

INSPECTION REPORT

SHELF JUNIOR AND INFANT SCHOOL

Shelf, Halifax

LEA area: Calderdale

Unique reference number: 107513

Headteacher: Mr Paul Reynolds

Lead inspector: Mr Clive Davies

Dates of inspection: 28 - 30th June 2004

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	298
School address:	Shelf Hall Lane Shelf Halifax
Postcode:	HX3 7LT
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Sue Jones
Date of previous inspection:	June 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Shelf Junior and Infant School is situated on the outskirts of Halifax and is bigger than most other primary schools. The school serves a mixed catchment with an increasing number of pupils attending who reside outside the normal school boundaries. Although the percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is below the national average this does not reflect a true socio-economic picture of the school's catchment. When they first start school children's personal and academic skills vary considerably. However, overall the weaknesses in children's speech and language suggest that attainment on entry is slightly below average. The percentage of pupils on the special educational needs list is below the national average, although the number with statements for special educational needs is about as expected for a school of this size. Very few pupils who attend do not speak English as their main language at home. The school serves a mainly British white population with only 6 pupils from other ethnic backgrounds attending. The school was awarded an 'Activemark' and a 'Healthy Schools Award' in 2004 and is part of the Local Education Authority's 'Leadership Development Strategy' initiative group.

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

This is a good school with many very impressive features. It is a school that is rapidly improving with very secure systems being put into place to help raise pupils' achievement. The headteacher and governors work extremely hard to provide staff with the resources and vision required to help raise standards. This has resulted in teaching being good overall with pupils of all abilities being challenged effectively. The school gives good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The governors challenge and support the school's leadership exceptionally well.
- The headteacher is a very effective leader providing staff with the drive and energy to help raise standards.
- The organisation within the foundation unit is excellent and provides children with a very stimulating start to their school life.
- Pupils from different backgrounds and abilities achieve well because teachers plan effectively to meet their needs.
- There is very effective use of pupils' literacy skills across the curriculum.
- Pupils have been provided with a rich curriculum which maximises opportunities for them to be engaged in practical activities.
- Teachers occasionally spend too long on their introductions and this cuts down on the opportunities provided for pupils to finish off tasks.

The school was last inspected in June 1998 and it has successfully built on the good position outlined at that time. It has made good progress in several areas, especially in the way pupils' achieve, the way the curriculum has been enriched and the development of basic skills.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Pupils of all abilities achieve well. The more able pupils were identified as underachieving until recently but very effective action has now ensured that their achievement is good. The National Curriculum test results do not as yet reflect fully this recently improved situation but all pupils are achieving beyond their potential.

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

When they first start school the children display a full and varied range of personal and academic skills. However, overall their communication and social skills are below the level expected for their age. Very impressive provision within the reception year helps children make rapid progress and achieve very well. By the time they finish their reception year more than three-quarters of the children are attaining the expected learning goals in each of the six areas. As they move through Years 1 and 2 pupils make good progress in all subjects with the exception of information and communication technology (ICT), where pupils' progress is satisfactory, but there are missed opportunities to allow pupils to use their ICT skills across the curriculum. Lower attaining pupils, including those on the special educational needs list, make good progress. In Years 3 to 6 pupils continue to make good progress with more able pupils being particularly well challenged. There is more effective use of ICT across the curriculum enabling pupils to attain at the levels expected for their age in this subject by the time they end Year 6. Standards in physical education are particularly impressive by the end of

Year 6 and pupils, throughout the school, achieve well in this subject. The use of pupils' literacy skills across the curriculum is very good.

Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are good. The vast majority of pupils are confident and keen to learn. The school council is a very effective organisation that makes an important contribution to school life. Pupils behave well in different situations and are polite and well mannered. The staff work hard to ensure that all pupils recognise what is and is not acceptable and there is a strong community atmosphere in the school.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is good. The school provides pupils with an exciting and rich curriculum that enables them to have access to as much first-hand experience as is possible. Residential, visits to places of interest and visitors to the school provide pupils with opportunities to use their basic skills in 'real' contexts. **Teaching is good with many impressive features.** In the foundation stage unit the outstanding organisation allows children access to challenging learning activities, which provide them with opportunities to improve their basic skills as well as enriching their experiences. Teachers throughout the school give good attention to the needs of pupils of different abilities and challenge and support them well. The contribution to learning made by classroom support assistants is very good. Occasionally, introductions to lessons can be too long resulting in limited time being available for pupils to develop their thinking skills and to finish their work.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are very good. The headteacher is the pulse of the school and a strong driving force working hard to effect school improvement. The governors provide outstanding support and have a clear vision for what they want for the school. The headteacher's ability to analyse situations and recognise what is needed for school improvement is a particularly strong feature of the leadership. The issue of the underachievement of more able pupils in the past is one example where good analysis resulted in effective school action.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents think very highly of the school and appreciate that the staff are doing a great deal to ensure that pupils are provided with a full range of activities that challenge and enrich them. They also appreciate the energy of the headteacher and know that their children are happy, well cared for and highly motivated. The pupils love their school and, through the school council, believe they have an opportunity to have a full say about things they like and dislike. They particularly appreciate the residential visits and the amount of extra curriculum opportunities that are provided for them.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Give consideration to the use of time in lessons so that there is sufficient time available for pupils to complete tasks and to develop their thinking skills.
- Improve opportunities for pupils to use their ICT skills across the curriculum in Years 1 and 2.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Pupils of all abilities achieve well.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in English and mathematics are improving rapidly because of good teaching.
- More able pupils are being effectively challenged and now achieve well.
- Children achieve very well in the Foundation Stage of Learning.
- Pupils with special educational needs achieve well.
- Standards in science and physical education are above national expectations.
- Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are broadly in line with national expectations but there is not enough opportunity for pupils to make use of their ICT skills in Years 1 and 2.

Commentary

- 1 The table below shows that standards reached by pupils at the end of Year 2 are in line with the national average. However, standards are rising faster than in other schools in reading, writing and mathematics, and pupils of all abilities are making good achievement overall. In comparison with similar schools, pupils' attainment on entry is low and this is reflected in the national results at the end of Year 2. However, detailed tracking by the school indicates that the majority of pupils make better than expected progress and achieve well for their abilities.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	15.9 (15.9)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	14.6 (15.0)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	15.6 (15.9)	15.5 (15.5)

There were 46 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

- 2 The table below shows that standards reached by pupils at the end of Year 6 in national tests are in line with the national average for English and mathematics and science. However, standards are rising faster than in other schools, especially in mathematics, and pupils of all abilities are making good achievement. The current Year 6 has made good gains against the targets set, has achieved higher standards than predictions from the detailed school data would indicate, and achievement against prior attainment is good.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	27.2 (28.5)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	27.1 (27.0)	26.8 (26.7)
science	28.6 (28.5)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 59 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

- 3 The good achievement for all pupils is because the detailed measures designed and implemented by the school to raise attainment are having a good impact on learning. Year on year progress has been uneven but the school trend is upward and above the national trend. There are no significant gender differences or differences in attainment between any ethnic groups. Lower achievement for higher attaining pupils has been recognised by the school who identified a number of ways to improve this. Achievement is now good for this group of pupils who are given a good level of challenge within lessons.
- 4 Children throughout the Foundation Stage of Learning make very good progress and achieve very well. Progress and achievement is particularly impressive for communication, language and learning and creative development. Many children start school lacking in confidence in speaking out in front of others. Very good provision in the reception class results in children's confidence levels being boosted and in children feeling secure about talking to adults and each other. Children are provided with many opportunities to write for different purposes and the excellent and stimulating activities set out for them promote their progress in reading and writing. Creativity is given a high priority in the Foundation Stage of Learning, resulting in children being engaged in a full range of activities that helps them move into an imagined world and promotes spontaneous play. There is also very effective work happening to help children understand from very early on what fair testing is and how to investigate. This is helping children have a secure understanding about science before they leave the reception class. The very effective work that is happening in the reception provides children with a very firm platform to achieve well throughout the school.
- 5 Throughout the school pupils with special educational needs achieve well in relation to their ability, because work is carefully and specifically matched to their needs. In a whole school initiative all pupils have been screened over the last two years to identify specific areas of weakness and new pupils are now assessed quickly when they arrive. Areas for individual development are correctly identified, and pupils get good support from effective individual education plans. They are given personal targets which are both challenging and achievable, and which are regularly reviewed to ensure progress. Senior staff keep detailed and efficient records.
- 6 Standards in science for the current Year 2 and Year 6 are above national expectations. A significant percentage of pupils of all ages are working at the higher levels of attainment, and work in books shows good progress for all abilities. A slightly higher attainment for practical and investigational science for pupils in Year 2 suggests a strong focus on investigational work and enquiry. Standards are good in physical education at the end of Year 6 and pupils achieve well in this subject across all year groups.
- 7 In religious education achievement is satisfactory. Pupils reach the standards expected by the end of Year 6, although at the end of Year 2 pupils' understanding of the work is sometimes rather tenuous. Standards in ICT are as expected by the end of Year 2 but there is insufficient use of ICT across the curriculum. This is not the case in Years 3 to 6, where there is appropriate use of ICT across the curriculum.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils have good attitudes to learning; their behaviour is good and the school makes good provision for personal development. The school's overall provision for developing pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Attendance is very good and punctuality is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school has a calm, pleasant atmosphere where high standards of behaviour are expected.
- Pupils are very proud of their school and show a great interest in the activities provided.

- Pupils are very willing to take responsibility and are very aware of the importance of living and working in a community.
- Attendance is very good.

Commentary

- 8 Attitudes to learning are good overall and in some lessons were very good. Pupils are keen to learn and their behaviour is good because they enjoy their work. There is a shared sense of pride and purpose, which the school encourages at every opportunity, both in lessons and in sporting activities. Staff are consistent in their implementation of the school's behaviour policy and the school works very hard to achieve a good standard of behaviour from all the pupils. Pupils are open and friendly with visitors and are happy to talk about their work and what they like about school. They are particularly enthusiastic in discussing their recent residential visit to North Wales. They show consideration towards each other and work and play co-operatively together. Pupils display an enthusiasm for school and are keen to take advantage of the many opportunities it offers particularly through extra curricular activities in which considerable numbers of pupils take part. *There have been no exclusions for some time.*
- 9 Relationships and personal development are good. Pupils are encouraged to take responsibility for their own actions and are given opportunities to exercise wider responsibility, for example by serving on the school council, which has a very important role in school. The 'Living Together Tree' is led by the council and provides the basis for school life. Pupils are given classroom responsibilities and in one class the pupils have the additional joy of hatching their own chickens. The organic vegetable garden thrives under staff direction and pupil care. Older pupils are given opportunities to consider the needs of the younger pupils such as organised play at playtime.
- 10 School assemblies play a big part in nurturing the spiritual, moral social development of pupils. Pupils celebrate their achievements whether in school or outside, through assembly. The school considers that individual achievement however small should be acknowledged and praised and also enables pupils to explore feelings, relationships and responsibilities. The pupils are developing an understanding of their own and other cultures through a range of subjects. However, there is scope for pupils' understanding of the diversity of the world they live in to be developed further.
- 11 Attendance is very good and well above the national average. However some parents do take family holidays in term time, which adversely affects teaching and learning. Most parents, however, are very supportive of the school approach to maintaining this high standard.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is good.

Teaching and learning

Teaching is good with many very good features. It is having a positive impact on learning throughout the school. The teaching and learning in the foundation unit are consistently very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The level of challenge for more able pupils is good, especially in Years 3 to 6, and helping them to achieve well.
- Classroom support assistants work effectively at improving pupils' learning.
- The planning, organisation and assessment undertaken by the foundation unit staff are excellent and having a very positive impact on children's learning.

- Pupils are a delight to be with and their positive attitudes and confidence to learning help them to achieve well.
- Teaching is good for pupils with special education needs and this helps them to learn well.
- Occasionally teachers' introductions can be too long resulting in missed opportunities for pupils to engage in talk.

Commentary

- 12 The table below shows that teaching is good overall but with a significant amount of very good teaching, some of it outstanding. The outstanding teaching occurred in the reception class but the very good teaching occurs throughout the school. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 27 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
2	9	10	6	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.

- 13 There is good attention to the needs of pupils of different ability. The school recently recognised that the needs of more able pupils were not being as well addressed as they would like. The action they have taken has helped to strengthen this aspect of the school's work. Setting arrangements for some subjects in Years 3 to 6 has helped to improve the provision. Extension tasks planned for more able pupils are introduced at the right time so that the demands in the lessons are increased for them. This was seen at its best during a Year 4 literacy lesson when pupils were considering how to write a persuasive argument about healthy eating. The challenge was increased for the more able half way through when the teacher had established that they had fully understood the initial part of the task. The demands made on more able pupils are consistently good throughout the school. The only exception is that occasionally in science the more able pupils are not provided with enough opportunity to think through investigations on their own and are sometimes being led too much.
- 14 Classroom assistants provide very good support for class teachers and contribute very effectively to helping pupils of all abilities to achieve well. The effectiveness of the adults who support teachers in the Foundation Stage of Learning is a major strength of the outstanding provision that exists for younger children. They work very much as part of a wider team and are exceptionally well-briefed and have intimate knowledge of all the children. Examples of the high quality of the support provided by teaching assistants in other classes was seen in Year 4, during the group sessions within a literacy lesson. Here the classroom assistant helped pupils who were initially struggling to find appropriate words to use as part of their persuasive writing. In another literacy lesson in Year 3 the contribution made by the classroom assistant was equally as good when pupils were thinking about humorous ideas for their limericks. In this case, the quality of the support was evident during the whole class part of the lesson. The contribution being made by one classroom assistant who mainly supports ICT activities is having a very good impact on the achievement of pupils in this subject.
- 15 The teaching is consistently very good in the reception class with many very outstanding features. The planning is exceptional, allowing all adults to have a clear understanding of their role and enabling them to give appropriate attention to the needs of children of different ability. The planning is not just good on a long, medium or short basis but also is forward thinking, for example, the planting of seeds in early Spring to accommodate work that was to happen in the Summer term. Very effective assessment is also a strong feature, enabling staff to be able to be flexible enough to meet the needs of all children of different abilities. The adults use

a daily 'post-it' system to record significant events, which then are used as part of a comprehensive system of record keeping on each individual. It is however, the creativity behind the quality of the activities that makes for the outstanding features seen. The way in which the rainforest hide had been constructed, the range of stimulating activities associated with the seaside theme and the excellent activities associated with butterflies all resulted in children being highly motivated and eager to learn. The outstanding work has rightly been recognised by the Local Education Authority and is now used as a training venue to help colleagues from other schools.

- 16 Pupils' attitudes to learning are positive. They behave well and are keen to learn. They have a growing confidence in their willingness to contribute to whole class discussions with examples of very well presented arguments being evident throughout the school. Pupils are willing to persevere when the task is more demanding, as was seen when more able Year 4 pupils had the task made more demanding half way through a literacy lesson on persuasive writing. The pupils' willingness to learn means that little or no time is lost to any disruptiveness. One pupil who has a statement for emotional and behavioural difficulties is very well integrated into the class situation with all pupils in that class playing a positive part in ensuring that he is involved in everything that is taking place.
- 17 Pupils with special educational needs are identified early through a range of screening procedures. The co-ordinator for special educational needs keeps detailed records of support and intervention programmes, and the progress that pupils make. These are used well by teachers who provide a range of good support strategies including adapted materials, targeted questioning and teacher assistant support to motivate and keep them on task. Targets are regularly reviewed and monitored and individual education plans are working documents used by all staff. Teaching assistants working with identified pupils are involved in planning and delivery of lessons and have a role in assessing pupil progress. There is a range of intervention programmes available to pupils. Where pupils are withdrawn for individual or group support this is clearly described in their individual plans and linked to the targets they are given.
- 18 On occasions, the teachers' introductions to lessons can be a little long and this cuts down on opportunities to enable pupils to be fully involved in group, or paired discussions. There are times when the over-long introductions results in limited time for pupils to make up their own mind about how to solve a problem. This limits opportunities for thinking. These lessons are the ones that are satisfactory rather than good because the teacher is not focusing enough on the pupils' learning but emphasising instead on their own teaching.

The curriculum

The breadth of curricular opportunities is good with very good opportunities for enrichment. Accommodation and resources are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum for the youngest children in the Foundation Stage is outstanding.
- The residential visits, exciting 'real life' contexts and opportunities for involvement in sport and the community give the school a very distinctive nature and are having a very positive impact on achievement
- Pupils with special educational needs get very good support and achieve well.
- Arrangements for moving on to the next school are very good.
- The development of literacy skills in other subjects is very good.

Commentary

- 19 The foundation stage curriculum is excellent. The staff working in this area know their children well and work exceptionally hard at providing activities that meet their needs. One of the strongest features of the work in the unit is the way in which the needs of children of all abilities are catered for. Excellent planning, taking account of national guidelines, has enabled the foundation stage unit to meet the needs of all children. There is also excellent use of the outside environment, ensuring that children have a full range of experiences that best support their needs. Imaginative activities, such as the shipwreck in the water tray and the setting up of a beach hut add to the quality of work that is happening. There is a strong focus on creativity, which helps children to think more deeply about the play they are engaged in. Excellent resourcing, together with very good team work amongst the adults working in the area, leads to the high quality of the provision.
- 20 Very good residential visits enrich the curriculum very effectively. During the inspection, Year 6 pupils had just returned from a visit to Llandudno. The visit developed literacy, numeracy and geographical skills very well and much of the curriculum following the visit puts National Curriculum subjects into an exciting and real context. These visits grab pupils' interest very well and as a result, pupils' productivity and engagement are enhanced. Teachers take every opportunity to bring the curriculum to life with practical, 'real life' contexts. During the inspection, the whole school was buzzing with excitement as the chicks in the Year 2 classroom broke out of their shells. The Year 3 and 4 classes learned all about life in Viking times very effectively by dressing up, making pottage, herbal tea and oat biscuits. Extra curricular activities enrich the curriculum very well. The school has a great number of visitors who help to make the curriculum rich and exciting. A visitor to the Year 3 and 4 classes gave very good support to an art lesson in which pupils learned to weave. The expertise of the visitor helped pupils to achieve well.
- 21 There are over twenty clubs on offer and involve sports, arts, languages and organic gardening. This gives all pupils extremely good opportunities to develop a wider appreciation of the world. The gardening club came back into school with a 'prize winning' potato and the sense of pride in their efforts was clearly apparent. The netball club brought in a large number of parent spectators from both Shelf and the visiting team. The atmosphere was one of healthy competition and a very good example of how pupils' personal development is enhanced by sport. Pupils are also very involved in life in the community. This enhances their citizenship education very well. For example, when a proposed new development was announced at a local car dealership, pupils arranged an appointment with the managing director to discuss their concerns.
- 22 Pupils who have special educational needs are provided for very well. This is because of very good support from well-trained and committed classroom support assistants who work very well in partnership with class teachers. Teachers plan small steps for these pupils and have a very good link with parents, who are fully involved in their children's education. The school pays particular attention to ensuring that they are offered the same opportunities as other pupils throughout the curriculum and that they have equal access through a range of modified resources. There is an expectation that lessons will be tailored specifically to their individual needs. For example, pupils of lower reading and writing ability in a science lesson recorded their work through photographs and a tape recorder, and were able to feed their results back to the rest of the class.
- 23 The school's involvement in sport helps pupils to be very well prepared for secondary school. This has a very positive impact on the preparations for moving school, and pupils feel they know their new school very well before they leave Year 6. The strong emphasis on sport throughout the school also contributes very well to the high standards achieved in physical education by the time pupils reach Year 6.
- 24 Pupils' literacy skills are developed very well across the curriculum. This is a strong feature in the school with teachers making full use of the first hand opportunities provided for them to develop pupils' reading and writing. There are therefore good opportunities within geography,

history, science and religious education for pupils to carry out research and to record their findings in a number of ways.

Care, guidance and support

The school's care and welfare, and attention to the health and safety needs of pupils are **good**. There is **good** provision for support advice and guidance

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school has implemented very good procedures for identifying pupils with special educational needs and monitoring their progress. As a result, the provision for these pupils is very good.
 - The headteacher places a strong emphasis on ensuring the welfare of all pupils; all pupils are very well known to the headteacher, class teachers and classroom support assistants.
 - The schools' systematic assessment procedures enable the progress of individual pupils to be tracked throughout the school.
 - Target setting procedures do not yet give pupils enough guidance on how to improve.
 - Some procedures for health and safety are not always enforced consistently.
- 25 The school recognised significant weaknesses in the identification of pupils with special educational needs and has been successful in introducing an effective range of screening procedures. All pupils in school have been tested for a variety of special needs including dyslexia and dyspraxia, and new pupils to reception or those entering during the school year are now screened as part of this process. This means that any barriers to learning are quickly noticed and measures swiftly implemented to help pupils to progress. This introduction of testing and monitoring of progress has been successful in raising achievement, which is now good for this group of pupils. They have full participation in their own individual education plans and reviews.
- 26 The headteacher places a strong emphasis on ensuring that the school is a caring one and one that monitors the welfare of all pupils. All pupils are very well known to him, to class teachers, and to other adults working throughout the school. Adults are quick to observe any personal difficulties exhibited by the pupils and to take prompt and effective action. The policy and procedures for child protection are fully in place and the headteacher has forged good relationships with a range of outside agencies. Medical records are kept on tracking sheets and all teachers have access to these, ensuring that all adults know pupils who have, for example, asthma.
- 27 The headteacher has developed very good systematic assessment procedures, which enable the progress of individual pupils to be tracked throughout the school. He also tracks the progress of different groups of pupils such as girls and boys, those with a higher ability or those with summer birthdays. Analysis of this information allows different groups of pupils to be supported in lessons and to raise their achievement. This is having an impact for example on the achievement of higher attaining pupils, especially in mathematics, because teachers are using the information to help them in setting classes and planning work for groups of pupils.
- 28 However, information from assessments is not yet being used to give individual pupils enough guidance on how to improve. Pupils who are more aware of what they need to do to improve achieve better than those who are unsure, as in the Foundation Stage and pupils with special educational needs who achieve very well. However, this good practice is not seen consistently for other pupils. For example, targets for improvement in mathematics and English are not specific enough, and are not yet shared with the pupils themselves.

- 29 The school has a very effective and high profile first aid team who do much to promote what they do. They took part in the whole school 'Look After Me' week last year where pupils were involved in a variety of activities designed to raise their awareness of a whole range of health and safety issues. For example staff provided aerobics lessons, work on road safety, team building and healthy eating and ways to keep the body healthy. However, there is some lack of attention to minor health and safety issues; there is inconsistency in the way that teachers register pupils in the afternoon and some areas of the school have loose pavements and equipment, which is not suitably stored away.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school's links with parents, other schools and the community are very good. This shows an improvement since the last inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents have a very high regard for the school.
- The quality of information provided for parents is good.
- The school has developed very good links with the local community.
- There are very good links with the local secondary school.

Commentary

- 30 The parents who answered the parents' questionnaire together with those who attended the pre-inspection meeting and those who were spoken to during the inspection all have very positive views of the school. They particularly like the way in which their children are nurtured and encouraged to succeed. They enjoy the warm welcoming atmosphere and the staff commitment to their children. There are some concerns with classroom space and parking facilities, and a lack of consistency in homework. The school is aware of these difficulties and there are plans to increase the school building area and improve parking in association with a local business. Homework is sometimes inconsistent and homework books are not always checked regularly.
- 31 The quality of information to parents is good overall. There are very good weekly newsletters, which are sponsored by local business, and parents' evenings are extremely well attended. Parents receive the prospectus and governors' annual report in one clear concise document. Helpful topic information is provided each term which is most welcomed by parents. Annual reports to parents are satisfactory. However, more information on targets and areas for development would be helpful to parents.
- 32 The school works very closely with parents of pupils with special educational needs who are kept fully informed of their child's learning difficulties and fully involved in all aspects of their progress. Parents are informed as soon as their child's needs have been identified and are provided with resources at home to support their progress. They are invited to record comments at reviews and are involved with the writing and review of individual education plans.
- 33 Parents' views are sought formally on an annual basis, which the school finds very helpful in determining strategies. The less formal feedback from parents is continuous and taken seriously. Parents are very involved in their children's learning both at home and at school. Many volunteer to help in school and the Viking role play, in costume organised by a parent, with pupils involved in cooking authentic dishes over an open fire was particularly enjoyed by Year 3 and 4. There is also active participation in the parents' courses and parent and child courses held in school. The Parent Teacher Association works very hard on a variety of planned activities. It raises substantial amounts of money for the school. Parents are enthusiastic with their support for all events and celebrations involving their children, such as

sports days, concerts and assemblies. Because of the very close links with parents, concerns and complaints are all dealt with quickly and efficiently.

- 34 There are very good links with the local high school which are enhanced by the sports connection, transition work units completed by Year 6 pupils and the use of facilities at the high school. High school students are welcomed into school for work experience and assist at the annual sports day. There are also developing national and international links with other schools via the school's website. Links with the community are very good. The school is involved in many activities including the local gala where the pupils enter a float, connections with local radio, the local church, and involvement with many local businesses. The local yoga group, Taekwondo and football clubs use the school's premises. The school is very much a vital part of the local community and continues to encourage village participation in all its activities.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are very good. The governance of the school is outstanding.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Governors do an excellent job. They play an outstanding role in shaping the direction of the school and know its strengths and weaknesses very well.
- The leadership of the headteacher is very good because of the very positive impact it is having on pupils' achievement.
- Other key leaders, including the special educational needs co-ordinator, provide effective leadership.
- The school's actions to improve are very good.
- Management systems are very good. They focus on continual improvement and give the school the mechanism for raising pupils' achievement.

Commentary

- 35 The governors of the school do an excellent job. They focus their work on pupils' achievement and have a very clear vision of how they want the school to be and all decisions are made with this aim in mind. For example, spending decisions are weighed up with the question 'How will this impact upon achievement?' This shows a very good understanding of the principles of Best Value. Governors, many of whom are parents of pupils, are very well involved in the day-to-day life of the school. All governors visit classes on a regular basis and attend residential visits. Governors have developed the school's anti bullying policy in consultation with the pupils' school council and have awarded them a budget for the purchase of equipment. The standards committee has an impressive system of monitoring the work of the school. Governors receive a very high quality of information from the headteacher and other key members of staff. They thoroughly interrogate it so that they fully understand the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Governors are very good at supporting the headteacher by giving advice and the resources to carry out his role. At the same time, they challenge and ask probing questions, acting as critical friends. They organise their work very efficiently and organise their own training and as a result, they have an outstanding range of expertise that is positively influencing the direction of the school.
- 36 The headteacher is very effective. He is the driving force behind the school and his enthusiasm and commitment is an inspiration for the rest of the staff. He has created some very effective teams, such as the outstanding foundation stage unit. They are exceptional in their work and this is helping reception-aged children to achieve very well. His very good leadership is having a very effective impact on pupils' achievement. For example, very good tracking and evaluation systems have identified the underachievement of more able pupils.

This issue has been very successfully tackled through very focused action plans and these pupils now achieve well. The headteacher leads the exciting curriculum very well and there have been some good improvements since the last inspection, in particular since the arrival of the present headteacher: After school activities, involvement in sports, residential visits and the exceptional foundation stage are just some examples of improvements since the arrival of the headteacher.

- 37 Other key leaders within the school provide good leadership. They are beginning to effectively focus their work on pupil achievement and have some good systems in place for tracking and evaluating progress. Subject leaders have a good command of their subject. The headteacher has deployed these leaders effectively and their work is evolving at a good rate. Very good leadership and management for the provision for pupils with special educational needs have driven forward many improvements in recent years. Staff have thrown the net wide to ensure that no pupil is missed and have devised very effective identification procedures. The co-ordinator maintains all appropriate documents, and very efficient colour coded records ensure simple day-to-day working procedures for all. A governor has been appointed with responsibility for special educational needs, who has regular meetings with senior staff to ensure that policies and procedures are kept up to date and relevant.
- 38 The school's actions to improve are very good. Action plans are thoroughly based on evaluation and focus on the main issues for improvement. For example, mathematics has been a priority for the past few years. The subject leaders have very effectively monitored the quality of teaching and learning and have organised effective training for staff. The school's appraisal system has also been very effectively used to set personal targets for staff. As a result, standards have risen, especially for the most able pupils. The physical education subject leader has developed very effective action plans. These involve a vast amount of training that she has organised through her involvement in the School Sports Co-ordinator Programme. As a result, standards in physical education are above the national expectation by the time pupils reach Year 6 and pupils in all classes achieve well.
- 39 The leadership of the school has developed well since the last inspection. The headteacher has very successfully identified areas for improvement and has forged a very good partnership with governors and this has resulted in a rapidly improving school.

Financial Information

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	827,665	Balance from previous year	24, 524
Total expenditure	842,592	Balance carried forward to the next	9,597
Expenditure per pupil	2,658		

- 40 The table above shows that the expenditure per pupil is around the national average. With average costs, the school helps pupils to achieve well. This represents good value for money.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

- 41 The practice in the Foundation Stage of Learning has been rightly recognised for its outstanding work by the Local Education Authority. Two years ago the unit was recognised as an 'Early Years Good Practice Centre' and has since provided training for other Foundation Stage of Learning Centres throughout the authority. There are several features that brings it this high reputation: the provision for outdoor play; the effective teamwork across all adults working with these children; the planning; the assessment procedures; and the ability to make learning exciting for these young children. Planning is very comprehensive with clear expectation outlined and much emphasis placed on meeting the needs of children of different abilities. Assessment is equally as thorough with teachers using 'post-it' notes on an on-going basis, which later form a wider individual profile for each child. All staff are very committed to working as a team and much of the unit's success is down to the fact that everyone knows exactly what the priorities are. Activities are therefore very stimulating and exciting, engaging the children immediately and helping them to stay with one activity for a long time.
- 42 When many children first start school their skill levels are particularly low in communication, language and literacy. There is no nursery at the school so children come to the reception classes from very different settings. Some have had no pre-school experiences at all. A growing number require speech therapist support and personal and social skills seem to be slightly weaker on a year-by-year basis. Since the previous inspection the backgrounds of the children attending have changed significantly with far more attending who live outside the boundaries of the Local Education Authority. Staff recognise that the first half term in the Autumn is a very important time to set the tone in terms of expectations and working routines. There is a very effective emphasis given to meeting the needs of children of different abilities with tasks being carefully organised to meet the needs of different children. The strength within the planning enables this to happen.
- 43 The provision within each area of learning is very good. There are many outstanding features especially within the teaching and learning which are very good overall. Children make very good progress with many attaining the learning goals in each of the six areas before they finish their reception year. Importantly, the Foundation Stage of Learning in the school provides children with an excellent platform to help move on their skills and secure very positive attitudes to learning.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Improved social skills of children helping them to work together more effectively.
- Good positive re-inforcement of what the children do well.

Commentary

- 44 When children start in the reception they display a full range of skills. However, the overall picture is that children's skills in this area are below the level expected for their age. During the time they are in the Foundation Stage Unit children make very good progress and achieve very well. It is the children's social skills that need most attention and the school does exceptionally well in helping children who are not used to sharing or taking turns to understand why it is important that they act socially and play together harmoniously. One of the main strengths is the way staff have ensured that activities are exciting and stimulating

enough to keep children on-task for prolonged periods. This works exceptionally well in the 'Rainforest Hide', including large models of alligators, tigers and hippopotamus, which has been created outside, using the large storage shed. Children in the hide are prepared to use the binoculars and to observe what is happening for long periods because they have 'moved into the world of the rainforest' and talk excitedly about the animals they have seen and what they are doing.

- 45 The staff have successfully introduced a number of ideas to help the children remember about being positive to each other. There is a strong emphasis on not saying 'no'. This is as a result of many children starting school saying they can't do things. The idea works well with all children believing they can do everything. The 'applause chair' is well used to help children recognise those who have done something special or to be proud of. The children are very much part of the whole-school awards ceremony on Fridays, when special individuals are recognised. The large sunshine in the classroom portrays the message of 'We are really proud of...' All of these factors work well in helping children focus on the positive and staff are very skilled at looking for different ways of praising individuals. They are also particularly sensitive to those who may need special attention for things that may be happening in their lives in and out of school.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Provision in communication, language and literacy is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Staff maximise opportunities for children to talk to each other.
- The importance given to accessing communication, language and literacy across each area of learning.
- High focus on early reading and writing skills.

Commentary

- 46 When children first start school many are unfamiliar with speaking out in front of the whole class. Others have difficulties with their speech and require specialist support. The staff within the unit are very aware of the distinctive features that predominate the children they cater for. They successfully find many opportunities for children to talk out in front of the rest of the class or to speak using full sentences rather than gestures or one word answers. The quality of the play environments requires children to interact together, and therefore be engaged in speaking to each other. In the 'Beach Hut', for example, the quality of the resourcing is such that children can easily play at being at the seaside and have to talk to each other about applying sun-cream or taking a picture with the camera. There is also a strong focus on dressing up, enabling the children to play at being pirates or to wash each other's cars in the car wash.
- 47 There is a strong emphasis on developing children's communication, language and literacy skills in each area and activity that is set up daily. The 'writing in the bottle' activity, fitting in with the seaside theme, works well in helping children to think of what a message is as opposed to making a list. Other children are able to record what they did in the Rainforest hide. The work on butterflies also allows children opportunities to record in different ways. During model making one child can describe how he has made a dragonfly and uses the word 'symmetrical' in his explanation. There is very effective use made of books to help stimulate children's language. For example, during the reading of Eric Carle's 'Quick as a Cricket' children consider their own similes which complement the ones used in the book. There is good use of 'buddies' to help children to talk to each other before having to answer in front of the whole class. As a result of the very good teaching children make very good progress and children of all abilities achieve very well. This results in many who were below

the expected level of attainment when they started school meeting the early learning goals for this area of learning.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Focus on practical activities to help develop important mathematical concepts.
- Good use of mental and oral work from early on to help with children's number work.

Commentary

- 48 There is a huge emphasis given to supporting children's mathematical development. The quality of activities used again supports this. Good use is made of the class mascot 'Lenny the Lion' to help target children's progress, especially in this area. Whenever possible, children are encouraged to count or to order items. In the car wash, for example, children count the number of cars washed while others check on the colours of the cars. The markings on the floor in the outside area also support children's mathematical development. One child uses chalk to draw a butterfly and remarks that it is 'symmetrical'. When children first start school many are unfamiliar with any number rhymes and this is given prominence early on. Mathematical opportunities are also maximised during registration, with staff linking this period with mental and oral mathematics.
- 49 During more 'formal' sessions there is very good teaching of mental and oral mathematical agility. Children are encouraged to count on or to work out how many items there are in a bag. In one case, involving oranges, the teacher asks the most able children to work out how many are missing, as part of the work introducing subtraction. When the main activity has been about 'counting on' then many of the indoor and outdoor practical activities also focus on the same concept. This again underlines the high quality of planning. There are very good links between knowing the children's stage of development and finding practical activities that help children experience work in that area. Children make very good progress in their mathematics and achieve very well.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Emphasis given to visits and visitors to help children's knowledge and understanding.
- Good early introduction to fair testing and investigations.

Commentary

- 50 Each half term children experience a visit to a place of interest, usually in the locality. As a result they are familiar with the local shops and what each shopkeeper sells. They learn that the local facilities, such as baby clinic and dentist are important to any community and have very good ideas about why they are there and what service they provide. The school also places importance on visits to school from people who perform important services. The fire fighters and local nurse are examples of people who have visited at different times. The staff also seize upon opportunities happening within the school, for example an older Muslim child in Year 5 talked to the children about his faith and way of life. Children have also experienced Zulu dancers and African drummers to help them gain greater understanding about different cultures.

- 51 Children are able to understand about carrying out fair tests. The excellent project involving butterflies, for example, helps children learn about how to find out things using fair testing procedures. Children were engaged in cutting out paper of different colour and placing sugar or vinegar on the paper. As a result they learn to experiment and record what happens. All the children involved in the activity were able to explain exactly what they were doing and what they found out. The excellent forward planning again came into its own with staff having planted poppies and other seeds to help with the work that was going on. Children make very good progress in this area and achieve very well. The very good teaching is primarily responsible for this achievement and progress.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Huge emphasis on outdoor education helps with the children's physical development.
- Good quality of activities aimed at improving children's finer motor skills.

Commentary

- 52 The quality of the outdoor environment is excellent. Children are helped to improve their gross motor skills by activities such as manoeuvring wheeled vehicles through given obstacles and using the car washing facilities. Other activities set up in the outdoor environment add to the opportunities to help children improve their physical skills. Similarly, the quality of desk-top activities is very good and enabling children to cut out materials, thread beads and to hang out washing. Playdough and other malleable materials are also used successfully to help children experience making small models or to sculpture. Slime is the most popular of the materials used. Children make good progress in this area and achieve well.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Outstanding creation of play-areas to help children move naturally into an imagined world.
- Good awareness of the need to encourage children to play spontaneously.

Commentary

- 53 This is a very strong area of provision with many opportunities used to help children move into a make-believe world and to play spontaneously. Dressing up is a very important part of the stimulation, using ideas like the former television programme 'Mr Benn', to encourage children to dress up in different clothes. This is an important part of children's creative development. Adults often model the play and this has proven to be a successful way of improving the quality of children's own play. As a result children find it easy to move into a make-believe world. In the garage, where the car wash is situated, two girls earnestly explain to another child that it will be some time before their car can be repaired because they have so much work on. Within the seaside theme children dress up as pirates and consider what gold may lie within the wreck of the ship that lies beneath the water in the water tray. In the rainforest hide children remain wary of the crocodile and still show surprise when spotting the hippopotamus basking in the 'deep dark pool'. The explorer's pack in the hide is well used to help the children feel like real explorers. The excellent planning and very creative thinking on

behalf of the staff has made creativity an important part of children's everyday experience. Very good progress is made and children of all abilities achieve very well.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' attainment is steadily improving and pupils of all abilities achieve well.
- The recent focus on improving pupils' writing is working well, especially in respect of more able writers.
- There are good opportunities provided for pupils to use their speaking skills in different situations.
- Pupils enjoy reading and can explain with confidence why they prefer certain authors and genre'.
- There is very effective use of language and literacy across the whole curriculum.

Commentary

- 54 When taking account of National Curriculum test results then standards seem to be steady. However, this is not a true reflection of what is happening in school. There is improvement in standards with many pupils who were not expected to attain at the level expected for their age doing so by the end of Year 6. Similarly, more pupils than expected attain at the higher levels. The overall picture is one of good progress with pupils of different ability achieving well. The setting arrangements in place in Years 3 to 6 is having a positive impact on this with more able pupils being well challenged and lower attaining pupils being provided with the necessary support to enable them to gain confidence. There is recognition that until recently more able pupils were not being sufficiently challenged but good recent action has helped to improve this situation. The main reason that National Curriculum test results have not shown a steady improvement is that the school has cohorts of different ability coming through. This is strongly influenced by changes to the school's catchment with more and more pupils attending the school from outside the immediate catchment.
- 55 There has been a recent focus on improving pupils' writing. This has had a positive impact in two important areas. Firstly, it has served to improve pupils' writing skills in general, that is, their ability to describe, to use punctuation, grammar and spelling has improved. Secondly, it has improved pupils' confidence to use writing throughout the curriculum. By the end of Year 2, pupils' descriptive writing is quite impressive. They are able to use a full range of adjectives and can hold the reader's interest with a well-sequenced story or report of events. Their spelling is still relatively weak with even the more able pupils still making basic errors with words like 'said (said); funny (funy); and, prison (prisone). There is good progress in Years 3 and 4 with more able pupils showing that they can use a full range of adjectives and adverbs. Phrases like, 'everyone fled into motion' and 'a boy swept passed her' are used regularly. By Year 6 more able pupils are able to change the style of their writing according to the demand of the task. They write in a formal style when required and can set out persuasive arguments. They also vary the structure of their sentences and use complex sentences to good effect, for example, 'Another counter argument is' When writing stories they get the balance right between building up a physical picture of the main character and telling the reader more about the personalities. Most pupils by Year 6 have the ability to grab the reader's interest and are able to show different ways of opening a story using action, dialogue or narrator's synopsis. However, openings of stories tend to be much stronger than endings.

- 56 The school has rightly put a great deal of emphasis on helping pupils to develop confidence in speaking out in front of others and to extend the use of their descriptive vocabulary. The good work that is taking place in the reception classes is successfully built upon in most of the rest of the school. The introduction of 'talking buddies', which occurs in the foundation stage, is extended into Years 1 and 2. Teachers are very conscious of the need to help young pupils to look at each other when they are talking. In Year 1 pupils often have opportunities to talk an issue through with their 'buddy' before being expected to offer an answer to the whole class. In this way it extends the opportunities for pupils to be engaged in talk and gives pupils time to consider their answer before committing it to the whole class. This type of activity has helped to build up pupils' confidence. However, this is not yet consistent and there are occasions when pupils' opportunities to talk are inhibited by over-long introductions to lessons. The school's focus on providing pupils with 'real' experiences through visits and visitors to school has also contributed to pupils' ability to use discussion effectively. Pupils who are members of the school council are very verbose in their ability to explain what their role is and what they would like to see improved. Pupils find it easy to talk to adults about their experiences and this is a very prominent feature in the school. Within lessons, there are examples of pupils being able to stand up in front of the rest of the class and explain aspects of the work they're engaged with. They can sometimes do this with little prior warning as in the example of a Year 6 pupil who explained to the rest of the class about the main features of Beaumaris Castle, and why they should visit it.
- 57 The school has recognised the need to re-think its approach to teaching reading. In the recent past reading standards in Years 1 and 2 were not as high as they could be so additional teacher training and consideration to varying the approach used worked well to help improve standards. Older pupils are very confident to talk about their reading experiences and can explain why they like certain authors. There are good links between the pupils' reading habits and history, usually related to the main historical theme being studied by the class. However, few pupils had read books related to non-white characters. Throughout the school pupils use a range of strategies for coping with unknown words and use good expression when reading aloud. Most older pupils are able to empathise with the main characters in a book and can relate the lives of these characters to their own.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

- 58 There is very effective use of language and literacy across the curriculum and this is a major strength in the school. Most of the literacy sessions use historical, scientific or geographical themes as their main content and this is helping pupils to make use of their literacy skills to develop work in these other subjects. The school places a strong emphasis on pupils learning from direct experience. This offers a multitude of opportunities for pupils to engage in reading and writing about the topics being studied. For example Year 4 pupils write about their experiences when dressed up as Vikings and being provided with a typical Viking meal. Year 2 pupils write about the development of the chickens that have hatched out in their classroom. Similarly, other pupils use writing for different purposes when studying the Victorians and when empathising with war-time evacuees.

MATHEMATICS

Provision for mathematics is good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are making good progress as they move through the school and this is now being reflected in improved National Curriculum test results.
- Pupils of all abilities achieve well because of the good quality of teaching.
- Leadership of the subject is effective and has led to improved standards for the most able pupils and has helped groups of pupils who were less able to reach the national average.

- 59 Standards in Year 2 are above the national average. The most recent test results for 2004, which are not yet confirmed, show that almost all pupils reach the national average with nearly a third of pupils attaining higher levels. This is a good improvement on the figures for 2003. Attainment when pupils start school is slightly below the national expectation and this jump to higher than average attainment demonstrates good achievement. Pupils in Year 2 use addition and subtraction to solve problems and are secure in the use of the 2, 5 and 10 times tables. Pupils have a good understanding of doubling and halving and understand symmetry well. They read and interpret information from graphs and bar charts and apply a range of mental calculation skills to problems. However, many pupils find it difficult to communicate their strategies in a written form. Although pupils can solve mathematical problems satisfactorily, there are few opportunities in the daily mathematics lesson to apply their number skills in this context and this limits progress in this area to a satisfactory level.
- 60 Standards in Year 6 match the national average and pupils achieve well. The present cohort has been identified since Year 1 as having lower than average attainment. Despite this, they achieve well. Their results show a substantial improvement in standards for this year group, who have performed significantly better than would have been expected based on their prior attainment. Year 6 pupils use percentages and fractions to show proportions and they multiply numbers involving 2 decimal places. They have a sound range of mental and written calculation skills but are reticent to show their working on paper, preferring white boards or scraps of paper. This sometimes hinders their progress.
- 61 The quality of teaching is consistently good and this is helping pupils' learning and achievement. The strength of teaching is undoubtedly teachers' good command of the subject. Teachers are well trained and have a good range of activities that develop pupils' mathematical skills. Teachers also use a wide range of resources effectively and this engages pupils well. For example, white boards, number cards and counting aids are all used to good effect. Classroom support assistants are used effectively, especially in supporting pupils with special educational needs and this helps them to achieve well. Because of the good teaching, pupils are generally productive and apply themselves well. They work together well during activities and this helps them to gain a better understanding of mathematical concepts. In a very good Year 3 lesson, ICT was used very effectively to develop pupils' understanding of directions. Supported by an assistant, pupils practised and refined a program of instructions for a floor robot until it could accurately follow the 'yellow brick road'. There is, in some lessons however, a tendency for teachers to spend too long on the introduction of a lesson. When this happens, teacher talk dominates at the expense of pupils' talk. This limits their thinking and problem solving skills and the lengthy introduction limits the amount of time pupils have to work.
- 62 There has been a good improvement in mathematics in recent years. Until recently, the most able pupils were identified as underachieving. With the very good leadership of the headteacher and the good leadership of the mathematics team, this issue has been addressed well. The mathematics team has worked well with the Local Education Authority to train staff and to evaluate teaching and learning. The headteacher and management team have put a great deal of emphasis on improving mathematics and have used the staff appraisal system very effectively to raise standards.
- 63 The good position of mathematics described at the time of the last inspection has been maintained well. There has also been a steady rise in the national test results in Year 2 and Year 6, with a growing number of pupils reaching higher levels.

Mathematics across the curriculum

- 64 There is a satisfactory level of mathematics across the curriculum and this has made a sound contribution to pupils' good achievement. There are, however, further opportunities to develop this further especially in geography and science.

SCIENCE

Provision in Science is **good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well in science.
- Teachers make good use of practical investigations in lessons.
- Leadership is good.
- Pupils do not have enough opportunity for independence in enquiry and recording.

65 In teacher assessment at Year 2 and in the National Curriculum tests at Year 6, attainment in 2003 was in line with expectations. However, work seen in books and on the walls, and pupils' own subject knowledge and understanding shows that standards have improved this year and are now above national expectations. This represents good achievement for all pupils. Pupils in Year 2 are beginning to realise the value and importance of a fair test and can describe what happens during their investigations. By Year 6 pupils are beginning to use their wide overall knowledge and previous learning in science to help them to understand new concepts. However, for higher attaining pupils there is some underachievement in experimental and enquiry work. There has been good progress overall since the last inspection.

66 The improvement in standards results directly from the effective teaching methods seen in many lessons, which are having a positive impact on pupils' achievement. Teachers plan a good range of activities to support teaching and learning. Residential and other visits are used to support wider learning and pupils visit Magma earth centre, Eureka and the Manchester Science museums as part of their regular planned experiences. Much of the effective teaching seen during the inspection focussed on a practical approach which allows pupils to develop their understanding through a wide range of observations and investigations. For example, younger pupils had the opportunity of watching eggs in an incubator hatch into baby chickens and older ones used the good school environment to examine habitats of small creatures. Teachers make good use of attractive wall displays, which are often interactive and encourage pupils to think more deeply about the area of science studied.

67 The new subject leader has correctly identified areas that need improvement, and has a good vision for future development. She has quickly become aware that pupils need more freedom to organise their own investigations and is beginning to explore ways in which this can be implemented throughout school. She has produced clear strategic action plans as part of the whole school development process. The subject is well managed, and teachers' evaluations and assessments are used effectively to ensure that resources and provision remains good.

68 Pupils in Year 6 are able to explain scientific facts and observations, but their understanding and achievement is sometimes limited by too few opportunities to develop their independence by making choices about their own investigations and recording. This sometimes means that more able pupils do not have the opportunity to make more advanced observations or to explore their own ideas sufficiently, being limited by the boundaries of the task, which they are performing. As a result conclusions and predictions are not always backed up with reason or causative arguments. Where teachers do challenge pupils to develop their independent enquiry, achievement can be very good. For example, a very good lesson was observed during the inspection which had an emphasis on the teaching of enquiry skills and made pupils begin to think more deeply for themselves. There is not enough evidence of use of mathematics when recording except when pupils are using commercial worksheets.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology (ICT) is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The provision and use of ICT across the curriculum is stronger in Years 3 to 6 than it is in Years 1 and 2.
- Effective leadership in this subject has recognised where the school's strengths are and what needs to be done to improve still further.

Commentary

- 69 Pupils' attainment in information and communication technology (ICT) is broadly in line with national expectations throughout the school. By the end of Year 2 pupils are able to save work to a folder; change text; alter text to a given size and colour and have some understanding about controlling a floor robot. Year 6 pupils confidently put together a multi-media presentation using sound, pictures and text. The school adheres to national guidelines when planning coverage in the subject but the provision is stronger in Years 3 to 6 than it is in Years 1 and 2. The main reason for this is that there is better use of pupils' ICT capability across the curriculum in Years 3 to 6. Teacher confidence is also higher in Years 3 to 6. There is good use of the school's computer suite to help pupils, throughout the school to improve their ICT skills. However, the use of computers based in classrooms is more varied and weaker in Years 1 and 2.
- 70 The subject leader has a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses in this subject and is already putting in place an action plan to help deal with the main weak issues. There is good knowledge about pupils' ICT capability and recognition that control technology is a weaker element of the subject. The creation of portfolios of work to help assess pupils' progress has been an important part of the subject leaders input and this has helped to give an overview of pupils' levels of attainment. Staff confidence level is now very good in Years 3 to 6 but is not as high in Years 1 and 2. The improvement of staff confidence in Years 1 and 2 as well as buying resources to support control technology are recognised as important future developments. At present one of the school's classroom assistants works primarily as a technician and her input has been invaluable to help the school move forwards.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

- 71 There are good examples of pupils making use of their ICT skills to support work across all subjects in Years 3 to 6. For example, Year 6 uses its multi-media presentation skills to good effect to develop work related to residential visits. There is also good use of the Internet to find out relevant information about areas they are to visit. In Year 3, ICT was used very effectively to develop pupils' understanding of directions as part of their work in mathematics. There is good use of pupils' desktop publication skills to aid their work in English, science and within the humanities curriculum. In Year 4, for example, pupils use their desktop publication skills well to produce a booklet about the school. However, there are missed opportunities in Years 1 and 2 for pupils to make use of their skills to further develop work in many subjects.

HUMANITIES

- 72 Only one lesson was seen in each of **geography** and **history** and it is not possible to make detailed judgement about provision, standards or teaching and learning in these subjects. The emphasis in both subjects is on experiential learning and the development of skills of enquiry. Work is well presented throughout, with high quality displays in all classrooms and made-up booklets and folders of pupils' work which shows respect and regard for their efforts. Teachers make good use of curriculum links with other subjects, especially with English and writing.

- 73 **History** is well resourced and staff have a good level of specialist knowledge and enthusiasm. For example in a Viking cooking day for pupils in Year 3 and 4 all wore Viking dress to enhance their experiences and the atmosphere was one of high excitement and interest. Pupils made pottage with lentils and cooked Viking scones on an open-air fire. They were keen to ask many searching questions, made observational comments and overall learned very well through this experiential approach. This is a regular feature of the teaching of history, and pupils throughout school have the opportunity to go on visits, talk to visitors and to experience whole days of being 'Victorians' or 'Evacuees'. Pupils use a wide range of evidence and older pupils are beginning to understand the value of first hand evidence and the difference between fact and opinion.
- 74 By the end of Year 6 pupils have a good level of specialist knowledge in **geography** and teachers make good links with this and other subjects. For example, pupils in Year 2 used their skills in science to aid them in a geography lesson on the environment. Subject leaders have provided a good structure for planning, which ensures sound coverage of topics and progression of skills and an analysis of pupils work shows that by the time they reach Year 6 they have covered a range of appropriate topics. Achievement is good, as pupils often come into school with very little knowledge about other countries.

Religious Education

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are good links with the PSHCE curriculum but teachers do not always sufficiently stress the spiritual elements of religious education.
- Teachers make good use of visitors and visits to enhance the curriculum.

Commentary

- 75 Standards are in line with national expectations overall in relation to the agreed syllabus and pupils make satisfactory achievement. This is satisfactory improvement since the previous inspection. In common with other areas of humanities work is well presented both in books and on the walls, and the subject has appropriate priority throughout the rest of the curriculum.
- 76 The main focus is on learning about Christian teaching, as set out in the locally agreed syllabus. Additionally pupils learn about Islam, Judaism and Hinduism, which are compared and contrasted with Christianity and similarities and differences in both faith and culture explained and valued. There are good links with personal, social and health education, especially in the teaching of morals, but teachers do not always sufficiently stress the spiritual elements of religious education. For example in a lesson about the environment and feelings for younger pupils there was little emphasis on the beauty of creation or explicit links to creation stories.
- 77 The subject leader has provided staff with a good range of ideas for visits and visitors to support this subject, and teachers' planning indicates that these are well used. During the inspection for example, pupils enjoyed a visit from a Jewish lady to explain some of the main similarities and differences between Judaism and Christianity.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

78 Only one lesson was observed in art and design and no lessons in design and technology or music. It is therefore not possible to make judgements on the overall provision of these subjects. Through discussion with pupils and by looking at work, however, it is clear that standards match the national expectation. In the case of music, this judgement is based on very little first hand evidence but good tracking systems indicate standards match the national expectation.

Art

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching in the one lesson observed was good.
- Pupils' three-dimensional work is impressive.

Commentary

79 The school successfully uses visiting experts to enhance the quality of provision. The class teacher worked in good partnership with the visitor and this helped pupils to learn how to weave, with the most able pupils developing a good understanding of tone and texture. The class teacher had a good subject knowledge and arranged a practical and challenging activity for pupils: Some created landscapes using different tones and textures whilst others created pictures of minibeasts they had been studying in their science work. Pupils in Year 2 use a range of starting points for their art such as stories, poems and the environment. They communicate their ideas through weaving, painting, drawing, collage and clay sculpture.

80 Pupils in Year 6 develop their work in three-dimensions particularly well. There are some impressive examples of willow weaving around school and some good textiles work. However, technical skills in painting and drawing are not systematically developed to the same high standard. Pupils in Year 6 talk about their work well. One pupil described ideas as 'effective' if they express an idea well. For example, in a piece of collage work expressing movement, pupils created images made up of many smaller images. This was particularly effective in a footballer and a gymnast image shown to the inspection team by pupils.

Design and Technology

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils 'disassemble' objects well to understand how they are made but teaching does not concentrate on skills development as well.

Commentary

81 Discussion with Year 6 pupils shows that they talk well about how they take apart products to see how they are made. This is sometimes done through careful observation rather than actually taking them apart and gives a good understanding of how to put things together. They also design and make products using this information well. Pupils also evaluate their work with a good range of criteria. Pupils described their project to design and make slippers. They discussed how they judged the overall effectiveness of their slippers by talking about comfort, looks, durability and the time taken to make them. This shows they have good evaluative skills. In the area of practising skills, however pupils are less confident in discussing what they do. They do not evaluate their designs in terms of how useful their techniques in joining, cutting, hinging or fastening are. They are also less confident in discussing the mechanisms they have used in their products.

Music

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good tracking sheets give the subject leader a sound overview of standards across the school.

Commentary

82 Music has been a strong feature of the school for many years. However, this had declined recently due to the loss of teaching expertise. The headteacher has addressed this very well by recently appointing a replacement. The new subject leader has a sound overview of standards because of good tracking sheets. These records show how each pupil is progressing well. Standards match the national expectation in Years 2 and 6, which is a similar picture as at the time of the last inspection.

Physical education

During the inspection, no lessons were observed. However, analysis of teachers' good tracking sheets and observation of an extra curricular netball club **show standards to match the national expectation in Year 2 and to be above the expectation in Year 6. All pupils achieve well.**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school's involvement in the School Sports Co-ordinator Scheme has had a very positive impact on the leadership of the subject and the range and quality of physical education
- Good tracking systems give teachers a good picture of how well pupils are achieving in the subject.

Commentary

83 A very knowledgeable subject leader is involved in a programme designed to improve provision in physical education. This is very effective, especially in the training that has been provided for staff and in the range and amount of sporting activities provided by the school. As a result, teachers have gained a good level of skill in delivering physical education and pupils have many opportunities to practise their skills. The headteacher has also had a very positive impact on the promotion of sport and as a result, all pupils receive the nationally recommended 2 hours of sport and physical education each week. The good quality and range of after school clubs demonstrates good staff expertise and very good leadership of the subject.

84 Teachers keep good tracking records of the skills pupils achieve. This helps them to plan the next steps in learning and shows that all pupils achieve well. Standards in Year 2 match the national picture and this represents good achievement from when they first start school, when their attainment is slightly below the national expectation. By the time pupils reach Year 6, standards are above the national expectation with some particular strengths in dance. This represents a good improvement since the last inspection where attainment matched the national picture in all year groups.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

85 No lessons were seen in this area of the school's work and so no judgements are made on overall provision. However, pupils' personal development is clearly an important part of the schools' work, and teachers' planning across the curriculum indicates opportunities to integrate this into other lessons. For example, moral and social education and citizenship is a major part of many lessons in religious education, and there is a good emphasis in science lessons on healthy living and eating. The school nurse comes into school on a regular basis

to support different areas of personal and health education, and sex education is also taught as part of this curriculum. Every classroom in school, along with the main shared areas, evidences the school's focus on the importance of relationships and behaviour. Many classrooms have areas specifically designed to raise pupils' self esteem with positive comments and personal goals and targets to be met, often identified by the pupils themselves during PSHCE lessons.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

