

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **OLD HILL PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Cradley Heath, West Midlands

LEA area: Sandwell

Unique reference number: 103952

Headteacher: Mr D E Green

Lead inspector: E Jackson

Dates of inspection: 26<sup>th</sup> – 28<sup>th</sup> April 2004

Inspection number: 257082

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 – 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	186
School address:	Lawrence Lane Cradley Heath West Midlands
Postcode:	B64 6DR
Telephone number:	01384 569213
Fax number:	01384 413216
Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Ms Pauline Riley
Date of previous inspection:	22 <sup>nd</sup> June 1998

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Old Hill Primary School is smaller than most primary schools with 19 boys and 17 girls part-time in the nursery and 88 boys and 80 girls full-time in Years 1 to 6. Numbers in the school have fallen in recent years due to housing demolition locally. Currently, the proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is well above average. The number of pupils with special educational needs is above average. The special needs are mainly moderate learning difficulties, or behavioural, emotional or social needs. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is below average, and a very small number learn English as an additional language. The number of pupils who leave or join the school at other than normal admission times is well above average. The socio-economic circumstances of the area served by the school are very unfavourable. The attainment of most pupils at entry to the school is well below average, and many have low speaking and listening skills. The school achieved an award for its pupils' improved achievement in 2003, and is working towards Investors in People status. The school works closely with two other local primary schools, and is used extensively by local community groups in the evening. It also uses Neighbourhood Renewal Funding for an after-school study club to develop speaking and listening skills.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
3108	E Jackson	Lead inspector	English as an additional language Mathematics Music Physical education
19650	S Thomas	Lay inspector	
30745	P Thorpe	Team inspector	Foundation Stage Science History Geography Religious education
33236	K Dodd	Team inspector	Special educational needs English Information and communication technology Art and design Design and technology

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

Old Hill is an **effective school**, offering its pupils a good quality of education in a caring environment where they feel secure and make good progress in their personal development. It gives **sound value for money**, given the above average unit cost.

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

- The staff promote a very good climate for learning, particularly for pupils' personal development, to which the pupils respond very well.
- The headteacher leads the school well, working in close co-operation with two other local schools, supported strongly by key staff and governors.
- Although judged to be good in most of its work, the governing body does not meet the statutory requirement to provide swimming at Key Stage 2, making governance unsatisfactory overall.
- The quality of provision is very good for the nursery and reception children in the Foundation Stage, and good for those pupils in Years 1 and 2.
- Pupils' achievement is good in art and design, design and technology, and information and communication technology (ICT), but not in speaking and listening and investigational skills.

Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory, and all the key issues have been dealt with. Very good improvements have been made recently in the Foundation Stage provision, and good improvements have been made in ICT. However, swimming is still not provided.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Achievement is **satisfactory** for Year 6 pupils, but it is good for most pupils in other classes. Pupils' personal development is **very good**. Children enter the nursery with very low attainment on average, although this covers a range. Currently, they achieve well in the nursery and reception class, although their attainment in relation to expectations for their age is still well below average as they enter Year 1. This good achievement continues in Years 1 and 2, so that standards attained currently have improved to below average by age seven in reading, writing and mathematics. The standards attained by the current Year 6 are well below average, representing satisfactory achievement overall, despite the high turnover of pupils since Year 2. This group has a very high proportion of pupils with special educational needs, many of whom achieve well for their capabilities. Pupils from minority ethnic groups generally achieve as well as their peers. The table shows the standards attained in national tests over the last three years. The trend in the school's results is broadly in line with the national trend. The results fell in 2003 because the Year 6 group was of very low prior attainment, the effects of the high turnover of staff and pupils, and low attendance since the class was in reception. The low results in English, in the lowest five per cent, had been predicted, but have led to changes in the teaching of reading, with significant improvement this year. Boys attained similar levels to girls over the last three years.

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
English	E*	E	E*	E*
mathematics	D	C	E	D
science	E	E	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.*

Pupils' personal development is very good, and their **spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good**. Their social and moral development is fostered very well by the staff, and

the pupils develop **very good attitudes** to their work. **Behaviour is very good**, supported by the very good emphasis in the school on developing positive relationships. Attendance has improved very well due to new procedures, and is now **just below average**. Punctuality is satisfactory.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The quality of education is good.** Teaching and learning are **good overall**. Overall provision is very good in the nursery and reception classes. In one outstanding session, nursery and reception children enjoyed a rich experience when they visited the local indoor market. Teaching is almost consistently good in Years 1 and 2, remarkable as the Year 2 teacher had only been with the class for one week before the inspection. In Years 3 to 6, teaching is sound with good and occasionally very good features, maintained well despite significant recent change. All the staff work well with pupils with special educational needs, helping them make small step progress towards their agreed targets. Art and design and design and technology are taught well. Big improvements have been made in resources and staff training for ICT, and pupils' skills are developing well. However, opportunities for speaking and listening in lessons are sometimes missed, and there are insufficient practical problem-solving and investigative tasks in mathematics and science. The curriculum is good in the Foundation Stage and at Key Stage 1. It is generally satisfactory with some good features in Key Stage 2, but does not meet statutory requirements because swimming is not provided. The accommodation is satisfactory overall, but the Foundation Stage accommodation is now excellent, a credit to the headteacher's determination. Care, guidance and support are **good**, and links with parents and the community, including other schools, are **very good**.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**Leadership and management are good.** The experienced headteacher leads the school well, setting the tone and high ethos for learning successfully. He is supported satisfactorily by other key staff, who provide very good role models for other staff and pupils, and between them the management of the school is good. The governing body understands the school's strengths and weaknesses well, and both supports and challenges effectively. However, governance is unsatisfactory overall because of the failure to provide swimming at Key Stage 2.

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

Links with parents are very good, and parents are very supportive of the school's work with their children. They feel that their children are safe and happy, and make good progress. Pupils are also pleased with the school, and the improving attendance figures illustrate their increased interest.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- provide more opportunities for pupils throughout the school to improve their speaking and listening skills by encouraging them to talk about their work in paired and group discussions, and through other activities such as drama and role-play;
- support pupils' learning in mathematics and science through practical problem-solving and investigations, guiding them to use support materials to help them understand their work more effectively;

and, to meet statutory requirements:

- ensure that the requirement to provide swimming at Key Stage 2 is met.



## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

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

The standards attained towards the end of Year 6 currently are well below average; achievement is satisfactory for the pupils' capabilities. Standards are well below average towards the end of the reception year, and below average towards the end of Year 2. For the children in reception and Years 1 and 2 achievement is good, as it is for many pupils in Years 3 to 5, reflecting the improvements made since the last inspection, particularly the improvements in the Foundation Stage.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve well in the nursery and reception classes, where provision is very good in most of the areas of learning, although children attain well below the levels expected by the end of reception.
- This good progress is maintained in Years 1 and 2 so that attainment has risen to below expected levels in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 2.
- Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and make good progress towards their targets.
- Pupils achieve well in art and design, design and technology, and ICT across the school.
- There are missed opportunities to develop pupils' speaking, listening and investigational and problem-solving skills.

#### Commentary

1. Results in national tests in 2003 at the end of Year 6 in English were in the lowest five per cent nationally, considerably down on the previous year. Even so, they were much improved on the results reported at the last inspection, and met the school's targets. Results in mathematics last year were well below average, halting an improving trend that had reached average levels in 2002. Results in science remained well below average, but improved on results in 2002, as the table below shows. Both the mathematics and science results were significantly above the 1997 results reported at the last inspection, and the trend in the school's results has matched the national trend over five years. The staff and pupils deserve credit for this, given the low attainment at entry, low attendance in the past, and the high turnover of pupils since Year 2. Improvements in the quality of education since the last inspection have also had less impact on the achievement of these pupils than on younger pupils moving through the school (see Year 2 table on page 9).

#### **Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 – average point scores in 2003**

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	21.4 (24.2)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	24.4 (26.6)	26.8 (26.7)
science	26.8 (25.6)	28.6 (28.3)

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

2. The 2003 test results were well below those in similar schools overall, although below average in mathematics, and in line with the average for these schools in science. On average over the past three years, girls and boys have achieved the same levels in the tests, but girls achieved relatively lower compared to girls' results nationally than boys did compared to boys nationally. However, girls' results rose well in science in 2003 compared to those in 2002. The few pupils from minority ethnic groups achieve similar levels to their peers.

3. The current Year 6 targets are low, based on what the school knows of the pupils' achievements, and this is appropriate. Again, this group was overall of very low attainment at entry, and has seen well above average changes since then. More than 60 per cent of the pupils in this group have special educational needs, three times the national average, and even higher than last year's group. It is only this term that the school has been able to afford a support assistant alongside the teacher for the full day. It is remarkable that this group's achievement is satisfactory in the circumstances.
4. Children generally enter the nursery with very low attainment, with particularly low skills in speech, language and communication. This was underlined after a visit to the local market. When the teacher held up a grapefruit in class not one child in the nursery or reception classes could name it. However, because the improved provision is so good in the Foundation Stage, the children achieve well and make good progress to be well below the average expected in most areas of learning. Their physical skills are average when playing with large apparatus, but their fine control of resources such as scissors or paintbrushes is generally well below average.
5. The staff in Years 1 and 2 use well the improved levels of attainment the pupils have achieved to continue their progress in literacy and numeracy skills. A return to more traditional approaches to teaching reading recently has had immediate good effect, and has begun to accelerate progress here even more, as it has in spelling. Skills in numeracy are also developing effectively, although many pupils still have difficulty in remembering basic number facts. The below average results in national tests in 2003 in reading and writing were actually above results achieved in similar schools. However, results in mathematics were well below average, and below those in similar schools because of weaknesses in the recall of number facts.

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
reading	E	E	D	B
writing	E	E	D	B
mathematics	E	E	E	D

*Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average  
Similar schools are those with similar percentages of pupils eligible for free school meals*

6. Standards attained by pupils with special educational needs are well below average overall, but their achievement is good throughout the school. This is because the whole staff work hard to include these pupils in all the school's work, tasks are usually prepared specifically to meet their needs, and all staff offer effective help based on the targets in the pupils' individual education plans. There is a strong focus on providing extended support for pupils with special educational needs in Years 5 and 6 to raise their attainment in preparation for the next stage of their education. A detailed programme incorporating support from local authority advisory teachers has been agreed to accelerate this approach from September.
7. Pupils' progress is often good in lessons in Years 3 to 6 in English, mathematics, science and ICT, although their recall of what they have learned is often weak, and work has to be repeated to secure their achievement. The staff are skilled in reviewing what has been covered previously, and often question the pupils well to assess what they remember in order to set tasks to address weaknesses. Occasionally, this leads to overlong explanations from teachers in trying to emphasise key aspects of knowledge and understanding.
8. The school has made very good progress in raising pupils' ICT skills to above average levels in Year 2, and average levels in Year 6. This is due to improved resources and focused staff training giving the staff more confidence, and the pupils far greater opportunities to make progress than at the last inspection. Pupils also achieve well in art and design and design and

technology because the staff link these subjects effectively to other areas of work in history and geography, as well as teaching specific skills and knowledge in focused lessons. Swimming is not provided at Key Stage 2.

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

Pupils' personal development is **very good**, and a real strength of the school. Provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **good**. Attendance is **below average**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils behave very well in lessons and around the school in response to the staff's high expectations.
- Pupils are interested in their work, and their attitudes to the school and to learning are very good.
- The quality of relationships at all levels is high.
- Pupils' moral and social development is very good in the school.
- A new system to monitor attendance is encouraging absentees to come to school.

### **Commentary**

9. The concern shown by the staff for pupils' personal development, very well led in this aspect by the headteacher, is recognised and welcomed strongly by parents. They appreciate the way in which young children in the nursery and reception classes are inducted into school, given time to learn the routines, and made to feel secure and relaxed. This paves the way for a growing understanding of the school's expectations, tempered with understanding of pupils' needs and circumstances. This induction into school routines was exemplified very well when the nursery and reception children made a visit to a local market (see page 20). The attitudes to learning, and the behaviour of pupils with special educational needs in lessons are good due to the good support received from teaching assistants and teachers.
10. Pupils recognise that the staff will listen to them, but will also expect them to be fair to others, to be polite and considerate, and to think about how they relate to other pupils and to adults. During the inspection, the pupils behaved very well in lessons, around the school, and in the dining hall and playground. This is a great credit to them, their parents and the school. It was clear on the one occasion in a games lesson where routines were not well established that a number of pupils rely on the staff's general consistency to help them know where the boundaries of acceptable behaviour are. There were two fixed period exclusions last year for violent behaviour. One of the pupils involved has now left the school, and there have been no exclusions this year.

## Exclusions

### *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	143	2	0
White – any other White background	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	5	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	1	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	4	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	2	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	6	0	0
Black or Black British - Caribbean	1	0	0
Black or Black British – African	3	0	0
Parent/pupil preferred not to say	2	0	0

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

11. The pupils' attitudes to the school and their learning are also very good. They try hard in their work, persevering even when they find the work hard. They listen well to advice and try to follow it, and when they have opportunities for independent activity, they generally respond very well. Some pupils have specific responsibilities and carry them out well, but the staff miss opportunities for pupils in general to have more responsibility for aspects of their own work, and the wider work of the school. A good example of responsibility being taken seriously is in the conscientious behaviour of two Year 6 boys who organise the overhead projector for singing assembly, and also manage the indoor and outdoor physical education and games stores.
12. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Moral and social development are particularly strong. The whole atmosphere of the school encourages pupils' awareness of the rights and responsibilities of being a member of a community. The headteacher leads the whole school well in helping the pupils to understand the difference between right and wrong, and how forgiveness and challenge to improve go hand in hand. Good opportunities for social development include the buddy system for older pupils to care for the younger, the breakfast club, and a residential trip for Year 6 pupils. Spiritual and cultural development is satisfactory.
13. Attendance was well below average last year, having a marked effect on some pupils' low achievement. Very effective steps have been taken this year to improve matters using a commercial system to call the homes of absentees. This has worked so well that unauthorised absence has fallen considerably, and attendance overall this year is only just below average. This can already be measured in its impact on a few pupils' improved achievement. Punctuality is satisfactory.

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

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	7.1	School data	1.2
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.*

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

**The quality of education is good.** It is good in the Foundation Stage and at Key Stage 1, and satisfactory with good features at Key Stage 2. Teaching and learning are **good** overall, as is the curriculum in the Foundation Stage and at Key Stage 1. The accommodation is **excellent** for the nursery and reception in the Foundation Stage.

### Teaching and learning

**Teaching and learning are good**, with very good or excellent teaching seen at each key stage. **Assessment is satisfactory**, and it is **good** in the **Foundation Stage**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The staff encourage and interest the pupils well, so that they want to work and are interested in their lessons.
- Teachers and support staff work together well to meet pupils' needs, including the well above average number of pupils with special educational needs.
- Opportunities to promote pupils' speaking and listening skills are sometimes missed.
- Teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage and at Key Stage 1 are consistently good, and occasionally very good or excellent.
- Pupils do not have enough real-life problem-solving and investigatory work in science and mathematics, although there are good opportunities in some lessons in both subjects.

### Commentary

14. The table shows that teaching was at least satisfactory in 97 per cent of lessons seen, and that three out of five lessons were at least good, with one in seven being very good or excellent. An excellent session was seen in the nursery (see page 20), and an unsatisfactory games lesson was seen in Year 3. Most of the teaching in the nursery and reception classes was good, and a very good English lesson was observed in Year 3.

#### *Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 38 lessons*

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
1 (3%)	5 (13%)	17 (45%)	14 (37%)	1 (3%)	0	0

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

15. There have been significant unpredictable teaching staff changes recently. This could have had a disruptive effect on the school, but the headteacher and assistant heads, supported by the governors, felt that the most important aspect of the school's work to maintain was the calm and supportive atmosphere, so that the pupils would continue to feel secure. It was understood that this strategy would not necessarily deliver the higher standards wished for in national tests. In the event, stability has been achieved by appointing a recently retired teacher for a term in Year 5, and the previous Year 6 teacher returning from maternity leave into Year 2. These teachers had been with their classes for only one week prior to the inspection, and it is to their great credit that their pupils made good progress on the whole in lessons seen. Appointments have been made for September into the vacant posts, and the planned deployment of staff has been well managed.
16. Teaching and learning for pupils with special educational needs are good due to an effective balance of planned and well-targeted in-class support by teaching assistants and reinforcement of basic skills identified in pupils' individual education plans. Assessment procedures and systems for referral are effective in identifying pupils with special educational

needs early and monitoring their progress. Pupils' individual education plans have clear targets that all understand. They are largely taught with their peers in small groups, mainly to supplement their literacy, and this is effective in promoting good progress for most of them.

17. The staff generally engage the pupils well in lessons, so that pupils from different backgrounds and ethnic groups work together co-operatively. This was the case in a very good Year 3 English lesson, when the teacher successfully encouraged the pupils to develop alliterative poetry. The very good relationships that the school sees as so important for the pupils' confidence form a good platform for the effective management of lessons and pupils' behaviour. A recently qualified teacher in Year 4 has been successfully inducted into the school's methods. She brings skills in developing pupils' speaking and listening skills in lessons that are not always shown by some of the more experienced staff. She is firm, but allows the pupils to discuss their work in pairs or table groups as they proceed, so that they use the specific language of the subject studied. This increases their vocabulary and general command of English well. This style was also used effectively in Year 5 when the teacher was the 'keeper of the (hidden) number' and pupils had to offer a reason for the digit they had proposed. This led to good development of mathematical reasoning for these pupils.
18. Occasionally, some of the other staff miss these opportunities, or ask questions that only require one-word answers, or in some instances, talk most of the time themselves whilst the children listen. This has value, but the key to pupils' development in this school is in their competence in spoken English, and their ability to use the language developed in their thinking. Sometimes, staff do not encourage pupils to use support materials sufficiently in their mathematical investigations. This limits some pupils' understanding, as they need practical examples to help them solve problems. When support materials are used, as in good lessons in Year 4 and Year 2, the pupils grasp the nature of the question to be answered quicker, and understand what steps to take to solve the problem. In an unsatisfactory games lesson, the teacher did not set out her expectations for the pupils' behaviour clearly enough, so that some of the Year 3 pupils did not meet the school's usual high standards.
19. In the Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2, lessons are often exciting, as the teachers use a variety of techniques to interest and motivate the pupils. In Year 1, the experienced teacher uses a puppet exceptionally well to hold conversations with the pupils. Even though they know it is their teacher speaking, her focus is so good that almost all the pupils watch the puppet, not her mouth. In the nursery and reception classes, the organisation is very good, and the deployment of the nursery nurses and support staff is very beneficial to children's progress as they enjoy the closeness of the family group arrangements.
20. Good mathematics, history, and design and technology work was seen in Year 6, where the assistant head has developed a really good working atmosphere in a class with a very high proportion of pupils with special educational needs, a number of them also with emotional and behavioural needs. Her management of the class and individuals, with the skilled support of a teaching assistant, is good, so that lessons are not interrupted.
21. Assessment of children's work in the nursery and reception classes is good, and the results are used effectively to plan new work and activities for the children. Assessment is generally effective in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, although teachers' marking of pupils' work is variable in how it is used to help pupils improve their work. Formal procedures are less well developed in other areas, although teachers know their pupils well, and have a good idea of their achievements across the curriculum. The headteacher is currently developing more effective systems to monitor pupils' progress year on year, and assessment procedures are being discussed in the three partner schools to make further improvements.

## The curriculum

The school generally provides a **satisfactory** curriculum, although swimming is not offered as part of the physical education curriculum. There are satisfactory opportunities for enrichment. The accommodation and resources meet the needs of most pupils effectively, and the Foundation Stage accommodation is excellent.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The addition of a purpose-built unit since the previous inspection provides excellent accommodation and resources for children in the nursery and reception classes.
- The statutory requirement to provide swimming at Key Stage 2 is not met.
- Curricular provision for the Foundation Stage, Key Stage 1, art and design, design and technology, personal, social and health education is good.
- Pupils have insufficient opportunities for practical and investigative work in mathematics and science and to develop speaking and listening skills in lessons.

### Commentary

22. The curriculum is planned well for the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. The introduction of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies together with national in-service training in ICT for staff has proven successful in raising standards of teaching and learning in these subjects. The school has justifiably focused on these areas since the previous inspection and has sought to further enrich the curriculum through, for example, involvement in a European project. It also develops provision in physical education through the use of specialist coaches, has successfully bid for a new outdoor games area (to be built later this term), and organises special events focused on specific subject aspects.
23. The curriculum meets statutory requirements in all subjects except swimming, where the continued failure to provide opportunities for swimming at Key Stage 2 limits the standards achieved in physical education. The curriculum for other creative and aesthetic subjects and ICT is good as there has been an effective focus in these areas to ensure pupils experience a meaningful, coherent curriculum. However, the lack of opportunities for practical and investigative work and to develop speaking and listening skills in other areas hampers pupils' progress. Good examples were seen of practical mathematics in Year 2, science investigation in Year 3, and good paired and group discussion in Years 1 and 4. In general, however, teachers and support staff talk more than the pupils, and do not train the pupils sufficiently to use support materials in their number work.
24. Personal, social and health education is taught well through a balance of focused and cross-curricular work and the school is considering applying for the Healthy School award to consolidate work to promote healthy eating. Sound extra-curricular provision exists including sports, ICT and speaking and listening clubs, together with visits and visitors that enrich the curriculum and ensure it addresses pupils' needs.
25. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is well planned. Pupils' individual education plans have clear targets that all understand. These pupils are largely taught with their peers in small groups, mainly to supplement their literacy, and this is effective. The sound management of special educational needs ensures that suitable short-term achievable targets are included in pupils' individual education plans. The co-ordinator has been in post only a short time and has rightly identified the need to develop an action plan to prioritise developments, particularly the further promotion of reading skills and the use of detailed assessment to enable her to monitor the progress of pupils in lessons more closely.
26. Numbers of support staff have increased since the previous inspection, which is a well-planned use of funds. These staff are effectively deployed and make a significant contribution to pupils' achievement, particularly in Years 5 and 6. Accommodation and resources are

adequate overall and excellent in the Foundation Stage where the newly developed early years unit provides a very successful learning environment.

27. The headteacher has monitored the curriculum using national guidance to confirm that it is balanced and supports pupils' learning adequately, and effective assessment systems have been developed linked to curricular and lesson planning in core subjects.

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

The school's environment for care and support continues to be very good. Parents place a high value on the care and welfare their children receive.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The school provides a very caring environment in which pupils feel safe.
- Each member of the school community is valued resulting in pupils' increased self-esteem.
- There are effective induction arrangements for new pupils.

### **Commentary**

28. The school gives a high priority to its pupils' care and welfare. Each child is valued and respected as an individual. Parents particularly appreciate the fact that pupils are able to start at Old Hill with a clean slate on transfer from another school. This helps them to settle well, and improves their confidence and self esteem. Pupils trust their teachers and feel there is always someone available to help them if they have a problem.
29. Support for pupils with special educational needs is good in classes because most have access to work suited to their ability and many have direct support from the teacher or a teaching assistant. Pupils are guided well in class and a good standard of care prevails. However, pupils are not yet sufficiently involved in reviewing their own learning targets.
30. Child protection arrangements are effective as the school follows local authority guidelines. Staff know the pupils and their families well. Regular discussions keep staff up to date with any problems. There is a well-attended breakfast club that provides a much needed peaceful and orderly start to the day for many children.
31. There are effective induction arrangements for new pupils and parents feel secure in leaving their child at the school. In the nursery, parents have the opportunity to stay and join in with their child's activities until the child feels settled. They may also attend the nursery as often as they wish prior to admission to familiarise their child with routines and procedures. Arrangements for transfer to secondary school are effective. Staff liaise regularly with high school staff and pupils attend their chosen school for taster sessions.
32. A good range of policies underpins the work of the school effectively. Routines and procedures are well established.

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

The school's partnership with parents is very **good**. Links with other local schools and the community are **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Parents find staff very approachable and helpful.
- There has been significant improvement in the information given to parents about the curriculum since the last inspection.



- The community is used well to improve pupils' learning.
- Links with other schools support pupils' progress and development very effectively.

### Commentary

33. Parents are very supportive of the school. They appreciate the head's 'open door' policy and are reassured by the helpfulness of staff when they have problems and concerns. Since the last inspection, the amount of information parents receive about the curriculum has improved considerably. For example, parents regularly receive newsletters and letters from the class teacher telling them what subject or topic is being studied. Parents welcome this. The great majority of those parents who returned the inspection questionnaire felt well informed about their child's progress.
34. The school uses the community well to support children's studies. Visits to places of interest take place regularly. For example, nursery and reception children visited the local market during the inspection. Older children also have the opportunity for residential trips, such as the Year 6 visit to Bournemouth. These support pupils' personal and social development very effectively as well as providing them with interesting learning experiences in places they might not otherwise see.
35. The local community benefits from the school. The building is used each night and usually at weekends for leisure activities and classes. Local colleges regularly send trainee teachers and nursery nurses to the school for teaching practice and work experience. The school makes a positive contribution to the local federation of schools and benefits from mutual projects. Staff have benefited from joint teaching and planning activities which enhance pupils' progress.
36. The school keeps parents fully informed of pupils' progress through formal reviews, letters and reports. However, parents do not always take up the opportunity to share in reviewing targets for pupils with special educational needs and this limits their effectiveness in providing support with targets at home.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management of the school are **good**. The headteacher leads the school well. However, although governance is good in most aspects, it is **unsatisfactory** overall because swimming is not provided.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher has a clear vision for the school's development, and leads well.
- There is a very strong and effective focus on raising pupils' self-esteem and promoting positive attitudes.
- The school provides a good learning environment, with very good provision in the Foundation Stage.
- The supportive governing body has a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school.
- The statutory requirement to provide swimming is not met.
- Recent monitoring of the school's performance has not been as rigorous as it could be.

### Commentary

37. The headteacher provides good leadership. He understands the needs of the pupils deeply, and has good knowledge of the local area. He ensures that the school is a welcoming place for parents, pupils, staff and the community. Largely through the vision of the headteacher, the school has become central to the good care and personal development of each pupil. He is strongly supported by the governing body, key staff and parents. Staff enjoy working in the

school and morale is high. The staff recognise the importance of raising standards but know that this can only be achieved in a school where personal development and care for pupils is a high priority. The school is currently working towards the Investors in People Award. The establishment of teams of staff who work closely together ensures that daily procedures run smoothly and that management systems are effective.

38. The school has gained a well-deserved reputation in the community for supporting and helping pupils regardless of their previous background or schooling. However, the resulting number of pupils joining the school with particular needs is having an impact on the overall level of attainment in national tests at age eleven. The headteacher and staff have worked hard to try to raise standards in difficult circumstances. The benefits of the new, very good provision in the Foundation Stage are beginning to be seen in the performance of younger pupils and the school is focused on the continuance of this improvement in order to raise achievement for all pupils in the future.
39. Other key staff make a sound contribution to the overall leadership and management. The assistant headteachers lead significant aspects of the school between them, and ensure that the Foundation Stage and the management of provision for pupils with special educational needs are effective. Other staff, such as the secretary and the caretaker, also make a significant contribution to the very good ethos for learning created in the school.
40. Performance is regularly reviewed, as reflected in the school's development plan, and last year the school gained an Achievement Award. However, recent monitoring practice has not been as rigorous as previously, due to the particular circumstances the school found itself in during the last 12 months. This was because there was an unforeseeable level of staff turnover in a short time. Action has now been taken to ensure strategic in-depth monitoring is in place by the start of the next term. Professional development is closely linked both to the needs of individual teachers and to the needs of the school. There are good arrangements to make sure teachers new to the school settle in quickly and receive the support they need.
41. The governors show a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They are committed, along with the staff and parents, to include all pupils and to raise the academic achievement of them all. Governors carry out their duties conscientiously and offer a good deal of support to the school. Appropriate policies are in place for nearly all statutory duties, the exception being the lack of provision for swimming.

**Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004**

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	588,232
Total expenditure	586,430
Expenditure per pupil	3152

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	32,351
Balance carried forward to the next	64,183

The balance includes approximately £30,000 capital carry-forward for future building developments.

42. The school's finances are dealt with efficiently and the governing body has managed the complex consequences of falling rolls effectively. Due attention is paid to best value principles. This is greatly helped by the school being a member of a federation of three primary schools. Economies are made because the federation shares resources and buys services between the schools. Given the effectiveness of the school, and the above average unit cost, the school gives sound value for money.

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

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

43. Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is very good, and a strength of the school. Since the last inspection there have been very good improvements to the accommodation and the curriculum. A high proportion of children enter school with very low levels of skills and knowledge compared with those expected for their age. This is particularly the case in speaking and listening skills. They make good progress due to the consistently good teaching and strong leadership provided by the co-ordinator. The provision for children with special educational needs and the support they receive are very good. The team of qualified and experienced staff work very well together to ensure the learning and well-being of the children. Assessment is used effectively to identify children's needs and track their progress. Although children achieve well in the Foundation Stage, their low starting point prevents them from reaching the goals expected and the attainment of most children currently remains well below average towards the end of the reception year.

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

The provision in personal, social and emotional development is **very good**.

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

- The very clear rules and routines make children feel safe and secure.
- The strong, positive relationships between staff and children promote children's confidence, encouraging them to try hard.
- The children's social skills develop rapidly in response to the very good experiences provided.

#### **Commentary**

44. When children start in the nursery, many are far less confident and independent than is typical for their age. Through good teaching, care and support, children settle well and swiftly begin to feel both happy and secure. Teachers and support assistants provide very good role models for children to follow. They are calm and organised and treat children with respect and courtesy. Their approach leads to warm and trusting relationships and helps children to be kind and considerate and to care for each other. The positive attitudes and high expectations of all staff continually boost children's self-esteem and spur them on to try hard and do their best. Children are expected to behave well, take turns and share, and they learn to do so. Good development of personal independence is seen in many ways and children are encouraged to dress and undress independently and manage their own personal hygiene. Although children make rapid gains in their social and personal development, their skills still remain much lower than the level expected by the end of the reception year.

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

The provision for communication, language and literacy is **very good**.

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

- Every opportunity is taken to expand children's spoken vocabulary.
- The use of small group sessions encourages children to speak in front of others with growing confidence.
- Resources are used well to engage children's interest.

## Commentary

45. Good quality teaching means that even the youngest children soon begin to offer simple contributions to discussions. Teachers provide interesting objects for children to look at, handle and discuss. They use every opportunity to ask questions, always emphasising words and names. Adult-led groups are regularly planned to provide more occasions for children to speak to an audience. Teachers encourage children to speak clearly and employ their own good use of language to help children to broaden their vocabulary. Children begin to develop a love of books and enjoy sharing stories with their teacher and friends, leading to older children in the reception class learning to recognise the sounds letters make. When they start in the nursery many children do not grip a pencil securely and make marks that are at a very early stage of development. However, writing skills are taught carefully and systematically so that children make good progress in forming letters correctly and by the end of the reception class the more able children write a simple sentence with adult support. Children achieve well during their time in the Foundation Stage, but because of their very low starting point, many reach levels well below those typical for five year olds in language and literacy skills.

## Mathematical development

The provision in mathematical development is **very good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Opportunities are taken to develop mathematics in other areas of learning.
- Staff have a good knowledge of how to teach basic numeracy skills through talk and the use of stimulating resources.
- Through regularly building with construction kits, children develop their understanding of shape and size.

## Commentary

46. Teaching and learning are good. A strong feature of the teaching is the daily focus on counting routines that develop children's sense of a number sequence. Teachers develop children's understanding of number through carefully planned practical activities often linked to other areas of learning. For example, children were keen to name coins and count out small amounts of money following the very successful visit to the local market. Children become familiar with shape as they play with construction kits or follow lines and patterns drawn on the play area outside. They recognise basic shapes and gain knowledge of capacity and weight from practical experiences with sand and water. Achievement is good because most children make rapid progress from very limited mathematical understanding at entry, but attainment still remains well below average by the end of reception.

## Knowledge and understanding of the world

Provision in knowledge and understanding of the world is **very good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children are very well motivated by the excitement of discovering through first-hand experiences.
- The local environment is used well.
- The staff encourage good use of ICT to support children's learning.

## Commentary

47. Children's knowledge and understanding are very limited when they start in the nursery and they have little experience of many common objects or situations. As a result, although the staff provide many opportunities for children to learn about everyday items in the classroom, during outdoor activities and on visits to the local area, many children remain well below the expected level at the end of the reception class.

### Example of outstanding practice

**A visit to the local market was a cause for great excitement and enabled nursery and reception children to make gains in observation and speaking and listening.**

This was an outstandingly planned and organised visit, not least being the number of parent helpers who had volunteered. The atmosphere was vibrant as the children listened with contained excitement in their family groups to the instructions. They put on their coats, attached their name stickers, organised themselves into their groups, and ensured that the reception child was on the outside of the partner nursery child for added safety on the pavement. They were hushed as the teacher skilfully briefed the adults, 20 in all, about procedures, but on the 15-minute walk to the market they animatedly discussed what they saw and heard with their partner and close adults. Some of the staff recorded their comments, and took pictures, to follow up on return. Each group had a specific task in the market that involved talking to the already alerted staff, buying snacks to eat or fruit to bring back, as part of their topic on healthy eating. The stallholders and customers joined in the spirit of the visit really well, so that the children could ask questions, point out what interested them, and talk, talk, talk about the experience with their friends or nearby adults.

48. All children improve their ICT skills because the staff provide many opportunities for them to practise, including in the school's ICT suite. Programs are chosen well by the teacher, and they help to increase children's confidence with number and language as well as develop their mouse control and keyboard skills. Children's wider understanding of people is developed well as all staff encourage children to talk about their families, and use stories to help them to understand that some groups of people have different beliefs and customs. This understanding is reinforced because festivals from many faiths are celebrated and enjoyed.

## Physical development

The provision in physical development is **very good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are very good outdoor play facilities that are used very effectively.
- Children develop good awareness of space to move around in.
- Children have limited skills in activities such as drawing and writing.

## Commentary

49. There are many opportunities for children to engage in activities to foster their physical development and as a result of good teaching, children achieve well. The large outdoor play area offers a range of surfaces and there is a good selection of toys and other apparatus on which children move and balance safely whilst engaged in imaginative and adventurous play. Physical activity is very well supervised and adults are always on hand to offer help, support and encouragement. In more formal lessons in the hall, children in the reception class run and jump safely, using the whole space well. They move with good control and have the physical skills expected for their age. The skills needed for writing and using small tools are very poor when children enter school and although good progress is made they remain poor at the end of the reception class.

## **Creative development**

Provision in this area of learning is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children take part in a wide range of art and design activities.
- There are limited opportunities for musical development.

### **Commentary**

50. Children make good gains in their learning from a very low start because they are taught well. They enjoy painting, collage and pattern making and experiment with different colours and shapes. Children are learning to recognise colours and often mix paint for them themselves. They enjoy singing nursery rhymes and counting rhymes and sometimes use the percussion instruments, although the range of musical activities is not as wide as it could be. Teaching is good. The staff use role-play well to develop imaginative language and bring stories 'alive'. Although achievement is good, standards are still well below average by the end of the Foundation Stage.

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

### **ENGLISH**

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils' achievement is good in the Year 1 and Year 2 classes.
- Reading skills and punctuation are taught well across the school and progress in these areas is good.
- Speaking and listening skills are well developed in the best lessons, but opportunities to promote these skills are often missed in other lessons.
- Assessment is used well to set new targets for improvement in reading, but teachers' marking of pupils' writing is sometimes less helpful
- Progress in handwriting is slow because teaching is inconsistent.

### **Commentary**

51. Achievement is good in Years 1 and 2, and satisfactory overall in Years 3 to 6. Standards are currently below average towards the end of Year 2, and well below average towards the end of Year 6. Improvements made in the last few years have begun to have noticeable effect on pupils' achievement up to Year 4, but have had less impact on Years 5 and 6.
52. Compared to similar schools, the school achieved above average results in the 2003 national tests for Year 2 pupils in reading and writing, and there has been a good improvement in boys' achievement. In Year 6, standards in 2003 dipped to well below average levels. This was due to a combination of low prior attainment, very high turnover of pupils and staff, very high levels of special need, and low attendance. However, the trend in standards achieved has kept pace with the national trend, and many pupils with special educational needs achieve well towards the targets set for them.
53. The small number of pupils from minority ethnic groups achieve in line with their peers, and the very few bilingual pupils who learn English as an additional language receive effective support, and make satisfactory progress.

54. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall and some very good teaching was seen in both key stages. This was characterised by the teacher sharing clear learning outcomes with pupils so they were able to evaluate their learning. This was exemplified in a Year 3 lesson when the teacher challenged the pupils to understand the meaning of alliteration and be able to write three illustrative lines themselves by the end of the lesson. She then assessed through question and answer the pupils' prior understanding of alliteration to ensure work was well matched to their attainment. In a very good Year 2 lesson, links between parts of the lesson were used effectively to promote learning. The teacher's use of open-ended questions in the shared reading session ensured the children had a good understanding of the 'Winnie the Witch' story they were reading. Their speaking and listening skills were extended further in paired discussion to encourage them to use full sentences when making a plan of the story in groups. A quick reminder of the use of appropriate punctuation ensured pupils were able to understand the relevance of the skills taught in the various parts of the lesson and consolidate and develop them in a meaningful and interesting way.
55. In less effective lessons, learning objectives are not shared clearly with pupils and skills are often taught in isolation rather than for a purpose. Hence, pupils are unclear in such lessons about what they are learning and have limited opportunities to develop skills in a meaningful way. Opportunities for the development of speaking and listening skills are missed in such lessons due to a lack of collaborative work and the over-use of questions requiring only a one-word answer by the teacher. Handwriting is variable due to the lack of a consistent approach to the teaching and development of a joined and legible script. Teachers' marking of pupils' completed work, whilst generally positive, sometimes gives insufficient guidance for them on how to improve their writing. Reading and punctuation are taught well because there is a clear focus on these areas and assessment is used well to target specific weaknesses such as how pupils interpret what they read for deeper meanings.
56. The co-ordinator's leadership and management are satisfactory as there has been satisfactory improvement in provision since the previous inspection, and standards have risen. Test results by Year 2 have shown good improvement over time in reading and writing, and satisfactory improvement in English skills for Year 6 pupils. Only 17 per cent of pupils achieved the level expected for their age in 1997, but in 2003 this figure had risen to 51 per cent. Due to her careful analysis of assessment information, the co-ordinator has helped raised achievement in certain areas such as reading, but development in other areas has been slow.

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

57. Satisfactory opportunities are provided for pupils to use language and literacy skills across the curriculum. Teachers' lesson planning ensures that pupils are introduced to a small but worthwhile range of experiences, such as writing instructions for making a clown in design and technology, or chronological writing about a visit to Bournemouth in geography. The lack of sufficient planned provision for encouraging pupils' speaking and listening and handwriting skills is evident across the curriculum.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Although standards are well below average towards the end of Year 6, achievement is satisfactory.
- Standards in Year 2 have improved to below average from well below last year, and pupils' achievement is good.
- The staff are enthusiastic in teaching the subject, and keep the pupils' interest.
- Support staff provide good help for pupils with special educational needs, so that they achieve well in lessons.

- Pupils' work in books is better than their recall of number facts because of the good support they receive in lessons.
- Pupils do best when they have a range of real-life tasks supported by practical equipment and resources, but do not have this type of work often enough.

## Commentary

58. Standards in the national tests in 2003 at the end of Year 6 were well below average nationally, and below average when compared with schools in similar circumstances. These results are above those at the last inspection, when only 47 per cent of pupils achieved the expected level or better, compared to 57 per cent in 2003. The results in 2003 had been predicted by the school, and were affected by the high proportion of pupils with special educational needs, the high turnover of pupils, and unforeseen staff changes. Over five years, however, the trend in the school's results is in line with the national rise. This year's Year 6 has over 60 per cent of pupils with special educational needs, and has also had a high turnover of pupils. Attainment is well below average, but pupils' achievement is satisfactory, and improving in their written work. However, whilst a small majority of pupils achieve age-expected levels, a high proportion achieve levels expected of pupils one or two years younger. Many of these are boys, but boys have averaged higher levels than girls in the last three years. The school's target for national test results is low this year, but this is accurately based on the school's analysis of pupils' attainment.
59. The trend in the results in national tests for Year 2 pupils is above the national improvement, and this shows in the current below average attainment but good achievement of Year 3 and 4 pupils. Boys' results have improved very well over the last five years, to be close to the average for boys nationally last year. Girls' results have fluctuated, however, and fell to be well below girls nationally, and below boys in the school, in 2003. Currently, Year 2 pupils are making good progress and achieving well, so that they are on track to attain below expected levels, an improvement on last year.
60. The quality of teaching seen was good, reinforced by the quality of work in pupils' books and worksheets. Staff follow the National Numeracy Strategy, adapted effectively in the main to their pupils' needs. In every lesson seen, work was adapted for pupils attaining low levels and those with special needs, and specific support was given by the staff to help these pupils to work on the same topics as their peers at their own level. For example, in a good Year 2 lesson, pupils played a dice game with a partner to generate additions to 20. The teacher and the support assistant worked with lower attaining groups, and enthused them to work quickly, and improve their slow recall of basic number facts. The teacher used practical apparatus well to help her group to handle and visualise the numbers, and combine and count them accurately. Two boys working independently became very excited as they completed a long list of accurate answers at good speed: this successful activity increased their self-confidence and self-esteem very well.
61. The staff are enthusiastic and spur the pupils on to make progress towards their set targets. These are shared effectively with the pupils, and each classroom has teaching information on display for the pupils to refer to, such as how to attempt a variety of computation problems. In a good lesson with Year 4 pupils, the teacher had skilfully displayed information about angles and how to measure the angle of turn on the classroom windows. During the lesson, a number of pupils referred to this to help them complete the set task.
62. Too often, however, the staff feel pressured to try to raise standards by concentrating on the completion of number and other problems on paper. This is important, but there was too little evidence of pupils using structured support materials such as counting rods or an abacus. Similarly, whilst there is evidence in their saved work that pupils experience the full range of the curriculum, including shape, space and measures, too much of their work is unrelated to practical tasks that set real-life problems with a mathematical solution. It is clear from the



examples given that when the pupils had such opportunities, their understanding was greater, and their recall of the mathematical knowledge and its application was more secure.

63. The subject is being temporarily overseen by the headteacher and one of the assistant heads. Plans to raise standards and improve achievement are having some effect, particularly for the younger pupils. Improvements in children's mathematical development the Foundation Stage are also being built on very well in Year 1. The school is becoming involved in a major project with the local authority to improve standards in the subject in Years 5 and 6. It is important that any developments in the subject are founded in ensuring that the pupils understand and can apply their numeracy skills and other knowledge in practical situations. This is because evidence from discussion with the pupils indicates that their learning is more secure when firmly grounded in practical experience. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

64. There are some good examples of links with ICT for handling data and measuring angles, science in presenting information in charts, geography in using co-ordinates to read maps, and history in dealing with dates and timelines. However, the subject is chiefly focused through subject lessons, and there are opportunities to apply numeracy and other mathematical skills in other subjects that are currently not taken.

### **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

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

- Pupils make good gains in their knowledge and understanding of key facts.
- Skills in investigation and experiments are not secure enough by Year 6.
- The work of older pupils is neat and well presented.
- Teachers plan lessons that build on pupils' own experiences.

#### **Commentary**

65. The standards pupils reach by Year 2 are below average but achievement is good. By Year 6 standards are well below average and achievement is satisfactory. This is mainly due to the very low attainment of pupils in Year 6 when they entered school, the well above average number of pupils with special educational needs and the higher than normal turnover of pupils. Pupils with special educational needs get good support and achieve at the same rate as pupils of the same age. These standards are higher than the results reported at the last inspection, as 73 per cent of pupils achieved at least the expected level in 2003 compared to 45 per cent in 1997.
66. The good quality of teaching and learning seen at the last inspection has been maintained overall in Years 1 and 2. Teaching in Years 3 to 6 is not as strong as previously recorded. Teachers in Years 1 and 2 use the good skills pupils develop in the nursery and reception as a starting point to broaden and increase their knowledge and understanding of key scientific facts. Teachers generally plan effective lessons using experiences that help the children understand. For example, pupils in Year 1 discover which materials are waterproof and suitable for clothes on a rainy day. This approach enables pupils, often with lower general ability or with limited experiences, to see the relevance of the work they are doing and relate it to their own background.
67. Through Years 3 to 6 there is some variation in how well teachers promote pupils' enquiry skills. Pupils participate in some investigations but they often tend to be teacher-led and do not provide sufficient opportunities for pupils to use their initiative or make decisions. Teachers, particularly of the older children, concentrate on teaching facts which are then recorded neatly

in great detail by pupils in their exercise books. Consequently, by the end of Year 6, pupils generally have better factual knowledge than enquiry skills.

68. Teachers make good use of the school's wild garden and pond as a resource to study the habitats of small creatures. Good use is also made of ICT to reinforce pupils' learning. Pupils practise their writing skills often and work is well presented, and they use their numeracy skills when they sometimes record their work in charts. The subject has a temporary co-ordinator at the moment because of frequent staff changes and other pressing priorities. Therefore, the monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning are not yet thorough enough to establish what works well and what needs to improve. However, improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards are above average by the end of Year 2 and close to those expected in the main taught aspects in Year 6.
- Monitoring and assessment are not used effectively enough to identify weaknesses and improve standards further.

### **Commentary**

69. Achievement is very good for Year 1 and 2 pupils, and for Years 3 to 6 it is good. By the end of Year 2 standards are above national averages, and they are average by the end of Year 6.
70. Pupils have covered a wide range of work by the end of Year 2, and make good progress in their knowledge, understanding and skills. Pupils use ICT well to handle data about favourite story settings and display this information in a variety of forms including bar and block graphs and pie charts. However, they have few opportunities to investigate imaginary situations or to discuss their experiences of control equipment inside and outside the school.
71. By Year 6, pupils have continued to experience a good range of the subject content, for example, producing graphs of their most popular books and to show how shadows change during the day. They have also had experience of using simulations to find out about factors affecting the growth of plants at levels expected for their age, and have learned well how to exchange information and ideas with others in different ways, including e-mail. However, they have had little experience of controlling events in a pre-determined way and sensing physical data using ICT systems.
72. Teaching and learning are good overall, and very good teaching was seen in Year 4 where the teacher used resources particularly well to develop pupils' knowledge and understanding of how to program a toy to complete a route. Very effective teaching strategies ensured all pupils were actively engaged in the activity in small groups, allowing ample opportunities to program the toy, discuss their findings and refine the program accordingly. Useful links were forged with mathematics when pupils were asked to estimate angles in degrees and with geography through a consideration of routes. Other good lessons were seen in Year 5 and Year 1, characterised by good progress towards the stated lesson target, good links with other subjects, and effective use of a good range of resources. However, time and resources are not always used effectively to focus the lesson, for example when pupils had to wait for individual instructions instead of receiving them collectively on the overhead screen.
73. The newly appointed co-ordinator has attempted to address staff's lack of confidence through an audit of their knowledge and skills and intends to use the findings from this survey to arrange further in-service development. She has organised a computer club that is attended

by staff and children and has raised interest in the subject well. She has also rightly identified the need to check standards through a more formal system of assessment and recognises her monitoring role needs further development to enable her to diagnose weaknesses, and to support staff in raising standards. In spite of her short time as co-ordinator she has many good ideas to raise standards but her influence has so far been through recommending and providing software. Consequently, her leadership and management are satisfactory.

74. Progress has been good since the previous inspection, as an ICT suite has been developed, a part-time technician employed, suitable software procured and a scheme based on national guidance developed, and staff have undertaken national training.

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

75. Useful links with mathematics, English, and art are evident in the work of younger pupils in Years 1 and 2. In Years 3 to 6 effective links have been made to science, mathematics, English and geography, but the lack of an overall plan has limited the range and depth of work.

### **HUMANITIES**

76. No lessons were seen in geography and only one in religious education. It is not therefore possible to make firm overall judgements about provision, standards or the quality of teaching in these subjects.

### **Geography**

77. The evidence from inspection is that teachers follow the topics detailed in the national guidance. There are good links with other subjects such as ICT and literacy when pupils in Year 4 write letters drawing attention to the improvements needed in the local environment. Years 5 and 6 take part in a residential visit to Bournemouth where they increase their knowledge of England whilst enhancing their social, speaking and listening skills. The school has good links with schools across Europe through exchange visits by teachers between the schools, through the Comenius Project.

### **History**

Provision for history is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils' enthusiasm for history is high.
- There were opportunities for independent learning in the lessons seen.
- There are productive links with other subjects.

### **Commentary**

78. Pupils achieve well from a low start on entry, but reach standards below average levels for their age by the end of Years 2 and 6. Pupils enjoy history and approach their work with enthusiasm. By the age of seven, pupils have an appreciation of the passing of time and how things change. They also begin to develop their enquiry skills effectively. For example, pupils in Year 2 worked in groups to discuss interesting questions they would like to ask about holidays, particularly seaside holidays, in the past. In this way, pupils explore ideas about past times and begin to think through social and technological change. Very good geographical links are being made through locating seaside towns on the map and exploring ways to get there now and in the past.

79. Teaching is good. Teachers plan interesting ways to present historical events as they would have appeared to people at the time. Pupils in Year 6 are fascinated by life in Ancient Egypt and recall detailed facts about customs and rituals. They take on well the role of detectives investigating the life and death of a Pharaoh and respond enthusiastically to the task of researching history books and using sources such as CD-ROMs and the Internet for more information.
80. As well as good links with geography and ICT, there are links made with art and citizenship. Teachers are also beginning to exploit the good opportunities for enhancing speaking and listening skills. The school is keen to see the subject develop. To this end the school is working closely with the other two schools in their group to share expertise and resources. A good example of this was when all the schools joined together for a 'Viking Day' and enjoyed a visit from an 'ancient member of that race'.

## **Religious education**

Provision for religious education is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils make good progress across the school.
- Teaching in the one lesson seen was good.
- The subject is well led.

### **Commentary**

81. Pupils achieve well, and reach levels close to those expected in the locally agreed syllabus. Examination of teachers' planning and discussion with pupils indicate that the school is correctly following the locally agreed syllabus. The fundamental principle of acknowledging people have different faiths, all of which merit respect, is an important overriding element of teaching and learning. This contributes well to the school's ethos of living in a harmonious multi-faith society.
82. In the one lesson seen, pupils in Year 2 knew that Buddha was the founder of the Buddhist religion. They discussed suitable rules for living with others that they think Buddha would want his followers to practise. Pupils made good use of this discussion to reflect on attitudes and rules relevant to their own behaviour and personal development.
83. Pupils in Year 6 are familiar with the major religions of the world with sufficient emphasis on Christianity. They compare similarities and differences between places of worship, sacred books, and birth and death rituals. Pupils appreciate the advantage of hearing information at first hand from members of their class and show a mature attitude when they discuss difficult questions.
84. The co-ordinator has good overview of the progress of the subject, and leads well. The quality of provision in the subject has been maintained since the last inspection, and improvements have been made in the development of pupils' personal reflection on their own attitudes, values and beliefs.

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

85. Design and technology, music and physical education were sampled. Three partial lessons were seen in design and technology, one lesson and two singing sessions in music, with specialist woodwind tuition from a peripatetic teacher, and one lesson was observed in physical education, with short observations of other lessons and outdoor activities.

## **Art and design**

Overall provision is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There is a good concentration on the subject throughout the school.
- The staff transmit their enthusiasm to the pupils, who develop good attitudes to their work.
- The co-ordinator keeps a good overview of the development of the subject.

### **Commentary**

86. Standards are above average overall by the end of Year 2 and Year 6, and achievement is good.
87. Teaching and learning are good. In a Year 1 lesson, the teacher's good explanation of the skills involved in observational drawing and interesting choice of plants focused the lesson well and enabled the pupils to develop their use of line and tone in their drawings. The work built well on previous lessons where pupils had noted the shapes in flowers and had reproduced these to good effect. Considering the shapes within plants extended this work and some useful links with science were developed when one child noticed the pattern in veins, which led to a discussion of their purpose. This work engaged pupils because the teacher was so enthusiastic, and enabled them to develop and explore ideas of line and tone well in their observational drawings.
88. In a Year 6 lesson, the teaching assistant worked effectively, engaging a group of pupils with special educational needs in designing paddle dolls. This work was linked to history where pupils were studying Ancient Egypt. The teaching assistant prepared the lesson well by making an example in advance of the lesson to show the children and hence shared the expectations for the lesson with them in a meaningful and engaging way. Her careful explanation and questioning enabled the children to have a good understanding and overview of the design process and hence they were well prepared to embark on designing paddle dolls themselves with good attention to pattern and detail.
89. Leadership and management are good as the good standards seen in the previous inspection have been maintained through the subject leader's vision and enthusiasm for the subject. Pupils frequently take part in competitions with success, and there is a planned scheme of work with a whole-school approach to developing links with other subjects. The subject is monitored well and the co-ordinator has a good strategic vision for the subject and rightly plans to extend extra-curricular opportunities with a view to attaining Artsmark status for the school.

### **Design and technology**

90. The evidence from inspection is that standards are above average in Year 2 and Year 6 and pupils' achievement is good. Teaching and learning in the parts of lessons seen were good in both key stages.
91. In a good Year 1 lesson, the teacher made effective use of resources and teaching methods to prepare pupils to design and make a vegetable salad. Her careful questioning enabled pupils to develop their observational skills and an appreciation of the appearance of vegetables as a prelude to considering their use and effect in a salad dish. In Years 5 and 6 good exposition and support enabled pupils to develop the skills necessary to make waterproof containers, and slippers. Resources and techniques are chosen with care to ensure sufficient attention is given to the appearance of the finished products.

## Music

92. The subject has a place in the curriculum, but it appears to be less prominent than at the last inspection. Caution is required in making judgements, however, as less evidence was collected in this inspection than the last. The school organises concerts and holds services in the local church where parents say that the singing is good. However, none of this was observed.
93. Two singing practices were observed in the hall. Pupils in Years 1 to 3 sat together in the hall to practise a number of songs and hymns. The session was uncomfortably managed by the staff, as there was no clear lead staff member for the pupils, and the continuity of the practice was regularly interrupted by one teacher speaking across another. There was little concentration on the skills of singing, as the main point seemed to be to remember the words. However, the singing was generally lively, with staff providing a satisfactory model. In the equivalent practice for Years 4 to 6 pupils, the pupils were reminded to breathe deeply, and hold a longer note at the end of a line, read from the overhead projector. However, the standard of singing was below that expected for the ages of the pupils, and there was no comment from staff when pupils consistently missed the first word, or did not reach the high notes effectively.
94. In the satisfactory lesson seen, Year 4 pupils made reasonable progress in listening to and responding to recorded music. By carefully focused questioning, the teacher drew a reasonable range of comments from the pupils after hearing three contrasting pieces from 'Cinderella'. She gave them good opportunities to discuss their feelings in pairs, although their responses were generally lacking in imagination. The pupils' levels of musical understanding and response were below those generally seen for their age. Year 3 pupils have good opportunities to learn to play the recorder, and the specialist teacher enterprisingly allows each pupil to compose and play their own piece using the three notes they have so far learned. A few pupils also learn to play clarinet or flute, and those observed made satisfactory progress.

## Physical education

95. The headteacher is keen to promote the subject further, and has successfully bid alongside the other two partnership primary schools for a fenced sports area to be built this summer in part of the playground. The school has no sports field, and the playground is oddly shaped, with part of it sloping quite steeply, so this new area should be very useful. An effective development that has some impact on a number of pupils' games skills and fitness has been the introduction of sports equipment and games at lunchtime.
96. Provision in the subject is unsatisfactory as swimming is not offered, though it is a statutory requirement. This was noted at the last inspection, and is explained partly by the school historically having no delegated transport funding as it is just under one mile from the nearest swimming baths. The headteacher also feels that it would be difficult to achieve the one adult to every eight pupils ratio to guarantee safety on the walk to the baths, crossing a number of main roads. However, active plans are now being developed in liaison with the linked schools to address the situation, with a view to providing swimming in the next academic year.
97. Year 6 pupils worked with a cricket coach from the local authority team to develop stamina, and throwing, catching and hitting skills. Year 3 pupils practised foot skills, but the lesson was not well enough organised for them to make sufficient progress. Year 5 pupils took part vigorously in a game of skittle ball in the hall, led by a very enthusiastic teacher. She praised them, helping them to evaluate what they had learned, but missed the opportunity to allow them to contribute their own views.

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

98. The provision for personal social and health education and citizenship is good. Lessons have a positive impact on pupils' development. Teachers have a strong awareness of pupils' problems and the neighbourhoods in which they live. They therefore place a strong emphasis on correct behaviour. The breakfast club teaches pupils how to sit at a table and eat sensibly. Teachers' planning is sound and supported by school policies such as drugs awareness and anti-racist policies.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>3</b>
How inclusive the school is	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	4
Value for money provided by the school	4
<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>4</b>
Pupils' achievement	4
<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>	<b>2</b>
Attendance	5
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>	<b>3</b>
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	4
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	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	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2
<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>3</b>
The governance of the school	5
The leadership of the headteacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	4
The effectiveness of management	3

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