

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **MOWBRAY FIRST SCHOOL**

Northumberland

LEA area: Northumberland

Unique reference number: 122243

Headteacher: Mrs J E Riley

Lead inspector: Mrs J Stephenson

Dates of inspection: 2<sup>nd</sup> – 4<sup>th</sup> February 2004

Inspection number: 256978

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

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## **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Type of school:	First School
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 to 9 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	247
School address:	Stakeford Lane Guide Post Choppington Northumberland
Postcode:	NE62 5HQ
Telephone number:	01670 823198
Fax number:	01670 531329
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr A Moody
Date of previous inspection:	11 <sup>th</sup> May 1998

## **CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL**

This is an average sized first school situated in Guide Post, Northumberland. Pupils in a first school do not complete all of Key Stage 2. It is a popular school. Many children from the nearby private housing estate attend the nursery and many parents from the next village, Choppington, choose Mowbray First School as the preferred option for their children. All pupils transfer into the middle school, which is on the same site. The free school meal figure has declined over the last five years and it is now in line with the national average. Currently there is one child from a minority ethnic background. At present, there are 199 pupils with 48 children attending the nursery on a part-time basis. The attainment of children on entry to the nursery is below average. The percentage of pupils on the special educational needs register is about average. There are six pupils with statements of educational needs. Five of these children have a speech, language or hearing disability. The remaining child has cerebral palsy. This child was not in school during the week of the inspection. Recently there have been considerable improvements to the building. The school has received funding to develop a space for sports and arts. This has included a new administration block, some additional classrooms and a well-equipped hall. The school has an achievement award (2002), a Healthy School award and Investors in People.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
27384	Mrs. J. Stephenson	Lead inspector	Music Physical education Religious education
12503	Mr. M. Cundick	Lay inspector	
31622	Mrs. L. Richardson	Team inspector	Art Geography History Personal, social and health education
32130	Mrs. L. Halliday	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology (ICT)
32179	Mrs. M. Armstrong	Team inspector	English
32094	Mrs. J. Bennett	Team inspector	Science Design and technology Foundation Stage

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**Currently, this school is not as effective as it should be.** Until very recently the head teacher spent most of her time dealing with the long-term absences of many staff. This has prevented her from focusing on the important matter of raising standards. School results are low in the national tests and pupils' achievement is unsatisfactory. The head teacher, key staff and governors do not have a clear enough view of standards in order to accurately identify strengths and weaknesses in provision. As a result the key priorities identified for improvement do not focus sufficiently on improving teaching and learning. Although the school is providing an acceptable standard of education, it has serious weaknesses in these activities. The school provides unsatisfactory value for money.

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

- Most pupils do not do well enough in reading and writing and this seriously affects the standards attained in some other subjects.
- Provision for the youngest children, and for all those with special educational needs, is unsatisfactory.
- Teaching is satisfactory overall with consistently good teaching in the Year 2 class.
- Leadership at all levels is unsatisfactory because outcomes from monitoring do not accurately identify key school improvement priorities.
- Pupils are not doing well enough in science, history, geography and religious education.
- Higher attaining pupils achieve well and provision for ICT, music and pupils' personal development is good.
- The level of care for pupils is good. They behave well, and are happy and keen to come to school.

Satisfactory progress has been made against the key issues from the last inspection. There is now a sound assessment system in place that effectively tracks the progress of individual pupils. However, insufficient use is made of information to plan work for different groups of pupils and many do not achieve as much as they should. Integrated monitoring systems have been developed but there is insufficient emphasis on evaluating teaching and learning to identify key school improvement priorities. This lack of rigour has allowed weaknesses to go unchecked. Resources have improved and are now satisfactory.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

*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.*

#### **Higher attaining pupils achieve well but most other groups of pupils are underachieving.**

This is mainly because of the lack of attention given to improving the quality of teaching in reading and writing. Standards in English are low; many pupils do not have basic literacy skills and this seriously affects the standards attained in religious education, history and geography. Although standards in mathematics are below average overall, achievement is satisfactory. The very youngest children and all those with special educational needs do not make as much progress as they should

because tasks are not well matched to their learning needs or abilities. Science standards are unsatisfactory; there is too much repetition of work. The school has worked hard to improve ICT opportunities across the curriculum and pupils are making good progress. Standards in music have improved since the last inspection because of specialist teaching by the co-ordinator. In all other subjects standards are in line with expectations.

**Pupils' personal qualities are good; they behave well** and develop very good relationships with each other because of the **effective provision for their moral and social development**. **Provision for spiritual development is very good**; the positive climate allows pupils to grow and flourish, to respect others and to be respected. **Cultural development is good**. The **attendance rate is only satisfactory** because authorised absence is high. Pupils enjoy coming to school and their **attitudes to learning are generally good**.

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION

**The quality of education is satisfactory. However, there is too much unsatisfactory teaching for the youngest children and for all those with special educational needs.** The weaknesses relate back to the lack of attention and focus given to evaluating the quality of teaching, particularly in reading and writing. This leads to underachievement over time in some subjects. In too many lessons teachers do not provide work that meets pupils' needs or abilities, nor do they provide enough information on how pupils can improve and do better. There is consistently good teaching in the Year 2 class and pupils achieve well because of the good levels of challenge.

Curriculum planning is satisfactory overall. Some teachers use national frameworks for literacy and numeracy but this is not consistent throughout the school and from one year to the next. Important key literacy skills have not been fully identified in most subjects and pupils have too few opportunities to practise and reinforce their learning. The building has been improved considerably through the 'Space for Sports and Arts' project. There is a good range of activities that enhances the curriculum. The care of pupils is good; they feel safe and secure. Links with parents and the community are good. The Family Learning Initiative is successful in helping parents and children develop literacy skills through ICT.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

**Management and governance are satisfactory overall.** Monitoring systems are well structured and they involve all staff and governors. However, **leadership at all levels is unsatisfactory** because there is not enough rigour in evaluating the quality of teaching to accurately identify strengths and weaknesses, particularly in reading and writing and for the youngest children and for all pupils with special educational needs. Improvement planning does not focus precisely on tasks that will improve pupils' achievements. There has been an overly cautious approach to the allocation of funds and the effectiveness of spending decisions is not evaluated. Developments in promoting pupils' personal and social skills are effective.

## PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

A very small minority of parents are sometimes confused by the school's information and are also concerned that their children are not rewarded for consistently good behaviour. However, the inspection team found that information is good and that the school has effective behaviour systems. The vast majority of parents are very positive about the school because their children are happy and well cared for. Pupils also like their school because they have friends and enjoy playing together. All are able to talk positively about the reward systems and many speak enthusiastically about the good activities after school.



## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

This school has serious weaknesses. The most important things the school should do are:

- Improve pupils' achievements in reading and writing.
- Improve the provision for the youngest children and for those with special educational needs.
- Improve the leadership at all levels so that outcomes from monitoring accurately identify key school improvement priorities.
- Improve the quality of teaching.
- Improve pupils' achievements in science, history, geography and religious education.

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

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

#### **Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects**

**Higher attaining pupils achieve well but most other groups are underachieving.** The majority of pupils could do much better in reading and writing. Standards in mathematics are below average but achievement is satisfactory. The very youngest children and all those with special educational needs make unsatisfactory progress. Standards have declined since the last inspection.

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

- There is significant underachievement in reading and writing and this seriously affects the standards attained in most subjects.
- The very youngest children do not achieve as much as they should because tasks are not well matched to their learning needs.
- Pupils with special educational needs make unsatisfactory progress because teachers generally have low expectations and work is often undemanding and too easy.
- Pupils could do better in science, religious education, history and geography.
- Higher attaining pupils achieve well and all pupils make good progress in ICT, music and personal development.
- Pupils in the Year 2 class make good progress because teaching is effective.

#### **Commentary**

1. The 2003 national test results for seven year olds, in reading and writing, were well below average. These low standards are reflected in the pupils' English work throughout the school. The vast majority of pupils are not achieving as well as they should because they do not have basic literacy skills.
2. The school's overall trend in standards is broadly in line with the national trend. In 2002 there was an improvement in results but these better standards are not always reflected in the current work of Year 4 pupils. This year's results show a decline in all subjects, particularly in writing. The school reported that the reason for this was the higher than average number of pupils with special educational needs. However, examination of current Year 3 work does not indicate this. Too many lower attaining pupils have been identified as having special educational needs. Expectations for these pupils are too low and as a result they make unsatisfactory progress. Standards in mathematics are also well below the national average. When comparing the 2003 results with the results in schools with a similar percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals, standards are low in reading, very low in writing and average in mathematics. One pupil from a minority ethnic group is well integrated and achieves well, working alongside higher attaining pupils.
3. Standards in reading are unsatisfactory overall. Too many pupils have reading books that are too easy. This is because of a poor range of reading material and because teachers have low expectations for pupils' achievement. The approach to teaching writing skills is not good enough. Many pupils do not know how to spell correctly and handwriting skills are poor. Opportunities for pupils to practise and reinforce their language and literacy skills in other subjects are limited. Pupils do not develop these skills further through meaningful activities and, as a result, standards in religious education, history and geography are below average.
4. Although standards for mathematics are below average, achievement is satisfactory. This is because more pupils are challenged to achieve the higher levels. They work productively and, therefore progress overall is satisfactory.

5. Standards in science are below average and pupils' achievement is unsatisfactory. This is because the work that is planned for them does not effectively build upon what they already know and can do. Too many pupils copy texts and there is an over-reliance on the use of worksheets. This is because pupils do not have good literacy skills to complete work independently. The same worksheets are sometimes used in different year groups. This illustrates the unsatisfactory planned approach to the teaching of science and demonstrates why pupils make slow progress.
6. Systems for identifying pupils with special educational needs are not precise enough. Teachers have too low expectations and sometimes identify lower attaining pupils as having special needs. This results in too many pupils working on tasks that are not well matched to their abilities. Individual education plans do not promote effective learning because there are no formal procedures for taking pupils' views into account. The high level of support that pupils receive does not help them to improve as quickly as they should. This is because support from teaching assistants often lacks challenge, resulting in pupils making slow progress in their learning.
7. Higher attaining pupils do well in reading, writing, mathematics and ICT. Pupils in the Year 2 class, most of whom are higher attaining, do well because teaching is consistently good and sometimes better. The teacher sets high expectations and tasks are well planned and challenging. This is the reason why pupils in this class achieve well.
8. Children enter nursery with skills, knowledge and understanding lower than those expected for three year olds. In both the nursery and reception classes children do not achieve as much as they should. By the time they leave the reception class standards in language and literacy, mathematics, and personal and creative development are below expectations. Activities are not well matched to children's learning needs; teachers miss opportunities to improve children's speaking and listening skills; there are too few opportunities for learning out of doors and children are not given opportunities to develop independence and to make choices. Standards in all other areas of learning are in line with expectations.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	14.6 (15.3)	15.7(15.8)
writing	12.4 (14.2)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	15.4 (16.5)	16.3 (16.5)

*There were 43 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

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

Pupils have **good** attitudes towards their work. Behaviour is good and is supported successfully by the effective provision they receive for their moral and social development. Pupils' cultural development is good and spiritual development is very good. Attendance is only satisfactory because of the high, authorised absence rate.

**Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils have very good relationships with all members of the school community, which means they are happy and trust staff and others to care for them.
- Pupils have a very good understanding of their own and others' feelings because they are given frequent, well-structured opportunities to reflect.
- Pupils' behaviour in and around school is good because of the clear and consistently high expectations of staff.

- Pupils have good attitudes in lessons, which means they listen well and try their best with their work.

## Commentary

9. At the time of the last inspection attitudes were good but behaviour and pupils' understanding of their own and other cultures needed improving. There have been significant staff absences over a period of many years, which resulted in a deterioration in pupils' attitudes to school. The current head teacher rightly devoted much of her time to improving opportunities for pupils' personal and social development and this aspect is now very good. Pupils enjoy coming to school because of the warm, caring and positive atmosphere and the interesting opportunities provided by the head teacher and staff. They now have good levels of confidence and an eagerness to take part in the life of the school.
10. Pupils build very good relationships with each other and all members of staff at the school. They rate their friendships with each other highly, stating that this is the main reason why they enjoy coming to the school so much. They trust the staff and speak confidently about being able to solve any relationship problem, either themselves, with the help of older pupils such as a 'Mowbray Mate', or a member of staff. They look forward to play and other social times at school, and enjoy their time together because it is relaxed and happy. In large group sessions such as assemblies there is a strong sense of unity and pupils clearly care for each other. In lessons pupils often benefit from these very good relationships because they are co-operative, and willing to share and to help each other. Pupils are supportive and some are able to make positive comments that enable them to improve their work.
11. Pupils' moral development is good. They have a clear understanding of right and wrong and behave well. This is because of teachers' high expectations and the school's consistent, positive approach to promoting good behaviour.
12. Spiritual development is very good and pupils' ability to reflect on their own feelings and the feelings of others is very good. This is developed very effectively through assemblies led by the head teacher as well as through some religious education lessons. In assemblies pupils are given time to reflect on their own actions with prompts from the head teacher to guide their thinking, which makes this particularly good. In lessons pupils demonstrate their good understanding of their own and others' feelings in the empathy they show for people who are unhappy or facing difficult problems. Increasingly pupils are able to respond to each other in a thoughtful and sensitive manner. Pupils respond well to planned opportunities in designated lessons to share feelings with others. They are confident to express their thoughts, and listen to others respectfully and with interest.
13. Good experiences are offered to pupils to learn about their own culture particularly through the increasingly rich arts curriculum and local visits. Extensive opportunities are provided for pupils to learn about other cultures through the school's international links and pupils enjoy finding out about the lives and traditions of families in their linked school in Africa.
14. Pupils' behaviour is good overall and frequently very good. They have a well-developed sense of right and wrong and a good understanding of fair principles. This is because staff have consistently high expectations which are made clear to pupils positively and frequently. The school premises are litter-free with no signs of vandalism. Pupils have a good understanding of the systems in school that encourage them to behave well. They are respectful towards staff and value the praise and rewards given for good behaviour and effort. Pupils behave well around school. This is because the head teacher and all staff have an active approach to promoting positive behaviour and levels of supervision are just right. Pupils' good behaviour has a positive effect in the classroom, disruptions to learning are rare and any that do occur are dealt with quickly, calmly and effectively.

15. As a result of the positive and encouraging atmosphere in school, pupils have good attitudes in lessons. They have good levels of self-esteem and confidence which means they listen and participate well. The good relationships with staff and the respect they have for them result in pupils concentrating and trying their best even when the work is not well matched to their ability.
16. A pupil from a minority ethnic background is fully involved in lessons and in friendship groups.

## Attendance

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

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	8.5	School data	0.1
National data	5.4	National data	0.4

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

**The pupils' attendance rate is satisfactory.** There is a higher than average number of pupils who take holidays in school time and therefore authorised absence is high. The head teacher and governors are actively trying to address this through effective communication with parents.

## Exclusions

### *Ethnic background of pupils*

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
Chinese

### *Exclusions in the last school year*

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
198	4	0
1	0	0

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

There were four fixed term exclusions, which involved one pupil. The school handled the exclusions well and followed procedures correctly.

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is **satisfactory**. However, there are important weaknesses in teaching, particularly for the youngest children. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is unsatisfactory. The curriculum is satisfactory overall and there is a good range of activities outside school to support learning. The building has been improved considerably and there are now good quality indoor facilities for learning. The level of care for pupils is good and the school has a good partnership with parents.

## Teaching and learning

Teaching is **satisfactory** overall. There is consistently good teaching in the Year 2 class. Too much teaching does not match pupils' needs well enough.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching in the Foundation Stage is unsatisfactory.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is unsatisfactory.
- Teaching is satisfactory overall, with a large majority of the good teaching seen in the Year 2 class.
- Assessments are not used effectively and tasks do not move learning forward fast enough.
- Pupils are given too little guidance on what they need to do to improve.
- Relationships are very good and teachers manage behaviour well.

## Commentary

17. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is unsatisfactory. This is because teachers' subject knowledge is limited, resulting in activities not being well matched to the learning needs of the children. Children make slow progress with the development of speaking and listening skills because too many opportunities to develop language are missed. Children have insufficient access to activities which promote independent learning, resulting in them relying too heavily on adult direction.
18. Teaching in most year groups is satisfactory except in the Year 2 class where it is consistently good. Where teaching is satisfactory, teachers seek to make the work interesting, resulting in most pupils engaging well. However, planning does not always build upon prior learning, and this results in too much teaching that does not match pupils' needs well enough. Teachers give clear instructions and explanations and this means that most pupils are clear about what they are expected to learn. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is unsatisfactory because the school does not have clearly defined procedures for the identification of those with special educational needs, and targets in individual education plans are not focused on the unique needs of individual pupils. This results in low expectations being set and a slow pace to pupils' learning. Teaching assistants provide satisfactory support but the lack of challenging questioning means that lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs do not achieve as well as they could.
19. There is consistently good teaching in the Year 2 class. Where teaching is effective, high expectations are set for all pupils and well-planned tasks based on prior attainment help pupils to move on in their learning. Teaching methods are imaginative and lead to a high level of interest from most pupils. They listen attentively and work with considerable effort and concentration. Higher attaining pupils are challenged effectively and this results in them achieving well in English, mathematics and ICT. A good example of this was seen in a Year 2 mathematics lesson, where pupils used mental calculation strategies well to add and subtract single digits from three-digit numbers. Pupils responded well to the challenge and worked productively. Good use of questioning and encouragement engages pupils of all abilities. Well-focused plenary sessions enable teachers to assess what pupils have learned and to plan future work appropriately.
20. Insufficient use is made of assessment in planning pupils' work, resulting in teachers having too little knowledge of pupils' progress and achievements. Marking and individual pupil target setting are not used consistently throughout the school, resulting in the majority of pupils being unsure about what they need to do to improve. An example of this was seen in the lack of guidance pupils received to improve handwriting skills, resulting in the majority of pupils making unsatisfactory progress as they move through the school. Where teaching was good, pupils received well-focused comments that helped them to judge the success of their work.
21. Procedures for monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching and learning are unsatisfactory because the leadership of the head teacher and other key staff has failed to identify the main priorities for improvement. This lack of rigour has resulted in ineffective practice in the Foundation Stage and too many pupils underachieving in reading and writing.

22. Relationships are very good and this is strength. Teachers manage behaviour well and this means pupils are clear about how they are expected to behave. Where teaching is effective, attitudes to learning are good, resulting in pupils being keen to achieve as well as they can.

**Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 44 lessons**

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0	3 (7%)	10 (23%)	28 (64%)	3 (7%)	0	0

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

**The curriculum**

Curriculum provision overall is **satisfactory**. A **good** range of activities is provided beyond the school day to support pupils’ learning. The quality of accommodation is now **good** and teaching resources have been **improved** and are now satisfactory. However, provision for pupils with special educational needs is **unsatisfactory**.

**Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The system for identifying pupils with special educational needs is unsatisfactory and the curriculum does not effectively meet their needs.
- In some subjects there is insufficient guidance for teachers. There is not a consistent use of national frameworks for literacy and numeracy. This leads to inconsistencies in planning and teaching.
- The provision for children’s personal, social and health education is good.
- A good range of learning opportunities is provided through a variety of activities outside of the school day. This provides rich experience for pupils.
- The accommodation has improved considerably and is now good and very accessible to all pupils.

**Commentary**

23. Systems for identifying special educational needs are unsatisfactory and this results in too many pupils working on tasks that are not well matched to their abilities. Individual education plans do not promote effective learning because there are no formal procedures for taking pupils’ views into account. This results in pupils being unsure of what they need to do to improve. The high level of support for pupils with special educational needs does not help them improve as quickly as they should. This is because support from teaching assistants often lacks challenge, resulting in pupils making slow progress in their learning. The newly appointed co-ordinator for special educational needs has accurately identified key areas for development and this is an improvement on the previous inspection.
24. In some subjects there is insufficient guidance for teachers. Key skills have not been identified, which results in ineffective planning and inconsistencies in teaching across the school. As a result tasks are not always well matched to pupils’ needs. This particularly impacts upon the progress made by the youngest children and those with special educational needs who require specific skills based development.
25. There is very good provision for pupils’ personal, social and health education, which has been strengthened in recent years as the school has worked successfully to achieve the Healthy Schools’ award. This has resulted in a very well planned and structured curriculum which is taught through designated lessons and also, very effectively, through most other subjects. Teachers are skilful at building in good opportunities for pupils to develop and practise their understanding and skills across the curriculum. An example of this was when

older pupils shared their knowledge of life in Uganda with members of the local church. These experiences are contributing very well to higher ability pupils' good levels of confidence in talking about their work.

26. Standards and achievement in personal, social and health education are good. Discussions with Year 2 pupils showed very good knowledge of healthy living. They know about balanced diets and the good effects of exercise.
27. The school provides good opportunities for pupils to develop a sense of responsibility through 'Mowbray Mates'. Although there is no school council, pupils are involved well in decisions about improvements. For example, pupils have drawn up plans of their ideas to improve outdoor play and learning facilities.
28. There is a good range of activities provided to support learning beyond the school day. These include a very good focus on the development of family learning. Sessions are organised to promote parents' skills in supporting their children's learning of literacy and numeracy skills. These sessions are well attended and parents value them highly, reporting that there has been an increase in their ability to support their children at home. For example, a parent with English as a second language reported that the sessions had increased her own confidence and skills and would also enable her to help her child. The promotion of the arts is good with a range of initiatives being offered to children. The teaching of music is further supported by the provision of workshops, choir, tuition and musical events. Provision for physical development through sports is currently being developed. In addition to team games, the school provides training sessions for karate and has provided whole-school initiatives such as the development of circus skills.
29. An improvement to the building since the last inspection has significantly enhanced the provision, and the accommodation is now good. The new 'Space for Sports and the Arts' has enhanced provision in the school. The range of sports offered is currently being extended. They now include football, netball and karate. Promotion of the arts is good. In the current year the school has been involved in various projects, which include ceramics, making stained glass windows and digital photography to support literacy. There is access for all children to the building, including those with disabilities.
30. There are sound resources for all curriculum subjects. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Increased resources have improved provision, especially for ICT. The new suite and other facilities are beginning to have a positive impact upon the quality of education across the curriculum. This enhancement of subject delivery through the use of ICT was seen in several subjects such as English, mathematics and art. For example, programs were used to enable the children to develop skills related to the use of colour. External providers, such as artists in residence, sports coaches and family learning providers, are used well to enrich the curriculum.

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

Pupils are well cared for. They feel safe, secure and confident. The learning environment is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The school provides a safe, secure and supportive learning environment because the head teacher has devoted her time to achieving this.
- There are confident relationships between pupils and staff.
- There are good opportunities for pupils to take on roles of responsibility.
- The system for identifying pupils with special educational needs is unsatisfactory.
- Systems for monitoring academic progress are satisfactory but the information is not effectively used to help pupils improve their learning.



## Commentary

31. Children are confident when they start the nursery because of effective home visits and the direct involvement of parents. There are detailed reports about pupils' academic and personal development but these do not effectively inform strategies for improving pupils' learning.
32. Pupils are confident in their relationships with staff, enabling them to seek support in their understanding of tasks and to share any personal concerns. They respect behaviour expectations and appreciate the care and support they receive. They value the recognition of their achievements in both academic and personal development and are keen to respond both to the questioning by staff and to the opportunities to take on roles of responsibility. Mowbray Mates are successful in developing the personal esteem of the older pupil volunteers and the confidence of the younger pupils that they support. The school actively encourages pupils' involvement in school life and the wider community and plans to develop the Mowbray Mates concept into a school council as a vehicle for pupils' ideas for school improvements and to raise their self-confidence.
33. Health and safety appraisals and risk assessments are both thorough and regularly reviewed. Child protection procedures are shared by all staff and are both discreet and effective. Relationships between pupils are good. Instances of bullying are apparently few and are promptly and effectively addressed by staff if they occur.

## Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Links with parents are **good**. There is a positive and supportive relationship between home and school. There are **good** links with the local community and with other schools.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is regular and informative communication between home and school.
- There are clear and detailed reports on pupils' progress, together with opportunities for parents to consult with staff.
- The school encourages parents to be active in their own learning and this is particularly successful with family learning projects.
- There are good links with the community.

## Commentary

34. Parents are very positive about the school, the support they receive and the education it provides for their children. The school in turn works hard to keep them informed and involved. Annual and termly reports are detailed in their content, and both formal and informal opportunities are offered to parents to consult on their child's academic progress and wider aspects of their development, including some setting of targets. The school offers an 'open door' for staff consultation and parents have confidence in the response from the school to any of their concerns or suggestions that they might present.
35. Parents are particularly supportive of the behaviour strategy adopted by the school, which results in a confident learning environment for their children. They are also confident that any instances of bullying will be promptly and effectively addressed. The vast majority of parents appreciate the reward system and they recognise that this supports pupils' good attitudes across a range of aspects within school.
36. There is a small but active Parent Teacher Association which provides both social and fund-raising activities to support the school in acquiring additional teaching resources. The school works hard to encourage wider parental involvement in the life of the school through regular newsletters and the introduction of a number of family learning initiatives. There is a small but

steady increase in parents attending these courses. The current initiative is successful in helping parents and children develop literacy skills through ICT. Parents also appreciate that homework is set at an appropriate level and is timetabled.

37. Parents particularly appreciate the process for the induction of children into the nursery, which involves pre-start home visits. This helps very young children to be confident when starting school. Parents are also appreciative of their direct involvement in the preparation for, and transfer of, pupils to the middle school.
38. The school makes constructive use of a number of community resources, including local business, the library and the community centre. This enhances topic work and provides social links through activities such as choir performances and the dedication of harvest gifts. There are also strong links with local churches who provide direct input into the spiritual and moral aspects of the curriculum. Parents are actively encouraged to support and become directly involved in these community activities.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership of the school is **unsatisfactory**. Management and governance are **satisfactory** overall.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is insufficient emphasis on educational priorities in strategic planning which results in a lack of focus on raising standards.
- The school's systems for monitoring and evaluation do not accurately identify key strengths and weaknesses.
- The school does not evaluate the effectiveness of spending decisions, particularly those related to special educational needs.
- There have been good improvements in the provision for some subjects as a result of the head teacher's success in involving the school in major initiatives and the careful resource management of the governing body.

### Commentary

39. The head teacher has been very sensitive to the needs of staff, most of whom were adversely affected by events prior to the previous inspection that had a serious effect on staff morale and health. At the time of taking up post the current head teacher quite rightly identified the need to build staff relationships and teams in order to restore staff confidence and enable the school to move forward. She also saw the negative impact that staff absences were having on pupils' attitudes and behaviour and had a strong and clear commitment to improving these areas. She has been successful in achieving these goals for, although the health of a small number of staff still results in extended absences, staff support each other and work together well and pupils' attitudes and behaviour are now good.
40. All staff have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities and how they contribute to school improvement. This has been strengthened further by the school's achievement of the Investor in People award, which has been very successful in making sure that all members of the staff team, including teaching assistants, know the school's aims and the part they play in achieving them. A small number of subject leaders, such as in ICT, music and art, have had good support and training to improve the quality of provision and the standards of pupils' work. Most take part in subject network meetings but too few have had appropriate training to enable them to identify the key strengths and weaknesses in their subjects that will bring about improvements in standards, particularly those relating to the quality of teaching and learning. In addition the head teacher has been too slow in shifting the emphasis from building relationships to improving pupils' achievement.

41. The school has a framework for strategic planning. However, it has limited impact on raising standards and improving pupils' achievement because key priorities such as improving standards in reading and writing are insufficiently emphasised. All subject leaders draw up an annual development plan for their subject but the key strands for whole school improvement are not taken through to the strategic plan. Day-to-day budget management procedures are efficient but the strategic management of the budget is not directly linked to pupils' achievement. A large planned budget surplus has built up to cover the school's contribution to the recent building extension and improvements to facilities. Despite the governors' and head teacher's best efforts, exact costs are not yet known which has led them to adopt an overly cautious approach to the allocation of funds to other improvements. Principles of best value are applied appropriately when purchasing goods and services. However, the head teacher and governors have not yet begun to evaluate the effectiveness of spending decisions such as those related to the higher than average number of teaching and support assistants that work with pupils with special needs.
42. Governors support the school well and they work effectively with the head teacher and staff to achieve their aims. A good example of this has been the significant improvement in the school's climate for learning, the development of very good relationships and pupils' behaviour since the last inspection.
43. The school has appropriate systems in place for monitoring a wide range of school activities and these involve all staff and governors. The involvement of governors has improved significantly since the last inspection and it is now good. All governors are linked to subjects or aspects of school life such as assessment and special needs and they have begun to develop their knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses through regular meetings with subject and aspect leaders. Their improved knowledge led them to challenge the head teacher and staff to explain the drop in the standards of pupils in the national tests in 2003. This has resulted in the sharper focus on raising attainment in reading and writing, which is outlined in the English subject leader's action plan, but not the school's strategic plan.
44. The last inspection report identified the need to improve the programme for monitoring teaching and learning. Monitoring systems are soundly structured and involve the head teacher, senior teachers and subject leaders. It follows a regular cycle and meets performance management requirements. A very limited number of key points for monitoring have focused on improving teachers' work. There has not been enough rigour in evaluating the quality of teaching and learning to accurately identify strengths and weaknesses. As a result, too many pupils are under-achieving, particularly in reading and writing, and the provision for the youngest children and for all pupils with special educational needs is unsatisfactory. This is now a serious weakness.
45. The head teacher's success in involving the school in initiatives such as 'Space for Sports and the Arts' has been good. Pupils now have good quality indoor facilities for learning. This has effectively improved provision for physical education and ICT. The school makes good use of the additional space for teaching and learning and this is beginning to have a positive impact on standards. For example, there is a well-equipped ICT suite which gives pupils access to a good range of ICT tools, staff skills have been increased through appropriate training, and planning is designed to help pupils develop their skills through activities that are well linked to other areas of the curriculum. Consequently standards in ICT have risen and pupils' progress is good. Standards have also risen in physical education because pupils now have regular lessons and staff training has been appropriately linked to making the best of the new facilities.

## Financial information

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

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	543,276
Total expenditure	529,171
Expenditure per pupil	2,059

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	81,808
Balance carried forward to the next	95,913

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

### AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

46. Children enter nursery with standards that are below those expected in language and communication and mathematical development. They make unsatisfactory progress in these aspects of learning, and by the end of the reception year, standards remain below those expected for their age. Children make satisfactory progress and attain standards that are in line with those expected nationally in physical development, knowledge and understanding of the world and social and emotional development. Standards attained in creative development and personal development are below those expected for their age because children have too few opportunities to make choices and to behave independently.
47. Children in the Foundation Stage make **unsatisfactory progress** overall. There is too much teaching that is unsatisfactory. Teachers do not plan activities that are consistently well matched to the learning needs of the children and too many opportunities to develop language skills are missed.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Activities are not well matched to children's learning needs and too few opportunities are provided for learning out of doors.
- Opportunities for children to develop their language and communication skills are not well planned.
- Children have too few opportunities to develop independence and to make choices.
- The good quality of relationships enables the children to make satisfactory progress in their social and emotional development.
- Children have positive attitudes to their learning.

#### Commentary

48. Overall teaching is unsatisfactory. Teachers plan an appropriate range of play activities and internal space is used well. However, insufficient use is made of the external environment to support children's learning and this limits the progress that they make. For example, in a reception science lesson in which children were learning about the force exerted by air under pressure, opportunities for children to experience the force of the wind by investigating out of doors were missed.
49. Planned activities are not consistently well matched to children's learning needs. For example, nursery children with poor pencil control are asked to copy words from cards, and more able children in reception are asked to colour in letter shapes. As a result children's skills are not built upon because work is either too difficult or it lacks challenge.
50. Opportunities for children to improve their speaking and listening skills are missed. Staff do not consistently use open-ended questions, such as "What...?", "Why...?" and "How...?", in order to encourage children to extend their language by explaining their ideas. Approaches to teaching writing are not well established. Good opportunities are provided for children to 'write' independently and as a result nursery children are confident to use marks on paper to convey meaning. However, teaching approaches do not build on children's learning. Strategies to help children to use their developing knowledge of sounds and words in their writing are not clearly established. As a result, children do not make satisfactory progress.

51. Children have appropriate opportunities to work at activities that they select for themselves. However, too many activities are over-directed by adults and this limits the opportunities for children to develop their independence and creativity. For example, nursery children select collage materials from the range chosen for them by staff, and they take their snack when instructed to do so. Children demonstrate initiative by attempting to take their own paintings from the easel in order to put them to dry, but too often staff intervene and children do not have the opportunities to learn how to be independent in their work.
52. There are good systems to help children settle quickly into nursery. Relationships are good and children quickly grow in confidence and self-esteem. Staff have high expectations of children's behaviour and they provide good role models. As a result children make good progress in their social and emotional development. They have good attitudes to learning. They choose between the activities available to them, using their time well. They listen carefully to what adults say, and they try hard, working with care and concentration.
53. Leadership of the Foundation Stage is unsatisfactory. There is not a clear view of standards in order to accurately identify strengths and weaknesses in provision and key priorities identified for improvement do not focus sufficiently upon improving teaching and learning.

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

Provision for personal, social and emotional development is **satisfactory** overall.

### **Main strengths and weakness**

- Induction procedures are good. As a result children quickly settle into the nursery.
- Relationships are good. Children quickly grow in confidence and learn to get on well with others.
- There are too few opportunities for children to be independent and to make choices. This limits their progress in this aspect of their development.

### **Commentary**

54. Staff use the information from home visits to plan activities that reflect the interests of individual children. As a result, children settle well into nursery. Teaching is satisfactory overall because staff provide good role-models. They listen to children and respond sensitively to their ideas. They have high expectations of behaviour. Consequently children grow in confidence. However, adults make too many decisions for children. This limits their ability to make sensible choices or to learn to behave with independence.

## **COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY**

Provision for communication, language and literacy is **unsatisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There are too few opportunities for children to develop their speaking and listening skills.
- There are appropriate opportunities offered to children to 'write' for a purpose within their play but strategies to improve children's writing skills are under-developed.

### **Commentary**

55. Teaching is unsatisfactory because adults do not capitalise on opportunities to develop children's speaking and listening skills. For example, they do not use open-ended questions consistently when working with children. Support staff are not well deployed at group times, particularly in the nursery. As a result the size of groups are too big which means that children have fewer opportunities to be actively involved.

56. There is appropriate emphasis on children's early writing and staff provide opportunities for them to use marks and symbols for a purpose within their play. However, there are no clearly understood strategies for helping children use their growing knowledge of sounds and words to develop their writing. Strategies to develop pencil skills and accurate letter formation require further development. Too often tasks are not well matched to children's stage of development.

## **MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision for mathematical development is **unsatisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Activities are not well matched to the learning needs of children; therefore prior learning is not consistently built upon.
- There are too few opportunities for children to develop their mathematical understanding across the day.

### **Commentary**

57. Teaching is unsatisfactory because staff do not accurately assess children's learning and plan activities that extend their understanding. For example, in a reception lesson on shape, more able children, who were able to recognise common two-dimensional shapes and identify some of their properties, were asked to colour in for a long period of time. This limited their learning.
58. Procedures are well established and teachers provide appropriate play-based activities from which children can choose. However, teachers sometimes miss opportunities for children to develop their mathematical thinking. For example, there were missed opportunities in 'Percy the Park-Keeper's Shed' for children to count, to sort, to match or to measure, within their play.

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

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children have an appropriate range of opportunities to investigate, to construct and to use ICT.
- There are too few opportunities provided for children to learn out of doors.

### **Commentary**

59. Teaching is satisfactory overall. Children learn to operate simple computer programs and use these to support their learning. They know how to use the mouse to bring about changes on the screen, and they show good control of the cursor. They enjoy exploring materials on the nature table using magnifying glasses and they construct bridges, towers and roadways with blocks showing good levels of concentration. However, children have too few opportunities to regularly work out of doors and this limits their opportunities for investigating the natural world and for constructing on a large scale.

## PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision for physical development is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Through physical education lessons children learn to move with developing control.
- Nursery activities enable children to develop good control of tools and small apparatus.
- Planning to develop good pencil control is not good enough.
- Children have too few opportunities for learning out of doors.

### Commentary

60. Teaching is satisfactory overall. Children learn to move safely in a range of ways and to use tools such as paintbrushes, glue sticks, hammers and nails with increasing control. Strategies to help children to develop good pencil control and accurate letter formation are not well planned and therefore progress in this aspect of physical development is unsatisfactory. Children have too few opportunities to extend their physical skills by learning out of doors.

## CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision for creative development is **unsatisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is an appropriate range of play activities provided.
- Too many activities are adult-directed which limits children's creative development.

### Commentary

61. Teaching is unsatisfactory overall because adults direct too many activities. Teachers plan an appropriate range of activities in which children can explore musical instruments, record their ideas in paint, and take on roles within imaginative play. However, too often children's creative ideas are limited because adults make choices for them.

## SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

### ENGLISH

Provision for English is **unsatisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in reading and writing are well below average in Year 2 and below average in Year 4.
- Tasks are not well matched to learning needs, resulting in middle and lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs making unsatisfactory progress.
- Teaching is satisfactory overall, with some good teaching in the Year 2 class.
- Insufficient use is made of assessment in planning pupils' work.
- There are limited opportunities to develop literacy skills across the curriculum.

### Commentary

62. Standards in reading are unsatisfactory overall. Younger pupils find it difficult to express opinions about their reading because speaking skills are under-developed and they do not have a clear understanding of what they are reading. Most use picture clues because they find it



difficult to decipher new words. In Year 4, many pupils are still hesitant readers because basic reading skills are not good enough. Higher attaining pupils in Years 2 and 4 achieve well because they enjoy reading and they can discuss preferences in a range of texts. Pupils with special educational needs make much too slow progress because texts are not well matched to their abilities and in many instances pupils retain reading books for too long. This results in them losing interest in their reading. There is a lack of opportunity for all pupils to respond to non-fiction because the school library does not provide a satisfactory range of reference materials. This results in pupils being unable to develop an appreciation of non-fiction or to develop their literacy skills across the curriculum.

63. Writing continues to be a key area for development. Higher attaining pupils achieve well in Years 2 and 4, but there is significant underachievement overall. Where achievement is unsatisfactory the approach to teaching writing skills is not structured enough. For example, pupils are not taught spelling strategies systematically and this limits the quality of their writing. The range of writing opportunities is not wide enough, resulting in an over-reliance on mundane worksheets. Where pupils make good progress, writing tasks are interesting and varied. Pupils use punctuation accurately and use imaginative vocabulary in their writing. Handwriting skills are well below average in all year groups because expectations are not high enough. An exception to this was seen in Year 4 where a minority of pupils work hard to use a neat, joined-up style when writing for a variety of purposes.
64. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall with some good teaching in Year 2. Where teaching is effective, there is clear recap on previous learning, which helps pupils consolidate skills and look forward to new learning. Teaching is lively and interesting and this leads to a high level of interest from most pupils. A good example of this was seen in Year 2 where pupils work together productively to discuss the key features of well-known characters from traditional tales and then use their knowledge to prepare 'Rumpelstiltskin Wanted Posters'. Where teaching is less effective, tasks are not well matched to learning needs and pupils of average and lower ability and those with special educational needs underachieve because assessment is not used well to plan future learning. Marking and individual pupil target setting do not give pupils an accurate indication of what they need to do to improve. When time is not used well there is a lack of structure to literacy lessons. When this is the case, many pupils do not work as productively as they might. The use of the literacy national framework is not consistent across the school or from one year to the next. This leads to inconsistencies in teaching. Systems for evaluating the quality of provision have failed to identify priorities for improving teaching and learning. This has resulted in too many children underachieving in reading and writing.
65. Teaching assistants are effective and, overall, they make a satisfactory contribution to learning. For example, there is appropriate support for the one child who has English as an additional language and who participates fully in class discussions. However, the high level of support for pupils with special educational needs does not help them improve as quickly as they should because the level of challenge in tasks is not high enough.

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

66. Opportunities for developing literacy skills across the curriculum are limited and this restricts the progress pupils make in other subject areas. The school has implemented a range of approaches to promote literacy through the home and school partnership. A good example of this was seen in the successful Family Learning Initiative, which aims to help parents and children develop literacy skills through ICT.

## MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **unsatisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Assessment of pupils' progress and their learning is unsatisfactory.
- There is insufficient guidance for teachers which results in inconsistencies in teaching.
- Systems for monitoring are in place but there is insufficient focus upon improving teaching and learning.
- There is a good level of challenge for the higher attaining pupils.

### Commentary

67. Standards in the 2003 national tests were below average and achievement was satisfactory. Work seen during the inspection was also below expectations for pupils in Years 2 and 4. However, achievement was satisfactory because of the good level of challenge for all higher attaining pupils and for some middle attaining pupils.
68. Assessment of pupils' progress and their learning needs is unsatisfactory. Medium-term and short-term assessments have not been developed and there is a lack of a consistent whole-school approach. Consequently, teachers do not have a clear understanding of the next steps that pupils need to take. This results in tasks not being well matched to pupils' needs and as a result lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs make slow progress. Marking and individual target setting do not give pupils an accurate indication of what they need to do to improve. Sometimes work is marked as correct when it is wrong. This shows a lack of thoroughness and attention to detail. Lower achieving pupils make too many errors before teachers intervene. This slows the pace of learning for these pupils. For example, a pupil completed a series of calculations, all of which were wrong. Apart from the teacher's written comment there was no follow-up work to ensure that the pupil's misconceptions had been addressed.
69. There is insufficient guidance for teachers. The use of the national framework to support teaching and planning is not effectively used by most teachers and this results in inconsistencies in teaching which affects continuity and progression of skills. For example, there is not a standardised whole-school approach to the teaching of calculation. Some pupils complete difficult addition sums and then go on to complete easier and simpler sums. There is often a lack of progression across year groups and key stages. For example, pupils in Year 3 repeat the same tasks set in Key Stage 1 for basic number work and fractions. A reliance on published schemes affects the quality of the tasks provided for pupils and the match of tasks to pupils' abilities.
70. Sound systems of monitoring are in place. They include the analysis of data, the scrutiny of children's work and some monitoring of teaching and learning. The co-ordinator has worked hard to establish her monitoring and has ensured that the outcomes of her analysis have informed the numeracy action plan. This has then been appropriately followed up. For example, problem solving has been identified as a priority for development and subsequently the subject leader has compiled guidance for staff and organised relevant training. There have been good links developed with the national strategy consultants, the middle school and local primary schools, which has increased the co-ordinator's expertise. This has improved the provision for mathematics. However, as yet there has been insufficient training for the co-ordinator on the identification of key criteria essential to improve pupils' progress and achievement.
71. There is a good level of challenge for the higher attaining pupils. They achieve well. Work is well matched to abilities and pupils work productively and make satisfactory progress. They display a good grasp of the basic skills. For example, in Year 4 they understand that division is the

inverse of multiplication. They are able to competently use standard methods for addition, subtraction, multiplication and division.

72. All pupils have positive attitudes towards their learning of mathematics, and behaviour in lessons is good.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

73. Links between mathematics and other subjects are limited. Pupils have some opportunities to apply their knowledge to other subjects, for example when using pie graphs in design and technology work, but generally there are missed opportunities to reinforce mathematics skills across the curriculum. For example, in physical education, pupils were asked to think about body changes but were not encouraged to measure them.

## **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **unsatisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching does not consistently build upon and extend prior learning and therefore pupils make unsatisfactory progress.
- Activities are not always well matched to pupils' learning needs.
- Pupils are not effectively taught investigation skills.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are good. As a result they concentrate well and try hard in lessons.
- The subject leader provides appropriate support for staff.

### **Commentary**

74. Pupils make unsatisfactory progress. By the end of Key Stage 1 and Year 4 they attain standards that are below those expected for their age. This is because the work that is planned for them does not always build upon what they already know and can do. For example, in Year 1 pupils learn about growth and healthy living. They learn about the needs of babies and how they change as they grow, and they learn about the foods that are good for them. When pupils study this topic again in Year 2 too much time is spent covering the same work. This slows the pace of pupils' learning.
75. Pupils' work is regularly marked but the quality is unsatisfactory. It does not consistently extend children's learning or help them to understand what they need to do to improve.
76. Activities are not well matched to the needs of pupils. Too much use is made of worksheets and too often lower attaining pupils are asked to copy work that has been written by the teacher. This contributes to the slow progress pupils make in their writing and results in activities being repeated. For example, a worksheet about 'the way our bodies can move' was completed by reception children and was used again in Year 1 and again in Year 2 as pupils studied various science-related topics. This task provided little challenge for the pupils as it was not adapted to meet their learning needs and neither did it build upon their prior learning.
77. Although long-term planning shows the science topics that pupils will study, teachers do not have sufficient guidance to help them to teach investigation skills. For example, Year 3 and Year 4 pupils study electricity in the same way. They are required to test materials and record their answers in a table. Teaching does not challenge Year 4 pupils to extend their skills, for example by requiring them to design a test to evaluate their predictions or to use recognised symbols in their circuit diagrams. As a result pupils make unsatisfactory progress in this aspect of science, particularly in mixed-age classes.

78. Pupils enjoy science lessons. They concentrate well and co-operate with one another. For example in a Year 3/4 science lesson on electricity, pupils were asked to test a set of materials to find out whether they were conductors or insulators. They took turns to connect differing materials within a simple circuit. They observed the work of others and agreed their findings. Higher attaining pupils showed appropriate levels of initiative by beginning to make generalisations and to carry out tests on additional materials in order to check these out.
79. Subject leadership has recently changed and is now good. The subject leader has a clear view of the strengths and weaknesses in the subject and is taking appropriate action to improve the confidence of staff. Resources have improved since the last inspection and levels are now satisfactory. The use of ICT to support pupils' learning is inconsistent but improving.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

Provision in ICT is **satisfactory**, and improving.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards of teaching and learning are good.
- Monitoring systems do not as yet result in an accurate knowledge of standards and achievement across the school.
- ICT is beginning to have a positive impact upon the quality of teaching and learning in a range of subjects across the curriculum.
- There has been good improvement of resources since the last inspection.

### **Commentary**

80. Standards are currently satisfactory and improving because teaching and learning are good overall. Teachers have sound knowledge of the curriculum, which enables them to plan effective lessons in which tasks are well matched to pupils' abilities. There is a good level of challenge for all pupils and lessons build successfully upon previous learning. There is a good focus on the development of staff expertise and the sharing of good practice, which is having a positive impact upon levels of staff confidence. This results in effective teaching because teachers have sound knowledge of both the curriculum and the new technology and can, therefore, plan and deliver lessons of good quality. As a consequence children display good levels of concentration, behave well and work productively.
81. Monitoring systems are in place and the outcomes are used to inform the development plan for ICT. The fairly recent development of resources, such as the suite, have resulted in a greater concentration on the evaluation of standards in Years 2 and 4, and because of this, less attention has been given to the evaluation of pupils' progress in key skills across the school. As a result the subject co-ordinator does not yet have an accurate knowledge of pupils' progress over time.
82. There has been good improvement made since the last inspection in both the quality and quantity of resources. The use of the recently developed suite is well planned, and used effectively to support teaching and learning across the curriculum. For example, during a literacy lesson, the teacher recorded lists of words suggested by the children in Year 1 to describe the characters in a story. The words were then printed out, selected by the children and used to support their descriptive writing. Involvement in initiatives, for example the digital photography project, also enhances the quality of provision and therefore the quality of pupils' learning.

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

83. ICT is being effectively integrated into the curriculum and this is beginning to bring about improvements in teaching and learning in a range of subjects. For example, the teaching of direction and the angle of turn in mathematics was enhanced by the use of appropriate resources in ICT. In Years 3 and 4, pupils have accessed websites in order to support their historical enquiry. Pupils confidently use skills in ICT and enthusiastically investigate sources, which enable them to make good progress in their knowledge and understanding.

## HUMANITIES

### Religious education

Provision in religious education is **unsatisfactory**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils find it difficult to record their work in writing because of poor writing skills.
- Lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs do not make enough progress.

#### Commentary

84. Standards in Year 2 and Year 4 are below average. This is mainly because pupils do not have good literacy skills to effectively support their learning. For example, pupils regularly use worksheets but they find them difficult to complete because they cannot always read the information or write answers to questions. Lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs sometimes copy out work that has been written by the teacher. Activities such as these are mundane and they restrict learning considerably. Overall, teachers have too low expectations for pupils. Some of the work seen in books lacks inspiration and does not encourage or enthuse pupils to be interested. For example, Year 2 pupils were asked to cut out a sequence of nativity events from a worksheet and put them in order. Whilst the majority were able to do this successfully, some of the work was untidy and messy and illustrated boredom.
85. Curriculum organisation and planning are satisfactory. The co-ordinator has found it difficult to effectively plan the curriculum because there is only a draft locally agreed syllabus. Good use has been made of national schemes of work and teaching suggestions have been given to each year group. However, it is not always clear how the work is planned for mixed year groups and sometimes there is repetition from one class to the next. The action plan is clear and appropriately identifies priorities. It rightly identifies the need to invite representatives from different faiths into school to meet and discuss issues with pupils and to visit different places of worship. This would further develop pupils' knowledge and understanding.
86. Only two lessons were observed but considerable time was given to evaluating pupils' work. Overall teaching is just satisfactory. Teachers' subject knowledge is sound and resources are used well to improve pupils' knowledge and to increase their interest and engagement. However, lower attaining pupils and those with special needs do not make enough progress because additional support is not well focused. In addition, teachers' feedback to individual pupils in whole-class sessions is not sufficiently specific and this does not help pupils to improve their learning.
87. Good links are made with assemblies and the subject contributes to the pupils' personal, social and spiritual development. For example, the theme of friendship is used during collective worship and pupils are encouraged to think about their own friends and ways to make them happier. This theme is then linked to religious education work and pupils begin to consider the friends of Jesus. Opportunities are also offered for pupils to reflect upon other different world religions, such as Judaism and Hinduism. Practical activities, such as writing their own Torah scrolls, help pupils to consider their own experiences and to explore relevant issues.

## History and Geography

Only two lessons were observed in **history**, and one in **geography**. Pupils' work was analysed and discussions took place with Year 2 and Year 4 pupils but it is not possible to make judgements about the quality of teaching in these subjects.

Provision in history and geography is **unsatisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Curriculum organisation and planning do not ensure that pupils make good enough progress in developing skills.
- Leadership is unsatisfactory overall because subject plans do not focus on improving pupils' achievement.
- Curriculum content is presented in an interesting way with effective links to pupils' good personal and social skills and cultural understanding.

### Commentary

88. Standards are below expectations and achievement is unsatisfactory for the majority of pupils in both history and geography. Higher ability pupils have good knowledge and can explain their understanding well. For example, in Year 2, higher ability pupils chose appropriate transport to travel between different places on a journey from Guide Post to Canada and the account of a Year 4 pupil written as a working child in Victorian Britain showed good knowledge of the conditions and understanding of how they would feel. The majority of middle, lower ability and pupils with special needs, however, underachieve and do not make satisfactory progress in developing geographical and historical skills. This is because their activities are more often a simple record of facts or consist of drawing and colouring as in the Year 1/ 2 lesson about the Great Fire of London. In addition, the poor literacy skills of all groups of pupils make a significant contribution to their underachievement. In both subjects pupils are increasing their knowledge and developing their understanding. However, standards are unsatisfactory because curriculum organisation and planning do not provide pupils with sufficient opportunities to learn key aspects progressively, such as specific vocabulary for geography and enquiry skills for both subjects.
89. Pupils have good attitudes to history and geography. They talk enthusiastically about finding out about the lives of people in past times and their good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development makes a significant contribution to their understanding and enjoyment. In discussions, pupils show good levels of interest in geography. This is due to the rich curriculum where pupils gain good direct knowledge of other countries through visiting teachers and teacher exchanges, and the strong links to the good provision for cultural development through their work with their partner school in Uganda, in particular.
90. Leadership in history and geography is unsatisfactory because there has been no identification of strengths and weaknesses in pupils' work, which means there is no clear view about what needs to be done to raise standards and improve achievement. The subject development plan is poor because it does not focus on key aspects that will improve the quality of teaching and learning, such as the provision of curriculum guidance to help teachers improve pupils' skills.

## CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

### Art and design and Design and technology

91. No teaching of design and technology was seen, and only one lesson in art and design were observed, and therefore it is not possible to make an overall judgement about provision.

Overall, standards in both art and design, and design and technology are in line with expected levels at the end of Key Stage 1 and Year 4. Achievement is satisfactory overall. This judgement was based on an analysis of work and discussions with Year 2 and Year 4 pupils.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Activities to develop art and design skills are well planned and pupils have appropriate opportunities to work with a range of tools and materials in order to design and make products.
- Assessment is not well developed and there is no regular evaluation of the quality of pupils' work so that priorities to improve standards in art and design are not clear.
- Design and technology lessons do not consistently build upon prior learning, and therefore pupils' ability to make realistic plans and to evaluate their designs and products is not sufficiently well developed.

### **Commentary**

92. In Key Stage 1 pupils are developing their drawing and painting skills and showing increasing ability to depict details such as facial features. By Year 2 they have a good knowledge of colour mixing and illustrate their understanding of differing art techniques by explaining how the tie-dye wall hangings, sent by their link school in Africa, would have been made. Pupils use differing joining techniques to make simple products and they can talk knowledgeably about the tools and materials that they used. In Key Stage 2, activities are appropriately planned to extend the range of materials and techniques used. For example, Year 4 pupils use wood and axles to make moving models of fairground rides, and in a Year 3/4 art lesson pupils used their growing skills to improve the quality of the prints they had produced.
93. Pupils have regular opportunities to work with artists in residence and good links are made with other subjects, for example the current work in media and literacy. However, pupils have too few opportunities to learn about and be inspired by famous artists, or to develop their skills through three-dimensional work.
94. Assessment in art and design is in the early stages of development. As a result there is no clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in pupils' work in order to identify the priorities for improving standards.
95. Teachers do not plan lessons that consistently build upon pupils' design and technology skills. By Year 4 pupils are beginning to evaluate their work in simple terms, for example by suggesting decorations that could be added to their fairground models. However, they have too few opportunities to make realistic plans, or to evaluate their designs and products in order to improve them. This limits the progress that pupils make in this aspect of the subject.

### **Music**

Two lessons in music were observed as well as the whole of Key Stage 1 during singing practice. It is not possible to make an overall judgement on the quality of provision.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Leadership is effective and there are examples of sharing good music teaching throughout the school.

### **Commentary**

96. Provision in music has improved since the last inspection. This is because of the effective leadership by the co-ordinator. She leads by example and her demonstration lessons for teachers in Key Sage 2 are very good. The music curriculum has recently been reviewed and it

is now planned using national schemes of work as well as a commercial scheme. Many teachers lack confidence in teaching music so the co-ordinator provides good practical guidance for them. The leadership has a good understanding of what is working well and the music action plan accurately identifies the need to improve teaching and learning. Pupils are enthusiastic about music when taught by the co-ordinator. She uses a range of teaching approaches to engage and interest them. Her very good subject knowledge means that she can ask very effective questions to extend pupils' knowledge and understanding. Pupils are making good progress and standards in music are improving because of effective leadership and the accurate identification of improvement priorities as well as the sharing of very good practice to develop teachers' confidence.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

Only two physical education lessons were observed, both in gymnastics. Discussions took place with pupils and the subject leader. It is not possible to make judgements on the provision for physical education.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils now have access to all aspects of physical education because the school building has been improved to include a purpose-built sports hall.

### **Commentary**

97. The head teacher has been successful in securing funds to develop and improve the school building and pupils now have good quality indoor facilities for physical education. There has been good improvement since the last inspection. Pupils now have access to all aspects of the physical education curriculum. Standards have risen because pupils now have regular lessons and staff training has been appropriately linked to making the best use of the new facilities. Pupils enjoy their lessons and enter into activities enthusiastically. They work well together, are focused on their work and give each other helpful feedback. There was a clear structure to the lessons seen, with a warm-up, main activity and cool down. Pupils had time to practise and develop their skills, as well as opportunities to think about how they could improve their performance further. All pupils understand the good effect that exercise has on their bodies.

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

Two personal, social and health lessons were observed. Discussions took place with pupils, and the school's extensive records, including photographs, were examined.

The provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There is a very well planned and structured curriculum, which means that pupils make good progress in developing their knowledge and understanding.
- The head teacher and staff are very good role models and they provide frequent opportunities for pupils to develop and practise their personal and social skills.

### **Commentary**

98. There is very good provision for pupils' personal, social and health education which has been strengthened in recent years as the school has worked successfully to achieve the Healthy Schools' award. This has resulted in a very well planned and structured curriculum, which is taught through designated lessons and also very effectively through most other subjects. Teachers are skilful at building in good opportunities for pupils to develop and practise their



understanding and skills across the curriculum and during events outside school, such as when older pupils shared their knowledge of life in Uganda with members of the local church. These experiences are contributing very well to pupils' good levels of confidence in talking about their work.

99. Standards in personal, social and health education are high and pupils' achievement is very good. During discussions pupils in Year 2 showed very good knowledge of healthy living. They know about balanced diets, the good effects of exercise and the importance of cleanliness in preventing the spread of illness. Older pupils speak confidently about how to avoid dangers in and around home and school and they make good links between the school's no smoking policy and the effects of smoking on conditions such as asthma. They also have a clear and mature understanding of the changes in their bodies as they grow.
100. The school provides good opportunities for pupils to develop a sense of responsibility and citizenship. Through Mowbray Mates in particular, older pupils showed a good insight into setting a good example for 'the little ones'. Although there is no school council the school involves pupils well in decisions about improvements. For example, pupils have drawn up plans of their ideas to improve outdoor play and learning facilities.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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