

# INSPECTION REPORT

**St. CHAD'S RC VA PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Cheetham

LEA area: Manchester

Unique reference number: 105525

Headteacher: Mrs Janina Chinnery

Lead inspector: Mr Glyn Gaskill

Dates of inspection: 14<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> June 2004

Inspection number: 257616

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils:	3-11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	227
School address:	Balmfield Street Cheetham Manchester
Postcode:	M8 0SP
Telephone number:	0161 2056965
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr K Mahoney
Date of previous inspection:	20 <sup>th</sup> April 1998

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The school serves a parish close to the city centre of Manchester. The school is a similar size to most primary schools. The socio-economic background of the area is very low. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is rising and is currently at the very high figure of 64 per cent. The pupils come from a rich range of ethnic backgrounds with a very high proportion of pupils whose first language is not English. A significant minority of pupils come from a long-established travelling fairground community. There are a very small number of asylum seekers and pupils in public care. The movement of pupils in and out of the school during the school year is significantly more than average. When they enter the nursery, children's attainment is very low. Twenty-nine per cent of pupils are on the special educational needs register and two per cent have Statements of Special Educational Needs. These figures are above the national average. The school is involved in initiatives connected with the *Children's Fund*, *Excellence in Cities* and *Sure Start*.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
22951	Glyn Gaskill	Lead inspector	Mathematics, information and communication technology and music.
11450	Lee Kuriishi	Lay inspector	
22398	Lynne Wright	Team inspector	Science, art and design, design and technology, physical education and the Foundation Stage.
32505	Michelle Coles	Team inspector	English, history, geography, special educational needs, personal, social and health education and citizenship and English as an additional language.

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

This is an improving school which provides a **satisfactory** standard of education for its pupils. Pupils' standards of work are below average but their achievement is satisfactory and often good. Teaching and learning are good. Pupils' behaviour and attitudes are good. The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Pupils' progress in the nursery, reception and Years 1 and 2 is good.
- Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) in Years 3 to 6 are below average because parts of the statutory curriculum are not taught.
- Standards are improving but below average in mathematics, speaking and listening in Years 1 to 6 and science in Year 2 and well below average in science in Years 3 to 6.
- Standards in writing have improved across the school and are now good in Year 2.
- Pupils work and play well together because teachers, teaching assistants and supervisory staff have high expectations and use effective systems to promote better behaviour.
- The headteacher provides good leadership and is well supported by good governance.
- The use of assessment to raise standards is effective in the nursery and reception classes and in English and mathematics in Years 1 to 6, but in other subjects it is unsatisfactory.
- A significant number of parents are unhappy with several aspects of what the school does but, at the same time, they are pleased with the teaching and their children's progress.
- All pupils have full access to school life. Provision for care is good but lacks formal procedures.
- Pupils' spiritual, social and moral development is good.

Since the school was last inspected, in 1998, improvement has been **satisfactory**. Standards in reading, speaking and listening have remained the same but have improved recently in science and mathematics. Schemes of work are now in place. Assessment has improved significantly in English and mathematics. Management and governance have been strengthened. Learning support is well managed.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Average points scores in National Curriculum tests (SATs) at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
English	E	C	E*	E*
Mathematics	E	E	E*	E*
Science	E	E*	E*	E*

*Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average; E\* in the lowest 5% of schools*

*Similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 2.*

Pupils' achievement is **satisfactory** overall. Children start in the nursery with very low standards. As they move through the nursery and reception classes they make good progress. The majority of children will fall well short of meeting all the expected learning goals for the end of the reception year. Inspection evidence found standards in writing to be above average in Year 2 and average in Year 6. Reading is average in Years 2 and 6. Mathematics, speaking and listening are below average across the school. Standards in science are below average in Year 2 and well below in Year 6. Standards in ICT are average in Year 2 but below average in Year 6. The use of English, mathematics and ICT to promote learning in other subjects is unsatisfactory. There is a high movement of pupils in and out of school at various times during the school year. Considering pupils' progress during their time in school, achievement is good from nursery to Year 2 and satisfactory in Years 3 to 6. The lower achievement in the older classes is due to weaknesses in the curriculum. Over the last five years, the school improved more slowly in its National Curriculum test (SATs) results than other schools

nationally. In 2003, results were in the bottom five per cent of all and similar schools. In English, results rose to be similar to all schools nationally in 2002.

Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral and social development, are **good**. Their cultural development is **satisfactory**. Behaviour and attitudes are good, because all staff work hard in using effective strategies to promote a positive response in pupils. This is particularly the case in lunchtime breaks. Attendance and punctuality are below average but getting better because of the good procedures to improve matters. Pupils willingly take on responsibilities.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

The school provides a **satisfactory** quality of education for its pupils.

The quality of teaching and learning is **good** throughout the school. Teachers and teaching assistants work very closely together and pupils respond positively to their insistence on high standards of behaviour. Provision for pupils with special educational needs, traveller children and those who speak English as an additional language is good.

The curriculum for the nursery and reception classes is good and very relevant to national recommendations and children's needs. In Years 1 and 2, the curriculum is satisfactory and improving. In Years 3 to 6, the curriculum is unsatisfactory because of the way a small number of subjects are organised and the National Curriculum requirements for ICT are not fully met. Provision is improving rapidly in ICT.

The use of assessment to raise standards is good in the nursery and reception classes. In Years 1 to 6, assessment is used well in English and mathematics. In the remainder of the National Curriculum subjects, assessment is unsatisfactory and is still largely informal. The school provides well for the care of its pupils but formal procedures are lacking. This makes overall care satisfactory. The introduction of the youngest children to the nursery is very good.

The school's links with parents are satisfactory, overall. Communications from school to home are satisfactory. There is limited parental involvement in supporting their children's learning. Links with the community, other schools and colleges are satisfactory. Links with one local primary school and the local education authority have a particularly beneficial effect on provision in the school.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

The overall leadership and management of the school are both **satisfactory**. The headteacher provides good leadership with a determination to provide the best for the school. The leadership of key staff is satisfactory and improving. The governors have benefited from recent training and carry out their duties well. They know the school's strengths and weaknesses well and work hard to bring about improvement. School development planning is effective and supported by efficient financial planning and administration.

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

Parents say their children like school and feel the teaching is good. In their concern for their children's education, several parents would like to see changes in the way the school is run but they also feel that their children are making good progress. A great concern of parents, which is shared by staff and governors, is the high turnover of teaching staff. This has had a negative effect on pupils' learning but the situation is getting better. Pupils have positive views about the school and staff.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- Raise standards in science, mathematics, speaking and listening in Years 1 to 6, and the use of English, mathematics and ICT throughout the school to support learning across the curriculum.
- Improve procedures to deal satisfactorily with parental concerns and complaints.
- Make assessment more consistently effective to raise standards in Years 1 to 6.

And to meet statutory requirements:

- Teach the full National Curriculum requirements for ICT in Years 3 to 6.

- Re-establish formal procedures for care.



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

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

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

Overall, pupils' achievement is **satisfactory** and their standards of attainment are **below average**. Achievement in the Nursery and reception classes and in Years 1 and 2 is **good** and in Years 3 to 6 is **satisfactory**. Standards of attainment are **well below average** by the end of the reception year and **below average** in Years 1 to 6.

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

- Children make good progress in the Nursery and reception classes and Years 1 and 2.
- Standards are below average in most of the core subjects.
- Standards are improving recently in several important areas, particularly in writing in Year 2.
- Pupils with special educational needs make good progress.
- Results in the National Curriculum tests for 7-year-olds and 11-year-olds have declined in recent years.

#### **Commentary**

1. When they first enter the nursery, children's attainment is very low. The majority of children will fall well short of meeting expectations in all the goals children are expected to reach by the time they start Year 1. In both the nursery and reception classes, children achieve well in all areas of learning because of good teaching and a good curriculum which interests them.
2. Inspection evidence found standards in writing to be above average in Year 2 and average in Year 6. This is a significant improvement, particularly in Year 2, on earlier standards in writing. This has been brought about by a whole school development in improving the teaching of writing. Standards in reading are average in both Year 2 and Year 6. In Years 1 to 6, standards in speaking and listening are below average. Standards in mathematics are below average in Year 2 and Year 6. In Years 1 to 6, pupils' achievement in English and mathematics is good. In Years 1 to 6, English, mathematics and ICT are insufficiently used to promote learning in other subjects.
3. Across the school, pupils with special educational needs receive good support in mainstream classes and individually when they are withdrawn. As a result, they achieve well against the challenging, yet realistic, targets in their individual education plans. Pupils who speak English as an additional language make good progress. Traveller children are well provided for when they are in school and at other locations. All these pupils receive good support from specialist teachers and teaching assistants and this helps them to achieve results similar to those of other pupils in their year groups.
4. Over the last five years, the school improved more slowly in its National Curriculum test (SATs) results than other schools nationally. In 2002, there were signs of good improvement in English but results went down in 2003. In the National Curriculum tests for seven-year-olds, results in reading and mathematics compared favourably with other similar schools. Results in writing were very low in comparison and the school has responded most successfully by improving provision for writing. In the National Curriculum tests for 11-year-olds in 2003, all published comparisons were in the bottom five per cent of schools. There is a significant coming and going of pupils during the school year. In the Year 6 of 2002/2003 some 40 per cent of pupils were not in this school when they were of Year 2 age. Assessment evidence indicates that the 60 per cent of these pupils who were in this school throughout Years 3 to 6 attained as well as, and often better, than pupils in similar schools.

The average points score from the 2003 National Curriculum tests are shown below:

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	14.3 (12.8)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	11.4 (12.7)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	14.9 (16.1)	16.3 (16.5)

*There were 29 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	22.6 (26.7)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	22.7 (25.1)	26.8 (26.7)
science	24.8 (25.3)	28.6 (28.3)

*There were 22 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

**PUPILS’ ATTITUDES, VALUES AND OTHER PERSONAL QUALITIES.**

Pupils’ attitudes to school are **good** and this is reflected in their **good** behaviour. Provision for the pupils’ personal development is **good**, as is that for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Attendance and punctuality are **below average**.

**Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils’ behaviour is good in all school situations.
- The school encourages its pupils to be thoughtful towards each other, and bullying is dealt with very swiftly.
- Good relationships within the school encourage the pupils’ self-esteem and confidence.
- The school has good procedures to promote better attendance.
- Pupils respond positively to responsibility.

**Commentary**

5. Children in the nursery settle happily to school life. Teachers and teaching assistants in the nursery and reception classes understand the children’s needs very well and make the children feel secure. Children know they are well-cared for and so they quickly become confident in tackling new things and in following classroom routines. They try very hard to fulfil the staff’s high expectations that they should behave well at all times, be kind to each other and try their best. From the start the youngest children are given good responsibility for choosing what they are going to do and organising themselves with what they need.
6. Good provision for the pupils’ moral and social development means they are generally polite, courteous and welcoming to all members of the school community. They carry out their responsibilities with care and share conversations and resources sensibly. Pupils with special educational needs, traveller children and those at the early stages of English acquisition are well supported so that they do well and experience success. Good behaviour is maintained in lessons. Pupils with limited self-control of their own behaviour respond positively to the staff’s consistent and fair application of high expectations. Exclusions have been at a high level but involve a very small number of pupils. Recent additional funding has led to more support for pupils with severe behavioural problems and has cut the number of incidents considerably this term. The number of lunchtime exclusions remains high because of the school’s policy,

supported by the local education authority, of zero tolerance of unacceptable behaviour. Parents' concerns about this have been justified. However, a new initiative of much improved playtime equipment and training for lunchtime supervisors has resulted in good behaviour at lunchtime. A buddy system also helps an improved social atmosphere. Both staff and pupils appreciate the improvements. The incident book shows repeat minor offences by a small group of pupils. The incidents of bullying are dealt with instantly and consistently and parents are informed and involved in action right from the start. Incidents of bullying have decreased as the diversity of ethnic groups within the school has increased. This is testament to the effectiveness of the school's inclusive and caring approach to all its pupils.

7. Pupils have positive views on school, although there is no formal way, such as a school council, of gathering their views. They have good attitudes to learning and do what is asked of them. Teachers do their best to promote a desire to learn and generally provide interesting lessons. Good attention to pupils' social development has resulted in a school where pupils are willing to help each other and celebrate each others' success.
8. The school has a strong commitment to promoting the spiritual aspect of the pupils' lives and, consequently, the pupils have good self-esteem and confidence in their relationships. It helps pupils to understand their own feelings and others' viewpoints, and this is reflected in their own prayers. Residential visits contribute strongly to the pupils' moral, social and spiritual development. Pupils' understanding of their own, and other cultures, is satisfactory but considerations of other cultures does not form an integral part of curriculum plans.

The number of exclusions for the year prior to the inspection is shown in the table below.

*Ethnic background of pupils*

*Exclusions in the last school year*

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	101	8	
White – Irish	6		
White – any other White background	2		
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	15		1
Mixed – White and Black African	3		
Mixed – White and Asian	1		
Mixed – any other mixed background	9		
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	5		
Black or Black British – Caribbean	9		
Black or Black British – African	42		
Black or Black British – any other Black background	6		
Chinese	1		
Any other ethnic group	24		
No ethnic group recorded	3		

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

9. The school works closely with local authority attendance services to encourage good attendance and punctuality. This is having a positive effect on attendance rates, which have improved considerably since the last inspection. There are several pupils who have very good attendance. In spite of this improvement, attendance is very low and several pupils do not

arrive at school on time. The mobility of families contributes significantly to absence statistics. Punctuality during the school day is good.

**Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (2002/2003)**

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	9.3%	School data	0.1%
National data	5.4%	National data	0.4%

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

**QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL**

The overall quality of education provided by the school is **satisfactory**. Teaching is good and the overall curriculum is satisfactory. Provision for care is satisfactory. Links with the local community, parents and other schools are satisfactory.

**Teaching and learning**

Across the school, the quality of teaching is **good** and leads to **good** learning by pupils. The use of assessment and its effect on raising standards is **good** in the Nursery and reception classes but **unsatisfactory** in Years 1 to 6.

**Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching in the Nursery and reception classes is consistently good.
- In Years 1 to 6 teachers insist upon a good presentation of pupils' written work.
- Teaching assistants provide very valuable support to learning.
- There are high expectations of pupils' good behaviour.
- Assessment in the nursery and reception classes, English and mathematics is having a positive effect on standards, but elsewhere is too informal to be sufficiently effective.
- Opportunities for pupils' speaking and listening are not always developed.
- Planning for teaching is very thorough but at times over-burdened with paper.

**Commentary**

10. There has been a satisfactory improvement in the overall quality of teaching since the last inspection when ten per cent of teaching was unsatisfactory. A summary of all the graded lessons is shown in the table below:

**Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 31 lessons**

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	6 (19%)	13 (42%)	12 (39%)	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.*

11. In the both the nursery and reception classes, planning for teaching takes good account of individual children's needs, circumstance and interests. These plans form a firm basis for lessons but the adults are skilled in modifying intentions to suit the developing circumstances in a lesson. Planning also ensures that the requirements of the Foundation Stage curriculum are met. Assessment procedures are thorough and firmly based on national expectations. Because of these arrangements, children gain confidence and make good progress.

12. A strength of teaching is the consistent use of strategies to promote good behaviour. This was seen in all lessons. Pupils mainly respond quickly and their learning moves at a good pace. At times these procedures take longer than expected because pupils become over-excited in wanting to get on with the lesson. Because of the expectations imposed on these pupils, they gain in their learning but the teachers have to work hard. Another consistent feature in all classes is the way in which pupils set out their work. This is a result of a relatively recent whole-school move to raise standards of presentation. Work is dated and given a suitable title. This gives pupils a pride in their work and makes it straightforward for pupils, staff and parents to see what progress pupils are making. Planning for teaching is thorough and takes full account of the schemes of work in use by the school. In many cases, teachers' planning is overloaded with paper but a few teachers reduce this to a more manageable amount without losing efficiency. Teachers often add notes to their plans at the end of a lesson so that constructive changes can be made to future planning. Homework satisfactorily supports pupils' progress, particularly in English and mathematics.
13. Where teaching is good or better, there is a brisk pace to learning and pupils become involved in the interesting activities set by the teacher. In several instances, pupils' reluctance to become sensibly involved in a lesson is turned into enthusiasm. Teachers have good subject knowledge in many areas of the curriculum. Their knowledge of ICT and music has been weak but is improving considerably thanks to continuing professional development. Teachers are enthusiastic about what they do in lessons and this transfers to many pupils. The work given to pupils is generally matched to their ability and previous learning. This helps them make progress. Pupils are involved in lessons by teachers' direct questioning. There are too many occasions, however, when pupils are not given the opportunity to explain their thinking. Where fuller answers are given, pupils' explanations are not always clarified to the rest of the class.
14. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good. It is well focused and well managed. When pupils are withdrawn from class, activities are planned carefully to tie in with what the rest of the class are doing and help them achieve their individual targets. All adults are committed to providing high quality care for pupils with special educational needs and raising their levels of achievement. Teaching assistants give very valuable support to learning, particularly for pupils with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language. The teaching assistants work in a constructive partnership with teachers. They know the pupils well and are thoroughly briefed by the class teacher in what is expected of them. They work flexibly with individual pupils or groups who benefit from their teaching. Traveller children receive regular specialist support and their parents are pleased with this arrangement.
15. The quality of marking in English and mathematics is good because teachers' comments contain information for pupils explaining what they need to do next to improve their work. In other subject areas it is less consistent. In all classes, teachers give pupils statements of what they are expected to know (learning objectives). Pupils are familiar with their group learning objectives for English and mathematics but these targets are broad and not always easy for them to understand. Teachers state learning objectives at the start of the lesson and follow them through to a final session, with the whole class, to see if they have been attained. This helps pupils' learning.
16. Pupils' knowledge and understanding in English and mathematics are formally checked regularly throughout the year. Realistic targets for improvement are set for each year group and the progress of individual pupils is recorded. The systems in use give a clear picture of the progress of individual pupils and the whole year group. The school uses these systems to effectively provide additional support where needed. This helps pupils progress. Whilst the arrangements and use made of assessment in English and mathematics are good, assessment overall is unsatisfactory because arrangements in the rest of the curriculum are largely informal.

## The curriculum

The school provides a **satisfactory** curriculum overall that includes **satisfactory** enrichment of opportunities for learning. The curriculum is supported by **satisfactory** accommodation and resources for teaching and learning.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The ICT curriculum at Key Stage 2 does not meet statutory requirements.
- The curriculum for pupils with special educational needs and those who use English as an additional language and for children in the nursery and reception classes is good.
- All pupils are given good access to the curriculum.

### Commentary

17. The school provides a curriculum that covers all subjects and is broadly relevant to the ages and interests of its pupils. It fulfils the statutory requirements of the National Curriculum for all subjects except in ICT at Key Stage 2. The school is not teaching its oldest pupils the required aspects of control, sensing of physical process such as heat and light and use of ICT for communication. Information and communication technology is a rapidly developing subject and is a current school priority. Its successful development and improvement in standards are one of the main thrusts of the school's professional development programme. Governors are fully aware of this and have supported improvement by allocating funds to buy the hardware and software necessary to enable ICT to meet requirements. The school is moving as quickly as staff and pupils can cope, against a timed plan. The creation of a computer suite has significantly strengthened the provision for ICT.
18. There have been significant developments in curriculum planning and all subjects, apart from personal, social and health education, now have comprehensive schemes of work, satisfactorily addressing a key issue from the previous inspection. The school is following national guidance for personal, social and health education and is introducing it gradually in a more structured way. The successful push to improve provision for, and standards in, English and mathematics has led to slower curriculum development in other subjects. There is not enough consideration being given to planning the use of English, mathematics and ICT to support learning across the curriculum. A future school priority is the review of the curriculum overview, which is now out of date. The plans for each subject do not accurately reflect what is taught, or the balances and links between subjects, and this is confusing, especially for teachers new to the school. There has been some innovation such as the introduction of the John Lennon unit in history and training to improve staff confidence and expertise in teaching music. Co-ordination of these changes has been overseen by the headteacher so that there is an ongoing process of curriculum development.
19. Teachers plan with the needs of all groups of pupils in mind. As a result of this, and good support from teaching assistants, the curriculum for pupils with special educational needs is of good quality. The school is committed to the concept of equality in learning for all, and this aspect of provision is good. The curriculum for the nursery and reception classes is good and future plans aim to make it even more exciting and stimulating for the children.
20. A sound enrichment programme enhances lessons. Pupils benefit from a residential trip as well as music tuition. Visits and visitors add an extra dimension to the curriculum, sometimes encouraging extended study and group performances in music and drama. However, after-school clubs are limited in both number and scope and do not significantly help to improve standards in physical education.
21. The school's accommodation and resources are satisfactory to meet the needs of the curriculum. Several classrooms are too cramped. The new ICT room is having a positive effect on standards but there remains a need to improve software and hardware to meet National Curriculum requirements by Year 6 and improve the use of ICT across the curriculum.

Whilst there have been improvements made, the library is too small and its location in a thoroughfare does not encourage independent learning. There is a lack of interesting and challenging reading books to stimulate higher standards in reading and pupils' personal research. When the dining hall is used for teaching it prevents access between classrooms and the administration office. The grassed area around the school is not sufficient for field sports. The recent improvements made to playing facilities in the school grounds have been in the planning process for some time and are a great benefit to pupils. Parents were concerned about children's behaviour during break times and this new provision has resulted in good behaviour during these times.

## CARE, GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT

The school takes **satisfactory** care of all of its pupils. Support, advice and guidance based on monitoring are satisfactory. Procedures for seeking pupils' views are satisfactory.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents are pleased with the settling-in arrangements for their children.
- Procedures for child protection and health and safety are not fully implemented.
- Procedures for promoting good attendance and punctuality are good.
- Sufficient adult supervision ensures that pupils learn and play in a safe environment.
- There are no formal procedures for taking pupil's views into account.
- Several parents express concern about incidents of bullying and harassment.

### Commentary

22. All staff pay sufficient attention to child protection and pupils' welfare, ensuring that pupils are safe and well cared for. Health and safety procedures are understood by all staff and the school has recently undertaken risk assessments. The school is aware of the need to formally adopt locally-agreed child protection procedures. These procedures have lapsed since the previously responsible member of staff left the school. The school works well with external agencies.
23. Teachers, teaching assistants and learning mentors know the pupils well. Pupils are confident about approaching adults to sort out any problems they may have. The role of the learning mentor, supported by the headteacher and other staff, is particularly effective with older pupils in stopping incidents which happen outside school affecting behaviour in school. A few teaching assistants and learning mentors have more than one role in school. This gives concern to a small number of parents but does not affect pupils' positive response to these staff. Pupils feel that any reported incidents of bullying are 'sorted' by staff. Incidents of alleged bullying, the action taken and outcomes are being logged. The school takes swift action when there is aggressive behaviour between pupils but parents do not always appreciate what is done. The supervision of pupils at all times of day is effective in promoting good behaviour.
24. Parents are generally pleased with induction arrangements for new pupils. Older pupils are allowed time to visit the secondary school of their choice. Pupils with English as an additional language are supported well by bi-lingual teaching assistants. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. Traveller children appreciate the support they receive. However, there are no formal procedures for taking pupils' concerns into account on a regular basis and systems for identifying gifted and talented children are not in place.
25. The premises are safe and free from hazards. The general cleanliness of the building is good. This is different from the views of a small number of parents who feel the school is dirty. There has been an effective, planned improvement in the tidiness of the school. Teachers and support staff promote hygiene well as part of the curriculum. There are good arrangements for first-aid and the school cares sympathetically for sick children. The school secretary immediately informs parents in case of an emergency or if a pupil becomes ill whilst at school. Learning mentors supervise the children arriving or leaving the school and monitor punctuality

well. The school works closely with the educational welfare officer to positively promote better attendance. Sufficient numbers of staff provide good support during extra curriculum activities.

## **PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS, OTHER SCHOOLS AND THE COMMUNITY**

The school's links with parents, the local community and other schools and colleges are **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Parents feel that their children like school and make good progress.
- Most parents think that teaching is good.
- A significant minority are not happy with the way the school is run and that that the school does not respond to their concerns.

### **Commentary**

26. Many parents and carers expressed their views in various ways to the inspection team. There were very conflicting opinions expressed. However, nearly all parents, 92 per cent of those responding to the parental questionnaire, are clear that their children like to come to school. The majority, 83 per cent of the respondents, are happy with the quality of teaching. A significant minority of parents who attended the pre-inspection meeting expressed dissatisfaction with some important aspects of the school. There was an exceptionally large number of written responses to parents' questionnaires stating that the school was not being well run, that the respondents feel excluded from school life and are uncomfortable approaching the school with their concerns. These same respondents, in their response to the 'tick boxes' in the questionnaire, gave a collective opinion that their children enjoyed school, were making good progress and that teaching is good. Most pupils expressed positive views of the school, being full of praise for their teachers and the support staff. However, they would like better transition arrangements in their move to secondary school.
27. There are opportunities for parents to meet teachers, which parents appreciate. Parents are invited to activities provided by the school, including assemblies and the opportunity to discuss their children's progress. Those attending appreciate these activities. They receive regular newsletters but several parents are concerned that they do not always see them. Pupils' annual progress reports provide parents with satisfactory information about how their children are getting on but do not sufficiently state what is needed to improve standards. Several parents and carers are very keen to help children at home. Those who attended, appreciated an event the school put on for parents to help their children with numeracy. Due to lack of interest, a literacy course was dropped. Parents provide very limited support in class and for after-school activities.
28. Parents of children identified as having special educational needs and those with English as additional language are informed regularly about their children's progress, and they are given information on how they can help at home. Parents are invited to review meetings; some attend these meetings regularly and this contributes to improving pupils learning. Parents who work in the travelling fairground are pleased with the support the school gives to their children. The school has successful links with education welfare services. This has led to improvement in pupils' attendance.
29. There are particularly beneficial links with one local primary school which has helped to strengthen the management of subjects and improve sporting activities for pupils. Links with the police contribute to pupils' well-being and awareness of the wider community. Pupils' visit the local church, but input from the church seems less than one would expect in a denominational school. Pupils are benefiting from a local initiative to promote their involvement in playing football. The school has recently benefited from the donation of play equipment and training for staff from an international sporting goods company.



## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The overall leadership and management of the school are both **satisfactory**. The leadership of the headteacher is **good**, and her management is **satisfactory**. The leadership of the senior management team and subject co-ordinators is **satisfactory**. Governance is **good**. The effectiveness of school management is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher has a very clear vision of how the school should develop.
- All pupils are included well in all aspects of school life.
- The headteacher is steadfast in her determination to improve all aspects of the school's work.
- The school's strengthened management team has led to an increased pace of change.
- Governors have a very clear idea of the school's strengths and weaknesses.
- Communication and organisation of paperwork within the school are not always as clear as they should be.

### Commentary

30. The headteacher has high expectations for the school's further development, and the school's new vision statement, which was agreed with the staff, makes these expectations clear. The headteacher is passionate in her belief that all pupils deserve the best the school can offer. In the three years since the headteacher has been in post she has had to overcome many obstacles to school improvement, most notably a high staff turnover and lack of an established senior management team for the first two years. In addition the existing school culture was one of some resistance to change, which made new approaches to school management difficult at times. Since September, 2003 the effects of the headteacher's leadership have accelerated considerably, due to a strengthened senior management team. The headteacher is given very good support by the deputy headteacher, and they work together in good partnership to provide a united approach to management and school improvement.
31. School development plans are used effectively to plan staff development. In this the school is very well supported by the local education authority. The senior management team, which now has clearly defined roles, manages this process well. Teaching is monitored regularly by all senior managers to ensure that agreed approaches are being followed through in lessons. Where this has not happened the headteacher has not been afraid to grasp the nettle and make her expectations completely clear. As a result, teaching is now good, overall. Co-ordination of English and mathematics is good but co-ordination for other subjects, whilst satisfactory, is at an early stage and there is limited monitoring of teaching. Data on pupils' progress and other information are sometimes difficult to find and analyse, which puts additional demands on time and effort.
32. The school benefits from a well-informed, highly organised special needs co-ordinator who provides good leadership for staff. She has introduced a system of regular meetings between different support services. This good communication enables more effective support to be provided for the pupils. The school also receives very good support from the local education authority. Pupils with special education needs, traveller pupils and those for whom English is an additional language all benefit from being taught by specialist teachers.
33. The headteacher and staff have worked hard to improve the pupils' behaviour and attitudes to school and to promote good achievement. To do this she has had to take an assertive stance; behaviour is now good, and achievement is improving. Positive action has sometimes resulted in resentment by some parents and this is proving difficult to overcome. The school is right in wanting to improve parental involvement in its work, although this is not part of the current school development plan. A newly appointed co-ordinator for communication with parents is a step in the right direction to address this problem.

34. Recently the pressures of high staff turnover have been lessened. Newly appointed teachers were attracted to the school by its calm working atmosphere and its evident push to improve. Arrangements to settle new teachers into their posts are good, although informal. The tensions apparent in minutes of past staff meetings are rapidly becoming a thing of the past. However, communications within school about management decisions are not always as clear as they should be and this leads to occasional misunderstandings.
35. The governing body has undergone training in the last year, which has given them the tools to become much more closely involved in strategic planning. They have risen to the headteacher's request to challenge her professionally and are beginning to ask searching questions so that they can support the school better and make a real contribution to its improvement. Their financial management is good and this has kept the school with a modest positive budget.

**Financial information**

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

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	682,390	Balance from previous year	33,009
Total expenditure	696,262	Balance carried forward to the next	19,137
Expenditure per pupil	3,312		

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

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

Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is **good**.

36. There has been good improvement in recent years and the Foundation Stage is now one of the strengths of the school. Children enter the nursery during the autumn term, so that even the youngest have maximum time there. There is a wide spread of attainment but overall attainment on entry is very low. A very high proportion of pupils speak no English or have very restricted language skills. In addition, most pupils have very limited early experiences of the world around them. The introduction to the nursery is very good, so that the children quickly settle and become confident away from their homes. Children are well prepared for their move from the nursery to the reception class. In both classes, relationships with parents are very good.
37. Throughout the Foundation Stage, consistently good teaching and assessment promote good achievement in all areas of learning. By the time the children leave the reception class standards have risen but are well below average. The good quality curriculum is varied and relevant, meeting children's needs well and helping them to become interested in learning.
38. Although the Foundation Stage co-ordinator has only been in post five weeks, all staff are working very well as a team. Staff have a very firmly shared philosophy of early childhood education and imaginative, but workable, plans for further development. Leadership and management are satisfactory and strengthening. Accommodation and resources are satisfactory. The teaching area for the reception class is rather cramped for imaginative play but is managed well.

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

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

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

- Adults provide very good role models of caring and considerate behaviour.
  - Children are given choices in many activities to help them learn to play and become more independent.
39. The development of this area of learning has a very high priority, and staff plan very skilfully to give the children stimulating experiences to help them develop concentration skills and to play together amicably. Standards are well below those expected because most children are passive learners and some are only beginning to realise that they have an active part to play in their learning at the end of the reception year. Staff work very hard to reinforce good learning attitudes. The children try hard to tidy up after activities. Children are confident in school and join in activities happily and willingly, making choices confidently. Lack of experiences outside school and limited language skills prevent many from playing co-operatively. A wide variety of activities are planned to develop increasing co-operation in games and small group activities. Good teaching leads to good achievement.

### **COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY**

Provision in communication, language and literacy is **good**.

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

- Staff take many planned and incidental opportunities to develop the children's language skills.
- Adults model speaking skills well.

- Singing is used effectively to build up the rhythms of language.

### **Commentary**

40. Good teaching enables the children to make steady and consistent gains in their understanding and use of language. By the time they enter Year 1 most children answer in single words and short phrases and several are beginning to offer more lengthy, structured responses. Very good relationships give the pupils increasing confidence to respond as they move through the Foundation Stage. In the nursery, children make good attempts to trace their names and some copy them. Most 'writing' is at the mark-making stage and children confidently make marks on paper. Staff make these into the children's own books, of which they are proud. Nursery children have a very limited vocabulary to discuss stories and books and have limited interest in them. They do not identify rhymes or repeat sounds in story.
41. Teaching in the reception class is increasingly more formally structured, building on the previous good achievement. Many children are beginning to write independently with clear meaning. Higher attaining pupils write one or more sentences independently with correct punctuation, using phonic skills and knowledge of key words correctly. Adults constantly emphasise letter sounds in their teaching. A few children recognise some familiar words in their reading books and know the letter sounds well. Most children are beginning to handle books correctly and turn the pages in order. They tell a story in a limited way, using the pictures, although these are not always connected. Children enjoy stories read to them and have a great attachment to *The Owl Babies*, which stimulates an enthusiasm for reading very successfully. A very small number of children are working beyond expectations, but generally standards are well below expectations.

## **MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Practical activities support effective learning.
- Play is used successfully to teach children to count and use mathematical language.

### **Commentary**

42. Teaching is good and the children achieve well throughout the Foundation Stage. Nursery staff plan activities that involve the children counting and adding in real situations. Small group teaching reinforces early mathematical ideas effectively and many children count small groups of objects with increasing accuracy. They do not use mathematical language spontaneously, though, and staff work hard to develop this area. The children slowly begin to recognise colour and shape and through sand and water play begin to extend ideas of full and empty.
43. In the reception class the emphasis on counting in everyday situations and mathematical language is maintained. More formal class and group sessions provide the children with learning well matched to their individual needs. Children gradually become more skilled at matching and sorting and talk more about the reasons for what they have done. They become more consistently successful in recognising numbers to ten. A few pupils correctly add two numbers with a total of less than ten and subtract with a total of less than six. To be successful they require, and get, a lot of support and guidance. The children's very limited vocabulary makes their use of mathematical language well below average. Standards across the mathematics area of learning are well below expectations at the end of the reception year.

## KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Staff provide a wide range of enjoyable experiences that give the children increasing experiences of their own world.
- Children have good access to tools and resources.

### Commentary

44. Teaching and learning are good in both classes. Permanent home corners and other creative play areas, such as the nursery 'baby clinic', offer many chances for the children to explore their own experiences and routines. 'Chad's Cosy Cafe' in the reception class extends these experiences to help the children make sense of the wider community. The school's Catholic mission is evident in the emphasis given to how each child is special to different people and to God. Reception children respond positively to this and were impressive in the confident way they presented a class assembly to the whole school on the theme of 'I am special'.
45. Nursery activities are planned to help the children understand the immediate world around them. In the reception class this is developed effectively and activities and talk takes ideas deeper. The 'finding out' table offers stimulating equipment to engage the children's curiosity and they begin, for example, to talk about what they see when they look down either end of the binoculars. Standards are well below expectations as most pupils do not explore and investigate without a great deal of support and encouragement.

## PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children are taught to use tools correctly and safely.
- Many activities are planned to develop the children's physical control and co-ordination.

### Commentary

46. Teaching is good and helps the children to achieve well throughout the Foundation Stage. Standards are well below expectations by the time the children transfer to Year 1. When the children first enter the nursery many are reckless in their play. They cycle fast on their tricycles with little regard to where they are going and launch themselves off high platforms. They enjoy this greatly but are largely unaware of the consequences of their activity. Through well structured physical activities children gradually learn to move and play with increasing physical control and awareness of others. Throwing and catching skills are not well developed, as many children are unaware of the need to think about what they are doing. Staff play games with children to help them to take turns and to concentrate. Staff have very good awareness of health and safety issues so that the children in their care learn in a safe and caring environment.

## CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Staff play alongside children to help them develop imaginative play.
- A wide, and changing range of activities is always available to stimulate the children's creativity and imagination.

## Commentary

47. Children respond positively to the many opportunities given to explore colour, shape and texture. Free access to well resourced activity areas in the nursery enable the children to explore materials, although few experiment as much is still unfamiliar to them. The reception class is not as well resourced, but staff make the best use of what is available. By the end of the Foundation Stage some children are beginning to explore materials independently. Much of children's creative play is rather aimless at the beginning, but good teaching and role modelling helps the children to slowly develop their own very basic stories through play. Music is used well to promote enjoyment in learning and good co-operation in playing instruments. Good teaching ensures that all children achieve well. Standards at the end of the Foundation Stage are well below expectations.

## SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

### ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in speaking and listening are below average in Years 1 to 6.
- There are not enough fiction books in the school.
- Standards in writing are improving throughout the school.
- Pupils achieve well in all years, because of good teaching.
- There is a full and accurate overview of provision in the subject.
- There are insufficient opportunities for pupils to use writing, reading and talking in other subjects.

## Commentary

48. Results in the 2003 National Curriculum tests for seven-year-olds were below average in reading and very low in writing when compared with all schools. In comparison with similar school, results in reading were above average but well below in writing. At the higher Level 3, results in reading were well above similar schools and average in writing. In the National Curriculum tests for 11-year-olds in 2003, results were very low compared with the national average and in similar schools. Only a very small proportion attained the higher Level 5. Over the last few years, results for reading has been improving for seven-year-olds but writing has been declining. The results for 11-year-olds were improving until 2003 when they dropped dramatically, particularly for boys. The attainment of the 60 per cent of pupils who were in the school from Year 3 till Year 6, however, was average, compared with pupils in similar schools. Results of recent assessments in Year 2 and Year 6 indicate pupils perform worse in tests than when they are doing ordinary classwork, in a familiar and well supported environment. Achievement across the school is good. Pupils with learning difficulties make good progress and the difference in attainment between boys and girls is broadly similar to that found nationally. Pupils from ethnic minorities and those who speak English as an additional language also achieve well.
49. The inspection found standards writing in Year 2 to be above average and in Year 6 average. This is a significant improvement in comparison with previous National Curriculum tests results. The improved standards are due to the school's efforts to raise attainment in writing across the school and this has been particularly effective in Year 2. This has been an improvement in the provision of good extension activities for more able pupils and effective support is provided for those pupils who find writing difficult. In Year 2, pupils place events in their correct sequence and write them as clear, recognisable sentences with capital letters and full stops. By Year 6, pupils write stories, letters and reports and many organise their work into paragraphs. A good range of writing activities is planned but little evidence was seen of extended writing or writing in other subjects.

50. Overall, standards in speaking and listening are below average. The school's assessment data shows that this is an improvement on the previous year. The school is beginning to successfully address this key issue from the previous inspection but appreciate there is still scope for further improvement. Several examples were seen of pupils expressing themselves articulately and confidently but too few opportunities are provided in lessons for pupils to practise their speaking and listening skills. In subjects across the curriculum teachers raise responses from pupils by asking relevant questions but do not always put the speaker in the best position or sufficiently establish listening strategies with the rest of the class.
51. Standards of reading are in line with the national average in both Year 2 and Year 6. This is an improving picture. More pupils are achieving the expected level in Year 2 but fewer are achieving the higher level. The school places a lot of emphasis on establishing secure reading skills through Literacy Hour activities by teaching the various letter sounds and blends and by regularly hearing pupils read. Pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language receive good support with this work and as a result of this, they make good progress. By Year 6, pupils have developed healthy attitudes towards reading and regularly read books at home. Pupils can discuss their reading preferences and have good skills for finding information from factual books. The school has worked successfully to promote pupils' information-finding skills by recently improving the stock of non-fiction books and making an improved library area to house them. However, there are not enough storybooks for pupils. This is having a negative impact on the pupils' reading abilities as there is not enough book stock for pupils to choose from so pupils are not always reading books at the right level. This is particularly affecting boys, pupils who speak English as an additional language and pupils who are reluctant readers.
52. Overall, the quality of teaching is good, and has had the positive effect of raising standards. Teachers have good subject knowledge which helps them to plan work that is interesting and challenging. Activities are well matched to the individual needs and abilities of pupils so that they are motivated to work hard and to achieve well. Most pupils were able to tackle this work. Pupils with learning difficulties are given good, specialist support which enables them to participate in lessons and achieve well.
53. The school assesses pupils regularly as they move through the school and uses the information well to identify pupils who may be underachieving. This is paying dividends and is helping to raise standards. Pupils were not always aware of their targets but teachers' marking of their work indicates how they could improve.
54. Leadership and management in the subject are good. There is a whole school vision for improving standards in English. Through systematic observation of teaching and analysis of pupils' standards, areas of weakness are identified and strategies for improvement prioritised. The success of the push to improve writing has come about with the joint support of fully committed teaching and teaching assistants. They have established a collective sense of purpose, which has brought about an upward trend in standards and created a solid platform for further improvement. Overall improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory.

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

55. The use of language and literacy across the curriculum is unsatisfactory, especially in speaking and listening skills. A frequent feature in lessons is pupils having brief discussion in pairs. This helps with pupils' understanding, speaking and listening. Too many opportunities are not taken advantage of in whole class situations to develop pupils' speaking and listening skills. There are a few examples of good practice in writing such as in mathematics where pupils write problems in mathematics notation and then a corresponding sentence in words. In science pupils write at length on issues such as healthy foods. Other than this there is little planned use of writing, reading and talking across the curriculum.

## MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils make good progress but standards are below average.
- Teachers are enthusiastic about mathematics and they organise activities to which the pupils respond well.
- Pupils appreciate being told what they need to do to improve.
- The application of mathematics in other subjects is unsatisfactory.
- Pupils are encouraged to think about the strategies they use to solve problems.
- Assessment is used well to raise standards.
- The subject is being developed logically and purposefully.

### Commentary

56. Across the school pupils' achievement is good. Inspection evidence found pupils' standard of attainment to be below average in Year 2. As these pupils started in Year 1 with well below average standards, they have achieved well. Considering performance in the National Curriculum tests in mathematics for seven-year-olds, a comparison of average points scored shows pupils have been performing better than other schools with a similar free school meals entitlement but generally below all schools. Results show that the school has been successful in providing for more able pupils.
57. The standard of pupils' mathematics in Year 6 was found to be below average. When this group of pupils was tested in Year 2 their standards were found to be average. Because of pupils' high mobility a straightforward comparison between the Year 2 and Year 6 performance is not valid. Results in the 2003 National Curriculum tests for 11-year-olds gave pupils performance in mathematics as very low. In the Year 6 of 2003 only 60 per cent of pupils had been in the school throughout Years 3 to 6. Analysis of the results of this 60 per cent of pupils shows they obtained results which were better than similar schools and below average in comparison with all schools. Inspection evidence finds pupils in Year 6 have made good progress and achieved well. The schools' assessment systems show progress has been accelerating in the last two years.
58. Teaching is good throughout the school. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and standards of presentation of work. Because of this, pupils have positive attitudes to their work. Teachers have to work hard and apply consistent strategies to stimulate and maintain pupils' interest and attention but pupils respond positively and know what is expected of them. There has been a successful drive to improve and standardise the presentation of pupils' work. This makes it easier to follow pupils' progress easier. From Year 1 onwards, good emphasis is placed on pupils using thinking strategies to solve problems. On several occasions, opportunities are lost for individual pupils to state their thoughts to the class and for the class to listen carefully. In all lessons, teachers state what it is hoped pupils will know at the end of the lesson (the learning objectives). Pupils find this helps them to know what to do. Pupils also know about learning objectives for the group or class which are either displayed in the classroom or fixed in their books. Whilst these arrangements stimulate learning, the objectives for groups tend to be either very broad or difficult for pupils to understand because of the demanding language used.
59. Teachers are enthusiastic about the subject and this rubs off on the pupils. This is shown in several short mental mathematics sessions when pupils get very involved in the challenges given to them and are keen to answer quickly. The quality of marking is generally good. Teachers write helpful comments which direct pupils on how to improve. Pupils respond positively. There are good arrangements to assess pupils, record the outcomes of assessment and use this information to raise standards for groups and individuals. This



results in specific support, provided in the mainstream class or in groups set up for the purpose. Teaching assistants play a vital role for these pupils. The overall use of assessment to raise standards is good.

60. Leadership and management of the subject are good. There is a good awareness of what needs to be done to improve provision through observing classes at work and good use of assessment outcomes. One particular outcome of this was to improve pupils' use of measurement across the school. A display of photographs of pupils at work in a classroom shows this has been carried out well. Display in all classrooms effectively supports learning in the subject. The management of the subject has appreciably benefited from links with a nearby primary school. Current standards are not as good as those reported in the last inspection. Since that time the profile of pupils has changed, with the percentage of pupils on the special educational needs register having increased significantly. The reported deficiencies in teaching no longer exist. Progress since the last inspection has been satisfactory.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

61. The provision for mathematics across the curriculum is unsatisfactory. The use of data in tables and graphs is seen to a limited extent in science and geography but is generally lacking across the school. There is little evidence of the use of careful measuring in design and technology

### **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

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

- Standards have improved recently.
- Investigative work is now a more regular part of science lessons.
- Assessment of pupils' work is not thorough enough.
- Too much work is copied from the board.

#### **Commentary**

62. The end of Year 2 teacher assessments for 2003 showed that standards were well below the national average, and that no pupils attained the higher level. There has been good improvement this year as the inspection found standards to be below the national average. The number of pupils attaining the higher Level 3 is similar to that expected nationally. The National Curriculum tests for 11-year-olds in 2003 showed that standards at the end of Year 6 were very low, in the bottom five per cent nationally and also when compared with similar schools. No pupils attained at the higher level. There has been modest improvement in 2004 so the inspection found standards to be well below the national average. A small number of pupils are attaining at the higher Level 5. Girls tend to do better than boys, as they listen closely to the teacher and follow instructions carefully, while the boys prefer to get straight on with the activity. The improvement in standards is largely due to a whole school push to change the emphasis on how science is taught. An intensive period of professional development has given teachers the increased knowledge and confidence to plan and to teach more investigative work. This has resulted in pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding are now developing in a more structured way. Pupils' achievement is good in Year 2 and satisfactory in Year 6.
63. Teaching and learning are satisfactory, overall. They are good in Year 2. Teachers plan their lessons thoroughly and give enough time for pupils to explore and experiment with new ideas, such as the link between vibration and sound. They plan for all groups of pupils to be involved and for lower ability pupils, and those still acquiring English skills, to be given extra help so that they achieve as well as pupils in other groups. In Year 2, a wider variety of approaches give pupils every chance to show what they know and understand, so that achievement is good. Teaching takes good account of the abilities of all groups. This leads to higher attaining pupils

using science vocabulary well to describe more complex science ideas, such as friction *'like when a slide is dry'*, and to make more generalised statements, as when they link animals to different habitats. The teacher's marking asks questions to extend the pupils science thinking, which contributes to good quality learning. In discussion it is evident that pupils in Year 2 have a clear idea of how well they are doing, and how they can improve. In the other classes, teaching shows a satisfactory mix of teacher directed work and pupils' own investigation. Whilst pupils have good knowledge in some areas, such as electrical circuits and ways of separating mixtures, it is limited in others. Pupils in Year 6 generally have a limited understanding of planning a fair test. They neither offer reasons for their predictions nor carry out careful measuring of observations or draw conclusions from their results. Although pupils record their work in their own words and diagrams, too much work is copied from the blackboard. This limits higher attainment and makes learning and achievement satisfactory. Marking is inconsistent, often offering supportive comments without suggesting improvements and regular assessments of pupils' progress is unsatisfactory.

64. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The co-ordinator has supported staff well in giving investigative work a higher profile. Science has not been a main priority in school development and he has not monitored teaching or pupils' progress. However, there are accurate targets for future action and a good quality development plan so that the subject is well placed for future development when science is a school priority. Improvement since the previous inspection is satisfactory, although the use of ICT in promoting science learning is still unsatisfactory.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

Provision in information and communication technology is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Significant parts of the National Curriculum are not being taught in Years 3 to 6.
- Rapid progress is being made in the development of the subject across the school.
- The quality of learning resources has been improved considerably in recent times.
- Information and communication technology is not used sufficiently to support learning across the curriculum.

### **Commentary**

65. By the end of Year 2 standards are in line with expectations but they are below average by the end of Year 6. This is much the same findings as in the inspection of six years ago but the curriculum expectations of the subject have significantly increased since then. Achievement is satisfactory across the school.
66. The requirements of the National Curriculum are not being met in Year 6. This is because the pupils have not been taught the use of a computer to control events, the measurement of physical data such as temperature, organising text and have very limited understanding of the use of ICT for communication. The rapid rise in standards is seen in the work of the current Year 5. They have successfully produced several graphs, carried out complex searches of data bases, used logo programs and written programs to control sequences for lights.
67. The quality of teaching in the subject is satisfactory. The school has systematically developed teachers' confidence and skills in the subject through relevant professional development. Lessons are carefully planned. The restricted space in the ICT suite makes whole class teaching difficult but staff cope well. Opportunities for speaking and listening are not used well and, at times, the purpose of the lesson is not made clear soon enough for pupils to get maximum benefit from their computer time. The use of a projector to see what is displayed on a small computer screen is effective. Teaching assistants give valuable support in helping pupils overcome difficulties.

68. Leadership and management of the subject are good. The governors made a bold move in reducing the size of a large classroom to make a smaller classroom and an ICT suite. There is a sufficient number of computers in the suite so that pupils work in pairs or singly on the machine. There is, though, little ventilation in the room which soon gets hot and creates lethargy in pupils. There is a timetable for use of the room but there is a significant amount of time when it is not used. Whilst these significant improvements have been made, there remains a shortage of hardware and software to teach the whole of National Curriculum requirements and to make more effective use of ICT across the curriculum. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory but developments in the last two years have been rapid. The co-ordinator is very well qualified, has a very clear view for the development of the subject and presents a good role model in the ICT work done in her class.

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

69. The use of ICT across the curriculum is unsatisfactory. Across the school there is limited use of word processing, graphics and supporting understanding in mathematics. Information and communication technology is used to produce interesting graphs and charts relating to the use of water and pulse rates but this is limited to one class only.

### **HUMANITIES**

70. Insufficient evidence was available to support overall judgements on provision in history and geography. One lesson was seen in history and one in geography. Work in pupils' books was also examined. The work sampled from pupils in Years 1 and 2 was of a broadly average standard, as was the history work from pupils in Years 3 to 6. However, the geography work sampled from pupils in Years 3 to 6 was unsatisfactory.
71. In **history**, pupils in Year 2 satisfactorily study the Great Fire of London and correctly identify the main cause and effects. Pupils in Year 6 study the twentieth century and use photographs as a way of finding information about how people lived and place them in correct date order on a time line.
72. In **geography**, pupils in Year 3 develop their knowledge of the world through map work. Pupils in Year 2 have compared their locality with another but could not describe what they had done. Pupils in Year 6 have studied mountains and the rain cycle and were able to name various mountain ranges but were not able to say accurately in what part of the world they are.
73. The quality of teaching observed was satisfactory in both lessons observed. The teacher made good use of a world map in the geography lesson to help pupils develop their knowledge of the locations of other countries. In the history lesson, visitors came in to explain to pupils what life was like during the 1940's-1980's. Pupils enjoyed this lesson but they did not sufficiently develop their research skills in a structured manner.
74. History and geography are taught as separate subjects, in alternate half terms, using nationally agreed schemes of work. All areas of the curriculum are planned for but in geography in Years 3 to 6 there is not enough work recorded in their books to give the pupils and their teachers a good idea of the progress they are making.

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

#### **Art and design, design and technology, music and physical education**

75. These subjects were sampled. No lessons were seen in art and design. Two lessons were seen in each of design and technology, music and physical education.
76. **Art and design** work on display around the school indicates that standards match national expectations at both key stages. Self-portraits painted by all pupils from the Nursery to Year 6

show that the pupils make satisfactory progress, both in their drawing and painting skills and in the detail of their observations. Art is used successfully to add interest to other subjects, such as Tudor portraits and seaside collages. Work done in Art Week, with a visiting teacher is of better quality, shows greater imagination and flair and a more confident use of materials. There are few pictures around the school by famous artists from different periods, cultures and styles to stimulate the pupils' interest and the range of media offered in lessons is limited.

77. In both **design and technology** lessons the teachers were very vigilant over health and safety matters and ensured the pupils handled materials safely and hygienically. In the lesson seen in Year 2, standards matched expectations. The purpose of the lesson was explained clearly so that pupils knew what was expected of them. Teaching assistants were used purposefully so that the pupils remained interested throughout. As a result, pupils enjoyed cutting and sticking their fabric to make snakes or giraffes. Standards in the Year 4 lesson, comparing the texture, smell and taste of different sandwiches, were below expectations. Although the lesson was well organised and interesting, pupils' restricted language for describing their observations prevented them from better attainment. In addition, many children have limited life experiences, and several did not know what lettuce was. Teachers' planning at Key Stage 2 shows that work is often correctly targeted at a lower level because pupils are not ready to move on more quickly.
78. Standards in the two **music** lessons were satisfactory. These lessons were for the Year 5 class followed by Year 6. Good planning between the two teachers led to efficient use of the satisfactory range of tuned and untuned percussion. During both these lessons, pupils' achievement was satisfactory in their understanding and performance of tempo and dynamics. In both lessons, the teachers were making use of the guidance they had received from the music service. This input to teachers' professional development is having a significant, positive effect on provision in music. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour in Year 6 were very good and they lost little time in using the instruments and following the teachers' instruction. Time was lost because of technical problems in playing recorded music and the teacher's initial lack of clarity in describing the different types of instrument to the class. The Year 5 pupils were over-eager to use the instruments and several were reluctant to follow the teachers' reasonable requests. Through the teacher's great patience and consistent use of good strategies the lesson plan was carried out and pupils made satisfactory progress. Whilst there was no evidence seen of pupils composing and using musical notation, these activities are in the teacher's plans. Pupils frequently enjoy singing as a whole school in assemblies. They draw on a repertoire from several cultures. They sing tunefully but lack expression. With help, older pupils are starting to maintain group parts when they sing rounds.
79. Both lessons seen in **physical education** were dance. In the Year 3 lesson seen standards were well below expectations as physical education has not been a regular part of that class's timetable. Pupils' movement showed little variety of skills or ideas and they were very self-conscious about moving. The supply teacher worked very hard to motivate the pupils, giving praise and encouragement and demonstrating what she expected, so that as the lesson progressed they began to do better. In the lesson seen in Year 6 standards matched expectations. The pupils enjoyed the lesson and behaved very well as they were familiar with the theme of the lesson and the teacher set the scene, coal mining, well. The quality of their movements improved in response to the teacher's accurate evaluations of how well they were doing. Pupils have regular swimming lessons for three terms spanning Years 3 and 4. The majority of pupils achieve their 25 metre certificate by the end of this period. Although the school has no large grassed space for athletics or some sporting activities it uses its good links with other schools to provide a good range of outdoor activities, such as orienteering and a mini Olympics.

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

80. Although there is no overall curriculum plan or co-ordinator for this subject, the school provides a satisfactory range of opportunities for pupils to develop their personal, social and health education. Through structured class discussions, known as circle time, pupils learn about the importance of tolerance and respect for others. Relationships amongst adults and pupils are good. Pupils appreciate the need for rules and codes of conduct in a community.
  
81. Educational and residential visits enhance pupils' social and personal development. Pupils have a good understanding about the importance of looking after themselves. Years 1 and 2 pupils know how people grow and understand the importance of eating a balanced diet. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 take part in a good range of health and safety projects, including drug education. Many of these activities are organised by the local community police officer. These arrangements help pupils develop their thinking skills and to make independent decisions.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Inspection judgement	Grade
<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>4</b>
How inclusive the school is	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	4
Value for money provided by the school	4
<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>5</b>
Pupils' achievement	4
<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>	<b>3</b>
Attendance	5
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>	<b>4</b>
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	5
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	4
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	4
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	4
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	4
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	4
The quality of the school's links with the community	4
The school's links with other schools and colleges	4
<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>4</b>
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	4
The effectiveness of management	4

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

