the subject, bridging both key stages. However, there is strong teamwork and a well-organised and established curriculum, securely based on the National Literacy Strategy. This has resulted in consistent and improved procedures throughout the school. There are very good systems for assessing and evaluating the subject based on a variety of information from children's work and test data. The school's analysis has led to a clear focus on areas for development.

## Language and literacy across the curriculum

48. There are effective links with other subjects throughout the curriculum so pupils have many opportunities to practise and use their reading and writing skills.

## MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory** in the infants and **good** in the juniors.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average in all areas of mathematics in Year 2 and in the recent work covered in Year 6, and have risen since the last inspection
- The use and application of mathematics across the curriculum is very good in Year 1, 4, 5 and 6
- The teaching is at least good in most lessons and some very good and excellent teaching was observed
- Marking is good overall and helps pupils to improve
- In Years 2 and 3 the work is not sufficiently matched to the needs of the different abilities in the class, particularly those with average and lower average abilities

### Commentary

49. Standards are above average both in Year 2 and in the work covered in Year 6. An analysis of last year's work and the school's tracking of individual pupils' progress indicates that the pupils in Year 6 are likely to attain standards that are well above average by the time they leave school. Pupils' achievements are good from Year 4 onwards.

50. The very good teaching in Year 1 enables pupils to work creatively, independently and co-operatively. The teacher provides exciting challenges that meet the needs of all abilities. In a lesson based on a class pictogram of favourite pets, for example, the most able pupils interrogated the data and answered questions independently, organising their own work. Other pupils organised data to show the frequency of colours in a tube of Smarties while the least able pupils worked with the teacher to establish favourite crisp flavours. All pupils worked very hard. While the teacher in Year 2 challenged the most able pupils and provided appropriate work for the least able pupils working with the teaching assistant, those with average attainment were not sufficiently challenged in the lesson observed. An analysis of last year's work by the pupils now in Year 3 shows that there is insufficient planning for pupils of different abilities in the class. The good progress established in Year 1 is not sustained in Year 2 and pupils do not achieve as well as they should. The pupils with lower than average abilities in Year 3 do not make enough progress. Their books show that they often do not complete or understand their work. The organisation of pupils in their mathematics lessons, in mixed ability pairs, makes it very difficult for the teacher to support more than one pupil at once so some pupils struggle throughout the lesson.

51. The teachers from Year 4 onwards are skilful in setting challenging work for pupils of all abilities. They have high expectations of what their pupils can achieve and pupils are expected to apply their mathematical knowledge and skills to new learning. In an excellent lesson in Year 6, for example, the teacher gave his pupils a line graph without a title or the axes labelled. Having established that the graph shows an event over time, pupils were asked to hypothesise on the event if the axes were labelled "Time" and "Water level", then given the title "Electricity consumption over 12 hours". This gave pupils a solid understanding of the function of continuous data graphs, laying the foundation for future work. Throughout the school pupils work hard and have very good relationships with their teachers and peers. Conversations with pupils demonstrate the excellent support they receive at home. The structured homework provided for the older pupils is a valuable support for pupils' learning. In some classes, however, pupils' work is untidy and sometimes the way the work is set out hampers calculation. Teachers rarely mention presentation in their otherwise good marking.

52. The subject is led well and the subject leader makes good use of the very good analysis of pupils' progress and the outcomes from tests to identify where changes in provision are needed. Extra support is given to some pupils to enable them to attain higher standards and teaching assistants are used to support pupils with special educational needs well. She does not, however, have opportunities to observe teaching and learning and is, therefore, unable to identify or address the weakness in different parts of the school.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

53. Overall mathematical skills are promoted effectively in other subjects. The use of information and communication technology is impressive throughout the school and the older pupils use computers and calculators to support their learning and to present the outcomes of their investigations as a matter of course. This is particularly effective in organising data using sensors in science, for example. Measuring skills are used to support design and technology and geography and pupils in Year 1 have made a three-dimensional model of their pictogram about pets.

## **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **satisfactory** in Years 1 and 2 and **good** in Years 3 to 6.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching is good in Years 1, 4, 5 and 6 and leads to good achievement overall
- Pupils achieve high levels in designing and performing their own experiments
- Narrow curriculum experiences, based on insecure subject knowledge, limit pupils' achievement in Year 2
- Leadership and management are receiving considerable external support

### **Commentary**

54. Based on pupils' work at this early stage in the year, they are well on their way to achieving well above average standards by the end of Year 6. Unconfirmed 2003 test results indicate a large percentage of pupils achieved the higher Level 5. Standards have improved since the last inspection with the help of some external support. Pupils in the top three junior classes build up a secure breadth and depth from year to year. Some of the pupils, for example in Year 4, are highly skilled in exploring cause and effect. This was well exemplified in a lesson on wood lice, where pupils were investigating which condition, dark or light, was preferred by them. The outcome of the experiment was inconclusive. The teacher explained very clearly what this meant and asked for reasons. The pupils gave reasons for variations. They explained that heat from an overhead lamp impacted on one tray; that the experiment was rushed and, hence, they were not able to establish or see how the wood lice would behave over a longer period of time. They suggested that the experiment should be continued over and beyond the lunch break. Many volunteered. The pupils' responses demonstrate higher order thinking and reasoning skills. Lively, confident teaching enables pupils to make links in their learning. Pupils have a very high respect for the teacher who makes effective and imaginative links with ICT. Pupils confidently used an electronic microscope to study in detail the wood louse's structure. Others used digital cameras to record changes and one pair used a video to record movement. All pupils work with self-assurance, interest and concentration. On the other hand, a science lesson in Year 2, which focused on healthy eating and designing a balanced diet for a lunchbox, lost some direction. The teachers' expectations were not high enough and some tasks were not well matched for the lower or higher attaining pupils.

55. Scrutiny of work highlighted some incorrect and inaccurate teaching of science. Pupils reach good levels in science in Year 1 but their learning does not progress effectively in Year 2. In Year 3, pupils cover a broad range of National Curriculum requirements but their learning is impeded

because, in order to control and manage the class effectively, the range of activities is controlled, allowing very little scope for pupils to initiate and develop their learning. Pupils' work is marked regularly but the extent to which marking helps pupils varies from very good in Year 6 to unsatisfactory where incorrect responses are marked correct.

56. The subject manager works on a part-time basis. She has carried out a useful analysis of the strengths and weaknesses, and the outcomes are planned to inform medium-term curriculum plans. There is a strong commitment by the headteacher and senior management team to identify weaknesses in the subject and improve the provision so that all pupils achieve high standards. There is the capacity to achieve this; there has already been a considerable improvement in the last two years.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Resources are very good
- The subject co-ordinator provides excellent leadership
- There are high levels of staff confidence and competence throughout the school especially in Years 4, 5 and 6.

### **Commentary**

57. Standards at the end of Year 2 are above those usually found and by the end of Year 6 they are well above expectations. Achievement is high in the infants and very high in the juniors. The 16-station computer suite is an outstanding resource and makes a significant contribution to the high standards reached by the end of Year 6. It is light, airy, and situated in an accessible part of the building where pupils can work in comfort and safety. Every classroom has its own computer, enabling classes to access information at any time. In addition, the school benefits from a high level of technological equipment, supporting teaching and enhancing pupils' learning to a very good extent.
58. In Year 2 pupils are confident users of technology, eager to talk about the advantages of using e-mail and searching the web pages. Working in pairs, pupils add to their technical skills well and readily change font, size and colour. They seek information and present findings in a variety of forms, such as pictograms. A high percentage of pupils have Internet facility in their homes and the parental contribution to pupils' learning is significant.
59. In most junior classes teachers provide stimulating and challenging tasks that capture pupils' imaginations and lead to rich and rewarding learning experiences where achievement is very high. Pupils extend the range of ICT tools they use for communication, investigation and control to a very good extent. Year 6 pupils manipulate digital images of themselves in roles from 'Macbeth', for example. Pupils are competent and confident to develop their creative ideas through ICT because of very good teaching that develops confidence, creativity and competence in equal measure for pupils of all abilities. They explain with good understanding the processes of using tools, such as the pipette, to lift a colour and alter images and the airbrush to re-create an image of Banquo's ghost. Pupils delight in enlarging images to gain understanding of pixels. Good planning and teaching makes sure that pupils build securely on prior learning. In Years 4 and 5, pupils have good opportunities to assess the value of ICT. They communicate their research findings about mini-beasts on an electronic database and compare this with making a paper database. They compare the use of a datalogger and a thermometer, making evaluative comparisons. This represents good achievement and examples of innovative, exciting practice, setting an example to others.

60. Teaching is good overall and pupils achieve well in Years 1 and 2. There is a dip in learning in Year 3, where teacher confidence is less secure. Pupils' learning accelerates rapidly in Year 4 and again in Year 6. The quality of teaching in both classes is very high, with exceptional subject expertise and understanding of how children learn. Achievement is good. There are thorough and detailed assessment procedures and in the best lessons, teachers frequently check pupils' understanding through good questioning and close observation of their work.
61. There has been considerable improvement in standards, provision, teaching and attainment since the last inspection. This is as a direct result of strong and dynamic leadership of the co-ordinator who is constantly striving for higher standards and better quality of provision. He leads by example and great enthusiasm. He provides a very good role model for staff. A programme of staff training has led to the development of staff confidence to a good degree.
62. The development of the school's web site is a most impressive feature of the subject, providing excellent links between members of staff, parents and pupils. It provides good examples of pupils' work in all curriculum areas and pupils are very proud to show their achievements.

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

63. Pupils and staff have become conversant with the use of ICT for an increasingly wide, varied and exciting range of purposes. Classroom and corridor displays, lessons, pupils' books, documents and discussions with pupils and teachers show that ICT is very well integrated into the curriculum, particularly in Years 4, 5 and 6. Cross-curricular links are very strong. Pupils use word processing skills to produce stories, poems and letters in English. They draft, edit and refine their work to a good extent. Pupils carry out research into geography, history, science and religious education using the Internet and they enjoy finding ways of recording their information. There are particularly good examples of work in science and design and technology, when pupils made moving toys in Year 5.

### **HUMANITIES**

64. In humanities, timetable arrangements made it impossible to inspect geography. Religious education was inspected by the diocese under Section 23.

#### **History**

Provision in history is **good**.

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

- Older pupils use debate and empathy well, demonstrating a good understanding of life in the past and how it compares with today
- Research skills and the interpretation of historical evidence are taught well
- The curriculum is interesting and imaginative and pupils are encouraged to find things out themselves
- The school makes good use of the locality and visitors to school
- Information and communication technology supports the subject very well

#### **Commentary**

65. No history was observed in the infants and there no books from last year's pupils in Year 2 were seen so no judgement on standards can be made. The planning shows that pupils are provided with an appropriate curriculum enriched with local visits and a good range of resources. The two lessons observed in the juniors and an analysis of the pupils' books from last year indicates that pupils' standards are higher than average. In a lesson in Year 5, for example, the more able pupils gave reasoned arguments to support or disagree with the statement; "Schooling was better

in Victorian times.” This they achieved well, as demonstrated in the “hot seating” at the end of the lesson with two pupils and the teacher in the hot seat. Others in the class created a comparative table showing similarities and differences between today’s and Victorian schooling. Lots of humour and a good understanding of how to access information make this a successful lesson where pupils achieved well. The teaching was good in both lessons observed because the teachers know the subject well, have good relationships with their pupils and encourage debate.

66. There is a rich curriculum based on pupils finding things out for themselves. In most classes throughout the school pupils’ work shows that the teachers match the work to the abilities of the pupils, including those with special educational needs. Pupils have a very good general knowledge and bring this to their lessons. Their very good attitudes to their work enables them to continue their learning outside the school day with excellent support from their parents. The pupils make the most of their visits to, for example, the Victorian workhouse and their wide vocabulary and command of different writing styles makes their written work interesting and thoughtful. The presentation of the work, however, is not always as good as it should be and teachers do not do enough to insist on good secretarial skills.

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

67. In **art and design** only one lesson was observed in which pupils in Year 1 were showed skills in using crayon and charcoal to draw a self-portrait at a higher than average level for their age, making good progress and achieving well. The teacher had given good instructions of how to make accurate observations of the face, provided a range of appropriate resources and provided independence to select and choose. Pupils evaluate their own and each other’s finished portraits, developing relevant language skills satisfactorily. The teacher could have intervened more effectively to further promote their critical skills for appraising.

68. Overall, the scrutiny of pupils’ work and work displayed in the school indicate that the range of art experience offered is inadequate. For example, there were few instances of studying different artists and their work. From the limited evidence available, the standard of the work seen does not appear to be high enough for these pupils. The curriculum provision is under review. The school has been aware of this shortcoming and identified art and design as a school improvement plan priority for 2002/3. A major programme of in-service training for staff in the spring term and an enrichment week for pupils, have been planned. The previous co-ordinator resigned and the subject is presently managed by an interim co-ordinator. The range of curricular opportunities has declined since the last inspection.

69. Because of timetable arrangements that block the teaching of **design and technology**, it was not possible to observe any lessons in this subject or to make judgements about the quality of the provision.

70. Only one lesson was observed in **physical education** during the inspection so there can be no overall judgement on standards or provision. In this lesson, pupils in Year 5 were performing at a higher than average level for their age, making good progress and achieving well. The teacher has established good routines including attention to safety and explained the rules of Tag Rugby very well, questioning effectively to test understanding. She extended pupils’ awareness of each other’s space by reducing the working area so pupils’ skills improved during the lesson. This was a well-planned lesson, vigorous and enjoyable where pupils added effectively to their already good standards.

71. The physical education curriculum is comprehensive and challenging. The older pupils are expected to use skills that they will need in the next stage of their learning. The staff provide a good range of activities that includes team games. Swimming is provided for one year and the juniors have the opportunity to play competitive sports in local leagues. The new subject leader manages the provision well. The resources are efficiently renewed, based on an audit of needs. The school grounds are spacious and support the subject well. There is a challenging curriculum

that progressively builds on pupils' skills. The curriculum links with other subjects, for example music and dance. There is a good range of sporting activities to support the curriculum.

## **Music**

Provision in music is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Provision has improved since the last inspection
- The juniors have access to instrumental tuition and recorder groups
- Pupils have few opportunities sing to with a live accompaniment so the quality of the singing is only satisfactory.

## **Commentary**

72. Only lessons in the infants were observed during the inspection. Pupils in Year 2 attain the expected standard for their age. In the lesson in Year 1 pupils were achieving very well, exceeding the expectations for their age because they were taught very well. The lesson was very well planned and the teacher's explanations were very clear. She has high expectations of her pupils, both in their behaviour and their achievements. Pupils were exploring expressive sounds and her very good relationships, firm and friendly management of the pupils and good use of resources enabled the pupils to create pleasing compositions in groups. Together they performed a story sequence, imitating, for example, the "glug glug" of a petrol pump. The teacher conducted the performance and the groups followed her signals very well. In Year 2 pupils are beginning to record sounds pictorially, and to explore different pitch, working at a level appropriate for their age.

73. There is an appropriate curriculum that is based on the government guidance for the subject and supported by a commercial scheme of work. However, ongoing skills such as the development of singing are not always identified in the teachers' planning.

## 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	4
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>3</b>
Pupils' achievement	4
<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>	<b>3</b>
Attendance	3
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>	<b>4</b>
The quality of teaching	4
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3
<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>4</b>
The governance of the school	2
The leadership of the headteacher	4
The leadership of other key staff	3
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).*