

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **REDSCOPE INFANT SCHOOL**

Rotherham

LEA area: Rotherham

Unique reference number: 106844

Headteacher: Mrs Claire Smeath

Lead inspector: Mrs Lesley Clark

Dates of inspection: 12<sup>th</sup> – 14<sup>th</sup> January 2004

Inspection number: 257297

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 – 7 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	183
School address:	Kimberworth Park Road Rotherham South Yorkshire
Postcode:	S61 3JT
Telephone number:	01709 740350
Fax number:	01709 550516
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Bronwen Watson
Date of previous inspection:	May 1998

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Redscope Infant School is about the same size as other infant schools. Most pupils come from the immediate area which is largely rented local authority housing with some owner-occupied properties. Overall, the school's socio-economic context is well below average and its take-up for free school meals is above average. Almost all pupils are of white, British, ethnic background; 2 per cent come from Mixed White and Black British Caribbean and other Asian backgrounds. There are no pupils learning English as an additional language. When children first start school, their attainment is well below average. The proportion of pupils identified as having special educational needs (6 per cent) is well below average whereas the proportion of pupils who have statements of special educational needs is about average. The range of needs includes moderate learning difficulties, social, emotional and behavioural difficulties and autism. A large proportion of children have significant speech and communication problems when they first start in the nursery. In 2002, the school received an Achievement Award for improvements in standards and in 2003 the Basic Skills Agency Quality Mark and the Active Mark for physical education. The school plays an active part in the Local 'Education Action Zone' and is part of the Excellence in Cities scheme. The school makes provision for adult education and each term offers a family-learning programme which includes courses on literacy, numeracy and positive parenting. In addition, drop-in facilities for parents are offered by learning mentors who also support pupils in school.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
25431	Lesley Clark	Lead inspector	English Geography History Religious education
8922	Brenda McIntosh	Lay inspector	
17685	Linda Spooner	Team inspector	The Foundation Stage Art and design Design and technology Music Physical education
17907	Mike Bowers	Team inspector	Mathematics Science Information and communication technology Special educational needs English as an additional language

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**This is a very good school** in which pupils achieve very well because they are very well taught. The headteacher's leadership is excellent and the very good management of all aspects of the school's work ensures that pupils reach standards that are higher than in similar schools. The school gives very good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Standards are above average in reading, information and communication technology (ICT), art and design, physical education and religious education because teaching is very good and pupils have many opportunities to use their skills;
- There is a strong commitment to the inclusion of all pupils and consequently they achieve very well. Almost all attain nationally expected standards in writing, mathematics and science by the end of Year 2;
- Children get off to a very good start in the nursery and learn a great deal very quickly;
- The curriculum is very good and combines a rich and varied programme of learning with very good provision for pupils' personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This results in pupils behaving very well and having very good attitudes to learning;
- The excellent leadership sets very high standards and successfully enables everyone to work as a team;
- The school has an excellent partnership with parents who contribute a great deal to their children's successful learning;
- In the reception classes, children need a bit more practice in using language and number by doing relevant activities with adult help.

The school has made good improvement since the last inspection. Higher attaining pupils are doing better; the school development plan is much more effective and the procedures to improve attendance are now very good.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

*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*

**Pupils' overall achievement is very good.** In the present Year 2, standards are above average in reading and average in writing and in mathematics. Almost all pupils, including those with special educational needs, reach the level expected of their age and the small proportion of higher attaining pupils exceed expected standards at the end of Year 2. The school's results are going up faster than the national trend. Achievement is particularly good in ICT, art and design, physical education and religious education. There are no significant differences between the achievements of boys and girls, pupils of minority ethnic groups, or those of differing attainment levels or special needs.

Children enter the nursery with skills that are well below average and many have difficulties communicating with adults and with each other at first. By the end of the reception year, they are likely to meet the goals expected in personal, social and emotional development and in aspects of

physical development. Their achievement in these aspects is very good. They are unlikely to meet the goals set for them in communication, language and literacy, mathematical development and knowledge and understanding of the world but nonetheless make good progress. Children achieve much better overall in the nursery than in the reception classes: their achievement is good on balance by the end of the reception year.

**Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good.** Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good and many pupils arrive early so they can work alongside their parents before school starts. They really want to learn, enjoy their lessons and behave very well. They get on well with each other and with the adults they work with. Attendance is average and is improving, as a result of the school's very good actions to promote it.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The quality of education provided by the school is very good. Teaching is very good** in most subjects and pupils learn at a very good rate. Children learn very well in the nursery where the high level of organisation, resources and adult support stimulate them to communicate and to learn many new skills. In the reception classes, children learn well on the whole, though sometimes their learning slows when they do not have access to enough purposeful activities to support their learning in language, literacy and mathematical development. Teaching is very good in Years 1 and 2. Reading, writing, numeracy and ICT are used very well in other subjects and creative links between subjects challenge pupils to think. Pupils are well aware of how well they are learning and measure their progress against their personal targets for improvement.

This is a very caring school where teachers know how to make learning fun. The curriculum is very good and imaginatively thought out to develop pupils' creative talents to the full. Parents and carers make an excellent contribution to their children's learning because the school involves them fully.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**The leadership and management of the school are very good.** The leadership of the headteacher is excellent. Strong teamwork and the development of a very imaginative approach to teaching and learning have produced a well organised and stimulating environment in which pupils fulfil their potential. The governors make a very good contribution to the running of the school and to the excellent involvement of parents.

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

Parents think this is a very good school and are particularly proud of how well their children learn to read. They receive high quality information about what goes on in school and about how well their children are doing. The pupils find school an exciting place to be and work with keen interest.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- Develop the teaching in the reception classes to give children greater access to purposeful activities, with appropriate adult support, to help foster their skills in speaking, literacy and mathematical development.

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

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

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

Achievement is very good, particularly in the nursery and in Years 1 and 2. It is good overall, in the reception classes. Standards are above average in reading and at nationally expected levels in writing and mathematics by Year 2.

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

- Children achieve very well in the nursery and make good progress overall, by the end of the reception year. They could do a bit better in the reception classes in language, literacy and mathematical development;
- Standards are above average in reading and almost all pupils, including those with special educational needs, attain nationally expected standards in writing and mathematics. They do better than pupils in similar schools;
- Pupils, including those with special educational needs, higher attaining pupils and ethnic minority groups achieve very well;
- Standards are above average in most other subjects; they are high in personal, social and health education and citizenship (PSHCE).

#### **Commentary**

1. Children enter the nursery with levels of attainment that are well below average. In particular, many children have difficulties in communicating because of their poorly developed language skills. They make extremely good progress in the nursery, as a result of expert adult support. The resources for learning are very good and imaginative and creative activities stimulate children to learn independently. They make very good progress, particularly in their personal, social and emotional development and aspects of physical development and in their listening skills. In the reception classes, children continue to make very good progress in their personal social and emotional development and in their ability to listen and in their physical development. By the end of the reception year, as a result of this very good achievement, children meet the goals set for them in these areas of learning. Children achieve well in communication, language and literacy and in their mathematical development and knowledge and understanding of the world overall, though progress is better in the nursery than in the reception classes. This is because children have fewer opportunities in the reception classes to reinforce their learning through undertaking independent, practical activities to complement what they are taught. At the end of the reception year, about half the children do not meet the goals set for them in communication language and literacy, mathematical development and knowledge and understanding of the world. Not enough lessons were seen to make a judgement in creative development.
2. Standards in Year 2, are above average in reading and well above average when compared to similar schools. Pupils' performance over time is consistently above average, with boys and girls performing equally well. Standards are above average because reading is very well taught, assessment is very good, pupils understand what they have to do to improve and they have many opportunities to practise their reading both at home and in school. Parental support for reading is greater than for writing. Standards in writing are broadly average because although almost all pupils reach nationally expected standards, only a relatively small proportion exceed expected levels. The school does all it can to encourage pupils' writing, providing a wide range of interesting writing materials and lots of different types of writing to develop pupils' skills; hence their very good achievement. The picture in mathematics is very similar. The school's push on developing pupils' ability to solve mathematical problems is successfully driving up standards. Compared to schools with a

similar intake of pupils, standards are above average in both writing and mathematics. Standards are broadly average in science, with the majority of pupils reaching the level expected of their age at the end of Year 2, comparing very favourably with similar schools.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	16.0 (16.9)	15.7(15.8)
writing	14.5 (14.9)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	16.0 (16.3)	16.3 (16.5)

*There were 65 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

3. Pupils achieve very well. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress because of the very good provision to help them to learn. Higher attaining pupils have many opportunities to work independently, to undertake challenging activities and to work out problems for themselves. The very good use of literacy, numeracy, and ICT in other subjects contributes greatly to pupils’ very good achievement. There is no difference between the achievement of boys and girls or between pupils from different ethnic minority groups. Resources for learning are carefully chosen to appeal to different groups of pupils and so contribute very well to their overall achievement.
4. Standards are above expected levels by the end of Year 2 in ICT, art and design, physical education and religious education. Standards are also better than average in singing and in those aspects of geography seen during the inspection. Pupils achieve very well because the curriculum is very well thought out to help them to use the skills learnt in one subject when they work in another.

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

Pupils have very good attitudes to learning; they behave very well and the school makes very good provision for their personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Attendance is satisfactory.

**Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils are very keen to learn and are very responsible for their age;
- Pupils get on very well together and with adults;
- The school makes very good provision for pupils’ personal development. Moments of spiritual wonder are extremely well prepared for;
- The school has very good procedures to monitor attendance.

**Commentary**

5. Pupils very much enjoy coming to school and most arrive early so that they can work with their parents before school officially begins. This is an improvement since the last inspection when it was noted that some pupils used to arrive late. Pupils are attentive, listen well and are keen to learn. They want to do well; the school stimulates in its pupils a strong desire to learn. As a result, pupils achieve very well. They learn to be enterprising and to take on responsibility around the school. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 have a great deal of responsibility for their own learning and are keen to achieve their individual targets in English and mathematics, for example. They approach their group targets for these subjects quite competitively, urging on others to achieve success so they can gain an award for their group. Pupils are expected be independent from the moment they start school. Reception children take messages and organise the lunch boxes and Year 1 pupils confidently sort out

printing their own work from the central printer in the staff room. Pupils are trusted to work outside the classroom using ICT equipment. They develop very well socially.

6. Pupils have very good relationships with their classmates and with the adults who work with them. Relationships between boys and girls and between pupils from ethnic minority groups are amicable. Pupils with special educational needs as well as higher attainers have very positive attitudes towards their learning. They take part in lessons enthusiastically, being prepared to answer questions and to contribute to discussions. Occasionally, when they find the work very difficult, they persevere to complete their tasks or confidently ask for help. Pupils are expected to behave very well in lessons and they respond to their teachers' high expectations. Sometimes, however, as happened in one reception class, behaviour is less well controlled. This is because adult expectations that children will listen to what others have to say and wait for their turn before speaking are not consistent enough and so a few children can tend to take advantage on occasions. There is a relaxed and friendly atmosphere both inside and outside the building at playtimes and lunchtimes. Lunchtimes are social occasions and, with each class having its own special lunchtime supervisor, pupils receive very good support. This contributes very well to the generally high standards of behaviour. Parents are happy with the way their children respond to school and feel that if any incidents occur they are dealt with quickly and effectively. Both parents and pupils do not perceive bullying to be a problem.
  
7. The school makes very good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Displays at the school's entrance and in the hall reinforce pupils' awareness of living in a multicultural society in which different faiths guide people's beliefs and actions. The school's policy on racial equality is very effective at ensuring harmonious relations between different groups of pupils. The moral values pupils learn in 'our caring school' are exemplified in the kindness and helpfulness they show to others and in the pride which they and their parents clearly take in the school. Lessons, particularly in religious education and personal social health and citizenship education, include consideration of moral values. Moments for pupils to experience wonder are carefully planned in other subjects to give them unforgettable experiences as in this activity that took place over two days:-

### Example of outstanding practice

**An excellent example of how pupils' imaginations were stimulated and how they experienced wonder.**

Ten minutes before school started, pupils, with their parents' help compiled lists of words to describe what they saw and felt. On the tables before them were huge eggs made from ice, sitting at the bottom of large, see-through containers. The pupils speculated where they had come from. One explained, 'I think it came from a museum in the Arctic. It's an ice creature's egg. When it melts the creature will get out.' As part of their literacy lesson, the pupils studied a letter explaining where the eggs were found. The letter, supposedly written in haste, omitted some important words and punctuation. The pupils spent some time correcting the mistakes. During the course of the morning, the ice began to melt. Pupils observed the changes and this was used as a stimulus for a lengthy piece of writing. The next day, more eggs arrived from the 'Ice Dragon' who wrote explaining that these eggs needed to be wrapped up so they would not melt. This formed the basis for investigations in science, incorporating mathematics and ICT using a digital weighing machine to monitor changes. Throughout, the pupils were awestruck, as they half believed in the reality of the dragon.

### Attendance

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

Authorised absence	
School data	6.2
National data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	
School data	0.3
National data	0.4

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

8. The school has put into place some very good systems for promoting and monitoring pupils' attendance and punctuality. Although pupils' attendance is slightly below the national figures it has improved greatly since the last inspection. There is nothing else that the school can do further other than to continue using and monitoring the effectiveness of the systems which have been put into place. There have been no exclusions. The Learning Mentor is very good at ensuring those pupils' with severe home problems arrive punctually at school.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL**

The quality of education is very good; teaching is very good overall, and the curriculum is much better than in most schools.

### **Teaching and learning**

Teaching is very good overall. It is very good in Years 1 and 2. Teaching in the nursery is also very good and sometimes excellent. Teaching in the reception classes is satisfactory overall, with many good features. Assessment is very good. The quality of teaching has improved since the previous inspection, as there are now more very good lessons.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching is very good and so pupils learn very well;
- Assessment systems are of a very high quality and are used very well to help teachers to plan lessons;
- Children of reception age do not always get enough focused adult help in lessons. Some activities lack purpose and do not make a sufficient contribution to the development of specific skills, such as language and number development.

### **Commentary**

9. There are many strengths in teaching in Years 1 and 2 and no significant weaknesses. Teachers have a very good knowledge of the subjects they teach and lessons are very well planned and prepared. Relationships are of a very high quality and teachers are very successful in encouraging all pupils to do their best. This results in pupils working very hard. Pupils are appropriately challenged and motivated by the activities provided for them and the tasks set. This makes a significant contribution to their very good achievement. The teaching of reading is particularly imaginative and many opportunities are provided through role play for the pupils to develop their reading skills and increase their enjoyment of books. In mathematics, good levels of challenge are provided for all pupils, including higher ability pupils and this makes a very significant contribution to achievement. Art and design is taught particularly well with much evidence of high quality work on display and observed in lessons. Teachers invest much creative thinking into ensuring that the pupils are provided with every opportunity to explore art for sheer enjoyment, yet at the same time planning and teaching ensure that they develop high levels of skill. The same is true in literacy, ICT and religious education, enabling pupils to learn very well with high levels of enjoyment and success.
10. Assessment procedures are very good overall, and all subjects and aspects of learning, including religious education and PSHCE are rigorously assessed. Teachers use the information well to help them plan the next lesson to make both teaching and pupils' learning effective. In science, however, teachers do not always recognise and record pupils' attainment when it exceeds the expected level and as a result, they do not have enough information to feed back into planning the next steps in learning for higher ability pupils. Pupils who have special educational needs are fully included in lessons through activities and tasks that are well matched to their learning needs and this helps them to achieve as well as others. Teaching assistants give skilful and effective help. Very occasionally, teachers do not make the best use of the skills of support staff, for example, in physical

education and ICT. Marking of pupils' work is thorough and is often done alongside the pupils so that they understand what they have to do to improve their work. High quality links with parents, through homework and target setting provide very good opportunities for them to be involved in supporting their children's learning and make a very positive contribution to achievement.

11. Teaching in the nursery and reception classes is good overall. The quality of teaching in the nursery is never less than very good and some excellent teaching was observed. Nursery staff have a very high expertise in their knowledge of how young children learn. This enables children to get off to a very good start to their time in school. A particular strength lies in the emphasis placed on personal development through excellent relationships and very well established routines and expectations. As a result, the children make excellent progress in this area of learning during their time in nursery. Teaching is at all times, stimulating and enthusiastic with carefully planned activities that fully engage the children. The very well planned focus on listening and speaking skills is already paying dividends in promoting very high levels of achievement, particularly in the development of listening skills. Teachers in reception effectively reinforce personal development and this ensures that achievement in this area is very good by the end of the Foundation Stage. Not enough opportunities are provided for the children to develop language and numeracy skills through focused adult support in lessons. Consequently, children miss out on talking about what they are learning with an adult who has been given guidance as to how to extend their vocabulary and their understanding by working with them.

**Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 29 lessons**

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1	13	8	7	0	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**

The school provides a very good curriculum that covers all subjects, and is relevant to the ages and interests of all its pupils. There are good levels of staff to meet the requirements of the school's curriculum, and resources for learning are good.

**Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The curriculum is very good and provides a very good range of extra-curricular activities for an infant school;
- Subjects are imaginatively linked together to make pupils' learning more effective;
- The arts curriculum is of excellent quality giving pupils really useful insights into multicultural issues;
- The provision for the library is not ideal.

**Commentary**

12. There is a very broad curriculum with an appropriate focus on literacy and numeracy. It fulfils the statutory requirements of the National Curriculum, collective worship and the Agreed Syllabus for religious education but provides much more than that. The curriculum has an impressive policy for drugs education and appropriate emphasis on health and safety. Several aspects of the curriculum have been recognised with national awards, such as the Physical Education Active Mark. There is very good provision for pupils with special educational needs and the school's 'inclusive environment' ensures that pupils from ethnic minority groups are well represented in what pupils study.

13. The school's approach to linking subjects together, such as geography and physical education or science and art effectively extends learning in each subject. So, for example, in a physical education lesson, pupils were learning Scottish dance steps as part of their work in geography on Katie Morag and the mythical Island of Struay and in art they have produced very creative pieces of work to illustrate the circulation of blood in the body.

#### **Example of outstanding practice**

**A great strength in the curriculum is the practice of carefully linking subjects together as part of an overall theme. This excellent practice promotes very high levels of interest and enjoyment in the children.**

In geography, a topic based on the mythical Isle of Struay was ingeniously devised to include mathematics as the pupils study timetables of the ferryboats plying between the island and the mainland. Pupils combined ICT skills and processes as they designed and made tartan covers and chose italic fonts for notebooks they constructed to be sold in the Island 'gift shop'. They took on the role of 'shop keeper' and 'customer', writing out bills and using genuine money to purchase items and receive change; this in itself was a worthwhile contribution to developing pupils' speaking and listening skills. Outside the classroom, a large sand tray, complete with boats and buildings means that pupils can use materials to create their own islands. In particular, this helped lower attaining pupils who found it easier as a result, to draw a map, using a key to explain the different man-made and physical features.

14. Teachers make very good use of opportunities to extend pupils' skills in English, mathematics and ICT through using them in other areas of the curriculum. Subjects like mathematics and science are linked by the planned use of problem solving activities. Very good use is made of ICT in many subjects, thus ensuring that these skills are not taught in isolation, and become an integral part of learning and communication. Physical education makes a particularly strong contribution to the life of the school. It includes regular after school interest clubs in country-dance, movement, gymnastics and soccer. The school continually adjusts its timetabling to ensure that activities can alternate between morning and afternoon sessions. This ensures that pupils are continually excited by the ever-changing form of the curriculum. The curriculum planning is regularly monitored and evaluated by the headteacher to ensure that it enables pupils to reach high standards in every subject. Currently, the shortcomings in the reception classes are being improved by the provision of shared resources, both in terms of adult assistance and learning materials, in a newly developed, shared area between the two classrooms.
15. There is excellent provision for the arts; during a recent cultural arts week, the curriculum was enriched by visits from musicians and storytellers. Pupils met members of the Muslim faith, listened to music from Australia and South America and created artwork based on African cultures. This experience remains on display in the school and is captured in the excellent artwork the pupils completed.
16. Resources are good overall. They are particularly abundant in ICT, art and physical education. However, whilst the school has a good supply of suitable books, there is insufficient space for a general library. The current placement of the library stock in the hall is not ideal because it limits the space available for physical education and also makes it hard for children to use when physical education lessons are going on.

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

Arrangements to ensure pupils' care, welfare, health and safety are very good. The level and range of support and guidance that pupils receive is very good. The school involves pupils very well in its work and development.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are very well cared for which makes them feel safe and this in turn makes a significant contribution to their achievement;
- Teachers and the learning mentor provide very good support for pupils' personal and academic development and this gives them confidence and helps them to achieve very well;
- There are good arrangements for settling children into the nursery and reception class;
- Pupils' opinions are listened to carefully and acted upon.

## Commentary

17. The school is a safe and secure place where very good attention to pupils' welfare, health and safety ensures that they can concentrate on their learning. Regular risk assessments and inspections of the building and equipment are undertaken and appropriate records are maintained. Parents feel that their children are looked after very well. Child protection procedures are very good. Staff know pupils and their families very well. With this knowledge and the very good liaison with outside agencies they are able to provide the best possible help to meet the needs of individual children. Pupils are always very well supervised. If a child is ill or has an accident, staff are immediately on hand to look after them to ensure minimum distress. The curriculum is good in this respect and helps pupils learn about the importance of keeping healthy and safe.
18. Adults are caring and helpful in their dealings with the children, showing concern and respect. Pupils feel that the teachers are fair and know that there is an adult they can go to if they are worried about anything. Pupils with special educational needs have speedy access to support because of the very well maintained records of their attainment and progress. They are very well supported in class and this helps them to take a full and active part in the lessons. The learning mentor provides very good support in her role helping pupils and their families with personal and social concerns that may be hindering their education. The school has very good systems for monitoring pupils' achievements and checking their progress. The information gained is used very well to ensure that pupils are guided to improve their work further, and to provide extra help where it is needed. As a result of this, pupils achieve very well. Pupils have a good understanding of how they are progressing with their work because their learning targets are shared with them regularly and they know when they have achieved them. Additionally, when work is complete, teachers try to speak to pupils individually to tell them how well they have done and what they need to do to improve.
19. There are very good arrangements to help the children settle quickly and happily into the routines of the nursery and the reception classes. The staff establish early links with parents through a series of meetings and gather information about the children in order to maximise support and guidance. Parents of children who join the nursery are invited to stay for the first session to settle their children and join in the activities. The school is very flexible in its approach as to when children start nursery and transfer to the reception class. Much discussion takes place with the family to make sure the needs of each individual child are carefully considered and met.
20. The school regularly seeks pupils' views through informal class discussions or asks for their opinions on specific projects through class activities, for example, pupils' designs and ideas were used when making improvements to the playground. Pupils with special educational needs are asked for their views about how well they are progressing, what they are good at and what they need help with.

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

The partnership with parents is excellent and contributes extremely well to the pupils' effective learning and very good achievement. Links with the community and other schools are very good. Educational and support programmes for parents, families and members of the community are very effective.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The involvement of parents is a very important factor behind the school's successes and pupils' very good achievement;
- The school provides extremely well thought out guidance for parents on how to help their children learn;
- Family learning and parenting courses have a significant effect on pupils' learning, raising achievement and promoting social inclusion in school;
- The very good links with the community and other schools enhance curricular opportunities for pupils.

### **Commentary**

21. The school places great emphasis on involving parents in school in a variety of ways and as a result, they make a very good contribution to their children's learning and achievements. It is well regarded within the local education authority for the promotion of parental involvement and it is easy to see why. The role of the learning mentors is very well integrated into the ways in which the school seeks to involve parents and families. Parents accompany school visits; support concerts and other school events and are very good fund raisers. A very good number of parents and volunteers make a regular commitment to help in the classrooms or with other specific tasks and activities; for example, parents provided almost all the very splendid costumes worn by the pupils at the Christmas performance. Many parents and family members attended the performance to see their children and it was very apparent how welcome they are in school and at ease when chatting to the teachers. No wonder therefore that parents think this is a very good school. The enthusiastic parents' association, known as the FORUM, meets regularly to discuss issues, share ideas and organise fund raising events. Parents find that the headteacher and staff are approachable and accessible at anytime for formal or informal discussions and where there are concerns or problems these are swiftly dealt with.
22. The school communicates very effectively with parents through an excellent range of information about the school, their children's progress and the curriculum. There is a regular sharing of pupils' learning targets so that parents are always aware of what their children are working towards and therefore they are able to help them with their learning at home. Parents receive lots of information about the curriculum and guidance on how to support their children's learning, for example, each week, Year 2 children take home suggested activities to assist their class work in mathematics. As a result of all the information provided, parents are able to make a significant contribution to their child's learning.
23. The school is involved in a local authority initiative to provide Family Learning and other courses for adults, such as Positive Parenting, Coping with Kids and 'Drop-In sessions'. The courses are popular and very well attended. The family literacy and numeracy courses are extremely successful in giving parents the opportunity to gain a better understanding of what their children are learning. Parents' targets link closely to their children's learning targets and guide them in helping their children to improve their work. Many of the other courses help parents gain a greater understanding of child development or give them an increased confidence in their contacts with school which often results in a readiness to become actively involved in school life. Children whose parents have been involved in family learning and other courses clearly show improvement in their progress.

24. The school has very good links with other schools and the local community. Teachers make full use of local resources in terms of working with local people and visiting places to enrich the curriculum. There are particularly strong links with the church. The curate supports lessons and assemblies and the vicar is a member of the governing body and assists with the development of religious education. There is very good liaison with the junior school especially between Years 2 and 3 which prepares the children very well for the move to their next phase of learning.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

The leadership and management of the school are very good. The headteacher provides excellent leadership and management of the school is very good. The governance of the school is very good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Excellent leadership by the headteacher ensures high achievement;
- Management of subjects by the co-ordinators is very good and contributes very well to the good standards;
- Very good management of the way the school runs ensures that all pupils are fully included and their individual needs catered for;
- Governors make a significant contribution to the leadership of the school and its successes;
- Financial planning and the systems for financial control and administration are very good.

### **Commentary**

25. The leadership of the headteacher is outstanding. As a result of very high aspirations for pupils, extremely good planning, a strong sense of purpose and a prime concern for the needs of individuals, pupils' achievement has improved since the last inspection. Standards are rising at an above average rate, and pupils are doing much better than those in similar schools. One of the key factors behind the leadership success is the headteacher's ability to form strong teams so that any specific weaknesses in the teaching, for example, are very well supported to ensure that pupils continue to make good or better progress. In the reception classes, for instance, lessons are planned as a foundation stage team to ensure a good balance between taught elements and the children's free choice. The shared classroom between the two reception rooms is being developed to give extended choice of activities to children. The next stage is outlined to ensure that activities are more closely integrated with each area of learning as it is taught, thus developing both the quality of the teaching and children's learning. By developing the links with parents and including them fully in their children's learning, through providing courses for those who wish to improve their own skills, or by enabling pupils to demonstrate success to their parents rather than failure, the leadership ensures that pupils have all the advantages of parental support to enable them to do well.
26. Subject co-ordinators and the senior management team are also very effective and aspects of their work, such as reviewing performance data, looking at patterns and taking appropriate action, are excellent. This contributes very well to the school's climate of success and to pupils' very good achievements. At present, the Foundation Stage co-ordinator has a clear overview of most aspects of provision but has insufficient opportunity to monitor what is needed to further develop teaching and learning in the reception year. Subject co-ordinators make a very good contribution to the school's self-evaluation and they provide very good role models both in terms of their own teaching and the advice they give other teachers. Characteristically, subject leaders are enthusiastic, embracing new ideas and technology with lively interest. This greatly benefits pupils learning. Staff training is linked very well to the needs of individual teachers as well as to the needs of the school. Performance management is currently being extended to the teaching assistants as well, illustrating the inclusive nature of the school's leadership. The school improvement plan is

well organised. This working document sets out as its first and most important consideration the high achievement of pupils. The document links target setting in key subjects and puts in order of priority the actions to be taken and their cost. It gives very clear educational direction.

27. The management of and provision for pupils with special educational needs as well as groups requiring additional support, such as higher attainers or pupils from ethnic minority groups, is very well managed. A well written 'inclusion' policy ensures that pupils with special educational needs are full members of the class, taking part in all activities and being taught at their specific level of achievement. Clear documentation ensures that all class teachers are fully aware of their responsibilities in this regard. Regular rigorous monitoring ensures that the targets on pupils' individual education plans form the basis of teaching and learning.
28. Governors have a very good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. They support the headteacher very well in the management of the school ensuring that statutory requirements are met in all areas of its work. They have a very good range of strategies for checking on what is happening in school, for example, they visit the school often to check what they are being told is actually happening and individual governors are linked to specific subjects or responsibilities. Meetings are very well organised and include regular reviews of the school's development plans as well as analysis of the school's performance in national tests. Governors ask the right questions in order to raise standards and are very knowledgeable about the success of initiatives, such as the reading recovery programme. All the information gathered enables governors to make informed contributions to the future development of the school. They challenge decisions and seek further information if they are unclear about a subject. For example, they challenged over the training needs of individual staff and as a result, the nursery nurse was given regular release time from teaching to further develop her skills. They are also very mindful of falling rolls and the implication this might have on staffing levels.
29. Financial planning is very good. The school budget is very well managed to support the school's priorities for improvement and is regularly monitored to ensure that spending levels are within the agreed targets. Governors are involved very well in considering and challenging the various spending options presented to them by the headteacher. The principles of best value are applied very well ensuring all resources are used to the best effect to meet the needs of the pupils. The systems for routine financial control and day-to-day administration are very well established and the administrative assistant provides very good support for the headteacher and teachers allowing them to concentrate their efforts on the pupils and their learning.

## Financial information

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

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	537,718
Total expenditure	513,948
Expenditure per pupil	2,215

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	23,522
Balance carried forward to the next	23,770

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

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

Provision for children in the nursery and reception is **good**.

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

- Provision in the nursery is a significant strength of the school. Teaching is of a very good quality because staff are experts in their knowledge of how children learn. Highly effective teamwork between the teacher and nursery nurse and very well informed adult support lead to rapid learning and very high achievement;
- By the end of reception most children achieve the expected targets in personal development and aspects of physical development. A smaller proportion achieve as expected in the other areas of learning;
- Attainment on entry to the nursery is well below expectations, but as a result of the overall good provision, children achieve well by the end of reception;
- In the reception classes, personal development and basic reading skills are taught well. However, the children do not always get enough focused adult help in lessons. Some activities lack purpose and do not make a sufficient contribution to the development of specific skills, such as language and number development;
- Assessment systems are of a very high quality. Teachers in all classes are accurate in their assessments of children's achievements in all six areas of learning. The information gathered is used very effectively in the nursery to set the next targets for learning;
- The accommodation and resources are of a very high quality in the nursery. There is no designated outdoor learning area for children in the reception classes. This was a weakness identified at the time of the previous inspection. However, satisfactory use is made of the nursery area by the reception teachers and the school has plans in place to improve this aspect of provision;
- Relationships with parents are very good. Parents and staff are genuine partners in the children's education;
- The Foundation Stage co-ordinator has a clear overview of most aspects of provision but does not have enough opportunities to monitor the quality of teaching and learning across the whole of the Foundation Stage.

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

Provision in personal, social and emotional development is **very good** overall. It is excellent in the nursery.

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

- Children attain the expected standards in this area of learning from a well below average starting point and achieve very highly;
- The quality of teaching is very good overall. It is excellent in the nursery and good in reception.

#### **Commentary**

30. Teachers and support staff have a very good understanding of the needs and interests of young children and ensure that they feel safe and secure. Many opportunities are provided for the children to learn about themselves and others. Staff are very good role models for behaviour and relationships through what they say and do. Routines are well established and the children know what is expected of them. In the nursery, a superbly planned balance between adult support and self-choice activities, results in the children developing good

independent learning skills. This is not as strong in the reception classes because in some lessons, the fine balance between adult intervention to help them develop specific skills and time for children to learn on their own is less well planned. The children in the nursery are very well behaved and have very positive attitudes to the activities provided and to each other.

## **COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY**

- Provision in communication, language and listening is **good** overall.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching is very good in the nursery;
- The teaching of reading is of a good quality and the children are achieving well in their acquisition of basic reading skills;
- In some lessons, in reception, there is not enough planned adult intervention to promote the use of language and literacy. As a result, the achievement rate slows down from very good in the nursery to satisfactory.

### **Commentary**

31. Attainment on entry to the school, in these aspects of learning, is very low for a large majority of the children and achievement in this area of learning is good overall. In the nursery, language development is planned as a high priority and carefully integrated into all aspects of learning. Activities are exciting and stimulating and are very effective in capturing the children's interest. Teaching in the reception classes is satisfactory overall, although one of the lessons observed was of a very high standard. This was particularly because of the very good balance between focused adult support and independent learning. In lessons where children do not get enough support, their rate of learning slows. For example, opportunities were missed in one lesson to develop children's growing awareness of letter shapes by neglecting to provide letter shapes rather than circular cutters in the play dough or to suggest that children made a cake with the shape of their initial letter on it. Just under 60 per cent of the children are likely to achieve the expected learning targets by the end of the year in speaking, reading and writing. These children are beginning to read and write simple, recognisable words and use their knowledge of sounds and language to attempt more complex words. Home/school reading diaries provide parents with good information on how they can help their child read.

## **MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in mathematical development is **good** overall.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching is very good in the nursery and satisfactory, with some good features, in reception;
- Achievement is very high in the nursery and satisfactory in reception;
- In the reception classes, not enough opportunities are planned to ensure rapid development of mathematical skills, knowledge, understanding and specific key mathematical language.

### **Commentary**

32. As a result of very high level of challenge, exciting activities, such as working out where to draw things on a pirates' treasure map and talking about the different shapes and colours they are going to use to decorate biscuits, the children in the nursery are gaining a secure understanding of colour, shape, position, early counting and mathematical language. Strengths in teaching in the reception classes include good links with role play, such as

children working with an adult in the 'greengrocer' shop and carefully planned monitoring and assessment of the children's responses to various mathematical tasks. Opportunities are sometimes missed to work directly with all groups of children to support the development of their skills. For example, in one lesson, most of the activities that the children went on to do were unrelated to mathematical development and so adults lost the opportunity to reinforce learning of specific mathematical vocabulary and concepts. This slows down rather than impedes children's learning. Although fewer than expected are likely to reach the goals expected by the end of the reception year the children achieve well from a low level on entry.

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

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching is very good in the nursery and the children achieve very well;
- Occasionally, opportunities are missed during lessons in the reception to make the best use of adults to work with individual children.

### **Commentary**

33. Many of the children enter the nursery with a narrow range of experiences and limited language skills to support their learning. Teaching ensures, through very carefully focused planning and the provision of a wide range of practical and meaningful activities that the children are given every opportunity to extend their understanding of the world around them and develop language skills. This is done expertly. For example, during one session, when a real baby was brought into the nursery, every opportunity was provided for the children to observe, listen and talk. As a result of the teacher's very skilful questioning and explanations, all of the children achieved very well in their understanding of baby care and in the use of new associated vocabulary.
34. Practical, focused opportunities for learning are also carefully planned in reception. Following a walk around the local area, the children working with the teacher drew their own route from home to school and achieved well in identifying some of the features they notice on their journeys. Some opportunities are missed, however, to provide the children with enough time to reflect on questions and to reinforce their use of associated language. For example, children engaged in other activities in lessons are rarely visited by adults and a time for the whole class to talk about what they have learned is not consistently planned into lessons. Computers are always available and programs are well prepared to reinforce learning.

## **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Most children achieve very well in relation to their skills on entry to the nursery. Some are slow to acquire the expected skills that require finer, more precise movements, such as using scissors and pencil control;
- In the nursery in particular, the indoor and outside learning environments are very attractive and very well resourced;
- Access to the school hall for dance, games and gymnastics provides a good resource for learning.

## Commentary

35. Attainment on entry to the school in this area of learning is well below average for a large majority of the children. Children in the nursery achieve very well in the development of running, climbing and controlling a range of wheeled toys. Very carefully planned use is made of the outdoor learning area to promote learning. By the end of the reception, movement skills, such as running, jumping, throwing and catching are in line with expectations and most children are well placed to attain the Early Learning Goals in this aspect. Children are given good opportunities to explore through activities in the classrooms and through the provision of regular opportunities to play outside. Teaching is very good in the nursery and satisfactory with some good features in reception. There is still no designated outdoor learning area for the reception children. During the inspection, satisfactory use was made of the nursery area to enable the children to use the wheeled toys and be involved in a range of other activities.

## CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Teaching and provision in this area of learning is **good** overall.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Nursery children are provided with high quality time to experiment, communicate, be imaginative and discover things for themselves;
- Interesting role play areas encourage the children to relate well to others and develop their imagination.

## Commentary

36. The children enjoy singing and joining in with the actions. In the nursery the children sing number songs and rhymes to support mathematical development. They dress up as pirates and crumple paper to roll up into treasure maps. Staff regularly assess the children's responses through discussion, questioning and observation. There is a good balance between adult involvement and independence. This results in children confidently building up their skills and being able to make their own choices. Children in the reception class have learned a wide repertoire of songs and many are likely to attain the expected targets in this area of learning. Singing is promoted well through an enthusiastic team approach by both teachers. Evidence of displayed collages and paintings indicates that the children are provided with a good range of opportunities to develop skills in these areas. There was insufficient evidence to form an overall judgement on attainment by the end of the reception.

## SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGE 1

### ENGLISH

Provision in English is **very good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average in reading;
- Pupils achieve very well in writing and in speaking and listening;
- The quality of teaching is very good and so pupils learn very well;
- Leadership and management of the subject are very good, involving parents fully in helping their children to learn.

## Commentary

37. Standards have improved since the last inspection and are improving at a faster rate than nationally. Standards in reading are particularly good. Pupils have many opportunities to read in school with adult support. They take home their group reading book and so reading practice at home allows them to demonstrate what they can do. Consequently, pupils really enjoy reading, experience a great deal of success and their parents are proud of them. Higher attaining pupils talk confidently about reading books by authors such as C S Lewis and Roald Dahl, explaining that they 'like reading long books with chapters'. The lower attaining pupils benefit greatly from a programme of 'reading recovery' which enables them to read at nationally expected levels by the end of Year 2.
38. Standards in writing, average overall, also reflect pupils' very good achievement. Lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs attain nationally expected standards and higher attainers begin to write at length, using a wide range of punctuation and interesting vocabulary. Imaginative resources such as different sizes, colours and shapes of pens, paper and specially made booklets make writing pleasurable. Classroom assistants effectively help groups of pupils to read and write and activities are very well matched to pupils' needs. From an initial low base, pupils make great strides in their speaking and listening skills, attaining broadly average standards by the end of Year 2. Pupils achieve very well because they are given many opportunities to speak and to listen to each other and to take part in role play. In an excellent conclusion to one lesson, for example, a higher attaining pupil read out his story, written from the point of view of father bear, putting on an appropriately gruff voice as he explained that he disliked cold porridge.
39. Lessons are interesting and fun and very well planned to help children to learn. For example, large ice eggs supposedly laid by the 'Ice Dragon' that pupils had been reading about were used very successfully as a stimulus for writing. A letter about the discovery of the eggs, supposedly written in haste and thus omitting some words and punctuation, helped pupils to use interesting vocabulary and to punctuate sentences correctly. All pupils are very clear as to what they have to do to improve their reading and writing and are keen to meet their demanding individual and group targets. The quality of assessment is very good and helps to ensure pupils' very good achievement.
40. A great deal of thought has gone into how to make teaching and learning effective, with thoughtful adaptations to the National Literacy Strategy to give more time for reading and writing. The subject leader uses assessment very well to target pupils who need additional support or those who need further challenge. A portfolio of work, regularly updated, gives guidance as to the standard of writing expected at each stage. Parents are very closely involved in their children's learning. Before school begins, parents work alongside their children, sometimes helping them to write lists of interesting words which the children will then use later in their writing. Parents know what targets their children are expected to reach in both reading and writing and make an excellent contribution to their learning.

## Language and literacy across the curriculum

41. Imaginative links are made with other subjects to develop pupils' skills in literacy and numeracy. In a very good lesson in Year 1, for example, lower attaining pupils programmed a remote control toy to land on words in a particular order to form a sentence. Pupils' skills in reading help them to make very good progress and through using writing extensively in subjects, such as religious education, geography and history pupils learn how to write factually as well as imaginatively. This gives them a lot of practice in developing their skills.

## MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **very good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- All pupils achieve very well because of the very high standards of teaching and learning, including a strong focus on developing pupils' numeracy skills;
- Mathematical skills are incorporated into other subjects and ICT is used well in this subject;
- A high level of importance is placed on the teaching of problem solving.

### Commentary

42. Standards in mathematics in Year 2 are average and reflect pupils' very good overall achievement. Since the last inspection, the proportion of pupils achieving the expected levels has risen steadily as the quality of teaching has improved. In Year 2, approximately a quarter of pupils are currently exceeding expected standards. Teaching is very good and this helps pupils to learn very effectively. As a result, pupils learn to recognise number patterns and to use different strategies to solve number problems, showing high levels of interest in the work. Strengths include: teaching which captures pupils' interest and enthusiasm; very good emphasis on the correct use of mathematical vocabulary; accurate planning to ensure that the current work builds on previous learning; and encouraging pupils to feel they can contribute with no fear of failure. Teaching assistants often effectively lead groups doing specific tasks. Occasionally, where pupils with special educational needs are taught in small groups, the pace of learning slows because those who can work more quickly are not allowed to work at their own speed. Mostly, though, time is used very well, ensuring that there is good pace with a variety of learning tasks and activities. Questioning is used well to check pupils' understanding and clear explanations ensure that all pupils understand how to complete a task successfully. Overall, the school does very well for its pupils, with higher attainers and pupils with special educational needs fulfilling their potential. Boys and girls are currently making similar progress.
43. Pupils often make use of computers to practise numeracy skills in their classrooms. The use of readily available laptops has ensured that computers have become an integral part of mathematical lessons. The strong and appropriate focus on numeracy skills has improved pupils' knowledge and capability. They have recently been involved in investigations involving measurement and money calculations. Mathematics is an integral part of role play with pupils enthusiastically taking on the role of shopkeeper and visitor - bills are written out, real money is used and change is given. By the age of 7, many pupils have achieved accurate measuring skills using centimetres to measure a full range of everyday objects. Many pupils have a good understanding of time and know how to read both digital and analogue clocks.
44. Lessons are very well planned in relation to the National Numeracy Strategy and this has made a significant contribution to the rise in standards. There is a very good balance between the use of commercial material and teacher prepared material. Teachers take every opportunity to involve children in mathematical puzzles and problem solving activities. This ensures that pupils constantly are continually challenged. Marking is consistent and positive, often giving children indications as to how they can improve. Pupils are aware of what they have to learn next because they are given specific targets. Resources are sufficient for the current needs and are continually being built up. The very strong leadership has played a key part in subject improvement and the school's own successful assessment system has been especially adapted from the key objectives in the Numeracy Strategy.

## Mathematics across the curriculum

45. Pupils often use mathematics as part of their work in other subjects and consequently develop an appreciation of the use of these skills, for example, they use graphs and tables to record data in science, geography and history. The mathematical skill of data handling is well developed through the use of ICT.

## SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well, as a result of generally good teaching, though occasionally the pace of a lesson can be too challenging for lower ability pupils;
- There is good development of investigations and fair testing;
- ICT and mathematics are used well in investigative work;
- There are weaknesses in providing guidance as to what makes for high achievement in science.

### Commentary

46. Standards are average when judged against the national level, though relatively few exceed the standards expected at the end of Year 2. Pupils achieve very well overall, and quickly develop an understanding of the specific vocabulary associated with the subject. The quality of teaching is good overall, and compared to similar schools pupils do well, with boys and girls performing equally well. Pupils with special educational needs also achieve very well overall, but in one lesson some experienced some difficulties recording their observations. This was because there was insufficient appropriate material to enable them to work independently and consequently they had to rely on the direct support of a teaching assistant.
47. There is a good emphasis on practical science which helps pupils to learn very well. While the teaching generally is clearly good, judging by the standards of pupils' work over a period of time and their recall of what they have learnt, that seen during the inspection was satisfactory mainly because it was over-ambitious. Teachers' subject knowledge is good, and in the lesson seen, in a Year 2 class, there was an appropriate emphasis on involving pupils in experimentation and investigation. Over half the pupils showed an accurate knowledge of what constitutes fair testing. They responded well to the teacher's questioning, and were able to predict which would be the best insulating materials to keep an 'Ice Dragon's egg' from melting, and set up fair tests to examine the performance of bubble wrap, paper and other materials. However, too much was attempted and whilst the average and more advanced pupils made good progress and understood what they were doing, other pupils struggled to keep up with the fast pace of the lesson. The 'Ice Dragon' theme created high levels of interest and all pupils enjoyed their work, showing interest and enthusiasm. There were high levels of concentration and those pupils who were experiencing difficulties in recording their findings nonetheless persevered to complete the task.
48. The portfolio of work, although not yet completed, includes accurate assessments and examples of good teaching which takes into account pupils talking about what they have done and what they intended to do, as well as their written work. There is appropriate emphasis on investigations and also on using ICT. For example, pupils create tables of results and construct bar charts and line graphs to analyse the relationship between gravity and friction as part of fair tests that vary the slope to analyse the effect on the performance of model cars. Pupils practise their mathematics skills accurately measuring the distances the cars travelled. Since the last inspection, the school has introduced measures to give greater direction to overall planning for the subject. The subject is well led and managed

and the relatively new subject leader gives good guidance and support. However, although pupils do attain high standards at times, this is not always recognised and some teacher assessments are not identifying or recording it.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

Provision in information and communication technology is **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards are above average because teaching is very good;
- The subject is well resourced to enable flexible learning;
- The subject is very well led and managed and very good use is made of the resources of the 'Education Action Zone'.

### **Commentary**

49. Pupils' ICT skills are above average by the end of Year 2. Very good teaching enables pupils to make rapid progress and achieve very well. Strengths in the teaching include, clear explanations and demonstrations to large groups of pupils followed by opportunities for pupils to practise what they have learnt, supported by skilled and enthusiastic classroom assistants. As a result, Year 1 pupils confidently and accurately type letters to their teddy bears and other soft toys showing good pace and accurate use of both alphabet and command keys. The teaching is imaginative and finds inventive ways to help pupils to practise skills; for example, loading instructions accurately into programmable toys dressed as bears to enable them to find their way back to their homes. By Year 2, pupils can use the mouse and toolbars to create vertical and horizontal lines as they produce tartan patterns, as part of a design and technology project to create notebooks to be 'sold' in the Isle of Struay gift shop. One pupil explained enthusiastically and in great detail how she used the same skills to create patterns in the style of Mondrian where she could include diagonal lines.
50. Since the last inspection, resources for the subject have been vastly improved and staff competence and expertise has been developed very well through additional training. The acquisition of laptops and the provision of modern machines, both in classrooms and adjoining corridors, means that they can be used flexibly and by different classes at the same time. Teachers organise their resources very well. Usually laptops are set up in classrooms enabling adults to continually check pupils' progress. More advanced pupils often work outside the classroom on computers because they are more confident, and do not require as much help and support. Adults regularly check their progress giving encouragement and praise.
51. The subject leader provides very clear guidance and procedures relating to the progressive development of skills and the assessment of pupils' progress. This ensures that teachers' expectations are high; they are also very well supported by accurately levelled portfolios of pupils' work. The advisory teacher from the 'Education Action Zone' is making a very good contribution to the subject and as a result, older pupils are beginning to develop more advanced skills. For example, they record their puppetry presentation of the 'Ice Dragon' story. With his support, pupils set up digital camcorders to photograph puppets, against different scenery they had assembled, taking turns to record their spoken narrative relating to each scene. From this, they learnt to sequence images with spoken and recorded text. Not only did this create very high levels of interest but it also helped pupils' speaking and listening skills, particularly that of boys.

## Information and communication technology across the curriculum.

52. During the inspection, ICT was taught as an integral part of other subjects. Computers were used to consolidate numeracy skills in mathematics, for writing tasks in English, as part of general investigating in geography and in role play. The subject is instrumental in creating links between subjects. ICT makes a very good contribution to pupils' levels of interest and enjoyment, and to their above average skills.

## HUMANITIES

53. Two lessons were seen in religious education, one in geography and none in history. No judgements on provision can be made in either history or geography. It is plain, however, from teacher's assessments and from looking at portfolios of work that pupils undertake a wide range of work within these two subjects and that it is completed to a good standard. The subject is very well led and managed and the co-ordinator has a clear overview of provision and standards.
54. In **geography**, examples of pupils' work indicate that standards are likely to be above average throughout the school. For example, pupils' postcards written as if from another place showed good understanding of the differences found in a contrasting location. Individually produced, slim-line dictionaries of geographical words, designed to develop their vocabulary, are used very well by pupils to record meanings of terms they come across. For example, a higher attaining pupil wrote: 'sea - areas of salty water that cover lots of parts of the earth.' Pupils' map work is of good quality and their plans and visual representations show that they have a good understanding of different uses of land in relation to differing places.
55. In **history**, it is clear that pupils cover a wide range of work, developing their skills in historical enquiry. They learn to place events in chronological order and begin to understand why people do things, why events happened and what changed, as a result. ICT is used very well to help pupils to find information; for example, an average attaining pupil commented on pictures downloaded from the Internet relating to the Great Fire of London that 'this is where the homes were too close together'.

### Example of outstanding practice

**In the Year 2 classes, teachers have devised an ingenious method to help pupils retain factual information relating to different subjects and to develop their skills in speaking and listening.**

Pupils' eyes lit up with excitement when their teacher brought out a brightly decorated shiny box, containing different cards. They were about to begin the memory test game! Each card is colour coded according to subject. From answering questions about Van Gogh the pupils moved on to history, selecting a card relating to Florence Nightingale, whose life they had studied last term. Pupils were very eager to reply and showed they had good recall of factual details which had clearly captured their imaginations. The cards are not only used to check what pupils remember but also to develop their skills in communication. Some of the cards start with the words: 'tell me' whereas others require pupils to formulate a question from the instruction: 'ask the class to...'. The pupils find it very challenging to phrase questions in this way and teachers use this method very skilfully to develop pupils' skills in oral communication.

## Religious Education

Provision in religious education is **very good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average because pupils are very well taught;
- The subject is very well led and managed and imaginative links with other subjects help to make religious education central to pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural development.

## Commentary

56. Pupils achieve very well, attaining standards both orally and in their written work that are above those expected by the end of Year 2. Standards have improved since the last inspection. Teaching is imaginative and provokes pupils to think for themselves. For example, pupils learn to consider what it means to belong to Christian or Jewish communities. They learn to understand the meaning of traditional stories and why they are told. For example, higher attaining pupils in Year 2, explained that in the Prodigal Son 'Jesus was really a Shepherd in this story and the sheep are the people'. Teachers' questioning is sensitive and challenging, helping pupils to see, for example, the love that lies behind the giving of special gifts. Pupils learn to be articulate and confident and they listen very well to each other, speaking of complex issues with maturity for their age. The very good relationships between pupils and teachers encourage pupils to talk openly.
57. In many respects, religious education is seen as being central to the school's work. There are very strong links with other subjects, particularly literacy and dramatic role play. Class books, such as a collection of pupils' writing on different aspects of Judaism, reinforce pupils' literacy skills by giving them a purpose for writing neatly using correct punctuation. Assessment is used very well to establish what pupils know. The subject co-ordinator also talks to a representative sample of pupils from each year group, assessing what they understand. From this it is plain that by the end of Year 2 pupils have above average concepts of what it means to celebrate and to pray. Provision for religious education and pupils' multicultural education are closely linked and support very well the school's commitment to the inclusion of all pupils.

## CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

58. There was insufficient evidence to make an overall judgement on standards and provision in design and technology and music, as no lessons were seen in design and technology and only one in music in which two year groups were taught together.
59. In **design and technology**, subject planning is detailed and comprehensive. It follows the national guidelines and is adapted appropriately to meet the schools' needs. Pupils' work is regularly assessed to evaluate how well they are doing and what they need to do next. The portfolio of samples of work from across the school shows that attainment is accurately assessed and provides teachers with good guidance when making judgements about how well pupils are doing. Examples of pupils' planning and design skills showed work of a good quality with realistic plans and carefully labelled sketches. The subject is very well led and managed and the co-ordinator has a clear overview of provision and standards. The scheme of work is skilfully integrated into other subjects and fully addresses the nationally expected programme of study.
60. In **music**, in the one combined Year 2 singing lesson observed, pupils sang with good levels of tunefulness and expression. They learn new songs quickly. A good example was evident in their skills in fitting the words of each new verse of 'The Tailor and the Mouse' to the tune - a song they had only begun to learn in the previous lesson. The subject provides good opportunities for the pupils to learn traditional songs, such as the well known song, 'Donkey Riding', and songs from other cultures. The subject is well led. The co-ordinator has a clear overview of standards and provision across the school.

## Art and Design

Provision in art and design is **very good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards of work are higher than those seen in most schools and pupils achieve very well. They are very well taught;
- The school has a very positive commitment to providing pupils with high quality creative experiences. Pupils' work is very attractively displayed and makes a significant contribution to the learning environment;
- Very good opportunities are provided for the pupils to appreciate the richness of their own and others' cultures in art;
- The subject is very well led. The co-ordinator has a clear commitment to ensuring pupils reach high standards through a range of stimulating and exciting experiences.

### Commentary

61. The standards of work on display and the lessons observed in Years 1 and 2 indicate that pupils are attaining at a higher level than normally seen. The high standards reached at the time of the previous inspection have been maintained. Teaching in lessons is very good overall with much evidence of very skilful teaching in the work on display. Two lessons were observed. The school's strong commitment to offering a wide range of opportunities for the pupils to enjoy art and develop their creative skills shines out in the teachers' enthusiasm and knowledge of the subject and the pupils' very positive responses. Pupils in Year 1 already know how to mix colours, shades and tones and are knowledgeable about, for example, the type of brush to choose. In both lessons, there was a strong feel for exploring and developing ideas. Year 1 pupils carefully observed and painted teddy bears as part of their topic work. In the Year 2 lesson, they experimented with different media, Chinese brushes and inks, watercolour and metallic poster paint. All pupils achieve very well because art is made exciting and they are enabled, through skilful teaching, to be highly successful. Pupils with special educational needs experience a similar level of success not only because of the high quality skills support provided but because teachers genuinely believe that every child is an artist.
62. The scheme of work, teachers' planning and assessment systems ensure that pupils are able to build upon their skills as they move through the school. The subject makes a very good contribution to the pupils' personal development, particularly in their self-confidence and through opportunities such as the 'Cultural Arts Week', where pupils worked with a visiting artist exploring art in other cultures.

## Physical Education

Provision in physical education is **very good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve very well in dance and attainment is above expectations by the end of Year 2. This indicates a significant improvement since the previous inspection when standards were in line with expectations;
- Enrichment opportunities through after school clubs are very good and the subject makes a very good contribution to the pupils' personal development;
- Resources are good, particularly the quality and range of gymnastics equipment;
- The subject is very well led and managed and the school has a high commitment to the promotion of physical development;
- Teachers do not always make the best use of teaching support staff.

## Commentary

63. Pupils achieve very well during their time in the school, because of good quality teaching and the range of opportunities provided. Standards reached in dance are above expectations by the end of Year 2. It is not possible to make a judgement on standards in gymnastics or games, as no lesson observations were possible in these areas. However, the recently achieved 'Active Mark' award indicates that the school shows a very strong commitment to promoting the benefits of physical activity and offers good levels of provision.
64. Teaching in the two lessons observed was good overall. It was very good in one lesson where a combination of teacher enthusiasm, very good planning, organisation and skills teaching ensured a very positive response by the pupils. By the end of the lesson all were able to sequence the steps and movements to a Scottish dance as part of their work in geography. In one of the two lessons, the teaching assistant was not given enough opportunities to make a contribution to learning and as a result, a small number of pupils were not as involved as they might have been.
65. The subject is very well led and managed by the co-ordinator. Very good opportunities are provided for pupils to develop gymnastics, football and other skills through participation in the regular after-school clubs. Physical education makes a very good contribution to the pupils' personal development, particularly in the opportunities provided for them to be successful and to work productively with other pupils.

## PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Provision in PSHCE is **very good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils have good opportunities to talk about things that matter to them and this helps them to become more mature;
- Pupils develop a very good understanding of the similarities and differences between their own and other communities in different parts of the world.

## Commentary

66. Pupils are taught very well and as a result, their personal and social development are very good. Two lessons were seen, one in each year group. In Year 1, pupils gain a very good understanding of what it means to care for and to help others. Most are willing and confident speakers, listening well to others, helped by the very supportive relationships with adults in the classroom.
67. Careful preparation and planning ensures that pupils gain a very good understanding of different cultures and customs; they compare, for example, the preparations and customs of the Chinese New Year with their own customs at home. Exciting resources, such as chopsticks, Chinese food and lanterns, are used alongside more formal key vocabulary and ten important facts for pupils to think about. This makes a very good introduction to a different way of life and stimulates much thought and many questions. The very good range of resources enriches pupils' learning and makes the unfamiliar exciting.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>2</b>
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	2
<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>4</b>
Pupils' achievement	2
<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>	<b>2</b>
Attendance	4
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>	<b>2</b>
The quality of teaching	2
How well pupils learn	2
The quality of assessment	2
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	2
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	1
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2
<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>2</b>
The governance of the school	2
The leadership of the headteacher	1
The leadership of other key staff	2
The effectiveness of management	2

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