

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **ST SAVIOUR'S INFANT SCHOOL**

Larkhall, Bath

LEA area: Bath and North East Somerset

Unique reference number: 109154

Headteacher: Mrs D John

Lead inspector: Ms A Coyle

Dates of inspection: 8<sup>th</sup> – 10<sup>th</sup> December 2003

Inspection number: 257951

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 controlled
Age range of pupils:	3 – 7
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	159
School address:	Spring Lane Larkhall Bath Somerset
Postcode:	BA1 6NY
Telephone number:	(01225) 313 928
Fax number:	(01225) 339 210
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs L Wright
Date of previous inspection:	28 <sup>th</sup> June 1998

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

St Saviour's C of E Nursery and Infant School is a voluntary controlled Church of England school situated in a residential area on the eastern side of Bath in Somerset. It is smaller than most other primary schools and there is a full-time equivalent number of 159 girls and boys on roll, including 35 children in the two Reception classes. Fifty-eight children attend the Nursery on a part-time basis. They are admitted in the term of their fourth birthday and attainment on entry is average. Only five per cent of pupils are from ethnic minority families, which is low compared to the national figure and none are at an early stage of language acquisition. The main language spoken at home, other than English, is Sindhi. Eighteen per cent of pupils have been identified as having special educational needs, which is similar to most other schools. Pupils' needs include speech and communication difficulties and hearing or visual impairment. No pupils have statements for their special educational needs. The school achieved the Investor in People award, the Children's Rights Charter Mark and the School Achievement award in 2003.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
20603	Ms A Coyle	Lead inspector	Science, Foundation Stage, English as an additional language
9079	Ms A Moss	Lay inspector	
20614	Mr D Kimber	Team inspector	English, Art and design, Design and technology, Music, Physical education
24528	Mr G Muton	Team inspector	Mathematics, Information and communication technology, Geography, History

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a **good school** that is **led exceedingly well** by the headteacher. It provides **good value for money** and the teaching and learning are predominantly good. Pupils achieve well and attain good standards generally.

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

- Standards are good in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science.
- Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good because the school takes excellent account of their views and provides an exceptionally inclusive ethos for learning.
- Teaching is good overall. It is often very good and sometimes excellent.
- The school takes very good care of its pupils within a welcoming and highly supportive ethos.
- The excellent leadership provided by the headteacher gives inspiration to staff.
- Very strong links with parents are used well to support pupils' learning.
- The role of the governing body is not as strong as it might be.
- The Nursery accommodation is limiting.

**The school has improved very well** since it was last inspected in 1998. It has rectified most of the shortcomings identified in teaching through better use of assessment and improved classroom management. The subject leaders monitor the provision much more closely than previously and the roles of the deputy and senior managers are far more effective than they were. However, the governors' annual report to parents still does not provide the required information to parents and this remains to be done.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

*Key: A – well above average; B – above average; C – average; D – below average; E – well below average. Similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 2.*

**Achievement is good** overall. The above table shows that standards have risen well over the last three years at the end of Year 2. In 2003, they were above the national average and above the results of similar schools in reading and mathematics. They were well above average in writing. The inspection evidence largely concurs with these results and shows that standards are currently above the national expectations by Year 2 in the core subjects.<sup>1</sup> The majority do well in relation to their capabilities and those with special educational needs make as much progress as others because they are given plenty of help and guidance in class and when they are withdrawn for short periods for specialist support.

From an average starting point on entry, children in the Nursery and Reception classes increase their knowledge and skills well and make good progress. By the time they reach the end of the

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#### <sup>1</sup> ON LEVELS

By the end of Year 2, pupils are expected to attain Level 2 in all National Curriculum subjects. Those who achieve Level 3 are therefore attaining above the nationally expected levels.

Foundation Stage<sup>2</sup> most attain the Early Learning Goals<sup>3</sup> in communication, language, literacy, mathematical development and physical and creative development. Standards are higher than expected in personal, social and emotional development and knowledge and understanding of the world because the school puts a very strong focus on developing these aspects of children's learning, as well as developing their thinking skills and personal independence.

The majority of pupils show **very good attitudes** to learning and **behave very well**. **Good attendance** and **very good** spiritual, moral, social and cultural development lead to clear gains in pupils' personal qualities.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

The school provides a **good quality of education** for its pupils. **Teaching and learning are good** overall in Years 1 and 2 and in the Nursery and Reception classes.

The **good** curriculum is extended by very strong links with parents. Pupils are cared for and supported **very well** in a strongly supportive environment where the provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. The school's highly inclusive atmosphere extends a warm, embracing welcome to all, whatever their capability or background.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Leadership and management are **very good** overall. The headteacher provides **exceptional leadership** and is supported very well by the deputy and the senior management team. However, the role of the governing body is not fully developed. Several new governors have been appointed and all are keen to improve but this is an area for further action.

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

Parents are very pleased with the quality of education the school provides and particularly like the warm, welcoming atmosphere and the friendliness of the headteacher and staff. Pupils also like their school and are eager to arrive each day.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- Strengthen the role of the governing body.
- Improve the accommodation for the Nursery.

and, to meet statutory requirements:

- Ensure that the required information is published in the governors' annual reports to parents.

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<sup>2</sup> **FOUNDATION STAGE** - This stage of learning refers to children aged between three and six years. In this school, it refers to children in the Nursery and Reception classes.

<sup>3</sup> **ON EARLY LEARNING GOALS** – These goals are a set of skills, knowledge and understanding that children might be expected to achieve by the end of the Reception year in the areas of learning: communication, language and literacy; mathematical development; knowledge and understanding of the world; creative development; physical development, and personal, social and emotional development.

## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

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

Achievement in the Foundation Stage and Years 1 to 2 is **good**. Standards are above the nationally expected levels by the end of Year 2 in all the core subjects.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils attain good standards in English, mathematics and science throughout the school.
- The school's strong focus on promoting thinking skills helps pupils to become confident learners.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	89 (88)	84 (84)
writing	89 (94)	81 (86)
mathematics	92 (90)	90 (90)

*There were 37 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

#### Commentary

1. Most pupils achieve well in English by the end of Year 2 because attainment is above the national average. Standards have risen consistently over the last three years, most notably in writing. Boys and girls do well, as do the few from ethnic minority backgrounds, because the good teaching helps them to build consistently on their skills. The results of the 2003 National Curriculum tests for Year 2 were above average in reading and well above average in writing, with 89 per cent at Level 2 in both areas, compared with the national figures and those of similar schools. This represents a better picture than that of the last inspection and most pupils have made good headway since joining the school, with the most capable doing particularly well. This is confirmed by the inspection evidence and by the fact that 38 per cent attained Level 3 in reading and 19 per cent in writing last year. Basic literacy skills are taught well across the curriculum, so that speaking, listening, reading and writing skills are good by the time pupils leave. Nevertheless, the school is not complacent and has identified the handwriting of boys as an area to improve even further this year.
2. Achievement in mathematics is good amongst most groups of pupils. In the 2003 national tests, standards were above the national average and those of similar schools at the end of Year 2, with 92 per cent attaining Level 2 and 35 per cent attaining the higher Level 3. This represents a significant improvement on previous years and points to the school's good focus on the subject as having had a significant impact on learning. These results are backed up by the inspectors who find that standards are good generally.
3. In science, the 2003 the teacher assessments for pupils in Year 2 were well above average for Level 2 at 100 per cent, although not many reached the higher Level 3. However, the evidence gathered during the inspection shows that standards are currently above, rather than well above, the nationally expected levels by Year 2. Pupils generally make good progress and literacy and numeracy skills are used well to help them increase their knowledge and understanding of scientific concepts. Some of the teaching is outstanding, which accounts for the very rapid gains pupils make at times, but the school does not stand still and has already noted the subject as ripe for expansion on its development plan.



4. The youngest children in the school are doing well. From fairly humble starting points they build quickly on their personal skills and begin to branch out socially in the Nursery with good confidence and a strong sense of wellbeing, due to the good teaching and very caring atmosphere. This stands them in good stead so that by the end of the Reception year they are likely to attain the expected goals in communication, language and literacy and mathematical development, creative development and physical development. Standards are often higher than expected in personal, social and emotional development and knowledge and understanding of the world because these aspects are very well promoted by staff, particularly in terms of getting children to think for themselves.
5. In other areas of the curriculum, all groups of pupils achieve well. Those with special educational needs make good progress and are supported closely for specific needs, such as hearing or visual impairment and other learning difficulties. The most capable also do well and when working individually or in a small group, they concentrate hard. Standards in music have improved well throughout the school and are currently good, especially in singing. Pupils sometimes show remarkable self-discipline while thoroughly enjoying their lessons and this is all to their credit because it helps them to strive for success.

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

Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development are **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The school successfully nurtures and develops pupils' self-esteem and confidence.
- Behaviour is very good and pupils take responsibility for themselves and others.
- Very good adult relationships are mirrored by the strong friendships between pupils.

### **Commentary**

6. The very strong ethos of the school underpins the personal development of all pupils, which makes them feel valued members of the school community. It listens to their views through questionnaires and discussions and acts on them when appropriate. The high quality relationships throughout the school make a significant contribution to pupils' good achievement. These relationships are based on mutual trust and respect through the 'Caring Code' and the school's values and vision statement. Adults and pupils work in partnership and teachers are skilful in directing the pupils' natural enthusiasm into a desire to concentrate and work hard. The generally very good behaviour in the school enables classes to focus on teaching and is a key to pupils' good achievement.
7. The very good examples set by adults play an important part in the personal development of pupils. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is very good. For example, in a Year 1 music lesson, pupils played percussion instruments with a great sense of awe and wonder and their faces were glowing with pride in their class performance. In all classes there is a clear understanding that pupils will behave well and treat each other with courtesy and respect. Pupils work very constructively together and have very good relationships with each other. No instances of bullying or inappropriate behaviour were seen during the inspection period and parents report that their children like school very much. Cultural development is good. The school celebrates other cultures and religions. Pupils celebrate their own culture and religion, as well as those of other people and are being prepared well for life in a community.
8. Attendance levels are good, being above the national average and the vast majority of pupils arrive punctually. There were no exclusions in the last school year.

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

Authorised absence	
School data	4.0
National data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	
School data	0.6
National data	0.5

*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
White – British
White – any other White background
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean
Mixed – any other mixed background
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi
Black or Black British – Caribbean

No. of pupils on roll
122
1
1
2
2
1
1

Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
0	0
0	0
0	0
0	0
0	0
0	0
0	0

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

**QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL**

The school provides a **good** quality of education for its pupils. Its broad curriculum is extended well by the good provision for pupils’ personal, social and health education and the support for pupils with special educational needs. Pupils are prepared well for the next stage of their education.

**Teaching and learning**

Teaching and learning are **good** overall and sometimes very good or excellent.

**Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The highly inclusive ethos of the school benefits pupils’ learning tremendously.
- Teachers encourage and praise pupils very well.
- Pupils work very well independently and they collaborate closely when asked to do so.
- Assessment procedures are used very carefully to help pinpoint success.

**Commentary**

9. Lively teaching and learning are conducted within an excellent inclusive atmosphere in which every single child is valued and respected equally by hard working members of staff. The naming of the infant classes after prominent countries of the world links exceptionally well to the school’s overall vision of children as the future generation and caretakers of our precious planet. This very carefully agreed whole-school philosophy is exemplified in the school motto of, ‘*The Joy of Learning and Caring about our World*’. It is reinforced lucidly in the school logo of a child holding up the globe, with Russia, New Zealand, Antarctica, Japan, Jamaica and India

clearly visible and benefits pupils' learning immensely because the adults' love for the children is at the heart of everything they do. Outstanding teamwork and a lively, joyful approach are strong features of the teaching, which has improved significantly since the last inspection when there were some shortcomings. None of the teaching is unsatisfactory now and all of it has positive strengths to celebrate, not least the very good use of praise and encouragement given to pupils to inspire and motivate them.

### **Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 32 lessons**

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
3 (9%)	9 (28%)	12 (38%)	8 (25%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

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

10. Children in the Nursery and Reception class are provided with a good start to their education. The adults working with them have a clear understanding of their needs and make sure that all are included fairly during activities. As a result, children enjoy learning, which contributes to their growing levels of confidence and they take part happily during activities. Detailed planning for increasing children's personal development is centred on the learning of thinking skills in practical and exciting ways. For example, teachers captivate children's interest with 'big' questions like, 'What are babies?' in the Nursery's autumn theme of 'Knowing Me, Knowing You' and they use books and props in very imaginative ways in the Reception classes to help increase children's basic skills. Learning becomes great fun when objects in stories come alive in the shape of 'The Enormous Watermelon' as staff dress up as characters and provide juicy pieces of fruit to munch and dribble!
11. The quality of teaching and learning in English is good in the infant classes. All teachers have secure subject knowledge and the National Literacy Strategy has been implemented thoroughly since the last inspection. Writing skills are taught well and pupils' learning is supported by good links with other subjects, such as in Year 2's historical study of Grace Darling and the use of instructional text for design and technology. Although handwriting is not consistently joined, standards are improving as a result of the school's good focus on this aspect of learning. Basic numeracy skills are taught well in mathematics. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and they treat pupils with great respect. Teaching and learning are also good in science, art and design, music and information and communication technology, especially when the teacher's skilful questioning and very good use of praise lead to a significant increase in pupils' learning. The work produced by pupils is displayed very imaginatively throughout the school, which helps to provide a stimulating environment for pupils, staff, visitors and parents.
12. Assessment procedures are very good because helpful marking and carefully recorded information is used conscientiously to link up with daily planning and to identify learning intentions. This means that help is provided precisely for groups of pupils, such as the most and the least capable, to extend learning and homework is used well to increase their skills at home. The management of pupils is very good. This helps to ensure that time is used well in lessons and, because teachers promote a classroom atmosphere that encourages hard work as well as a good sense of enjoyment, learning is often fun! Support staff give very good personal and academic support to pupils with special educational needs, based on the targets set out in their individual education plans. Strategies to support them are realistic and skilled teaching assistants make a significant contribution to the work of the school by guiding pupils to do well and achieve success.

### **The curriculum**

The quality of the curriculum is **good** and there are plenty of opportunities for pupils to extend their learning through out-of-school activities.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Rich learning experiences and good extra-curricular opportunities prepare pupils well for the next stage of learning.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good.
- Planning documents and timetables for the Foundation Stage are inconsistent.
- The Nursery accommodation is limiting.

### **Commentary**

13. The broad curriculum, including religious education, meets the statutory requirements and provides a rich learning experience that prepares pupils well for the next stage of their education. A good range of visits and other extra-curricular activities enrich the curriculum. The after school clubs, which are open for children from Reception class upwards include cookery, science, craft and Spanish. A French club meets at dinnertime.
14. Pupils' learning experiences are greatly enhanced by new approaches which staff have wholeheartedly adopted and are using well with great care and thought. The effects of these approaches and the way they help pupils learn well with a greater understanding of their learning, were frequently apparent in lessons in all age groups. Pupils are encouraged to think about what they want to learn and how they might go about it. For example, the very good provision for pupils with special educational needs helps them to become independent and to think for themselves. These pupils are regularly integrated very well in lessons, although they are also withdrawn sometimes for specialist help when it is more beneficial for them to work in small groups with a teaching assistant. This strategy works well because the quality of support given by the support staff is good.
15. Detailed curriculum plans for all subjects and strong cross-curricular links between subjects boost pupils' learning well. Topic weeks occur each half term and pupils speak well of these learning experiences, which often include a school visit. However, the timetables for activities in the Nursery and Reception classes are confusing because they are inconsistent. For example, whereas some appropriately detail the areas of learning for children in the Foundation Stage, others mention subjects of the National Curriculum that do not apply to the age group, but to Years 1 and 2. Nevertheless, the long-term planning and daily practice conforms to the required curriculum for the youngest children and is suitably managed.
16. The school's ethos is such that pupils are consistently made to feel highly valued and all are helped to take a full part in learning activities. This excellent equality of access to the curriculum is also supported by the good quality programme for personal, social and health education. The very good assessment and the flexible teaching approaches also contribute well to the outstanding quality of the inclusion of all pupils in the curriculum.
17. The match of teachers to the curriculum is good and this underpins the progress pupils make. There is a satisfactory range and quality of resources to support learning in all areas of the curriculum. Although accommodation is satisfactory overall, the Nursery accommodation has some shortcomings. The internal lay out and organisation impede ease of movement and interaction and the outdoor play space is limiting.

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

The care, guidance and support for pupils are **very good** and support pupils' learning very well. Health and safety procedures are **good**.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Excellent involvement and trusting relationships with adults mean that pupils feel very secure and well cared for.
- Very good induction and transfer arrangements help children to settle quickly.
- Child protection procedures are very effective.

## Commentary

18. Pupils feel very secure and well cared for and there are very good induction and transfer arrangements. Staff know pupils very well and any particular needs are very well documented and met. All pupils have access to well-informed support, advice and guidance, which makes a very significant contribution to their achievement.
19. All pupils are highly valued and the school's very good ethos promotes excellent relationships and racial harmony. There are very good procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour and all staff make a significant contribution to providing a caring atmosphere in a safe and calm environment for all pupils. Parents describe the school as caring and pupils say that the staff are kind. Pupils also say that their views are regarded as important in the school and they feel very involved. Appropriate staff are fully up to date in aspects of first aid and in child protection procedures. Arrangements for assessing and monitoring the personal development of the pupils are very good. The information is used well to provide support, advice and guidance for all pupils and this raises their achievement.

## Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The partnership with parents is **very good**. Links with the community are **good**.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents are very supportive of the school.
- Good links with the community make a good contribution to learning.
- The governors' annual report to parents does not meet statutory requirements.

## Commentary

20. Parents hold the school in high regard. They are very supportive and the school continues to work hard to involve them more in their children's learning. The school has organised family learning sessions which will begin in January and these courses are intended to help parents to contribute even more to the pupils' learning at school and at home. Parents say that teachers are very approachable, that their children are making good progress and are encouraged to become mature and responsible. Parents also confirm the views of the pupils that they like being at the school. They like their teachers, believing them to be fair and know that they can turn to an adult if they have any worries.
21. Parents say that the school values and acts on parents' views when appropriate and they feel that the school deals effectively with any concerns or complaints. The inspection team agrees with these positive views. The school involves parents very well, for example, in the Nursery where they are encouraged to stay to help their children plan their free time. Parents are also consulted before the school starts any new initiative and questionnaires are sent out regularly to ask for their views. Many parents help in the classrooms, but they do not get the right amount of information in the governors' annual report because there are several minor omissions. This is a weakness still to be rectified from the previous inspection.
22. Links with the local private Nursery and the junior school are good, ensuring the pupils have a smooth induction into the school and good preparation for the next stage in their education.

Links with the community are also good, including the church, a printing business and participation by the pupils in the Bath Festival. These links make an important contribution to pupils' personal and academic development.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are **very good** overall. The headteacher is inspirational and the senior managers support her conscientiously. Governance is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The excellent leadership of the headteacher leads to outstanding teamwork.
- Very good management stems from outstanding commitment amongst senior staff.
- The role of the governing body is not fully established.

### Commentary

23. The leadership of the school is outstanding. The headteacher, who was appointed after the last inspection, is an inspirational leader because she has drawn together a superb ethos for learning in which all staff work as an excellent team. Her obvious love for the children and sense of joy shines through in all she does and her ability to empower individuals, make everyone feel valued and create a shared vision is exceptional. She has accomplished a great deal in a short space of time and is already on the brink of change, as she awaits the findings of the inspection eagerly. The development of an energetic but highly caring deputy and senior management team, who have concentrated well upon raising standards, has helped to promote a very supportive and ordered environment in which all pupils are very valued and encouraged to contribute to the life of the school. Daily administrative routines are well established and adhered to, which provides stability within the school. Although the staff turnover has been high in the last two years, the senior managers have handled this very successfully and been well supported by the governors, with the result that the school now has a dedicated team that is wholly geared to the needs of the pupils.
24. Management is very good. This is a huge improvement since 1998 when there was a lack of delegation and far too much reliance on the previous headteacher. The subject leaders are now conscientious and hard working and the good systems for monitoring performance data and teachers' planning are used well. Although some are new, they have taken on their responsibilities enthusiastically and are very keen to develop their roles further. Management planning has improved since the last inspection because it has evolved into an analytical and reflective process.
25. The school improvement plan is a good working document that is linked clearly with the school's aims and with the Christian ethos of the local church and community. It was produced corporately with the help of all the stakeholders of the school, including the staff, governors, parents and pupils. All are very aware of the priorities and are fully committed to them. These include improving pupils' independent thinking skills through a strategy known as '*Building Learning Power*' which is threaded through the school's policies and practice so that all pupils are actively involved in making decisions that affect their learning. The school was awarded the 'Children's Rights Charter' for its successful work in 2003.
26. Governance is satisfactory. The governing body is very supportive of the school and individual governors carry out their duties willingly. They are committed to the principles of inclusion and equality of opportunity, which are key elements in the superb vision of the school. However, there are many new governors who have not yet had the opportunity for training and this is a weakness. Nevertheless, they are very keen to get going and hone their skills so that they can make a better contribution to management. Governors are willing to challenge and debate with staff at the school. They have a growing knowledge of the schools' strengths and areas for

development and are beginning to focus on raising standards and improving the quality of provision.

27. Financial planning is secure. Since the last inspection governors have become much more confident and empowered to manage grants effectively. They are currently considering improvements to the Nursery, which would allow for closer links with the Reception classes and the rest of the school.

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

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	432,327
Total expenditure	406,749
Expenditure per pupil	2,526

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	39,630
Balance carried forward to the next	25,578

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

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

28. Children in the Nursery and the two Reception classes are provided with a good start to their education. These 58 children attend part time when they first start and gradually build up to full-time sessions. From fairly humble beginnings they achieve well, so that by the time they reach the end of the Reception year they attain the expected standards in most areas, and exceed them in some. This is because the adults working with them have a clear understanding of their talents, specific needs or learning difficulties, and they make sure that all are included well during activities. They collect and use assessment information conscientiously to help them. As a result, children enjoy learning, which contributes to their growing levels of confidence and all do well.

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

Provision in personal, social and emotional education is **very good**.

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

- Many Reception children achieve well and exceed the expected standards.
- The staff's strong focus on promoting thinking skills has a very good impact on learning.

#### **Commentary**

29. New children in the Nursery settle quickly so that they learn to share and take turns. In the Reception classes they concentrate well and spend sustained periods on tasks they have chosen themselves. Some of the reasons for the good achievement are that the teaching is very good in this aspect. All adults are very good role models for the children to follow and the detailed planning for increasing children's personal skills is centred on the development of thinking skills in practical and exciting ways. For example, activities hinge upon initial planning sessions whereby children choose for themselves what they will tackle and how they will go about it. This very strong focus on individuals helps them to become confident, independent learners and to treat each other and the staff with courtesy and respect.

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

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

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

- Children have well-developed speaking and listening skills.
- Plenty of opportunities are provided for children to develop writing skills.

#### **Commentary**

30. Children are taught well and they attain the expected outcomes overall by the end of the Reception year. Speaking and listening skills are good because the teachers and assistants involve children successfully in conversations and this helps them to increase their speaking skills well and take an interest in their surroundings. For example, teachers captivate children's interest with 'big' questions like, 'What are babies?' in the Nursery's autumn theme of 'Knowing Me, Knowing You' and they use books and props in very imaginative ways in the Reception classes to help increase children's basic skills. Learning becomes great fun when objects in stories come alive in the shape of 'The Enormous Watermelon' as staff dress up as



characters and provide juicy pieces of fruit to munch and dribble! Writing is encouraged carefully and children are given plenty of activities to extend their knowledge so that they build steadily on their knowledge of letter-shapes and sounds. The most capable achieve particularly well when writing sentences about the stories they have heard.

## **MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision for mathematical development is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching is good.
- Learning is reinforced well through everyday situations.

### **Commentary**

31. The good teaching has a positive effect on children's learning, which speeds up as they settle into daily routines. Standards are sound and children increase their basic knowledge of numbers and shapes in the Nursery by tasks such as counting the numbers of drinks and pieces of fruit needed at snack time. Older children learn about size, length and height and they extend their knowledge of the numbers 1 to 5 in songs. In the Reception classes, children achieve well when counting up and back to nine and often beyond, with the most capable counting to 20 confidently. Opportunities are used well by staff to consolidate children's understanding of number throughout the day and they provide plenty of opportunities for them to use mathematical skills in everyday situations.

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

Provision for knowledge and understanding of the world and physical development is **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children join in enthusiastically with a wide range of activities.
- The very good teaching leads to children's increased confidence.

### **Commentary**

32. Achievement is good and children exceed the expected goals by the end of the Reception year because they learn well. In the Nursery they build up skills through integrated activities that involve thinking actively in a social context. They begin to understand events by thinking about how babies grow and people change. All enjoy playing indoors and outside and they move freely, with pleasure and confidence when using the equipment. For example, they adjust speed and change direction enthusiastically to manoeuvre around obstacles where others are working and demonstrate increasing ability to manipulate moving parts of toys. They take part in a wide range of activities to help them increase their physical skills of using crayons and paints. The majority in the Reception classes have good pencil control when drawing and making marks. They use construction kits and computers to find out about the world around them and the staff make good use of available resources. Very good teaching and portfolios of children's work, with plenty of interesting photographic records of activities are used well to help children learn.

## **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision for physical development is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children demonstrate confident skills on tricycles and scooters.
- The Nursery accommodation is limiting.

### **Commentary**

33. Throughout the day children in both the Nursery and Reception classes have a wide range of opportunities to develop the finer skills of using pencils, crayons or paints. Children are taught well, so that by the time they leave the Reception year they reach the expected goals. They are able to control their movements and manoeuvre around objects deftly. In the Nursery they show sound pencil control when drawing or making marks on paper. Most children move freely with pleasure and confidence when using outdoor equipment and the climbing wall. They adjust speed and confidently change direction when demonstrating good strong movements to peddle tricycles and push scooters. However, the indoor accommodation is cramped and the outdoor area only has a limited amount of open space.

## **CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

34. A secure judgement on teaching in this area is not possible as only a few brief activities were seen during the inspection, although children's work on display was of a good standard. The opportunities for them to paint and use construction materials are freely available in all classes and are used regularly by children as one of their choice activities. Adults successfully support children's creative skills through participating in their role-play, so learning is extended well.

## **SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGE 1**

### **ENGLISH**

Provision in English is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards are good at the end of Year 2.
- Subject leadership is very good and staff are encouraged to try new ideas in their teaching.
- Pupils' learning is enhanced well by the development of thinking skills.
- Teaching is good.
- The attainment of boys in writing has been lower than that of girls.
- Handwriting is often untidy in the work of the younger pupils, particularly boys.

### **Commentary**

35. Pupils' standards have improved since the last report when they were in line with expectations and are now good. All pupils achieve well. The very good leadership and the enthusiastic response of colleagues are key factors that affect the good standards attained. Very good use of targets enables pupils to know what they are trying to achieve in writing and spelling. Pupils' progress is assessed well and the information gained is used well to plan and guide teaching. Classroom assistants contribute well to this in the support and guidance they give. Class teachers also use methods that successfully get all pupils involved.

36. Speaking and listening skills are good. In English and in other lessons, pupils frequently consider the 'thinking wheel' in relation to their topic. This involves discussion, in pairs or with the whole class, on how they could find out more about particular themes. Opportunities for structured play spark imagination and foster speaking and listening skills well. For example, pupils in Year 2 enjoyed practising their skills in a lesson when one took on the role of the cockerel in a Christmas story.
37. The standards of reading and of writing are also above average in Year 2. This is due to the quality of teaching, which is good overall and often very good. Year 2 pupils have a sound knowledge of phonics and some talk about their favourite books. This reflects the successful use by the school of many strategies to encourage reading. For example, reading books are taken home and shared, there are different types of reading sessions in class and teachers ensure the classrooms have plenty of written words on the walls. These practices contribute well to the progress pupils make.
38. The teaching of writing is good. Pupils' learning is well supported by good links made with other subjects when they practise their writing skills. Year 2 pupils write about Grace Darling (history) and draw upon practical work in design and technology to write a list of instructions in their literacy lesson. However, the handwriting of some pupils is not consistently joined.
39. The subject leader, with colleagues, has successfully introduced new approaches over the last two years. These have helped promote the rise in standards of writing noted in the annual national tests since then. Some of the innovations include:
  - Greater emphasis upon visual and kinaesthetic approaches.
  - Instituting regular assessments including the termly levelling of work and target setting.
  - Class teachers plan together in year groups.
  - In-house training on various topics.
40. The school has identified the need to ensure the more steady progression of pupils' handwriting in Year 1 than in previous years. The intervention programme to support them is working well and is pushing up the standards noticeably so that many pupils are now achieving very well by the end of Year 2 in the national tests. Having identified that the attainment of boys in writing is lower than that of girls, the school is currently focusing on this and working on ways to improve this aspect.

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

41. Pupils use their language and literacy skills well in other subjects. Frequently these opportunities are listed clearly in the medium-term plans and they feature daily in many lesson plans.

### **MATHEMATICS**

The provision in mathematics is **good**.

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

- Standards are above national averages.
- Subject leadership is very good.
- The quality of teaching is good and assessment procedures are very good.
- Pupils do not always get enough time to finish their work.

#### **Commentary**

42. Standards attained in the national tests by seven-year-olds have risen steadily over the past few years with the exception of a dip in 2001 and are now above national average. Evidence of work seen during the inspection shows that this improvement is continuing.
43. The subject leader has taken a number of actions to raise achievement during the past two years including:
- monitoring the effectiveness of teaching and taking appropriate action;
  - monitoring pupils' work and taking appropriate action;
  - introducing new assessment and recording systems;
  - analysing pupils' test results to identify strengths and weaknesses; and
  - improving resources for teaching and learning.
44. An impressive and key part of the subject leader's role is to set half-termly targets for all abilities in both Years 1 and 2. These targets are part of the drive to improve the achievement of all pupils. Assessment systems including the detailed marking of pupils' work ensure that teachers are very aware of the next steps individual pupils have to make in their learning. Group targets are displayed in the classrooms and pupils are frequently reminded of these so that they have a sense of purpose and know when they have succeeded.
45. Very good relationships with pupils and the ability to enthuse and encourage them about mathematics are key to the good quality of teaching. In addition, teachers work very hard to plan their lessons in detail to make sure that they are building on the knowledge and skills that pupils have already acquired. Tasks of different levels of difficulty are presented to pupils of different capabilities including those with special educational needs to make sure that all pupils are progressing. Good use is made of teaching assistants who make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning.
46. The approach to the teaching of mathematics is typical of the school's overall approach to learning. Pupils are given lots of opportunities to work with practical equipment and to solve problems using their own ideas. So for example to find out who could jump the furthest a group of Year 1 pupils decided themselves to use string to measure the length of the jump. A new development in the school is the use of 'thinking books' in which teachers write down and model inventive ways suggested by pupils for solving problems.
47. The 45 minutes allocated to the teaching of mathematics each day is adequate providing that the time is used effectively. In addition to practical work pupils have valuable times for discussion and opportunities to use the whiteboard to try out their ideas. Achievement overall is good. However, the evidence from pupils' books indicates that sometimes insufficient time is allowed for pupils to develop their pencil and paper skills or in some cases (including lessons observed during the inspection) to finish the work set by the teacher.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

48. This is a developing strength of the school. Teachers provide activities in lessons linked to learning in other areas, such as using an idea from geography by asking pupils to work out the cost of the lighthouse keeper's party. In addition to this however, pupils are given lots of opportunities to follow up their own interests and projects so that, for example, during the inspection a group of pupils were encouraged to set up their own toyshop.

### **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **good**.

### **Main strengths and areas for development**

- Standards are good by the end of Year 2.

- Very detailed analyses of national tests are used well to assist planning.

## Commentary

49. Standards are good and pupils achieve well, which is a similar finding to that of the last inspection. The teacher assessments conducted at the end of Year 2 showed that pupils did well last year, and this good picture is being maintained. Overall, pupils' knowledge and understanding is good. Pupils carry out a suitable amount of practical work with plenty of opportunities for them to apply their knowledge, understanding and investigative skills and to pose questions they have raised for themselves.
50. Teaching and learning are good and sometimes very good. They are occasionally excellent when precise technical vocabulary is used to support and challenge pupils' understanding and when investigations are used to promote pupils' understanding of substances such as ice. Pupils' work is well presented and marked and computers are used effectively to help them.
51. The subject leader has a very good overview of the provision. Her expertise and highly conscientious approach has benefited the staff and pupils very well. She monitors the standards carefully and has identified the need for more opportunities for staff to discuss pupils' attainment and moderate written work together to help them raise standards even further. Her excellent home-made collection of 'Science Sizzlers' has had a tremendous impact on learning and led to the good standards attained by pupils, as well as increased their enthusiasm for the subject.

## Example of outstanding practice in science

### **Excellent relationships, very good behaviour and a joy of learning characterised this outstanding lesson in Year 1.**

The teacher's infectious enthusiasm and highly inclusive approach in this 'Science Sizzler' session led to a buzz of excitement as the pupils discussed their predictions for which substances would freeze and which would not. They listened avidly to each other and watched in wonder as the teacher tipped out, 'last night's freeze!' Excellent attention to scientific vocabulary resulted in pupils learning words such as 'liquid' and 'solidify', which they used thoughtfully to help them describe what happened to salty water and washing up liquid.

## INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

The provision in information and communication technology is **good**.

### Strengths and weaknesses

- Subject leadership is very good.
- The new scheme of work is very good and assessment is good.
- Computers are not used enough across subjects.

## Commentary

52. The subject leader is very enthusiastic and skilled and has used these qualities to improve the overall provision and to provide a very good role model for other teachers. Although it was only possible to observe one lesson during the inspection there is ample evidence to indicate that the quality of teaching overall is good. A portfolio of work collected by the co-ordinator shows that all elements of the subjects are being covered and that standards achieved by seven-year-olds are at least in line with expectations. The skills demonstrated by younger pupils indicate that standards are improving. This is a very good improvement from the time of the last inspection. A new programme of work written by the subject co-ordinator provides teachers with a very good resource. Teachers' planning is very good. Half-termly plans are followed up by detailed weekly plans, all of which are monitored by the subject leader.
53. The characteristics of the good teaching found in other subjects are evident. Challenging targets are set for pupils and teachers keep accurate records of pupils' performance. Planning

documents show that teachers are aware of the differing capabilities of pupils including those with special educational needs and plan tasks that provide appropriate challenges. As result of these procedures pupils' achievement is at least satisfactory and the inspection evidence shows that as a result of some outstanding practice some pupils' achievement is very good.

### **Example of outstanding practice in information and communication technology**

**High expectations of pupils and very good planning combine to produce an excellent lesson. This lesson was the culmination of a half term project in Year 1 to design wrapping paper.**

Key factors included the very good relationships between teacher and pupils and the careful nurturing of excellent work habits. Pupils were encouraged to use their own ideas and links were established with their work in religious education when they discussed different types of celebrations. Further motivation was supplied by using an excellent community link to promise the pupils that a local printer would turn their designs into real wrapping paper. The teacher's high expectations were made realistic because new skills were introduced in manageable chunks as the weeks progressed. Lesson times were constructively divided between time away from the computers to experiment with ideas for designs and time to practise newly acquired skills on the keyboard. In the final lesson pupils demonstrated huge confidence and a high level of interest and excitement as they produced their final designs. They used all the functions of 'Painter' including the 'stamp' to produce repeating patterns. The teacher clarified technical terms by using child-friendly language throughout. Available resources were good but the teacher helped to make the most effective use of some inevitable sharing of machines by using an excellent technique whereby pupils took turns being the 'captain' giving the instructions whilst the other was the 'robot' obeying.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY ACROSS THE CURRICULUM**

A good start has been made to this aspect of the provision, although it is part of the continuing development. The review of programmes of work in other subjects is planned to include the use of computers more often.

## **HUMANITIES**

### **Religious education**

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teachers' planning is good.
- The subject makes a good contribution to curriculum enrichment.

### **Commentary**

54. It was not possible to observe any lessons in religious education during the inspection. However, school documentation shows that a complete programme of work is planned in accordance with the locally agreed syllabus. Teachers' planning is consistently good, very detailed and regularly monitored by the subject co-ordinator. Pupils' work is assessed at the end of each unit of work and teachers keep records of pupils' contributions in discussions so that further steps in lessons can be planned. These records together with an examination of pupils' work on display and in their books indicate that teaching is at least satisfactory overall and that pupils' attainment and achievement are at least satisfactory.
55. Year 2 pupils demonstrate that they are beginning to think about the meaning of some of the stories and facts they have learnt. They suggest that Jesus was crucified because 'some people were afraid he was taking over' and that Muslims wash before worship to show respect for their God. They know about some of the stories told by Jesus and some of the things he did such as the Sermon on the Mount. They know that Christians believe Jesus to be the Son of God: '*Jesus had two dads, God and Joseph*' and know why Christians celebrate Christmas

and Easter. Pupils' knowledge and their ability to identify with other peoples' feelings and beliefs are at least in line with the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus.

56. Pupils have very positive memories of a special week when the whole school spent time hearing about and responding to stories of the Hindu festival Diwali. The subject leader made a very good contribution to this special focus week by providing teachers with a detailed resource pack and by providing information to parents. The current programme of work has been in use in the school for some time and plans for its review are in the current school improvement plan.

### **Geography and History**

57. It was not possible to observe any history or geography lessons during the inspection. School documentation was examined together with pupils' work on display and in their folders. The subject leader was interviewed. A full programme of work is planned for both subjects and taught in topics so that wherever possible links with other subjects can be made, so that when studying lighthouses for example as part of geography, pupils also learn about the life of Grace Darling, the Victorian lifeboat heroine and about electricity in their science lessons. Teachers' planning is very good and well focused to ensure that pupils make progress. Assessment arrangements are good. Pupils' skills and knowledge are recorded at the end of each unit of work and teachers build on these in the next unit. The new co-ordinator for humanities is planning a complete review of the schemes of work.

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

58. Only one was observed in design and technology and none in art and design or in physical education. It is not possible therefore to make firm judgements about provision or standards. However, in addition to observing lessons, inspectors spoke to subject leaders, looked at pupils' work and scrutinised planning documents. From this evidence it is clear that the subjects are managed well and that good assessment procedures are used to record the progress that pupils make.
59. In **art and design** pupils' learning derives from the school's own scheme of work. This emphasises progression in developing pupils' skills. Pupils use a sketchbook as they go through school to collect and explore ideas. For example, during 'Art Week' they produced attractive work related to the creation stories in the Bible, thus linking well with religious education. Pupils developed skills of collage, resist painting, tie-dye and marbling. Year 2 pupils have recently used pastels to create a portrait gallery of bold and colourful self-images.
60. Year 2 pupils showed great enthusiasm in their **design and technology** lesson as they worked well together in their pairs assembling, joining and combining materials to make a lighthouse. Year 2 pupils draw more strongly upon a 'design process', which they had used more simply in Year 1. This design cycle is used well by teachers as it complements the 'thinking skills' approach. The scheme of work is currently under review as the school ensures that pupils continue to value and to gain from, their activities and investigations.
61. In **physical education**, pupils experience a broad curriculum. They usually have three half-hour sessions each week, representing the three elements of dance, gym and games. Pupils are very aware of why they do physical education. The subject leader has developed a useful scheme of work that draws in part upon the national guidelines and also makes good use of local or topical themes. She has also checked with colleagues to ascertain where additional guidance might be helpful and monitors teaching plans well.



## MUSIC

The provision for music is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching is good, encouraging pupils to enjoy each minute.
- The quality of pupils' performance, especially of singing, is good.
- The co-ordinator provides good leadership.

### Commentary

62. The provision in music has much improved since the time of the last report. Standards attained then were in line with the national picture but the teaching was inconsistent and included some unsatisfactory lessons. Four lessons were observed during the recent inspection, with teaching very good in two and excellent in one. Pupils' progress is bolstered by the enthusiasm of teachers. This is often infectious, not just for pupils, but also for other adults in the vicinity.
63. Year 1 pupils, using a range of instruments – metal, drums, shakers and bells - show very good ability to maintain a steady beat. They also showed remarkable self-discipline while thoroughly enjoying their lesson. The same sense of fun was evident with Year 2 pupils as they sang wholeheartedly, in tune and with a good sense of rhythm.
64. The subject leader has developed new approaches over the last year. These have contributed to improvements in the standards of singing. She has also developed the medium term plans for teaching all children above Nursery age.

### Example of outstanding practice in Music

**This excellent lesson culminated in an outstanding final celebration of the Year 1 pupils' achievements based on Mozart's 'Eine Kleine Nacht Musik'. In an exceptionally inclusive atmosphere, the teacher conducted whilst every single pupil took part by playing untuned percussion instruments.** A wonderful sense of awe prevailed as they delighted in their own success and every face shone joyfully; lit up and glowing with pride at the high standards achieved in the whole-class performance. The teacher's very lively, animated and excited approach rubbed off on the pupils so that they attempted to reach for the stars for her! In the quiet afterglow, pupils listened, still enthralled, as the teacher completed the day's learning with an outstanding reading of a short story.

## PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION

No lessons were seen in this area of work and so no judgements are made about overall provision. The school has a policy for 'personal, health, social and moral education'. The programme helps pupils learn about family life, health and hygiene, drugs awareness and their environment. Sex and relationships education is appropriately covered. Pupils gain confidence and learn to interact well with others in a variety of situations including circle time, bubble time and role-play as well as in many standard lessons. The ethos of the school strongly promotes pupils' personal, social and moral development.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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