

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST C.E. (AIDED) PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Leicester

LEA area: Leicester

Unique reference number: 120230

Headteacher: Mr. D. R. Dunmore

Lead inspector: Mr. C.D. Loizou

Dates of inspection: 17 – 20 May 2004

Inspection number: 257704

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:	4 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	450
School address:	East Avenue Leicester Leicestershire
Postcode:	LE2 1TE
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E-mail address:	LMawer@st-john.leicester.sch.uk
Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Dr. W.J. Kirkham
Date of previous inspection:	1 June, 1998

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

St. John the Baptist Church of England (Voluntary Aided) Primary School is well above average in size, with 450 pupils on roll. It is a popular school that admits up to 68 four-year-old children into its Reception classes each September. The children's attainment on entry to the school varies but is average overall. Although many pupils live nearby, a significant number travel to school using the school bus or are brought to school by car. The number of pupils leaving or joining the school at times other than the usual time of admission or transfer is low compared with most schools. However, a significant proportion (one third) of pupils leave the school at the end of Year 5 because their families chose junior high schools (10-14 years), selective or private education. The majority of pupils are of British white heritage though approximately one in four are of mixed or minority ethnic community heritage. The largest group is of Indian descent, with smaller numbers of Caribbean, Pakistani and Chinese origin. An increasing proportion (currently one third) of the children joining the school in Reception speak English as an additional language. Across the school, one in ten pupils speak English as an additional language and a third of these are in the early stages of English language acquisition. In Years 3 to 6, nearly all of the pupils speak English as their main language and a very small number are in the early stages of English language acquisition. Five per cent of pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is below average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is below average (14 per cent) and two per cent of the pupils have a Statement of Special Educational Need, which is average.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
18645	Charalambos Loizou	Lead inspector	English as an additional language; Mathematics; Information and communication technology; Music; Physical education
13526	Richard Barnard	Lay inspector	
20798	John Marlow	Team inspector	Special educational needs; English; Geography; History
30398	Chris Scola	Team inspector	Foundation Stage; Science; Art and design; Design and technology

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

The school provides a very good education and has many outstanding features. Teachers and support staff are highly committed to the needs of all the pupils. Consequently, the pupils achieve very well because of very good teaching. Standards are continuing to rise because the leadership and management of the school are excellent. The school makes very efficient use of its resources and funds and provides excellent value for money.

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

- Standards are well above average and the pupils achieve very well because the teaching and support provided by teachers and learning assistants are consistently very effective
- The headteacher, assistant headteachers and governors provide excellent leadership and management, foster strong teamwork and set high expectations
- Learning is made interesting and fun because the staff provide a very good curriculum, enriched by music, the creative and expressive arts, sports and a wide range of other extra-curricular activities
- The pupils with special educational needs are provided with highly effective support and achieve very well, as do those who are learning English as an additional language
- The provision made for pupils in the Foundation Stage (Reception year) is excellent
- Parents think highly of the school; there are very good links with them and with other schools and agencies
- The school provides excellent provision for the pupils' personal development

The school has made very good improvement since its last inspection in 1998 and has successfully addressed the three issues it faced. Standards have improved well and, in particular, the achievement of more able pupils has improved very well. Homework is now much more consistent across the school with very good support and approval from parents. The information and communication technology curriculum and staff training have improved and so standards are now well above average as a result.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

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

The attainment on entry to the Reception classes is average overall; this takes account of one in three children who now join the school learning English as an additional language. By the end of the Reception year children exceed the early learning goals expected for their age in all areas of learning, making very good progress and achieving very well. The **pupils achieve very well in Years 1 to 6**, attaining well above average standards by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 in nearly all subjects. In the 2003 end of Year 2 national tests, the pupils attained well above average standards which signifies very good progress in relation to their attainment when they first started school. The Year 6 national tests last year confirmed that the pupils continue to achieve very well as standards were well above average in English and above average in mathematics and science. The comparison with similar schools does not account for the significant number (a third) of higher attaining pupils who left the school at the end of Year 5 to join junior high, selective or independent schools. Inspection evidence

shows that standards by Year 5 are very high so the school has done very well to maintain well above average standards by the end of Year 6.

The end of Year 2 results last year show that teacher assessments in science were too severe; inspection evidence indicates that standards in science are also well above average. Inspectors found that standards in Year 2 and Year 6 are currently well above those expected in all subjects except in geography and history where standards are above average.

The pupils have excellent attitudes to learning. They are very well behaved, polite and courteous to each other and relationships are excellent throughout the school. Attendance and punctuality are very good. **The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils is excellent.** There are excellent opportunities for the pupils to show respect for other cultures and races and to demonstrate care for each other.

### **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The quality of education is very good. The quality of teaching across the school is very good.** Pupils use literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology skills very well in other subjects. Highly competent staff support pupils with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language very well. Learning is very good overall because teachers plan work that is based on systematic assessments. Information and communication technology is very well used to support teaching and learning.

The curriculum provides very good opportunities for learning throughout the school and it is excellent for children in the Reception year. Music, creative, expressive and performing arts and physical education are outstanding features of the school's overall curriculum. Consequently, learning is fun and supports pupils' learning in all subjects and this enhanced further by a very good range of extra-curricular activities.

### **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**The leadership of the school is excellent.** The headteacher and senior staff monitor lessons and teachers' planning rigorously. There is a highly effective commitment to the professional development of all staff and to embracing different learning styles to continually improve teaching, learning and the curriculum for all pupils. Governors are highly effective. They receive reports about the impact teaching is having, so have a clear understanding of what needs to be done to sustain improvement. **The management of the school is excellent.** The headteacher, staff and governors work well as a team under the strong leadership of the headteacher.

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

Most parents are very pleased with the school and think highly of it. Very good information is provided and very good procedures enable parents to help in school and at home with their children's learning. The headteacher and staff involve the pupils in decision making and the pupils enjoy taking responsibilities and caring for others.

### **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

The school has no major areas for improvement, as it is a very effective school. It should continue to implement its school improvement plan. Part of the school's plans is to improve the outdoor facilities for the Reception children and inspectors agree that this will further enhance what is already highly effective provision for the youngest children in the school.

## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

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

Standards are securely well above average in English, mathematics and science by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 and the pupils achieve very well throughout the school.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are well above national expectations in nearly all subjects and above average in geography and history
- The children in the Foundation Stage (Reception) achieve very well and this lays excellent foundations for their later learning
- The pupils with special educational needs make very good progress and are very well supported by highly skilled and well qualified teaching assistants
- The pupils learning English as an additional language make very good progress as the large majority exceed the standards expected for their age by the end of Year 2 and Year 6
- Standards in information and communication technology have improved very well since the last inspection and are now well above average

#### Commentary

1. Attainment on entry to the school is wide ranging and varies considerably from year to year largely because an increasing proportion of children joining the Reception year (currently one third) speak English as an additional language. Overall, attainment is broadly average. There is excellent provision for Reception children and this provides the children with an excellent start to their education. Most of the children exceed the learning goals in all areas of learning by the end of the Reception year.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	17.0 (17.5)	15.7 (15.8)
Writing	15.2 (14.8)	14.6 (14.4)
Mathematics	17.5 (17.0)	16.3 (16.5)

*There were 68 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	28.6 (28.0)	26.8 (27.0)
Mathematics	27.9 (27.7)	26.8 (26.7)
Science	29.9 (29.1)	28.6 (28.3)

*There were 55 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

2. The national tests results for Year 2 pupils in 2003 improved well compared with the previous year and were well above the national average in reading and mathematics and above average in writing. Year 2 teacher assessments in science in 2003 indicated average standards but assessments of the same pupils' work at the beginning of Year 3 showed that

many of them were exceeding the standards expected at the end of Year 2. The school recognises that teacher assessments appear to have been too cautious in science. Compared with similar schools, standards in reading were average, in mathematics above average and in writing well below average. Writing standards improved well on the previous year and current standards continue to show sustained improvement as the school has focused on this over the last year.

3. In the national tests in 2003 for Year 6 pupils, standards were well above average in English and above average in mathematics and science. Standards have also improved well but the results needed to be put into context. One third of pupils in Year 5 last year left to join junior high, selective or independent schools. The large majority of these pupils achieved high standards by the end of Year 5 in English, mathematics and science, confirmed by national assessments of the pupils before leaving the school. When compared with schools with a similar intake the results of tests by the end of Year 6 show average standards. However, outward mobility in Year 5 depresses these figures substantially. Taking account of Year 5 migration and the generally well above average standards in Year 2 and 6 pupils' achievement is very good overall.
4. The excellent leadership of the school has ensured that standards continue to rise and that teachers use assessment information to guide their planning. This has resulted in a consistent pattern of school improvement that has led to clear planning and targeted support for pupils of all abilities. The school is adapting its curriculum continually to take account of changing circumstances, for example, to meet the needs of the increasing number of pupils in Reception and Years 1 and 2 who speak English as an additional language. The recent focus on extended forms of independent writing in pupils' recorded work shows improved consistency.
5. A significant proportion of pupils with special educational needs reach the levels expected nationally for their age and, although some do not because of moderate learning difficulties, they make very good progress and achieve very well because they benefit from high quality classroom support provided by learning support assistants. Individual education plans are put together carefully by teachers, learning support assistants and the special educational needs co-ordinator to enable pupils to progress in small, well-defined stages, set against their individual learning targets. The pupils have clear targets in their individual education plans, with most having a specific focus on speaking and listening, literacy, numeracy, and personal and social development. Teaching and support staff use targets very effectively, particularly to promote improvements in reading, writing, number problems and positive behaviour.
6. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are improving rapidly and are currently well above those expected. This is a significant improvement on the position found during the last inspection when standards were average. The highly effective leadership and management of ICT are responsible for the improvement to the curriculum, staff training and resources that lie behind the improvement in standards.
7. Standards in other subjects are well above average except in geography and history where they are above average. The leadership and teaching of nearly all subjects is at least very good and this consistency has led to a sustained improvement in standards across the curriculum.

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

The pupils' excellent attitudes to school, very good behaviour and levels of attendance, supported by the excellent all round provision the school makes for their personal development have a very significant impact on their achievements. Standards have improved since the previous inspection.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Attitudes to learning are excellent
- A very positive approach to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development permeates school life
- Relationships and racial harmony are excellent and behaviour is very good
- Attendance levels and punctuality are very good

## Commentary

8. The pupils and their parents say how much they love their school. Evidence of this was seen in almost all lessons, in the excellent relationships throughout the school and in the pupils' very positive response to the wide range of activities provided. The pupils are happy and smiling as they come into school and as they leave for home. They bubble with enthusiasm about their learning, as when many show off the woodlice that they have brought in to school for their science lesson. A thirst for knowledge is shown from an early age, as when a pupil from Year 1 proudly shows a labelled drawing of Mount Everest to an inspector before school, showing excellent knowledge. Throughout the school the pupils' powers of concentration are excellent and they show an excellent interest in their work and try hard to please their teachers.
9. The school enhances the pupils' positive attitudes through the excellent provision made for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development that permeates the whole curriculum and life in school. This was shown when pupils in Years 3 to 6 visited the local church to attend an Ascension Day service. Confidence, self-esteem and an appreciation of music and drama were encouraged through the pupils' participation in music, telling Bible stories and reading prayers. Spiritual awareness was heightened when pupils reflected on what heaven is like. The excellent use of display throughout the school both encourages and celebrates the pupils' success and their appreciation of art and design, music, drama, sport and a wide range of religions and cultures. Pupils with special educational needs show very positive attitudes to their work in class and around school; they are particularly enthusiastic when completing practical tasks.
10. Relationships throughout the school are excellent; pupils co-operate very well with each other in pairs and groups but also display very good levels of independence and use their initiative well. They undertake a very good range of duties and responsibilities, such as looking after the office at lunchtime, with great enthusiasm and confidence. Pupils are very polite and well mannered but not shy; for example, they are friendly, chatty and confident when talking to visitors.
11. Behaviour in lessons, around the school and at playtimes is very good. This is helped by the very good supervision and extensive playground spaces. Pupils and the great majority of parents say there is no significant bullying, racist or sexist behaviour. The low number of temporary exclusions over the last two years confirms this. Pupils know right from wrong and what to do if minor squabbles or accidents happen. The consistent and positive approach to behaviour management from all members of staff and the quick, thorough, sensitive and effective treatment of potential issues ensures high standards. The use of praise and rewards has a very positive impact on pupils' behaviour and attitudes in almost all lessons. Racial harmony is excellent and all pupils and adults work and play together well. All pupils talk about how happy they are and how they really love school.

## Attendance

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

Authorised absence	
School data	4.3
National data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	
School data	0.0
National data	0.4

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

## Exclusions

### Ethnic background of pupils

### Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	226		
White – any other White background	10		
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	9		
Mixed – White and Black African	1		
Mixed – White and Asian	6		
Mixed – any other mixed background	8		
Asian or Asian British – Indian	58	1	
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	8		
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	7		
Black or Black British – Caribbean	22	2	
Black or Black British – African	8		
Black or Black British – any other Black background	4	1	
Chinese	9		
Any other ethnic group	1		
No ethnic group recorded	16		

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

12. Attendance levels have been consistently high over the last four years and in the current year are well above the national average. Punctuality is very good. Rates continue to be high because of the very high importance the school places on promoting attendance and the very thorough systems used to record and monitor it, as well as the importance the great majority of parents place on the regular and prompt attendance of their children.

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is very good.

### Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning and of the assessment of pupils' work is very good.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers set high expectations and tasks are well matched to the abilities of the pupils
- Very good teamwork results in a consistent and systematic approach across the school
- The use of assessment to inform teachers' planning is an excellent feature in the Foundation Stage
- Teachers use information and communication technology very well as a teaching aid
- Planning includes helping pupils to be aware of precise targets for their progress
- Classroom assistants make a very good contribution to pupils' learning

### Commentary

#### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 58 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
10 (17%)	33 (57%)	14 (24%)	1 (2%)			

The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons.

13. The headteacher and assistant headteachers have established a highly effective team approach across the school. The school has a well established teaching and learning policy which has resulted in a high degree of consistency in the quality of teaching across the whole school. Training and professional development has been highly innovative, for example, this is currently focused on different learning styles, so that teachers and support staff have a very good understanding of how pupils learn and what their specific needs are. Mind mapping, grouping by ability, collaborative learning and target setting are very well established learning styles and techniques adopted in most lessons; they have led to faster rates of learning and very good opportunities for pupils to work collaboratively and to learn from each other.
14. Teachers and support staff plan lessons that provide tasks that are very well matched to the needs and abilities of the pupils. The Foundation Stage staff work closely with those in Years 1 and 2, so the transition from the Reception year to Year 1 is very smooth. This team approach results in a high degree of consistency in teaching styles. The staff in each year group or team regularly discuss the pupil assessments to ensure that all of them are making enough progress. This is highly effective in the Foundation Stage where the staff regularly assess the children and make adjustments to their planning in order to best meet the specific needs of every child. In the rest of the school, the teaching is very well organised and managed by the senior management team. Important aspects of the school's determination to continue to raise standards in all subjects are the very effective support and professional development opportunities.
15. The teaching in the Foundation Stage (Reception) is very good and is having a positive impact on children's learning. The staff have an excellent understanding of how young children learn and they have high expectations. They teach basic communication skills extremely well and are very successful at improving the children's personal and social development. Teachers, nursery nurses and learning support assistants are clear about what they want the children to learn. For example, from the very start, the children soon learn to settle into school each morning. The children choose from a range of well prepared activities such as drawing and marking or writing. Activities are prepared for the children to choose that reinforce their communication and language skills, as when they share traditional and familiar stories and nursery rhymes. There are also good links to numeracy as some

groups count out places when sorting and matching coloured toys. Teachers and support staff sit with a group of children when they draw pictures and write about stories.

16. Teaching in Years 1 to 6 is very good overall with some excellent features, for example, when investigating texts in Year 6 to write complex sentences, or reinforcing number bonds in Year 2 through quick fire counting exercises. A significant amount of very good teaching was observed in every class. Literacy and numeracy skills are taught very effectively and the pupils read a range of texts with increasing accuracy and fluency. It is clear from pupils' books in all subjects that extended forms of writing are given high priority in most classes.
17. Assessment is used very well to inform teachers' planning. The consistency in teachers' marking reflects high expectations and learning targets are usually individual to the pupils and well linked to National Curriculum levels. In all subjects, assessments are regularly made of the pupils' progress and these are recorded with diligence and accuracy right across the school. Teachers monitor and track the progress of individual pupils accurately. Consequently, all subject co-ordinators have a very good grasp of standards in their subjects. They prepare action plans that take full account of relative weaknesses or that maximise learning opportunities for the pupils. Learning is made fun for all the pupils by teachers and support staff who show enthusiasm for teaching and enjoy helping the pupils to improve their learning and performance.
18. Teaching for pupils with special educational needs is very good. Teachers and learning support assistants are fully aware of the intellectual and emotional needs of the pupils. The individual requirements of the pupils are very well matched to the learning targets within their individual education plans. The school takes particular care in organising pupils' individual support in class lessons and outside the classroom, making sure that they are given equal access to all areas of the National Curriculum. The school has a team of highly skilled and motivated learning support assistants who work very closely with class teachers to motivate and sustain the interest of the pupils and provide a very high level of support. With the increasing number of pupils learning English as an additional language, the school has adapted its planning, particularly in the early years, to enable support staff to work alongside these pupils. Consequently, they achieve very well and soon learn to converse naturally in English, including those who start school in the early stages of English language acquisition.
19. The school provides very good opportunities to enhance the pupils' learning using information and communication technology (ICT). The pupils enjoy using computers and have regular access to the computer room. Consequently, basic skills are very well taught and are being sufficiently reinforced in other subjects. There are very good examples across the school of pupils using word processing skills in literacy and spreadsheets in mathematics and science. Year 5 pupils were observed making very good progress using a sophisticated control technology program to control switches. The use of ICT is consistent across the school and the teachers' planning is highly effective. This is a key area of the school's work since the last inspection and there has been very good progress.

## **The curriculum**

The quality of the curriculum for all pupils in the school is very good. Many opportunities are provided for broadening and enriching the curriculum, particularly through educational visits, sport, ICT and music during and outside the normal school day.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There is a very good range of extra-curricular activities, covering a wide range of interests
- Curriculum provision for pupils with special educational needs is excellent
- Provision for pupils' personal, social, health and citizenship education is very good
- The quality of the staff, accommodation and resources is very good

## Commentary

20. The school provides a very broad and rich curriculum for its pupils. It has very successfully adapted national guidelines to reflect its specific needs and Christian ethos and those of its pupils. The Primary National Strategy is firmly embedded in the planned curriculum and underpins the high standards achieved. Effective links have been created between all subjects with very good emphasis placed on promoting literacy, numeracy and ICT skills and this is having a very positive impact on standards. Much has been done to improve provision, teachers' skills and the quality of the curriculum in ICT since the last inspection. As a result standards are now well above those expected in all year groups.
21. The provision for Foundation Stage children is very good. The curriculum is imaginatively and coherently planned to provide a wide range of interesting and relevant activities, which are very well matched to the children's needs. There is a very good balance between activities selected by teachers that give opportunities for exploration and extension of knowledge and understanding and those chosen by the children.
22. The provision for pupils' personal, social and health education, citizenship, sex and relationships education is very good. There is a very high level of participation in sport and the arts. Many out-of-school clubs, visits and visitors make learning more relevant and enjoyable. Pupils are actively encouraged to participate in sporting events, for example football, netball, athletics and Tai-Kwando. The school recently achieved the Football Association's Primary Charter Standard for provision in football, and has applied for the national 'Active Mark' for physical education activities. Pupils can participate in musical and dramatic performances in school concerts. In addition, pupils have opportunities to work with authors, artists, musicians and drama groups, and to learn to play a musical instrument. For example, the high quality music tuition has resulted in a 42-piece school orchestra comprised of very talented woodwind, brass, string and percussion musicians who regularly play in assembly and concerts. This has a huge impact on raising pupils' levels of self-esteem and achievement. In addition, the school is actively constructing a self-esteem policy that will be implemented in all year groups. The residential visit for Year 6 pupils, which was to Kingswood Activity Centre this year, enables them to take part in outdoor and adventurous activities, as well as learning how to be part of a team in environments away from home. The curriculum prepares pupils well for subsequent stages of education.
23. All pupils in the school are highly valued and have equal access to learning activities. They are fully included in all aspects of school life and are well prepared for the next stage in their education. Provision for pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language is excellent. The system of supporting the learning of pupils with special educational needs is a strength of the school, and ensures that they make very good progress in their learning. Individual education plans for these pupils include targets for English, mathematics and personal development, which are clear, achievable and manageable. This is an improvement on the quality of support seen during the last inspection. There are very good links with support services, reviews are held regularly and parents and pupils are kept informed of progress. Sophisticated and very detailed assessments and records are maintained and annual reviews are well organised. Pupils identified as being able, gifted or talented are very well provided for with appropriately challenging work to meet their needs. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection.
24. The school is well staffed with suitably qualified and experienced teaching and support staff whose combined experience provide the pupils with a firm base for learning. The school's well maintained indoor and outdoor accommodation is used very effectively to promote learning. It is enhanced by excellent quality displays that celebrate pupils' ideas and achievement in and out of school, providing a stimulating learning environment that

encourages pupils to do well. The curriculum is supported and enhanced by a range of very good quality resources that has a positive impact on teaching and learning.

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

The provision for pupils' care, welfare, health and safety is excellent. The quality of support, advice and guidance based on the monitoring of pupils' achievement is very good. The involvement of pupils through seeking and acting on their views is very good. Standards have improved on those described in the previous inspection report.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There is an excellent ethos throughout the school
- Induction arrangements are excellent
- Support and advice, both personal and academic, are very good
- The pupils' views are highly valued and they are very well involved in school life

### **Commentary**

25. The sensitive and thorough approach to child protection procedures and awareness, excellent evaluation of health and safety risks, very good first aid procedures and careful supervision of pupils at break-times and lunchtimes enables pupils to feel safe and work in confidence. The buildings are clean, tidy and inviting. The calmness, professionalism and warmth of all adults further enhance the quality of care, appreciated by both the pupils and their parents. The school has excellent systems for identifying pupils with special educational needs and ensuring that they receive the support they need as quickly as possible.
26. The school's special educational needs co-ordinators carefully review the targets for each child with individual class teachers each term and progress is assessed and meticulously recorded. Specialist staff from the local education authority work in the school periodically, providing very effective support and guidance for the teachers and learning support assistants.
27. Excellent induction arrangements and continuing care and support ensure that the youngest pupils quickly settle into school and make very good progress in their personal development. This is supported very well as pupils move through the school. All members of staff know their pupils and their wide range of backgrounds very well. An excellent example of the care provided is the provision of a "Peace Corner" in Year 5 for pupils who need peace or time-out. As the poster next to it says; "Feeling a bit down - try the magic of our peace corner."
28. The school takes particularly good care to meet the needs of pupils with disabilities. Ramps ensure that all areas of the school are accessible and resources such as laptop computers help all pupils to participate fully in lessons. Academic support and advice for pupils are very good. This is especially evident in the arrangements made to give support to pupils who leave for the next stage of education in both Years 5 and 6. The pupils benefit from the school's encouragement of a variety of individual learning styles and from regular assessments of their progress, which provide them with a very good understanding of their own learning. Pupils feel that members of staff value their views and this gives them the confidence to discuss issues and raise questions. For example, as a result of a survey of pupils' views last year, improvements were made to the toilet facilities, with pupils choosing the colour of the paint.

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

The school has a very good partnership with parents and its links with the local community support pupils' learning very well. Educational links with local schools are very good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The parents are very supportive of their children's learning in school and at home and make a significant financial contribution to the school
- There is excellent encouragement for parents to be involved in learning, starting from the Reception classes
- The school is very open to parents and there is very good information provided about their children's progress
- There are very strong links with the Family Development group of local schools

### **Commentary**

29. The very good support parents provide for their children's education and the high value they attach to it are harnessed and encouraged well by the school. They underlay the pupils' excellent attitudes to school and very good achievements. Parents ensure their children attend regularly and promptly and are keen to learn. They encourage them through supporting homework and helping them read at home. Many provide very good help in the classroom and, in particular, financial contributions through the Parent Teacher and Friends Association have been crucial in helping provide the school with additional resources, such as the music and drama suite and cloakroom facilities. Parents receive very good information to help their children further in their learning. The way parents are received and supported in the Reception classes is particularly good. Information on the curriculum or topics has been provided in newsletters, with excellent weekly sheets for Reception parents, as well as booklets. Annual reports give very good information on progress and achievements and targets for improvement and consultation sessions give high quality individual information. The school is open to parents and teachers are available at the end of the day so that issues are dealt with promptly and to high levels of satisfaction from the great majority of parents.
30. The school uses the local community well for visits and local visitors help in school. The very strong links with the local church add much to the strong spiritual and Christian community feel to the school. The school recognises very well that the school community, because of the wide area from which pupils come from, is not just the local community. It uses family members well to provide multi-cultural experiences for all the pupils. The school makes very good use of the strong local sporting tradition by gaining the support of local clubs and contributes very well to local music and drama festivals. The partnership with the local schools, especially the host of secondary schools where pupils move to, ensures pupils are very well prepared for and confident about their move to the next stage of their education. The local Family Development group of schools is helping with many sporting activities and curriculum areas such as information and communication technology, history and geography. The quality of the partnerships and links has improved since the last inspection.

### **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

All aspects of the leadership and management of the school are excellent. The headteacher, who enjoys the support of an excellent senior management team, provides outstanding leadership. The subject co-ordinators are extremely effective. The governance of the school is excellent.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The headteacher has a very clear vision for the school, which is shared by all who work there

- The school is very well managed, and excellent systems ensure that it runs very smoothly
- The senior management team and the subject co-ordinators play a key role in the excellent quality of leadership and management
- The rolling programme for developing the curriculum is very effective
- The governing body is very supportive, knowledgeable and involved in the daily life of the school and has an excellent grasp of the school's strengths and weaknesses
- The finances are very well managed and monitored

## Commentary

31. The overall quality of leadership is excellent, and has improved since the previous inspection. The headteacher is fully supported by all his staff. There is a very strong team approach and high morale. All adults at the school work extremely hard together. They give each other tremendous support and have very strong relationships. They all share the same aim of developing the whole child. These are all key factors in the school's tremendous success and are a direct result of the very high quality of the headteacher's leadership and very clear vision for the school. The school has a very positive and totally inclusive ethos and a very strong commitment to providing the best education possible for pupils of all ages, races and abilities. The very good climate of self-improvement for pupils, teachers and managers is a critical factor that accounts for the school's ability to achieve and maintain such high standards in all aspects of the pupils' development and achievement.
32. The management of the school is excellent. The senior management team is a crucial factor in ensuring that the management is so good. The two assistant headteachers fulfil a wide variety of roles to support the headteacher, such as their role as very effective team leaders for performance management. They are very effective in ensuring that the school runs so smoothly on a day-to-day basis.
33. The management of provision for pupils with special educational needs is excellent and is an important factor in the development of the school. The commitment of the headteacher and governors is reflected in the significant proportion of the budget used for support in this area. The co-ordinators are extremely conscientious and totally committed to providing the very best support and clear educational direction for staff and pupils about special educational needs.
34. The headteacher and senior management very closely support co-ordinators for all subjects and key aspects of the school's work. They are given the time, funding and support to enable them to carry out their roles to the best of their ability, and are highly effective in the way in which they develop, maintain and share good practice so that there is continual improvement. When individual subjects are priorities within the school improvement plan, the co-ordinators embark on a rigorous process of monitoring and evaluation, and they use the outcomes very well to identify relative strengths and weaknesses, and to highlight areas for whole-school development.
35. The governance of the school is excellent. The governing body is very closely involved in the running of the school. Through very close links to the subject co-ordinators, the governing body has an excellent understanding of school's strengths and weaknesses. Individual governors have, for example, monitored teaching and learning and many governors come into school on a regular basis to support the school as well as gain a first hand overview of its work. The committee structure within the governing body is very effective, and enables the governors to use their individual and collective expertise very well. The finances of the school are managed very effectively. The financial management of the budget is very good and the school provides excellent value for money.

## **Financial information**

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

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	904,449	Balance from previous year	10,625
Total expenditure	933,677	Balance carried forward to the next	-18,603
Expenditure per pupil	2,070		

36. The local education authority has allowed the school to carry forward a temporary budget deficit as indicated in the table above. This is less than two per cent of the school's overall expenditure and has been fully accounted for in this year's school improvement plan. The expenditure per pupil is low compared with most schools, so the school makes very efficient use of its limited funds while maintaining its improving trend of standards and ensuring that the pupils are provided with high quality resources to maximise opportunities for learning.

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

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

37. The provision in the Reception classes remains a strength of the school. The Reception Base provides the children with an excellent start to their education. Sixty-eight Reception children are taught in two reception classes with a smaller group of older children being taught in a mixed Year 1 and Reception class. This organisation is very effective and ensures that all children achieve at a very high level. The accommodation is very good, though it lacks some permanent outdoor facilities.
38. The children achieve very well because of a consistently very good quality of teaching which has many excellent features. The teachers and nursery nurses (the Reception Team) work as a highly effective and totally inclusive team. This is a direct result of excellent leadership and management. The curriculum is highly structured and very well planned. All the staff know the children really well because of very detailed and highly effective assessment systems, constant monitoring of the children's daily progress and excellent communication with the parents. Excellent planning ensures that every child works at a level that matches his or her ability. A significant minority of the children (about a third) now enter the school with English as an additional language. There is a very great emphasis on ensuring that the curriculum is planned to include these pupils, and as a result they make very good progress. The way the Reception Base plans for and includes pupils who have special educational needs is excellent.

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

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

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

- Links with parents are excellent
- The children achieve very well, responding to teachers' very high and consistent expectations
- In dealing with each other, the children show very good levels of kindness. Their behaviour is excellent
- By the end of the Reception year, the children show very good levels of independence and maturity

#### **Commentary**

39. Staff work very effectively and consistently to promote the children's personal, social and emotional development, and are very successful in the way in which they encourage children to become more independent and to take responsibility for aspects of their learning. The excellent links the Reception Team has with playgroups and parents ensures that all children build well on their prior learning because of the team's detailed knowledge of their abilities. The Reception Team has very high and consistent expectations of the children's behaviour. The children respond very well and are polite, helpful and enthusiastic in their learning, and know and observe the very well structured classroom routines and rules. The standard of behaviour is outstanding. Children throughout the Foundation Stage are very kind, and show exceptionally high levels of empathy when they work alongside children who have significant special educational needs. By the time they transfer to Year 1, attainment is above the expected level and virtually all the children have attained beyond the Early Learning Goals recommended for their age in personal, social and emotional development.

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

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The teaching is excellent and the children of all ages and abilities achieve very well as a result
- The curriculum is planned and used extremely well to enhance the development of language and literacy
- Excellent systems of assessment and daily monitoring ensure all children are challenged appropriately
- The breadth and diversity of structured play activities, formal reading, writing and spelling activities, is very good
- The excellent links with parents support this area of learning

### **Commentary**

40. Basic skills of reading, speaking, listening and writing are very well taught. The whole Reception environment stimulates the children's imagination and interest. Every aspect of the curriculum is used to promote this area of learning. For example, the children really enjoy the Garden Centre where a huge variety of stimulating and challenging activities hold the children's attention and stimulate curiosity. This enables them to make excellent progress in their learning of language and literacy skills. The teaching promotes highly effective learning as all the children, and especially those who have entered Reception with English as an additional language, make huge gains in their learning and achieve very well across all aspects of their work. By the end of the Foundation Stage attainment is above the expected level and virtually all the children have achieved the Early Learning Goals and a significant number exceed them.
41. The Reception Team is very effective in the way in which it promotes the children's spoken language throughout the course of the day. When children are involved in structured play activities, all adults in the Reception Team provide very good levels of intervention, encouraging the children to communicate with one another, and to talk about their work. They also quickly identify children who have difficulties in speaking, and work closely with them to overcome their problems.
42. Reading is promoted as a very pleasurable activity and children have access to a very good range of attractive books. The excellent links and communications with parents ensure that virtually every child regularly takes home a reading book and receives support in reading from parents. Classrooms provide a language-rich environment for the children with eye-catching labels positively reinforcing the link between reading and writing. The children have access to many very good quality books about other cultures, and this early understanding of cultural diversity reflects the thoughtfulness of staff, and the school's total commitment to inclusion in a multicultural society. By the end of the Reception Year, many children are reading with confidence and accuracy, and higher attainers try hard to sound new words out using their knowledge of phonics (letter sounds) to help them to decode more complex words.
43. Children achieve very well in writing. The teaching of writing in the Reception classes is another strength. Children enjoy taking part in many excellent writing activities, such as when they work in the Garden Centre 'office'. These activities are very effectively complemented by formal writing activities that ensure that the children know the correct way to form letters. Writing activities are made fun for the children; consequently, they make very good progress and by the end of the Reception Year many independently write one or two sentences of news and make very good and confident attempts to spell words correctly.

### **MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in mathematical development is **excellent**.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is excellent, and teachers make very good use of structured play activities to help the children understand and learn new mathematical ideas
- The whole curriculum is used very effectively to promote all aspects of mathematical development
- Children of all abilities achieve very well, especially in knowledge and understanding of number

## Commentary

44. By the end of the Foundation Stage overall attainment is above the expected level. Almost all the children attain the Early Learning Goals and a significant number exceed them. The teaching is highly effective, enabling children of all ages and abilities to achieve very well, especially in their knowledge of number. The children have very positive attitudes to learning, and thoroughly enjoy taking part in daily counting rhymes, sorting and matching objects, completing jigsaws, and playing mathematical games with classmates.
45. Very good use is made of structured play activities to support and extend the children's learning and to help the children develop a very secure understanding and grasp of new mathematical ideas. The children show very positive attitudes as they work with one another in the sand, water and role-play areas, using mathematical vocabulary confidently as they explain what they are doing. Adults provide very good support, and focus the children's attention on key learning points, such as comparisons of size, volume and weight. Very good links are made with other areas of learning, such as when the reception children use ICT to produce various graphs to display data they have collected.
46. Teachers are very skilled in the way in which they teach children how to record their mathematical ideas. They model the recording of simple sums on whiteboards as the children count out groups of objects, and draw the children's attention to the signs for 'adding on' and 'equals'. This strategy gently helps the children to move from a practical context to an abstract context, and prepares them very well for their transfer to Year 1 without putting them under pressure, or without losing the essentially practical spirit of the Foundation Stage curriculum.

## KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers provide a wide range of exciting activities that capture the children's interest
- The children have regular access to class based computers and to the computer suite

## Commentary

47. By the end of the Foundation Stage, most children exceed the Early Learning Goals, and overall their attainment is above the expected level for their age. Children of all abilities achieve very well and benefit from the very good teaching. All staff are very skilled in maintaining the balance between giving the children the information they need to carry out their tasks, and encouraging them to find things out for themselves through a process of experimentation and investigation. Very good use is made of visits to local places of interest and the school environment. A very good range of visitors is used to enhance and widen the curriculum, such as a visit by Dominos Pizzas to reinforce work done on food.
48. Activities are very exciting and are carefully designed so that the children can learn through first-hand experience and structured play. For example, the garden centre provides excellent

opportunities for the children to engage in imaginative play. The children use computers regularly to support their learning. They have very good mouse and keyboard skills and with support they log on to the Internet to find out information.

## **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The children have good access to a well-equipped infant hall
- Reception children have too few opportunities to play on large equipment
- Fine motor skills, such as using pencils, brushes and modelling tools are very well taught

### **Commentary**

49. The children achieve very well in this area of learning as the result of very good teaching. They are provided with opportunities to run, jump, balance and climb during the regular physical education sessions. Their attainment is above the expected level for their age. However, they do not have enough opportunities to use climbing equipment. This limits the planned opportunities for group work and independent play. As a result, their achievement in this area is not as good as it could be.
50. Throughout the Foundation Stage, the staff are very effective in the way in which they teach the children how to manipulate brushes, pencils and modelling equipment. They successfully balance instruction with opportunities for the children to practise newly acquired skills freely in a wide variety of contexts. When working with paint, the children choose different sized brushes, and appreciate that a finer brush will enable them to be more precise in their work. The children use scissors and glue sticks very well, and follow guidelines carefully.

## **CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in creative development is **excellent**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The vast majority of children are imaginative and creative, and originality is celebrated and praised
- There is a very good balance of activities that are led by an adult, and which teach a new skill, and those the children choose themselves
- Very exciting role-play activities develop the children's creative development extremely well

### **Commentary**

51. By the end of the Reception year, the children's attainment is beyond the expected level for their age. Children achieve very well and most show very good levels of confidence, flair, imagination and creativity in their work. Teaching is very good, enabling the children to learn, master and use key skills and techniques. A very good balance is achieved between activities where adults show the children how to carry out tasks and how to improve their work, and those activities that give the children the freedom to experiment and make their own choices and decisions.
52. The quality of the children's artwork is very good and most show real flair when using and combining colours and materials of different textures to make flower pot men in the garden centre. The children make very good observational drawings and paintings such as their

work on the Red Rose. Role-play areas are very exciting and encourage the children to take on the characters and mannerisms of a range of people. Many of the children have very good imagination and adapt their actions and expressions to reflect the characters they are depicting, such as when they imaginatively interpret Jack, the Cow and the Giant in their dance of Jack and the Beanstalk. The children have good ongoing access to music centres and musical instruments, and enjoy taking part in daily singing activities. They compose their own music for their Foundation Stage assembly.

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

### **ENGLISH**

Provision in English is **very good**.

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

- Pupils have a wide range of opportunities for writing and they generally achieve very well
- Teaching and learning are very good across the school
- The subject is well led and managed and there has been good improvement since the last inspection
- Resources to support teaching and learning are very good

#### **Commentary**

53. In Year 2, the pupils attain standards that are well above average in speaking, listening and reading and their achievement is very good. Standards in writing are above average and pupils' achievement is good. There is an improving trend in the number of pupils achieving Level 3 in writing, and the school has already implemented effective planning in lessons that is improving this further. In Year 6 standards are well above average in speaking and listening, reading and writing, and the pupils' achievement is very good. However, by the end of Year 5 standards are high and a significant proportion of high achievers (approximately one third of the year group) leave at the end of this year and transfer to local junior high, grammar and independent schools. This is having a considerable impact on the school's national test results by the end of Year 6. The school has focused successfully on increasing the number of pupils attaining the higher Level 5 in English and provides many opportunities for them to write for a variety of purposes. This, supported by the regular opportunities to write, often at length, in other subjects is having a positive impact on standards. Overall, the school has made good progress in improving standards since the last inspection.
54. Pupils throughout the school enjoy English lessons and achieve very well overall. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 make very good progress in speaking and listening as a result of very good quality teaching. By the end of Year 6 most pupils are confident speakers, answer questions and express clear opinions that show a high order of thinking skills. Pupils are given very good opportunities to discuss their own ideas in class and paired activities.
55. Pupils make very good progress in reading as they move through the school. By the end of Year 2 most pupils are confident readers. Basic literacy skills such as phonics (which are the sounds made by letters) are taught very effectively in literacy lessons and this helps pupils to successfully read unfamiliar words. Pupils are encouraged to read regularly at home and reading diaries are used effectively to inform parents of individual pupils' progress. Throughout Years 3 to 6, the pupils continue to make very good progress in reading. They are enthusiastic and very competent readers, and can express opinions about their favourite authors and why they like a particular type of book. These skills are used well when selecting fiction and non-fiction books from the library, accessing the Internet or when interpreting text in other subjects such as science, history and geography.

56. By the end of Year 2, pupils' progress in writing is good. Teachers challenge pupils to think carefully about their use of powerful words in making their written work interesting to readers. Many pupils use appropriate punctuation, including accurate use of capital letters, full stops, speech marks and question marks. Spellings are regularly given out as homework and then tested and this is having a very positive impact on the standards achieved. By the end of Year 6, pupils make very good progress in writing. They write in a variety of styles, including biographies, plays and poems. The teachers have successfully introduced 'mind mapping' as a technique for pupils to systematically structure their texts in a logical way for any reader. The result is that pupils confidently use complex sentences and powerful words in other subjects. Higher attaining pupils and those who are gifted and talented produce examples of extended writing of a very high quality.
57. The quality of teaching and learning is very good overall. The national literacy strategy has been implemented well and this has led to a consistency of approach in all classes. Learning is often very good because pupils are very responsive and have very good relationships with staff and with one another. The teachers have a very good understanding of how pupils develop their literacy skills and this is used to good effect in the way lessons are managed and taught. In a particularly effective Year 6 lesson, pupils were observed studying the two main characters in the book 'Goodbye Mr Tom'. The pupils made very good progress in drawing upon their own experiences of meeting people for the first time to understand the exchange of feelings and emotions between the characters of Mr Tom and Willie during their initial encounter in the story. This helped them to appreciate the author's particular style of writing. The teachers have high expectations of what the pupils are capable of achieving and the lessons are brisk and enjoyable. The pupils are expected to behave and work hard. As a result, they take pride in their work, which is usually very well presented.
58. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is excellent and they often make very good progress in lessons. Pupils are very well supported by learning support assistants who understand their individual needs and by the teachers' planning, which provides for different activities at different levels of ability. This is also true of the support provided for the pupils who speak English as an additional language. They are given appropriate support and are encouraged to participate in class discussions and to ask questions.
59. English is very well led and managed by the co-ordinator who has a clear understanding of the school's strengths and what needs to be done to continue to raise standards. The co-ordinator analyses test results, monitors the pupils' work, supports staff by leading teacher-training days and has had opportunities to support and observe colleagues in lessons. Resources to support literacy development are very good throughout the school.

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

60. Effective use is made of the pupils' literacy skills in other subjects. This has a positive impact on the pupils' achievement in English and on the progress they make in other subjects. The pupils' speaking and listening skills are extended through the many discussions at the beginning and end of lessons, and when listening to and carrying out instructions in physical education lessons. There are many opportunities for them to read a variety of texts, non-fiction books and to search for information on the Internet. In history and geography there are good opportunities for pupils to develop their skimming and scanning skills for research.

### **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **very good**.

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

- Standards in mathematics are improving well because the teaching is very good

- The pupils achieve very well throughout the school and show a lively interest in mathematics
- The mathematics co-ordinator monitors pupils' progress closely and this is helping teachers to provide accurate learning targets for the pupils
- The pupils with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language do very well and make excellent progress

## Commentary

61. Standards are well above average by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 and the school has made very good progress since its last inspection. The teaching is consistently very good across the school, reflecting the significant improvements to the curriculum through very effective leadership and management and professional development of teachers and support staff. Standards seen during the inspection reflect the well above average standards in last year's national tests in Years 2 and 6. Given that the one third of pupils in Year 5 leave to join junior high schools or other schools in the selective or independent sector, and the large majority of these are higher attaining pupils, the school does very well to sustain an improvement in standards year on year. This also reflects on how well teachers maintain assessment information about the pupils in order to help them work towards their learning targets. It also reflects on the very effective leadership of the subject as the co-ordinator ensures that, through effective monitoring and support for staff across the school, there is a high degree of consistency in the quality of teaching and learning.
62. The pupils identified with special educational needs are very well supported by teachers and teaching assistants and their progress is monitored closely. This is also the case for pupils who are learning English as an additional language. An increasing proportion of pupils joining the school speak English as an additional language. They are well supported in lessons and from an early age make significant gains in their learning. The pupils are grouped by ability for one day each week and this has had a positive effect on raising standards, particularly pupils who have learning difficulties and those who require additional support.
63. Assessment records show that, over time, the pupils have made very good progress and both boys and girls achieve equally well. The attainment on entry of the pupils when they first start school varies from year to year but the school's good tracking systems enables teachers to provide tasks that are well matched to the pupils' capabilities. The picture of achievement is consistent across the school because the teaching is very effective throughout. By the end of Year 5, standards are high but the outward mobility of a significant number of pupils affects overall standards by the end of Year 6.
64. Mathematics lessons throughout the school provide many opportunities for the pupils to check their own findings and answers, for example, by reversing the process of multiplication to division or addition to subtraction. Year 1 and 2 pupils can predict numbers in a series or patterns, identify and name the properties of shapes and can use a range of standard and non-standard measures, reflecting their very good understanding of number, shape and measures. In Years 3 to 6, pupils check numbers to two decimal places and most are confident handling complex division problems by the end of Year 6. Very good use is made of ICT as when Year 5 pupils used a spreadsheet to investigate data to help them improve their understanding of decimals and percentages.
65. Throughout the school, the pupils develop a very good understanding of numbers and number operations. Teachers ensure that they learn the correct mathematical vocabulary and the strong emphasis on mental mathematics helps the pupils to have a very good recall of number facts. Evidence from the pupils' workbooks shows that teachers use learning targets to mark work and then provide useful guidance to help pupils improve their understanding further. In Years 1 and 2, teachers often explain to the pupils why they have got the wrong answer and then follow this up with guided support during the next lesson. In Years 3 to 6, for example, the marking provides the pupils with good opportunities to use their

good knowledge of numbers and apply these to statistical facts such as when investigating averages, means and modes in a series of numbers or measures.

66. The leadership and management of mathematics are very good; they are having a positive impact on standards and establishing consistency in the teaching and teachers' target setting. Staff training and the deployment of resources are very efficiently organised so that all staff are kept up to date with developments to the curriculum and to resources. ICT is now playing a much more prominent role in mathematics lessons compared with that seen at the time of the last inspection. Progress since the last inspection has been very good and standards are improving as a result.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

67. The school provides very good opportunities for the pupils to develop their problem solving skills. This is reflected in all year groups because mathematics is used very well to support learning in other subjects. In ICT for example, spreadsheets, graphs, tables and simple matrices are used to record data and, in the case of spreadsheets in Years 5 and 6, to calculate totals and averages. Year 1 and 2 pupils look at patterns in numbers and shapes and produce good symmetry patterns with computers or by drawing shapes on paper as part of combined art and design and mathematics topics. In geography, the pupils record data about populations and other demographic information. Very good use is made of the pupils' knowledge of weights and measures in design and technology as they weigh ingredients before cooking or measure nets when designing food packages.

### **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **very good**.

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

- Standards are well above average and pupils of all abilities achieve very well
- Pupils have very positive attitudes and work well both independently and collaboratively
- Teaching is very good and teachers provide very good opportunities for pupils to develop their investigative and experimental skills
- There are very good systems for monitoring and tracking pupils' progress
- The subject is very well led and managed

#### **Commentary**

68. The 2003 national test results in Year 6 show that pupils' attainment is above the national average. The 2003 teacher assessments for Year 2 show that pupils' attainment is also above the national average. However, the inspection findings paint a much more positive picture than the test results and teacher assessments. In Years 1 and 2, the teachers have been too rigorous in their assessments of the pupils' attainment. This is especially so in the work of the more able. The school has identified this and the use of a new assessment system has already addressed the issue. Standards at the end of Year 5 are very high. However, around one third of the pupils leave at the end of Year 5, and a high proportion of them are very able as they usually join junior high, selective or independent schools. This has the effect of depressing the national test results in Year 6, which would otherwise be well above average. Currently, standards in science are well above average across the school.
69. As a result of the very good emphasis placed on pupils' learning through practical and first hand experiences, the pupils' skills of investigation and experimentation are very secure. Investigative skills are taught hand in hand with the necessary scientific knowledge, so that pupils learn how to question the facts they are given and to draw their own conclusions. From an early age, pupils learn how to use their knowledge to make sensible predictions and

older higher attaining pupils make well founded hypotheses based on the information they already have. Pupils use scientific vocabulary well to explain their ideas clearly and accurately and have a secure knowledge and understanding across all elements of the very well structured science curriculum. The achievement of all pupils is very good. Throughout the school there is a great deal of work carried out in science and it is consistently very well presented, reflecting the pupils' pride and motivation in their work. There are very good links to ICT and other areas of the curriculum, such as when Year 4 pupils design and make their own torches. This is a very good improvement since the most recent inspection.

70. The standard of teaching is very good throughout the school. Teachers plan very well together in the year groups, ensuring that pupils of the same age in different classes have equality of opportunity. There is a very small amount of specialist teaching where appropriate. Work is very well matched to the different abilities of pupils. High attainers, as well as those with special educational needs and English as an additional language, achieve very well. Sharing the lesson's objectives at the start of a lesson enables pupils to know exactly what is expected of them, and ensures that the pupils evaluate the extent of their learning during end of session reviews. Teachers have very high expectations of behaviour and manage pupils very well. Consequently, the pupils are very well motivated and work very well both individually and in groups, collaborating and supporting one another. The teaching of control technology has greatly improved since the most recent inspection and there are some very good links with science work in this area of learning. For example, older pupils use graphic modelling and word-processing skills to present their science work or research scientific facts using the Internet or CD-ROMs.
71. The very recently appointed subject co-ordinator is very well supported by the headteacher and a member of the senior management team and has quickly built on the very good work of her predecessor. She provides very good leadership and management of the subject. A thorough system of monitoring teaching and learning has been carried out which identifies areas for improvement. The issue of teachers' assessment in Year 2, for example, is being addressed by the introduction of the Pupil Achievement Tracker, which is now being used right across the school. This has already identified some areas of learning that need more emphasis. Further improvements in control technology have also been identified. Improvement since the last inspection has been very good.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The school has made very good progress since its last inspection
- The pupils now achieve very well throughout the school and standards are well above average by the end of Years 2 and 6
- The subject is very well managed and resources well used and deployed

### **Commentary**

72. The school has developed and improved the curriculum since the last inspection, resulting in well above average standards. From the work that the pupils do in the computer room and at other times in a range of subjects, it is clear that standards are improving throughout the school. There is also evidence that, as standards continue to rise, the pupils are close to achieving very high standards for their age by the end of Year 6. The pupils achieve very well in most lessons and printed work displayed around the school indicates that the pupils are making good use of their skills to help their learning in other subjects. The work includes for example, Year 3 to 6 pupils designing book covers for stories; using controlling and modelling skills to present information, including the design and use of Internet web pages; and highly organised and effective graphic and word processing skills. Older pupils enjoyed producing

animation using a powerful control technology and modelling program when participating in a recent residential visit. Throughout the school, the pupils demonstrate how well they acquire skills such as word processing and graphics and are adept at combining these to edit and improve the presentations of stories, written accounts and presentations of particular topics or projects.

73. The teaching is very good, with particularly skilful support and teaching provided by the two co-ordinators. Their skilful intervention and support of the staff has led to a very good rate of improvement since the last inspection. The leadership and management of the subject are very effective, with efficient use of the school's resources to enable teachers and support staff to fully utilise computers, projectors, programmable robotic devices and interactive whiteboards to support the pupils' learning across the full range of the curriculum. The teaching is clearly having an impact on pupils' learning so that, for example, the pupils can observe demonstrations of advanced word processing skills or the Internet on the projector and can use hyperlinks when using the Internet to research information. In this way, more able pupils learn skills and knowledge beyond their years.
74. The pupils achieve very well because there is a cross-curricular approach to the subject and the teaching is particularly effective at combining the skills the pupils acquire with those in other subjects. This was demonstrated in a Year 5 music lesson when the teacher used the projector and computer to produce the background to 'Kensuke's rainforest' as part of a lesson about musical composition. Problem solving was used to very good effect when pupils throughout Years 3 to 6 used control technology skills to produce commands and procedures to control objects or manoeuvre vehicles through mazes. High quality support was provided for pupils with special educational needs in Years 1 and 2 as they used a program called 'Young Explorer' to identify, classify and label information as part of data handling. In this very good lesson, the tasks included some challenging problem solving and more able pupils self-corrected and worked together collaboratively to solve problems involving branching exercises.
75. Other work covered across the school includes a good range of turtle graphics and sequencing work, and the teaching observed was particularly skilful in helping the pupils to use control technology to program and sequence information. The pupils with special educational needs also make very good progress and achieve very well. They are usually well supported by learning assistants, especially when working in the computer room. The school is also good at grouping pupils so that more able pupils are on hand to help those who need additional support. This improves the knowledge and understanding and skills of both the more able pupils and those who find it difficult to grasp key skills the first time of trying.
76. The excellent leadership and management combined with the highly effective support provided by teaching assistants in the computer room has helped the school to improve the subject further. The subject co-ordinators are highly skilled at deploying resources and helping the staff to develop their skills and this has improved the professional competence of teachers and other support staff.

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

77. The school makes very good use of ICT across a broad range of subjects. There are many examples of computers being used in art and design, design and technology, geography, history and religious education. These include imaginative and descriptive accounts presented using an excellent range of word processing skills. The Internet and electronic mailing are used to very good effect to help the pupils find information. Mathematics skills are used very well to help the pupils design two and three-dimensional shapes using the turtle graphics language such as 'Logo'. Modelling programs are used to present book covers, stories and newspaper articles written in the form of reporters in past times during history lessons. Graphical representations of data are displayed in most classrooms using computer generated graphs, matrices and spreadsheets. In Year 3, the teacher used the

computer very well by projecting digital photographs of an experiment to show the effects of different substances on eggs as part of their topic about teeth and decay. The school makes very effective use of new technology to support music, drama and the expressive and creative arts. In a recent school production, for example, pupils designed different backdrops that could be projected on screen to produce different scenes. There has been very good progress since the last inspection in this aspect of the school's work.

## HUMANITIES

78. Only one **geography** lesson was observed in Year 3 and discussions were held with staff and pupils. In history, four lessons were observed. The pupils' previous work was scrutinised in both subjects. There is a strong emphasis on linking both subjects with English and mathematics as well as in art and design, where illustrations are used well to enhance the pupils' work. History is reported fully, whereas the teaching in geography cannot be judged directly as there was insufficient evidence during the inspection. However, from the work seen in geography displayed on walls and in pupils' workbooks, standards appear to be above average and the pupils achieve well.

### History

Provision in history is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of planning, teaching and learning across all year groups is good
- In lessons pupils display very good attitudes to work
- Subject leadership is very good
- Pupils in Years 1 and 2 too often record their work pictorially on worksheets, which sometimes inhibits their writing skills and opportunities to express their ideas and opinions

### Commentary

79. In Year 2 and Year 6 pupils attain standards that are currently above average and their overall achievement is good. Levels of attainment now exceed the standards seen at the last inspection and so progress since then has been good. High quality teaching assistants are very well used to support pupils with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language, and this ensures that most are making good progress.
80. Pupils in all classes show a developing sense of chronology by recognising and understanding that their own lives are different from the lives of people in the past. This is particularly evident when they make comparisons between their own lives and characters from the past. This was well illustrated in a Year 4 lesson, where pupils were using drama to understand the social dangers of being a Viking child. Through their drama they considered how best to save a Viking boy called Karl from being sold into slavery. The pupils very effectively drew upon experiences in their own lives and compared them with their Viking friend.
81. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. All of the lessons observed were well planned with clear learning objectives that were shared with the pupils. A key feature of the best lessons was the challenge and pace to activities and time was used well to encourage pupils to explain how they discovered or interpreted their answers. This was especially effective in a Year 1 and 2 lesson where the pupils examined ways in which to attack and defend a Norman castle. The pupils fully understood the difficulties of crossing a moat under attack, especially when the teacher pointed out that it was generally used as the castle's main sewer. They drew upon their knowledge of tall strong doors to understand how important a portcullis was to a castle entrance. The pupils made good progress in interpreting the task and applying their own knowledge and understanding. The quality of

teaching in the Year 1 and 2 classes, while good overall, is quite often characterised by the overuse of worksheets. Consequently, pupils have limited opportunities to develop their writing skills to record their ideas and this restricts their progress.

82. The leadership of history is very good. The co-ordinator periodically monitors teachers' planning and has opportunities to observe colleagues in class. The analysis of these observations is helping teachers to improve their assessments of pupils' work and set targets. The co-ordinator has been instrumental in purchasing good quality resources that help to stimulate the children and improve standards.

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

83. Art and design, design and technology, music and physical education are all strong features of the school's curriculum. Three art and design lessons; three physical education lessons, including a Year 6 swimming lesson; and three music lessons were observed; but only one design and technology lesson was seen.
84. From the scrutiny of pupils' work and discussions with pupils and staff, **design and technology** standards are well above average in Year 2 and Year 6 and the pupils achieve very well. There has been good improvement since the last inspection. There is now a very appropriate emphasis on designing, and very good use is made of computers in the pupils' design and in recording the pupils' work. The new scheme of work sets out a progression of interesting projects that effectively address the National Curriculum Programmes of Study and capture the pupils' interest. Links with other areas of the curriculum provide a very good context for the pupils' learning. For example, Year 5 pupils use tools very effectively to carve soap tablets as part of their 'Greek Day.' They design and make jewellery in the style of the Ancient Egyptians. They use digital cameras to record their designs. In a very good Year 4 lesson very effective use is made of the Internet to enable pupils to have a very clear understanding of how chairs are made for a wide range of purposes. Pupils achieve very well. They have very positive attitudes to the subject, and are very keen to talk about their work. Standards of presentation are very high.
85. The design and technology co-ordinator provides very good leadership. She has ensured that the issues identified for improvement in the previous inspection have been addressed. She has identified areas for development, such as the need to reorganise the topics covered in Year 1 and 2 because of the vertical grouping. She will implement a planned programme of lesson observation and has added to the resources following a recent audit.

### **Art and design**

Provision in art and design is **excellent**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teachers work together very well and share their expertise, and this helps pupils to attain very high standards in their work, and to achieve very well
- The very strong, well thought out curriculum ensures that all pupils enjoy the subject
- There are very good links with other subjects
- The leadership of the subject is excellent
- Art and design makes a very good contribution to pupils' cultural development

### **Commentary**

86. Standards in art and design are well above average in Years 2 and 6. Pupils of all ages and abilities enjoy art and design, and achieve very well because of an interesting and well-structured curriculum that progressively builds the pupils' skills as well as introducing them to

a very wide range of interesting art and a variety of artists. Throughout the school the subject has a very high profile, and pupils' work is celebrated and very attractively displayed around the school. Very good links with other subjects provide very good contexts for the pupils' artwork. For example, in Year 2 the pupils use excellent toning and shading to produce some excellent atmospheric images of Norman Castles, which supports their work in history.

87. The quality of teaching and learning is very good overall with many excellent features. In an excellent Year 5 lesson the teacher had a very good insight into Lowry's character and the way he represented his Matchstick Men and Matchstick Cats and Dogs. Her unique exposition and highly personal style ensured that her pupils empathised with Lowry and produced some excellent reproductions of bland characters with their 'non-faces and round feet.' The links with English, music and ICT added even further to the quality of the lesson and their support for the art and design curriculum across the school is one of its many strengths.
88. The school takes every opportunity to use outside agencies and the wider curriculum to promote the subject. Year 2 pupils have worked with a local college to explore the theme of self-portraiture, focussing on the work of Andy Warhol and using the college's very specialised equipment and expertise. There are excellent opportunities for the pupils to develop their knowledge and understanding of art and design in other cultures. Some excellent work on African, Asian, Japanese, and Chinese art, as well as various art workshops reflect the cultural diversity of the school's intake and promote the pupils' knowledge and understanding of other cultures.
89. All the teachers, supported by some very talented classroom assistants, work very closely together, plan work together and share their expertise. This strategy, together with a very well planned curriculum, ensures that pupils develop their skills, knowledge and understanding to a high level. Pupils have very positive attitudes to the subject and take pride in seeing their work on display. They talk with animation about their lessons, and show good levels of confidence when choosing materials and media.
90. The subject co-ordinator's leadership is excellent. She provides a very good model through her own very good subject knowledge, and uses the skills and contributions of other teachers effectively to benefit learning throughout the school. She has built up a very good range of resources, which are used well to enhance teaching and learning. The good focus on the work of well-known artists and crafts people has a very positive impact on pupils' cultural development, and widens their experience. Since the last inspection there has been very good improvement in teaching and learning of art and design because of well targeted staff development and continuing development of a strong and effective curriculum.

## Music

Provision in music is **excellent**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The leadership of the subject is inspirational
- It has resulted in well above average standards among the large majority of pupils and high standards achieved by a significant number of pupils learning to play musical instruments

### Commentary

91. There has been very good progress since the last inspection and this has largely come about because of the highly organised and effective leadership of the subject, which has built on the very good work done previously. Standards are well above those expected in Years 2 and Year 6. Furthermore, the school has a well established and deserved reputation for its musical expertise and this has resulted in a very broad range of music playing and singing of

the highest quality. The school has an extensive range of music tuition taking place every day and a large number of pupils play instruments in the school orchestra. The orchestra and small ensembles are used frequently to accompany singing in assemblies and larger productions. In this way music supports and enhances the school's rich and broad curriculum and makes learning fun for all the pupils. Music makes an excellent contribution to the creative expressive and personal development of the pupils. It is also used to very good effect in other subjects, including ICT.

92. The two music co-ordinators inspire others around them and lead the subject extremely well. Their musical expertise is used to very good effect and this has had a positive impact on general music teaching by all teachers across the school. The quality of teaching and learning is very good as a result and, added to the expertise offered by the co-ordinators and by peripatetic music tutors, the pupils benefit from a broad range of musical experiences. These include communal singing each week in the hall, musical accompaniment to school assemblies, dance and drama productions; performances outside school, such as the summer music festival, and very spiritual and creative use of music to support religious festivals celebrated in the neighbouring church.
93. Many pupils learning to play an instrument perform solo at school events and festivals. Composition is taught very well as when Year 5 pupils were observed composing a piece inspired by work related to the sounds of a rainforest. Pupils with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language get a great deal from musical experiences and many go on to play an instrument or learn to sing to a high standard. Singing in school assemblies is of the highest quality because it is taught particularly well. Consequently, music plays a very important role in enhancing and improving the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

## **Physical education**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The pupils achieve standards that are well above those expected for their age
- The teaching is very good and well organised
- The school achieves a very good standard of performance in sports and games and is very committed to providing a very good range of extra-curricular activities

### **Commentary**

94. Standards are well above national expectations by the end of Year 6 and a significant number of pupils achieve above average standards in sport, gymnastics and swimming. No lessons were observed in Years 1 and 2 so no specific judgement about standards can be made. However, from the work seen in Year 3 it appears that the pupils start the year with above average standards. The pupils do well in competitive sports and games because the teaching is very effective, skilled and well organised. Very good opportunities are provided for the pupils to receive a balanced programme of physical education throughout the year.
95. The leadership of the subject is excellent and this inspires teachers who are very committed to providing the pupils with opportunities to excel. There has been very good improvement since the last inspection mainly as a result of consistently effective teaching across the school and the enrichment activities that take place both in school and out of school hours.
96. Swimming lessons are very well planned and organised so that the pupils are grouped by ability. This enables all pupils, including those with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language, to make very good progress in relation to their prior attainment. Swimming also offers very good opportunities to those pupils who would

otherwise not have enough swimming experience outside school hours. Swimming standards are above those expected; the large majority of pupils exceed the required national standard by the end of Year 6.

97. In a very good Year 3 gymnastics lesson, the pupils used a good range of movement to produce a sequence of body shapes and well improvised movements using large apparatus and climbing equipment. The teacher taught with accuracy and precision using a step-by-step approach, and this resulted in all the pupils learning and improving their performances. Games lessons are very well organised so that each class experiences the full range of sports and games during each part of the school year. Football, netball, basketball, tennis, cricket and athletics skills are taught very well, resulting in very good levels of performance amongst a significant proportion of pupils in Years 3 to 6. Year 4 pupils made good progress in an athletics lesson by improving their relay skills with a particular focus on passing the baton to a team mate. Good use was made of the class projector and computer to show photographs of the key skills before going outside to practise these.
98. Extra-curricular activities are extensive and wide-ranging. They include a very good range of sports, games, and activities. Sporting achievement is high resulting, for example, in Year 6 pupils winning city and countywide tournaments in football and Year 4, 5 and 6 winning city and countrywide athletics championships. The school also organises outdoor pursuits and adventurous activities for older pupils as part of their annual residential visit. This year, for example, Year 6 pupils talking about the visit demonstrated how much they benefited from the experience. A large number of pupils participate in after-school sports and activities, some of which are organised by outside clubs and organisations. This has a positive impact on the pupils' attitudes to learning and to school and include some minority sports such as the Korean martial art of Tae Kwon Do.

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

99. The school has a well established and positive ethos that encourages the pupils to respect others and to help and support in the community. Personal, social and health education issues are often linked to whole school themes, assemblies and to topics in religious education. In some lessons, the pupils talk or write about health and safety matters or moral issues that provide opportunities for the pupils to learn right from wrong. Excellent use of visual prompts, illustrations and storybooks help the pupils to relate to, say, fictional characters and ask questions about how they ought to behave or respond. Bullying is discussed in some sessions and tolerance of other faiths and cultures is continually encouraged in religious education and humanities studies. Class discussions, assemblies and lessons provide many opportunities for the pupils to share ideas, to listen to others and to respect their point of view. Personal, social and health education lessons and those in most other subjects help to raise self-esteem and confidence, especially when pupils speak to a group or the whole class. Very good use is made of drama and role-play to help the pupils relate to the views of others and to prompt questions.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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