

# INSPECTION REPORT

## ST STEPHEN'S C OF E PRIMARY SCHOOL

Deptford

LEA area: Lewisham

Unique reference number: 100734

Headteacher: Mrs Ann Bull

Lead inspector: Brenda Spencer

Dates of inspection: 15<sup>th</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup> September 2003

Inspection number: 257959

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	3 – 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	235
School address:	Albyn Road Deptford London
Postcode:	SE8 4ED
Telephone number:	(0208) 692 1898
Fax number:	(0208) 694 0136
Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Rev. Geoffrey Kirk
Date of previous inspection:	June 1998

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

St Stephen's is an average-sized Church of England primary school in Deptford for pupils aged three to 11 years. The majority of pupils have average attainment on entry to school and disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds. There are 223 pupils attending full-time and 24 part-time; 116 boys and 131 girls. Three pupils left and five joined the school last year outside the normal times of transfer. The majority of pupils of almost equal numbers are of White, Caribbean or African ethnicity. A relatively small number are of Asian and Chinese heritage. Nearly three-quarters of pupils come from homes where English is an additional language and 13 are at an early stage of use of English. Three per cent of pupils have statements of special educational needs and 29 per cent have special educational needs. This is above the national average. Special educational needs are predominantly related to moderate learning difficulties, dyslexia and autism. 24 per cent of pupils are eligible for free school meals, in line with the national average.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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20457	Brian Fletcher	Team inspector	Special educational needs (SEN), Mathematics, Music, Physical education (PE)
19227	Paul Missin	Team inspector	Science, Information and communication technology (ICT), Geography, History
3574	Kanwaljit Singh	Team inspector	English as an additional language (EAL), English, Art and design, Design and technology

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**St Stephen's is a good school** which enables all groups of pupils to achieve well. The ethos is excellent and there are very warm relationships in a school of diverse racial mix. Standards of the present Year 2 are above average. Those of Year 6 are below average for English and average for mathematics and science, reflecting the high proportion of pupils with special educational needs. Results in national tests in recent years were above average. The quality of teaching, learning, leadership and management is good overall with very good features. Costs are average and **the school gives good value for money.**

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The school's ethos is excellent; enthusiasm and community spirit are pervasive.
- Pupils' attitudes, relationships with others and racial harmony are very good.
- Overall leadership and management are good, with key staff making a strong contribution and the headteacher providing an inspiring lead to the school community.
- Governors do not regularly gain first hand information about the effectiveness of their decisions.
- The very good provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development ensures pupils have a well-rounded education.
- Pupils make good progress as they move through the school and achieve well in English, mathematics and science and very well in singing.
- The lack of a library is hindering the development of pupils' independent research skills.
- There is very good continuous professional development for all staff to improve teaching.
- Reception children have too few opportunities to make decisions in design activities.
- Teaching is effective with very good outcomes for pupils' investigation and communication skills.

Improvement is good since the last inspection in 1998. Recommendations to raise standards in junior classes for physical education and improve teachers' subject knowledge in information and communication technology have been met. Strengths in the provision have been maintained.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
English	C	C	A	A*
mathematics	B	B	A	A
science	B	C	A	A

*Key: A\* - very high; 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** for all year groups. Pupils in the present Year 2 reach standards above average in reading, writing, mathematics and science. Year 6 reach standards below average in English. Standards are average in mathematics and science. The difference in standards reflects the present Year 6 pupils' relatively low starting points and high proportion of special educational needs compared to all other year groups past and present. Year 6 pupils have, however, made good progress from Year 2 when their results were well below the national average in writing and below average in reading and mathematics. Children are on track to exceed the goals expected by the end

of reception year in communication, mathematical and physical development. They are on track to meet them in the rest of their learning except in making decisions when designing and making. There are no significant differences in the achievement of pupils from different groups in the school. Across the school, pupils reach above average standards in singing. In mathematics and science pupils achieve well in developing investigational skills. Pupils' communication skills are impressive, reflecting how well the teaching plans for discussion and develops vocabulary.

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION

**The quality of education provided by the school is good. Quality of teaching is good** across all parts of the school. Planning of activities and lessons generally addresses the needs of pupils of different capabilities well, ensuring that all progress well. However, assessment needs improvement in a few subjects to support this process better. Staff employ innovative teaching strategies such as role-play, which support pupils' enjoyment of their learning. Pupils' communication skills are very well developed across the curriculum by extending vocabulary and offering lots of opportunity for discussion. **The curriculum is broad and balanced across the subjects.** Literacy and numeracy are given good emphasis. The lack of a library is inhibiting independent learning. The outside provision for reception children needs improvement. Learning is enriched by visits to museums, historical places and concerts which give pupils' positive attitudes.

Pupils are well cared for, partnerships with parents are good and the school provides good guidance to secure pupils' academic and personal welfare.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

**The leadership and management** of the headteacher and key staff **are good.** Professional development of staff contributes significantly to the rising trend in standards. The **leadership, management and work** of the governing body **are satisfactory.** They provide good support to the school, interrogating data on performance to ensure the school is doing well. Much of their view of the school is provided through reports and they are setting out plans to become more closely involved in the day-to-day running of the school.

## PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents value very highly how much children like school, the quality of teaching, the high expectations that staff have of their children, the quality of leadership and management and the range of activities on offer.

Pupils have a positive view of school. They are clear who to go to if they are worried and are pleased that teachers show them how to make their work better. They enjoy learning.

## IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Set up a school library to give pupils better opportunities to undertake independent research.
- Review the curriculum for pupils in reception class to ensure they have more opportunity to exercise choice and make decisions in design activities.
- Put in place a programme so governors can become more closely involved in monitoring the work of the school.

## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

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

**Standards achieved across the school are good. Achievement is good** across the age range and for different ethnic groups.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils throughout the school are articulate and use a wide vocabulary.
- Pupils' problem solving and investigational skills are good in mathematics and science.
- Pupils' social skills throughout the school are very good.
- The quality of singing in Years 1-6 is well above average.
- Pupils' independent research skills are limited by the lack of a library.
- In reception class children have few opportunities to make choices in practical work.

#### Commentary

1. Most children enter school with expected skills in communication, personal, social, emotional and mathematical development. The starting points of the present Year 6 were unusually low. Their results in national tests were well below the national average in Year 2 in writing and below average in reading and mathematics. They are, however, making good progress overall.

#### **Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 – average point scores in 2002**

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	30 (27.2)	27 (27)
mathematics	28.4 (27.4)	26.7 (26.6)
science	30.8 (28.8)	28.3 (28.3)

*There were 28 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

2. By the end of Year 6, pupils reached standards in the 2002 national tests well above average in English, mathematics and science. Their results were well above average in mathematics and science compared with other pupils who reached similar results at the end of Year 2. Their results in English were in the top five per cent. The proportion of pupils reaching the higher levels in English was in the top five per cent nationally, was well above the national average in science and was above average in mathematics.
3. The school sets itself realistic targets for Year 6. The outcomes of 2003 results were slightly below the targets set. Two pupils missed the targets by one mark in mathematics and one pupil did not reach the target for English.
4. By the end of Year 2, pupils reached standards in 2002 national tests, which were above average in reading and mathematics and in line with the average for writing. Based on teacher assessments, standards were well above average for science. Their results were well above average overall compared to similar schools. The proportion of pupils reaching the higher levels was above average for reading, writing and mathematics and was well above average for science.



5. By the end of Year 2, present pupils are likely to reach above average standards in all aspects of English. The current Year 6 pupils' standards of attainment are below average in reading and writing due to the large proportion of pupils in the cohort who have special educational needs. However, seven out of ten pupils are likely to attain the expected standards and higher-attaining pupils will attain the above average Level 5. Pupils in all classes have good speaking and listening skills. Many are therefore fortunate to be articulate in two languages. Pupils make good gains in reading. They tackle a wide range of material. However, independent research skills are not developed sufficiently by the end of Year 6 because of the lack of a library. Pupils are introduced to a breadth of writing styles, are carefully taught how to handle plot, character and setting and use their expanding vocabulary. This all contributes to their good achievement.
6. Pupils in the current Year 2 reach standards above average in mathematics and science. Current standards in Year 6 are in line with the average because of their lower starting points. Both groups achieve well. The pupils' achievement is supported by strong planning in mathematics and science which builds systematically on their knowledge. The curriculum is very practical and consequently pupils solve problems and carry out investigations well. By the end of Year 6, pupils have strong hypothesising and experimental skills. In Year 2, pupils have benefited from strong encouragement to observe carefully and to acquire a rich vocabulary to report their findings. Occasionally the achievement of higher attainers is limited by the worksheets used for recording when pupils are capable of devising their own systems.
7. The school's analysis of assessments indicates that pupils' starting points are the most significant factor in determining their final results rather than their gender or ethnicity. The proportion of pupils reaching the higher levels at the end of Years 2 and 6 indicates that pupils of above average capability do well. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language make good progress. Pupils who are fairly fluent in English attain standards that are similar to their monolingual peers. Pupils who are new to English make very good progress.
8. The school's average points scores for Year 6 in English, mathematics and science are above the national trend. Year 2 appears to be in line with the national trend overall. Results for 2003 are not so favourable as 2002 which was an exceptional year for Year 6.
9. Achievement is good overall across the stages of education. Children in reception class are on track to reach the goals for their learning in personal, social and emotional development, for language and literacy, most aspects of knowledge and understanding and for creative development. They are likely to exceed them for communication, mathematical and physical development. There is too little demand made on children in encouraging independence in designing and making in reception class with consequent underachievement.
10. Achievement in singing is very good. Pupils reach well above average standards in singing across the school because of high level subject expertise and enthusiasm of teachers. The social aspect of education is strong. Pupils throughout the school have warm relationships. They have many opportunities to work together, to review each other's work, to discuss ideas and to support others. Standards and achievement in physical education are better than at the last inspection in Year 6. Pupils now reach the expected standards, reflecting better planning for the subject and additional training for staff.

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

**The school provides very well for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.** Attendance was well below the national average in 2001/02 despite the school's good efforts to prevent this.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Christian values pervade the learning environment.
- Personal development is very good.
- Pupils have a strong desire to learn.
- Relationships within the school community are very warm.
- Behaviour is good.
- The attendance of a small group of pupils is below average which pulls down the school's other good levels.

## Commentary

11. Pupils' personal development is very good and this is because of the school's outstanding Christian ethos. Staff respect and value all pupils, promoting self-confidence and an enjoyment of learning. Pupils know how well they are doing in lessons and what they need to do next. The spine-tingling assemblies contribute significantly to their spiritual awareness. The different cultures of the school community are celebrated in displays and the degree of racial harmony is exemplary. Pupils are prepared to take on responsibilities; for example, Year 6 pupils run the events committee and organise events.
12. Pupils with special needs have positive attitudes towards their work and towards their teachers. They are well regarded by their fellow pupils. Pupils are well supported and this boosts self-esteem, which in turn improves learning. The inclusive nature of the school and the prevailing ethos of acceptance allow pupils to feel secure.
13. Pupils behave well overall and often very well, especially in the playground and during assemblies. The school has good procedures for promoting self-discipline and is successfully keeping pupils in school who have been excluded elsewhere. There have been no exclusions from St Stephen's in the last eight years. Pupils feel safe in school and say they are confident that if they have a problem a member of staff will quickly sort it out.

## Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census	<i>Exclusions in the last school year</i>		
	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	45	0	0
White – Irish	1	0	0
White – any other White background	9	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	7	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	3	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	2	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	7	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	3	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	4	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	2	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	1	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	45	0	0
Black or Black British – African	32	0	0
Chinese	6	0	0
Any other ethnic group	12	0	0

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

14. The response to the pupils' questionnaire was very positive. Pupils' attitudes to learning are universally good and this contributes to their good achievement. They enjoy coming to school and most find their lessons interesting. Pupils work hard and want to do well. The very good relationships throughout the school are evident in how well pupils co-operate with each other in lessons as well as the friendly atmosphere in the playground.
15. The school rigorously encourages good attendance but a small number of families take holidays in term time to visit their home country. This, in conjunction with some long-term absence for serious medical reasons, resulted in attendance being well below the national average in 2001/02. Unauthorised absence is in line with the national average. Staff work hard to emphasise to parents the importance of their children arriving on time.

## Attendance

### Attendance in the latest complete reporting year 2002 (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	6.8	School data	0.1
National data	5.4	National data	0.5

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

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

**The quality of education is good.** All pupils benefit from good teaching and a broad and balanced curriculum which develops pupils' literacy and numeracy skills well. Pupils are well cared for. Relationships with parents are very good. Parents support their children's education well.

### Teaching and learning

**The overall quality of teaching and learning is good** across the school. General strengths in teaching are particularly evident in English lessons in infant classes. **Assessment is satisfactory.**

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Planning of activities and lessons build on pupils' learning very well.
- Staff's subject knowledge is good which enables pupils to learn essential skills.
- Staff employ innovative strategies such as role-play which help pupils enjoy their learning.
- Pupils' communication skills are very well developed across the curriculum.
- Teaching assistants make a substantial contribution to meeting the needs of children.
- Assessment in lessons is good and self-assessment by pupils helps them improve their work.
- Assessment is used well in English and mathematics and for investigational work in science; assessment for other subjects identifies broadly what pupils have done.
- Sometimes lessons across the school lose pace and pupils' productivity drops.
- Very occasionally across the school tasks set do not match the capabilities of pupils well enough.

### Commentary

16. Strengths in teaching have been maintained since the last inspection. Teachers' subject knowledge in information and communication technology and physical education has improved.

17. The quality of planning is very good in Years 1 to 6. It is good overall for the Foundation Stage. Planning is consistently very effective throughout the school in organising how literacy and numeracy should be taught to engage pupils with different needs. In the reception class some

**Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 39 lessons**

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0 ( 0%)	10 (26%)	20 (51%)	8 (20%)	1 (3%)	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.*

strands of planning are not linked well to the goals for children's learning. Consequently, there is lack of challenge for children in developing independence and initiative in practical areas.

18. Teachers' subject knowledge, particularly of core subjects, is strong, resulting in good achievement in English, mathematics and science across the school. Teaching of essential skills is carefully broken down into manageable steps, enabling pupils to achieve well. In Year 1, pupils counted backwards in twos and doubled numbers then used this to undertake consolidation work on the computer and to count money in a piggy bank. This application of mathematical skills enables pupils to be challenged by their work and reach standards above average.
19. There is often an atmosphere of excitement about learning across the school. Role-play by staff is very successful in achieving this for the youngest to the oldest pupils in school. Real and physical experiences are used well to involve pupils in their learning; for example, recordings of the Blitz were used in a Year 4 history lesson to provide insight into life in wartime.
20. At all levels in school, communication skills are given a high priority and account for pupils' very good achievement. New vocabulary is constantly taught. Good time is given to help pupils gather their thoughts in response to questions. The quality of teaching received by pupils who have English as an additional language is good. The support staff work closely with class teachers and help pupils successfully within classes and in withdrawal groups. Most teachers explain the key subject vocabulary well and present work with a strong visual content.
21. Teachers plan well for individual special needs and carefully assess the progress of each pupil. Pupils are well integrated and have good access to the curriculum. Teachers' assistants take careful note of pupils' progress and regularly discuss lesson plans with the class teacher. Autistic pupils are given trained help alongside their peers and in withdrawal groups.
22. Occasionally across the school, otherwise effective lessons lose some impact because of a loss of pace. For example, too long is spent on introductions and explanations or the lesson includes a work sheet which does not serve the intended learning. This can result in pupils becoming slightly restless and achieving only satisfactorily. Occasionally, there is not a close enough match of work to pupils' different capabilities. In the one unsatisfactory lesson, the database was too complicated for the pupils to understand so they made little progress.
23. Overall, assessment is satisfactory. Tracking of pupils' progress in English and mathematics and for investigation in science is effective. It involves six-monthly assessment and termly review of pupils' work. This information is used well by staff, including for pupils with English as an additional language, to identify if any pupil is underachieving. Assessment in many lessons is good. Targets are frequently set and these are referred to in some lessons. Particularly effective is the use of pupil peer review. Assessment of other subjects occurs during lessons and when work is marked, but this is not tracked during the year. This means the work set sometimes does not closely match all pupils' capability in these subjects, which

results in them not always achieving sufficiently well. Most marking identifies points for improvement.

## **The curriculum**

**Curriculum provision is good.** The curriculum covers national requirements and is particularly successful in developing pupils' skills in English and mathematics.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The curriculum is broad and balanced and is planned well. It meets the needs of all pupils well.
- The curriculum is enriched through a wide range of interesting visits and visitors to the school.
- Further opportunity is provided by a very good range of extracurricular activities.
- Although the overall accommodation and level of resourcing is good, there are shortcomings in the accommodation for the school library and in aspects of the Foundation Stage.
- The curriculum under emphasises aspects of knowledge and understanding of the world.

## **Commentary**

24. The school provides a curriculum which is well planned, broad and balanced and meets the needs of all pupils well. Statutory requirements relating to the National Curriculum are fully met. The school ensures that appropriate attention is given to providing sex education and awareness of the dangers of drugs misuse. Opportunity is provided to celebrate well the ethnic and cultural diversity of the school. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good, and the needs of gifted and talented pupils are assessed and met well. The school works hard to ensure that all pupils are treated equally and that all pupils, regardless of gender or ethnicity, have equal access to all aspects of its work.
25. The school provides for a very good range of extra-curricular opportunities, particularly for older pupils. During the inspection week, clubs varied from origami, Japanese language club and calligraphy to football, cycling, sugar craft, cross stitch club and gospel singing. Offsite visits support curriculum work well. Class visits are organised each term to support work in different curriculum areas.
26. Provision for special educational needs is good. It is enhanced by the skilled use of programmes in Active Literacy and Units of Sound. Additionally, pupils who need it are provided with language and speech therapy. After-school activities are open to all and pupils with special needs are well represented in music, drama and sport.
27. Pupils who speak English as an additional language receive a broad and balanced curriculum and take full part in all school activities. The school is successful in providing a curriculum that reflects a positive attitude towards other cultures and languages. Pupils get good opportunities to gain confidence about their culture through the study of religious education, assemblies, music, art and celebration of Black History Month.
28. Provision in the Foundation Stage is good overall and provides particularly well for developing pupils' personal, social and emotional skills, their communication, language and literacy skills and for their mathematical development. Planning covers the different strands of each of the areas of learning. However, some aspects of practical and outdoor provision are not given sufficient priority and result in children underachieving.
29. The provision of teachers and support staff is good. They support the curriculum well and make important contributions to the standards pupils reach. The number of teachers in the school is generous. The school makes effective use of the expertise of individual teachers, especially in music, PE, art and design and science. Good use is also made of external

agencies, for example in PE and ICT. The provision of teaching assistants is also very good. These and the other adults who work regularly in the classrooms support pupils well and make important contributions to the achievement of pupils.

30. The overall accommodation of the school is good. It is on three levels, making it very difficult for people with physical disabilities to have full access. This does not affect current pupils. The accommodation is enhanced well by engaging displays of pictures, artefacts and pupils' work. Overall, the level of resourcing in the school is good. The range and quality of musical instruments which are available for pupils are very good. There is no whole school library. This impacts negatively on important aspects of pupils' research skills.

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

**The school cares well for pupils.** Pupils feel well looked after.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pastoral care is very good.
- There is good support and guidance for pupils.
- The designated teacher for child protection is not identified in the policy and there is a lack of regular training for teachers about child protection issues.
- Pupils' views are welcomed and acted upon.
- There are very warm relationships between staff and pupils.

### **Commentary**

31. The level of pastoral care is very high with staff knowing their pupils very well and understanding their needs. The school also provides a counsellor for those pupils who require extra support. Procedures for health and safety are good with governors playing an active role in ensuring the safety of the site.
32. Child protection procedures are in place and are satisfactory overall. Staff are clear what they should do if they have any concerns. However, the child protection policy does not identify the responsible teacher and there is no regular provision for updating staff awareness of the issues.
33. Pupils receive good advice and guidance from their teachers. Staff have built up a very trusting relationship with their pupils who feel well supported and valued. Teachers encourage pupils to assess their own and each other's work. This gives pupils a clear understanding of what they need to do to improve their work. The school makes good use of its assessment data to identify individual pupils or groups of pupils who are not doing as well as they might.
34. Pupils with special educational needs are given a high standard of care. Relationships are very good and provide a secure background for learning, especially where pupils have experienced instability. All adults know the pupils in their care well and know how best they learn. Pupils' achievements are monitored carefully in the classroom but detailed assessments of their progress are not always easily accessible.
35. The school has a supportive learning environment and ensures suitable opportunities for all pupils to develop their understanding of English. They are well integrated in the school life and are well cared for by the school.
36. Procedures for helping pupils to settle into the nursery are effective with staff taking individual children's needs into account. Very few pupils join the school at other times but those who do are welcomed as part of the school family and given support to help them feel at home quickly. Transfer procedures are good with the headteacher collecting information from a wide range of secondary schools to help pupils and their parents make an informed decision.

37. The school values pupils' views and regularly seeks them informally. It also periodically gives them a questionnaire and as a result of this has provided more water fountains. It also uses pupils' self-assessments to help plan future lessons.

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

**Parents are very appreciative of the work of the school.** Local Christian churches are involved well in providing spiritual and religious education.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Relationships with parents are very good.
- Information for parents is useful.
- Links with the local community support pupils' learning well.

### **Commentary**

38. The school has developed a successful partnership with parents that effectively supports pupils' learning. Strengths in this area are maintained since the last inspection. The school believes strongly in working with parents, and staff are available at both ends of the school day to see parents. This, in combination with the annual report, gives parents good information about what their children know and can do. The reports also include useful advice on how the pupils can improve their work in English, mathematics and usually science.
39. Parents are encouraged to support their children's learning both at home and at school. To facilitate this, there is regular homework and information about what pupils will be studying. The school welcomes parents helping in school and where possible uses their skills to enrich the curriculum, for example running a German club. Parents obviously feel welcome in school.
40. The school arranges interpreters and translators for those parents who are not fluent in English. The school makes every effort to involve the parents in their children's learning and provides support for those children who are not able to complete their homework at home. The school has held some successful social events in which parents of all ethnic backgrounds participate.
41. Links with the local community are good. Local churches support assemblies and the school's links with the neighbouring sheltered accommodation helps promote pupils' personal development. Visitors to the school help the lessons come alive. In a Year 1 history lesson, a visitor recounted her experiences of being a refugee in Australia. Other members of the community hear pupils read.
42. There are satisfactory links with local schools. The school has worked with a Beacon school to improve pupils' writing and uses a local secondary school's facilities to improve pupils' computer skills. Primary schools come together at St Stephen's to make music.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**The leadership and management of the headteacher and key staff is good** overall. Staff work well together to bring about school improvement. **The governance of the school is satisfactory.**

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The headteacher provides inspirational leadership.
- Performance management is used well to pursue whole school and individual staff improvement.

- Governors do not regularly gain first-hand information about the effectiveness of their decisions.
- Professional development of all staff leads to good achievement and improving standards.
- Performance data is used well to improve standards of work in English, mathematics and experimental science.

## Commentary

43. The leadership of the headteacher and staff with management responsibilities is good. The headteacher provides leadership that is both inspirational in its focus on developing the whole child while still having a clear focus on high standards of work. The result of this is the excellent climate for learning that is deeply rooted in the Christian faith and values every member of the school community. The school improvement plan contains appropriate areas for development reflecting the school's aims and values. These are costed appropriately but the measures for success are not sufficiently focused on outcomes for pupils' learning. In most cases, the school has taken effective action to address its priorities.
44. The senior team and other curriculum co-ordinators are doing a good job. The good quality of education and teaching reflect leaders' good organisational skills and knowledge. The good provision for special educational needs and English as an additional language comes from effective deployment of teaching assistants, careful planning for pupils' needs and regular checking on their progress. Co-ordinators of PE and ICT have tackled the key issues raised in the last inspection well. The knowledge of strength and weaknesses in English, mathematics and experimental science reflect the good quality and regular checking on standards.
45. The headteacher places a very high priority on developing the quality of teaching and learning. She has put in place a comprehensive system of monitoring and evaluation of teaching for both teachers and teaching assistants. This includes staff and managers observing and video taping lessons. The results of this monitoring inform both the school improvement plan and training for staff. As a result, teaching is good and the varied teaching methods make lessons interesting. This is an achievement, given the number of staff in the early years of their career.
46. The school is managed well. Staff rigorously monitor whole-school and individual pupil performance which informs their planning. Performance targets are closely linked to whole-school targets and they highlight the training needs of staff. The school regularly evaluates its performance in relation to the targets in the school improvement plan. Financial procedures are sound and the school has good strategies for ensuring it gets value for money.

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

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	752,293	Balance from previous year	41,912
Total expenditure	718,048	Balance carried forward to the next year	34,245
Expenditure per pupil	2,895		

47. Governance of the school is satisfactory. Governors are very supportive of the school and have a good understanding of how well the school is doing compared with other schools. Governors recognise the importance of the very special ethos in the school and take this into account when making staff appointments. Governors know the areas for improvement within the school, for example, writing. At present the programme of linking governors to classes has lapsed affecting governors' ability to evaluate the performance of the school at first hand. Governors have a limited role in drawing up the school improvement plan but are satisfactorily involved in evaluating its progress through reports brought to them by staff.



48. The school is well placed for future improvement under the perceptive leadership of the headteacher as all staff are committed to improvement. The overall quality of leadership and management are good which ensures most aspects in the school improvement plan are successfully addressed with positive outcomes for standards. The supportive actions of the governing body result in resources being well targeted to priorities for development. They recognise that their contribution to shaping the direction of the school requires strengthening by implementing plans to seek first-hand information on the performance of the school. The very strong programme of professional development of staff and strong sense of school community ensure there is an effective team all working hard for school improvement. The school's excellent ethos ensures all pupils feel valued and supported in their efforts to succeed.

**What is the effectiveness of the provision for and standards achieved by ethnic minority children?**

**Provision is good and standards achieved are good.**

**Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils of different ethnic minorities achieve well.

**Commentary**

49. Approximately two-thirds of pupils are from ethnic minorities. The largest groups are of African and Caribbean origin. There are seven refugees.
50. School data comparing attainment by ethnicity shows white pupils have higher starting points than pupils of African and Caribbean origins and attain slightly higher results. Given the different starting points comparative achievement over time is similar. There is no significant difference between the attainment of the non-White groups. By the end of Year 6, the vast majority reach the expected standards in English, mathematics and science in national tests. Sampling of pupils' work and standards reached in lessons were similar for all groups. Pupils are equally enthusiastic about their lessons and other activities.
51. The curriculum in art and design, music and literature celebrates the different cultures in school. Teaching assistants are used well to support pupils with English as an additional language and with special educational needs. Where pupils from the different ethnic minorities are present in these groups they benefit as well as their peers.

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

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

In both nursery and reception, children from different groups achieve well. Attainment on entry to school is broadly average. Accommodation and resources are satisfactory. The small outside space in the nursery is shared, limiting how the curriculum can be extended for older children. Leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are satisfactory overall. Arrangements for securing children's communication skills, literacy, mathematical and personal, social and emotional and physical development are good. They are satisfactory for knowledge and understanding and creative development. Staff work well as a team. Overall, the strengths in the provision have been maintained since the last inspection.

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

- Staff provide very good role models for developing warm relationships and a love of learning.
- There are too few opportunities in reception class to make choices during practical activities.
- Children's standards of communication and listening are above those expected.
- Teaching of key skills is very good.
- Children achieve well and standards are above those expected in number.
- The curriculum is rich in practical activities to support children's mathematical development.
- Planning meets the needs of children of different capabilities well.
- Children in reception's thinking and use of vocabulary are extended well in investigations.
- Children in reception class move with control, grace and confidence in dance
- Children in nursery learn a good repertoire of song to support learning in other areas.
- Role-play is too under resourced in reception class to support children's imaginative play well.

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

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

#### **Commentary**

52. The quality of teaching and learning is good and children achieve well. Nursery children quickly settle into school life because of good entry arrangements. There are appropriate expectations for children to be active and vigorous and at other times to be still. Consequently, they develop a good understanding of appropriate behaviour. Only occasionally their patience is tried by over-long sessions on the carpet in nursery. Children in reception class do not have enough opportunities to make choices within the activities on offer. This limits the challenge of their experiences. In both classes, the warmth of relationships results in the youngsters feeling very confident in trying out new activities. Children are on track to meet the early learning goals.

## **COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY**

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

### **Commentary**

53. The quality of teaching and learning is good and children achieve well. Teachers' planning addresses the needs of children of different capabilities very well. Challenging questions are used very well to encourage children to make comparisons and draw conclusions. This contributes much to the children's good communication skills. The atmosphere supports children well who are at an early stage of speaking English to share their ideas and comment on their work. Children develop a good knowledge of phonics and letter names in nursery, and in reception class a few are begin to write words or simple sentences. The resourcing of role-play in classrooms does not engage children sufficiently in writing and communicating. Most children are on course to meet the early goals for reading and writing and to exceed them for communication.

## **MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

### **Commentary**

54. The quality of teaching and learning is good and children achieve well. Children in the nursery learn a rich repertoire of song, which extends their knowledge of numbers. Consequently, many can count backwards from ten and use a number square as reference to check the order. Work completed by the end of reception year shows children can order numbers to 20 and complete simple addition and subtraction sums. Higher attainers can identify numbers missing from a 100s square. Teaching places emphasis on giving children good opportunities to apply their knowledge. For example, in the nursery, children sometimes sit at places for lunch labelled by number up to 16. Development of mathematical language is well planned and staff model its use very well, consequently children are articulate in expressing their mathematical thoughts. The good provision means most children are on track to exceed the early learning goals.

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

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

### **Commentary**

55. The quality of teaching and learning and children's achievement are satisfactory overall. Planning does not address two aspects of the goals for children's learning sufficiently well, namely selecting tools, techniques and resources, and adapting work and developing children's personal opinions about the environment. This results in underachievement. In the nursery, ICT supports learning satisfactorily, for example following stories on computers. In reception class, children program toys to move in given directions. Teaching in reception classes encourages children very well to evaluate their investigations through well-posed questions. They are asked to observe closely. Sometimes the quality of discussions is hampered by the requirement to complete a worksheet. In assemblies and through song, children learn about the cultures of others. Children are on course to meet the early learning goals for all aspects except choosing resources, materials and techniques.

## **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

**Provision in physical development is good.**

### **Commentary**

56. The quality of teaching and learning are good overall and children's achievement is good and has improved since the last inspection. In nursery, staff allow children to be adventurous in climbing and balancing on and jumping off equipment without jeopardising safety. In reception, children benefit from the very good role model and consequently are able to dance to a much higher standard than is expected. In these lessons, children talk about the positive benefits of warming up and the positive effect of exercise. Children in nursery learn to master a good range of tools. In reception, most children hold these correctly and are beginning to learn to write with a pencil accurately. Children are likely to exceed the goals for their learning.

## **CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

**Provision in creative development is satisfactory.**

### **Commentary**

57. The quality of teaching and learning and children's achievement are satisfactory. They are introduced to a range of media in nursery and reception, for example painting, song, dance and singing. Staff with specialist expertise are used well to develop children's skills in art and dance. In reception class, the timetable of activities is often brisk, reducing opportunities for children to use their skills in creative expression. The space for the role-play area competes with storage of exercise books and this intrudes on the creative experience. Children's vocabulary is extended consistently well and their opinions are sought. This enables them to communicate their ideas, thoughts and feelings very well. Overall, children are on track to meet the goals for their learning.

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

### **ENGLISH**

**Provision for English is good.**

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

- Teaching is consistently very good in Key Stage 1 and good in Key Stage 2 classes.
- The standards achieved across the school are generally above average.
- There is no school library and this hinders pupils' development of independent research skills.
- Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning are very good.
- The co-ordinator provides good leadership and manages the subject well.

### **Commentary**

58. The standards of attainment of current Year 2 pupils are above average in speaking and listening, reading and writing. The current Year 6 pupils' standards of attainment are below average in reading and writing, due to the large proportion of pupils who have special educational needs. However, seven out of ten pupils are likely to attain the expected standards and higher-attaining pupils will attain the above average Level 5.
59. Attainment for 11-year-olds was above average in 2002 and was very high in relation to prior attainment and very high when compared to similar schools. The number of pupils attaining

the higher Level 5 was very high. The results for 2003 were slightly lower because some new pupils with little English joined the school. Attainment in the statutory tests for seven-year-old pupils was above the national average in reading and average for writing in 2002. Attainment was well above the average for similar schools and the school's improvement trend was in line with the national trend. Attainment was similar in the 2003 test results.

60. Pupils throughout the school achieve well in English. Pupils with special educational needs and those who learn English as an additional language make good progress because of the well-focused support they receive across all aspects of the subject.
61. Pupils attain above average standards in speaking and listening by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Higher-attaining pupils speak very confidently and at length. Between the ages of seven and 11, good teaching successfully consolidates and extends pupils' vocabulary. Most pupils begin to use complex sentences when explaining their thinking.
62. Pupils in Year 2 attain above average standards in reading. Pupils have a good grasp of phonics and word building techniques and can tackle unfamiliar words confidently. Most pupils read fluently and understand the text well. Higher attaining pupils exceed the expected levels. By the end of Year 6, pupils have made good progress in reading. The majority of Key Stage 2 pupils' reading skills are at least average and many have skills that are better. As they progress through the school, most pupils learn to skim and scan the text and make meaningful notes or retrieve information. They express opinions about their favourite authors and books. Standards of reading for Years 3, 4, and 5 are above average. However, the standards of the current Year 6 are below average. The home reading system makes a good contribution to the development of reading for pupils through the school.
63. Pupils' overall attainment levels in writing have improved and are now above the national average by the end of Year 2. The school has successfully implemented strategies such as early literacy, additional literacy and in-service training for the staff. Letter combinations and common spelling patterns are appropriately emphasised in teaching and as a result, pupils use them in their writing. By the end of Year 2, pupils begin to think carefully about the overall structure of their writing. They learn to write letters, poems, instructional writing and stories. Pupils' spelling skills are good and homework supports this aspect well. Pupils write neatly and most join script. Attainment in writing in Years 4 and 5 is above average and is average in Year 3 but is below average in the current Year 6. Pupils successfully learn to write for a range of purposes. They write poems, accounts, reports, persuasive letters and book reviews. Pupils use an appropriate range of punctuation and their spelling skills are good. Most pupils write neatly and legibly.
64. Teaching is very good in Key Stage 1 and good in Key Stage 2 classes. The main features of good teaching are:
  - Teachers' good knowledge and understanding of the subject enabling pupils to achieve well.
  - Good use of additional staff to extend and support pupils' learning.
  - Good questioning and opportunities to discuss ideas in pairs.
  - Good planning which builds on pupils' skills well.
  - Very good management of behaviour, which provides a good climate for learning.
  - Very good use of homework to reinforce lessons.
  - Very good assessment procedures and its use to help pupils improve.
65. Homework is set regularly and parents are given a half-termly programme in advance. Teachers know their pupils well and assess their work thoroughly, setting appropriate targets. Pupils are given good opportunities to assess their own work in relation to their targets. Peer evaluations are also welcomed. Very constructive marking gives suitable guidance to pupils on how to improve their work. Consequently, pupils have strong knowledge of how to improve.

66. The English curriculum and the good teaching strongly support pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development as well as their very good attitudes to learning. Regular visits from storytellers and celebrations such as Book Week are well used to enrich pupils' experiences. The school has no library provision. There are not enough information books for pupils to develop independent study skills across other subjects and to understand how the library system works.
67. The leadership and management of the subject are good. Teaching, learning and assessment results are monitored and effective action is taken to support improvements. The quality of teaching and achievement have improved since the previous inspection of both seven and 11 year-old pupils.

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

68. Speaking, listening, reading and writing skills are promoted effectively in English lessons and across the curriculum. For example, pupils explain and write their scientific investigations and write glossaries of scientific vocabulary. They discuss and write past events in history. They use the computer to draft their writing and design pictures to illustrate their poems and stories.

## **MATHEMATICS**

### **Provision in mathematics is good.**

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

- Teaching is good. It is lively and imaginative.
- The close co-operation of the teacher and the classroom assistants helps all pupils to learn.
- Staff have high expectations of work and behaviour.
- Subject leadership is good and inspires a shared commitment to maintain and raise standards.
- The oral starter for each lesson is not consistently crisp and demanding.
- The presentation of pupils' work, particularly the written methods for solving problems, needs improvement.
- There is no plan for the consistent use of ICT to support and enhance learning.

#### **Commentary**

69. Pupils in Year 2 attain standards that are above national averages. Pupils make good progress and achieve well, some against a background of weak skills in numeracy when they enter the school. Pupils with learning difficulties and English as an additional language are given good support as they work towards their personal targets. Results in the Year 2 national tests have shown steady improvement in the last three years. In 2002, results were above the national average, in both the proportions meeting the expected standard and those attaining the higher levels. Results were well above the national average for similar schools. The provisional results for 2003 again show Year 2 pupils to be above average in mathematics.
70. The national test results in 2002 for Year 6 show an even better picture. Results were well above the national average and the results for similar schools. The provisional results for 2003 are not quite as good although they remain above average. During the inspection, Year 6 attained standards that are broadly average. This is because of the higher than usual proportion of pupils with learning difficulties. Nonetheless, all pupils continue to make good progress and achieve well as they are well supported by teachers and classroom assistants. Achievement in investigatory work and problem-solving is better than that normally seen and is part of the school's creative approach to learning.

71. By Year 2, most pupils count, order, add and subtract numbers to at least 20. Year 1 take part in a treasure hunt with numbered clues to practise number skills. Learning is fun and pupils quickly discover the pattern in numbers necessary to interpret the clues. Pupils know the names of regular shapes such as the square, rectangle and circle and accurately count corners, edges and sides of 3D shapes. Conversation with Year 2 pupils produced animated discussion about the correct name for a seven-sided shape. An examination of pupils' previous work showed intelligent use of the computer to produce a bar graph of the favourite types of fruit and a number puzzle where each side of the rectangle had to add up to the same number.
72. By Year 6, most pupils are familiar with the basic elements of mathematics that they will encounter in the secondary school. Pupils are well prepared by imaginative and challenging teaching, although there are sometimes pupils who could tackle more demanding work. Pupils often work well with the four rules of number and apply what they know to decimals, fractions and percentages. A significant number are not as confident and secure as they should be in their knowledge of multiplication tables and this slows down their work in problem-solving. In the more advanced work, pupils learn about reflective and rotational symmetry and produce accurate illustrations. They know about probability and spin a coin after predicting the chances of it falling heads or tails. Pupils plot a straight line graph to illustrate how healthy babies put on weight.
73. The overall quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers have good subject knowledge and they plan lessons well so that knowledge builds systematically. Teachers are imaginative in their approach to teaching. One arranges a treasure hunt to confirm basic understanding of number. Another dresses up as a shopkeeper, 'Ridler the Didler' to ensure that pupils can correctly count the change from two pounds. Relationships are warm and friendly and based upon mutual respect. This provides pupils with a safe and secure place to learn. Questions are used well to find out what pupils know but sometimes too little time is allowed for pupils to make their answer. Teachers' expectations of pupils' work and behaviour are clear and they know exactly what they are expected to do. All pupils have a positive attitude towards work and respond well to any challenge they are given. The presentation of work is variable and sometimes leads to errors in problem solving. The excellent computer suite is well used but computing in the classroom for everyday mathematics is less well established. The mental and oral starter is consistently used but sometimes lasts for too long, so that pupils begin to lose interest. Daily assessment is well used and provides the starting point for each lesson. Books are marked and there are many encouraging comments. Pupils feel that their work is noticed and appreciated and they want to do the best that they can. Pupils' progress is carefully monitored over time and this provides an important focus for long-term planning.
74. The subject is well managed and led by an experienced teacher who has set the right priorities for development, namely to review the strategies for teaching and the use of resources and to continue effective monitoring of teaching and learning. Previous monitoring has been effective in sharing good practice and has helped to improve the use of mental mathematics and the use of information and communication technology. All adults work well together and share the commitment to maintain and raise standards and to ensure that all pupils have the opportunity to enjoy learning. Good standards have been maintained between inspections.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

75. Pupils use numeracy satisfactorily in other subjects, although a clear plan is needed if pupils are to derive full benefit. The most impressive use of number skills was by a group of Year 6 pupils who were designing a carousel for a fairground as part of a design and technology project. They talked confidently about gear ratios necessary to slow down the carousel. In history, pupils use a timeline to plot historical events, including the events of Tudor times and the decade leading to the Second World War. In geography, pupils use their knowledge of co-ordinates to read a map. In science, pupils use line graphs to plot the times of sunrise and

sunset and in information technology, pupils draw, name and rotate 2D shapes. In art and design, pupils make reference to shapes when they study the paintings of Matisse.

## **SCIENCE**

**Provision in science is good.**

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The standards achieved across the school are generally above average.
- Pupils of all abilities are challenged well.
- The quality of teaching and pupils' learning is good across the school.
- The subject is well managed by a knowledgeable and enthusiastic co-ordinator.
- Procedures for assessing what pupils know and can do and the use of the data to set developmental targets is not yet sufficiently developed.

### **Commentary**

76. In the 2002 national tests, pupils in both Years 2 and 6 reached standards that were above and well above those expected in all and similar schools. The proportion of pupils achieving the expected Level 4 and above in the test for 11 year olds was among the top five per cent nationally. Indications from the results of the 2003 national tests show that above average standards were maintained but at a high rather than a very high level. National testing data for 2002 and 2003 also show that the proportion of pupils achieving the higher levels in both Years 2 and 6 is above average. The achievement targets set for the current Year 2 and Year 6 groups are realistic.
77. Pupils in Year 6 are on line to attain average standards and pupils in Year 2 are on line to attain above average standards. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 have a good knowledge and understanding of the topics they have covered. They are able to hypothesise well and to adopt a rigorous scientific approach in their work. The overall standards achieved by the current Year 6 pupils are lower because of the high proportion of pupils with special educational needs who have specific language difficulties. This limits their capacity to record their work accurately and to communicate reasoned explanations of what they have done
78. Pupils in Year 2 have a good knowledge of the topics they have studied. For example, their observation of seeds as they grow gave them a good understanding of elements of life processes. Pupils are introduced well to the process of scientific investigation.
79. Across the school, pupils of different ethnicity, capability and those who have English as an additional language achieve well. They make good gains in their knowledge and understanding because the subject is planned very carefully and taught well. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 make good progress and achieve well. They acquire a wide range of specific scientific vocabulary and good knowledge of different scientific topics. Pupils in Year 6 are particularly accomplished in the way they approach investigational work and in their application of skills across other curriculum areas.
80. The quality of teaching and learning across the school is good, with several very good features. Planning is effective. Teachers use a comprehensive set of termly plans which ensure that they are clear about what they need to teach. Teaching across the school is imaginative and inventive in the way topics are introduced. In Year 2, the teacher donned a sparkling hat and role-played being a Crazy Scientist in order to interest and challenge the pupils' thinking. Across the school, pupils are managed well. Teachers use praise and encouragement successfully to motivate pupils. A relative weakness in Years 1 and 2 is that there is an overuse of photocopiable worksheets and insufficient opportunity, particularly for higher-attaining pupils, to develop their own recording and reporting skills.



81. The leadership and management of the subject are good. The co-ordinator has a good view of the working of the subject across the school and an appropriate plan for improvement. Assessment in the subject is sound, but it is identified as an area for development. Currently, teachers make their own assessments of pupils' achievement in elements of the subject, although a whole-school approach is being adopted for recording investigational skills. The use of assessment data to set achievement targets for individuals or classes is underdeveloped. The use of information and communication technology is sound. Interest in the subject is promoted well through the whole-school Science Week and the science club. Strengths in the subject have been maintained well since the last inspection.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

**Provision in ICT is satisfactory.**

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teachers' expertise and subject knowledge have improved since the last inspection.
- The subject is led well by a knowledgeable and enthusiastic co-ordinator.

### **Commentary**

82. At the end of Years 2 and 6, pupils achieve standards that are in line with those expected for their age. Pupils with special educational needs and who have English as an additional language achieve similar standards to their peers. In Years 1 and 2, pupils use the computer to write and print poems about the sun and then to decorate them with clip art pictures. Others use a simple graph program to display results about their seed growing experiment. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 use a drawing program to create geometric patterns and use the computers to produce a newspaper style report of the confrontation between David and Goliath.
83. Across the school, pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Strengths are the way in which they develop very positive attitudes to their work and the enjoyment they get. Pupils are now being made aware of the important uses of ICT skills in other curriculum areas.
84. The quality of teaching and learning across the school is satisfactory but with some unsatisfactory, good and very good features. The proportion of good and very good teaching has been increased since the last inspection and significant weaknesses in teachers' subject knowledge have been addressed. Several features of very good teaching were observed in a lesson to pupils in Year 2 where they were learning how to enter data collected from a traffic survey on to a computer database. The teacher had a good understanding of the pupils' previous learning and she used this effectively in her introduction. The clarity of her explanations, the firm but pleasant way that pupils were managed and her constant use of praise and encouragement quickly established a very good climate for learning. Pupils became very receptive, understood what was required of them and were keen to 'have a go'. Most pupils were well challenged and made good progress and several were able to access different screens and add numbers and titles without close adult supervision. Where teaching is unsatisfactory, activities are not sufficiently well matched to pupils' capabilities. This occurred when pupils were asked to follow a too-complicated series of instructions. As a result, many were unsure what to do, became disheartened and did not make sufficient progress in their learning. In another lesson, the activities planned for a group of lower-attaining pupils were too difficult. As a result, the learning support assistant became too heavily involved and the activity became too adult-directed.
85. The leadership and management of the subject are good. The co-ordinator is enthusiastic, knowledgeable and leads well by her example. Planning in the subject is good. The termly plans also serve as lesson plans and make clear links to each class's work in other subjects. Assessment procedures are sound. They will be improved as more information about pupils' attainment is tracked through following the gradual introduction of revised planning which

makes clearer reference to assessment expectations. Interest in the subject is enhanced well through the computer club for some older pupils. Good links are established with a local college to enable Year 6 pupils to complete further work on programming and monitoring events.

86. The school has made good improvement since the last inspection. Staff have attended a good level of in-service training and teachers' subject knowledge is now good. The level of resourcing has continued to keep pace with increased expectations.

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

87. Across the school, overall ICT skills are used well across several curriculum areas. Its application needs to be more systematic in mathematics. In Years 1 and 2, younger pupils use the digital camera to record different features of their local environment in geography. Older pupils write accounts of how best to grow sunflower seeds and illustrate them with clip art pictures. In Years 3 to 6, younger pupils use art programmes to design and print Christmas patterns while older pupils apply their mathematical skills as they devise a spreadsheet to show the cost of items in a food hamper.

## **HUMANITIES**

One lesson was seen on information and communication technology, which had a geographical focus. Inspectors also looked at a sample of pupils' work. Three lessons were seen in history.

### **Geography**

There is insufficient evidence to judge provision in geography. The sample of pupils' work indicates standards are in line with expectations in Years 2 and 6.

### **History**

**Provision** in history is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teachers develop an interesting and inventive approach to the subject.
- Interest in the subject is enhanced well by offsite visits, visitors and the quality of resources.
- The quality of displayed work is very good.
- Assessment procedures are unsatisfactory.

### **Commentary**

88. By the end of Years 2 and 6, pupils achieve standards that are similar to most pupils of the same age. In Years 1 and 2, pupils are made aware of changes over time as they sort toys into those from the present and those from the past. They look at their own family tree and have a sound understanding of the life and times of Florence Nightingale. In Years 3 to 6, pupils have a sound understanding of the historical periods they have studied. For example, they know the importance of the River Nile to the people of Ancient Egypt and they know some of the reasons why the Romans invaded Britain. Some older pupils' reasoning and deductive skills are not sufficiently developed and across the school, some work is not recorded in sufficient depth.
89. Across the school, pupils achieve satisfactorily. Most pupils, including those with special educational needs and who have English as an additional language, are appropriately challenged and they make sound progress. A strength is pupils' understanding of the wider significance of historical events. For example, older pupils discussed community and citizenship as they considered the organisation of states in Sparta and Ancient Greece.

90. The overall quality of teaching and learning across the school is satisfactory, although the quality of teaching and learning observed during the inspection was good and very good. The sample of pupils' work showed there were missed opportunities for pupils to develop their writing and recording skills and for higher attaining pupils to write at an appropriate length. Teaching is inventive and interesting, bringing the subject alive. For example, a teacher acted as an Air-Raid Warden. Her costume and the use of air raid sirens and impromptu Anderson shelters all added to pupils' interest and improved the quality of their learning. Pupils are managed positively. Questions are used well to extend and assess pupils' understanding.
91. The leadership and management of the subject are sound. The co-ordinator has organised useful in-service training. Pupils' interest and involvement in the subject and the importance of first-hand evidence are promoted well through the good number of visits which are made to places of historical interest. For example, classes from across the school visit the Museum of Childhood, the Reminiscence Centre, Hever Castle and Lullingstone Roman villa. There are good levels of resources. Overall, assessment in the subject is unsatisfactory. Marking of pupils' work is variable. There are no agreed procedures related to National Curriculum levels for assessing what pupils know and can do.
92. Many of the strengths identified at the last inspection have been maintained. Standards in Year 6 have dropped, reflecting this cohort's lower starting points.

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

One complete lesson and the end of a second lesson were seen in art and design, one in design technology and four lessons in music. A sample of pupils' work was seen for all three subjects.

### **Art and design**

There is insufficient evidence to judge the provision in art and design.

93. The art and design specialist teacher took both observed lessons and teaching was consistently good. Year 5 pupils were developing their observational drawing skills, including a focus on the negative space. Good use was made of a range of resources. Year 4 pupils were exploring emotions through mark-making using charcoal. In these lessons, skills were well taught and pupils' learning and achievement were good. Art is used well across subjects such as history when pupils make three-dimensional Egyptian Mummies and Greek figures, using clay. The staff display pupils' work in classrooms and around the school very well and this provides further stimulus for learning. A parent teaches 'Origami' after school, further supporting learning.

### **Design and technology**

There is insufficient evidence to judge the provision in design and technology.

94. Only one lesson was seen in Year 1 where pupils were learning the names of fruit and tasting them in preparation for making a fruit salad in the next lesson. The teaching, learning and achievement were satisfactory.

## Music

The overall provision for music is **good**. It is **very good** for singing and instrumental work.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The standard of performance in singing and instrumental work.
  - The wide range of performance opportunities offered to all pupils.
  - The unusually high number of talented musicians on the staff.
  - The outstanding contribution made by music to the corporate life of the school.
95. By Year 2, pupils' attainment in music matches the national expectation. By Year 6, attainment exceeds expectations. The quality of pupils' singing is well above that usually found. In assembly and in singing practices, it is outstanding. Pupils with learning difficulties and English as an additional language are well supported and take a full part in all lessons. Music is entirely inclusive and embraces the whole school. All pupils make good progress and achieve well. The performance of some individual pupils, vocal or instrumental, compares well with the best that is found in primary schools. Music significantly contributes to pupils' personal development.
96. In all year groups, performance is the strongest element of the music curriculum. By Year 2, pupils sing a variety of songs and play simple pieces with confidence and a good awareness of pulse. All pupils learn to play the recorder. Pupils respond well to all kinds of music and recognise patterns and changes in tempi and rhythm. They listen attentively to each other. Pupils recognise and name percussion instruments and describe the sounds they make. Pupils' work in Year 2 work shows that they are mastering the basic ways in which music can be written.
97. By Year 6, pupils sing songs and rounds that have two parts. They are able to maintain their own tune while listening to others. They use symbols when performing and expressing musical ideas and have a satisfactory knowledge of using a graphic score. Pupils work in small groups to compose a piece which they then play to the class, who offer a critical evaluation. Pupils develop a good awareness of audience. In exercise books, pupils draw the *'the amazing musical textureburger'* in an effort to show how music is layered to produce the depth of sound. In junior singing practice, pupils demonstrate an ambitious range of vocal techniques.
98. Overall, the quality of teaching is good. The teaching of singing is very good. The teacher is a very good musician who inspires the pupils to give their best performance. Her energy and enthusiasm are infectious. All lessons are well planned and move at a brisk pace. Music is taught for enjoyment and pupils respond readily. Pupils are encouraged to improvise - one boy improvised a jazz theme on xylophone in the school orchestra – and this allows the creative spirit to emerge. The balance between creativity and control is well made. Pupils make music and experiment with sound in a secure environment. Relationships are often excellent and teachers and pupils enjoy making music together. This promotes the unity of the school and increases pupils' self-esteem. Pupils assess their own work and that of others.
99. The music programme is well co-ordinated. It is a corporate enterprise of great vigour and commitment. This adds significantly to the pupils' achievement. All pupils learn to play the recorder. Over half the pupils learn to play another instrument. For the year 2002/03, the school lists 15 opportunities for public performance. The accommodation offers plenty of space for practice and rehearsal. There is an excellent stock of good quality instruments, including a large number of keyboards. Music remains a strength of the school.

## Outstanding practice

Music has become, over many years, a defining characteristic of the school and makes a significant contribution to pupils' personal development. It underpins the school's excellent ethos. Assemblies are joyful occasions, which often include improvised playing, spirited singing and lyrical movement. Pupils wave their arms and sing with expressively beautiful tone and control. The whole ensemble leaves no doubt that creation is wonderful and the community is strong. The range of talent and instruments and the number of staff and pupils who participate are inspiring.

Regular concerts play to large and appreciative audiences. Pupils give solo and ensemble performances in assembly and their efforts attract spontaneous and prolonged applause. The whole school's rendition of *'I'm glad that I'm a child'*, composed by a teacher, and sung in delightful two-part harmony, will not be forgotten by anyone who was fortunate enough to hear it.

## Physical education

The provision for Physical education is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The significant improvement in the provision for pupils in Year 3 to 6 since the last inspection.
- The positive attitudes of the pupils and their willingness to work hard.
- The quality of assessment is not consistent across all year classes.

100. At the previous inspection, the school was asked, to raise standards in PE, particularly for pupils in Years 3 to 6, by improving teachers' subject knowledge and ensuring that pupils have time to polish and improve their skills. This has been achieved well. Specialist sports coaches are engaged to teach the pupils and to help staff to improve their teaching skills. Staff now teach PE more confidently and the overall quality of teaching and learning is good.
101. Pupils' attainment in Year 2 and Year 6 matches the national expectations. All pupils, including those with learning difficulties, achieve satisfactorily and make at least satisfactory progress in all aspects of PE.
102. Pupils in Year 2 plan and perform simple skills safely and show satisfactory control in linking actions together. They work well together and improve their performance by practising skills. They make simple judgements about what they and others have done. They need to be encouraged to take greater note of the effect of exercise on their bodies. Pupils in Year 2 are agile. They travel and balance confidently on the floor and on the apparatus and many are ambitious in the movements they undertake.
103. Pupils in Year 4 add another movement to an African animal dance, using a regular musical beat to set the pace and atmosphere. Pupils work together and learn from each other. Pupils demonstrate their movements to the class and are asked to think about and discuss ways of improving their performance. Pupils in Year 5 learn the basic skills of hockey. They know how to dribble, pass and shoot. Pupils practise their skills in team games, which they play enthusiastically by the rules. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 take part in regular swimming sessions and most swim 25 metres by the end of Year 6.
104. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers are developing good subject knowledge and a greater confidence to teach physical skills. Relationships are good and praise is plentiful. Pupils are encouraged to do the best that they can and so they set about their tasks with enthusiasm and behave well. Lessons are well and safely planned. Teachers make a note of

pupils' progress on the lesson plan but there is no provision for recording the continuous development of pupils' physical skills to aid planning for pupils of different capability.

105. The subject is well led and managed. Teachers are committed to raising standards in PE. Resources are satisfactory although accommodation is cramped for indoor games and this restricts achievement. Conversely, the residential trip for Year 5, to an adventure centre where pupils can attempt a wide range of challenging physical activities, enhances achievement. As one boy wrote, 'There are lots of cool things to do - archery, high ropes and climbing.'

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

### **Personal, social and health education**

No lessons were seen in this subject. The subject is tackled across the curriculum. Planning and provision for the strands were traced through other subjects.

Provision in personal, social and health education is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The excellent ethos of the school promotes social harmony of all the different groups very well.

### **Commentary**

106. Planned activities in science and physical education provide pupils across the school with a good basis to understand the importance of healthy eating, safe use of medicines and the importance of exercise in maintaining health and fitness. Wider discussions in history help pupils understand the role of community and the responsibilities of citizenship. Pupils develop this through increasing responsibility. Nursery and reception take care of their resources. By Year 6, pupils organise school events to raise money for charity. A strong moral code is successfully passed on through assembly. Social harmony is promoted through the very many opportunities pupils have to work and discuss together. For example, Year 6 pupils hear younger pupils read, and older and younger children mix happily at playtime. The richness of the school's ethnic mix is a constant source of celebration.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Grade

### *Inspection judgement*

<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>3</b>
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	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	4
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
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	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	4

<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>3</b>
The governance of the school	4
The leadership of the headteacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	3

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