

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **SUMMERHILL PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Maghull, Liverpool

LEA area: Sefton

Unique reference number: 104882

Headteacher: Mrs L Nelson

Lead inspector: Mrs J E Platt

Dates of inspection: 26 – 28 January 2004

Inspection number: 258062

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:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	206
School address:	Poverty Lane Maghull Liverpool Merseyside
Postcode:	L31 3DT
Telephone number:	0151 5261343
Fax number:	0151 5265958
Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr W Palmer
Date of previous inspection:	26 April 1999

## **CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL**

Summerhill Primary School is an average sized school providing education for 206 boys and girls. It is situated in Maghull which is an area slightly more advantaged than the national picture. A very small number of pupils are from minority ethnic groups and none of these pupils needs help because English is not their first spoken language. The number of pupils entitled to free school meals is average. Forty three (21 per cent) pupils are on the school's register of special educational needs and one pupil has a formal Statement of Special Educational Need. Concerns include specific and moderate learning difficulties. Children start the school with a range of pre-school experiences but overall attainment is average with strengths in speaking and listening and social skills. In 2000/2001 the school received Achievement Award for improvement in results in national tests.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
11565	Mrs J E Platt	Lead inspector	English Special educational needs English as an additional language
9399	Mr R Watts	Lay inspector	
27777	Mr R Greenall	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Humanities
22740	Mrs M Leah	Team inspector	Science Areas of learning in the Foundation Stage Creative, aesthetic, practical and physical subjects Religious education

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a **good** school with several very good features. Achievement is good and pupils leave school with standards which are above average. The overall quality of teaching is good especially in the reception class and the juniors and learning is most effective in these classes. Leadership from the headteacher and governing body is very good. This has been very successful in raising the community's confidence in the school which is now oversubscribed. This has been achieved on a low budget and hence **the school provides very good value for money.**

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Achievement is good in the juniors in English, mathematics and science and standards are above average. Overall achievement in the infants is satisfactory but higher attaining pupils especially are underachieving. Standards in Year 2 are average except in mathematics which are below average.
- Standards in information and communication technology are above average throughout the school.
- Teaching in the reception class and juniors is challenging and learning is good. Teaching in the infants is satisfactory but expectations are not always high enough to ensure effective learning. Teachers mark pupils' work but only a few comments tell pupils how to make their work better.
- The headteacher has developed a strong team spirit with a clear vision and determination to raise standards and there is a happy, community feeling in the school.
- Pupils enjoy school and work hard because of the rich variety of experiences and focus on personal development. Relationships are very good and Year 6 pupils show great maturity.
- The school has a very good partnership with parents who have raised considerable funds to enhance accommodation and improve resources.

Improvement since the school was last inspected has been good. Very good improvement has been made in raising standards in information and communication technology and enhancing resources throughout the school. Governors have fully resolved previous concerns and now play a very full role in decision-making. The improvement in writing in the infants has been satisfactory but the lack of challenge for higher attaining pupils remains an area needing attention. Assessment procedures are now satisfactory and these are being improved to make it easier to track progress.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Year 6 results

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

*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.*

Overall achievement is **good**.

These test results show very high standards in Year 6. Results are high because approximately half of the pupils exceeded the expected level. The trend in results has been above the national picture. Current standards in Year 6 are not quite as high because of the ability of this cohort.

Nevertheless, standards are above average and achievement is good. Current, standards in Year 2 are average in reading, writing and science and below average in mathematics. Overall achievement in the infants is satisfactory but higher attaining pupils are underachieving and this is holding down the school's overall standards especially in mathematics. Children in the reception class get off to a good start. Achievement is good and many reach the level expected for them and exceed it in language and literacy, personal and social skills and their knowledge and understanding of the world. Pupils with special educational needs receive effective support and make good progress towards the targets set for them.

Overall provision for pupils' personal development including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **good**. Pupils have a mutual respect for each other and the environment in which they live. Behaviour is very good and pupils are self-assured and confident. Pupils show a genuine eagerness to learn and extend their knowledge. Attendance and punctuality are good.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

The school provides a **good** quality of education.

The overall quality of teaching is **good**. In most lessons seen teaching was good or better. Teaching is best in the reception class and the juniors where lessons are brisk and teachers have high expectations for their pupils. Pupils enjoy this challenge and work to their full capacity. The overall quality of teaching in the infants is satisfactory although in mathematics it is unsatisfactory. Teachers there do not always make effective use of assessment information to set tasks that match pupils' ability and this does not lead to effective learning. Throughout the school the management of pupils is based on positive encouragement so pupils learn in a calm atmosphere. Overall procedures to assess pupils' progress are satisfactory. Teachers offer good advice in lessons but comments in books do not always make it clear to pupils how to improve. Teaching assistants play a very positive role in the school. Their warm relationships and experience are effective in supporting many of the pupils with special educational needs and enable them to play a full part in lessons.

The curriculum is good. Staff imaginatively link different subjects so that learning is more relevant. This is most effective in the teaching of information and communication technology. A very good range of clubs, visits and visitors enrich the curriculum. Accommodation and resources have greatly improved and are now very good. Staff know pupils well and provide very good support. Partnership with parents is very good and they make a major contribution to their children' learning. Links with other schools are very good and the school works closely with the local community.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

The overall quality of leadership and management is **good** with some very good features. Governors share a wealth of experience which contributes very effectively to the school. They give willingly of their time and are fully aware of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Leadership from the headteacher is very good. She is an inspirational leader and has very successfully developed a team approach to decision making. Management is good especially of the needs of pupils with special educational needs, information and communication and technology and literacy. Other subjects are soundly led.

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

Parents are very pleased with the education their children receive. Pupils enjoy school and appreciate the warm relationships established with staff which make the school a happy community.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- Raise achievement in the infants especially in mathematics and for the higher attaining pupils in writing and science.
- Improve teaching in the infants by matching work more closely to pupils' needs.
- In Years 1 and 2 track pupils' progress against the level expected for these pupils nationally and make more reference to pupils' individual targets so that they are more involved in their learning.
- Throughout the school to include more comments when marking pupils' work so that they know how to improve their work.



## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

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

Overall achievement is **good**. Children in the Foundation Stage<sup>1</sup> exceed the level expected for their age. Standards are above average in Year 6 and average in Year 2 except in mathematics which is below average.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- From an average starting point children in the Foundation Stage make good progress.
- Achievement is good in Years 3 to 6 and results of national tests have been very high.
- Overall achievement in Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory but higher attaining pupils are not making enough progress.
- Standards in mathematics in Year 2 are below average.
- Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are above average throughout the school.
- Pupils with special educational needs make good progress.

#### Commentary

1. Recent changes in the Foundation Stage have led to children experiencing a stimulating range of activities with a focus on learning through practical activities. This combined with good teaching ensures the children get off to a good start to their education. They exceed the early learning goals<sup>2</sup> in their personal and social skills, speaking and listening, reading and knowledge and understanding and reach the expected level in other areas of learning. The class is an exciting place to be and children quickly learn to relate to each other and make very good progress in their social development and this contributes to their overall good achievement.

#### **Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 – average point scores<sup>3</sup> in 2003**

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	29.9 (27.5)	26.8 (27.0)
Mathematics	29.1 (28.9)	26.8 (26.7)
Science	29.7 (29.2)	28.6 (28.3)

*There were 31 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

<sup>1</sup> Foundation Stage begins when children start in the nursery and finishes at the end of the reception class.

<sup>2</sup> Early learning goals are the expectations for most children to reach by the end of the Foundation Stage. They refer mainly to achievements children make in connection with communication, language and literacy; mathematical development; personal, social and emotional development; knowledge and understanding of the world; physical and creative development.

<sup>3</sup> Average point scores. The average point score provides schools with a single statistic to compare the overall grades by all of their pupils with the grades attained by pupils in another school as well as an average for all schools nationally. The score is obtained from the National Curriculum level attained by pupils in the national assessments. For example, in mathematics pupils are awarded 9 points for a Level 1, 15 points for Level 2 and 21 points for Level 3. The average score is then calculated by adding up all of the points and dividing by the number of pupils.

- The grid shows that test results in 2003 were outstanding. Compared with similar schools the results were well above average in these subjects and in fact in English the results were in the top five per cent in the country. These high results are closely linked to the challenging teaching in Year 6 which led to approximately half of the pupils exceeding the level expected for their age. Trends in results are above the national picture. Results suggested boys were underachieving. The school's analysis shows this was not the case and several boys were very close to reaching above average standards. The school does not expect results to be as high this year because more pupils in Year 6 have special educational needs. Nevertheless, standards are above average in English, mathematics and science and achievement is good.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	16.2 (16.1)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	16.2 (15.4)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	16.6 (16.9)	16.3 (16.5)

*There were 30 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

- Test results in Year 2 in 2003 were average in reading and mathematics when compared with all schools and schools with a similar intake. Standards in writing were well above average. In all subjects too many pupils only just reached the level expected for their age and this held down the school's overall performance. Current standards in Year 2 are not as high as the test results and are average in reading, writing and science and below average in mathematics. Although, overall achievement is satisfactory the lack of challenge in the teaching does not encourage higher attaining pupils to make the progress of which many are capable. This underachievement is more significant in mathematics where teaching was unsatisfactory and tasks set do not enable pupils to go at their own pace. There is no difference in the attainment of boys and girls.
- Very effective leadership of ICT has dramatically raised standards in the school since the last inspection. Standards are now above average in Years 2 and 6 and pupils make good progress.
- Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because of the well-organised support they receive. Sessions are tailored to their individual needs and progress recorded and monitored in their detailed individual education plans. Support staff make effective use of practical activities and ICT to make these extra sessions stimulating and so learning is effective. Those needing an additional boost in their reading benefit from involvement in the *Better Reading Partnership* which enables them to catch up with their classmates. The school also provides well for pupils identified as academically gifted. In the juniors they are moved to higher classes for literacy and numeracy and this flexibility enables them to mix with their peers socially as well as fully extend their academic skills. Pupils talented in art, music and sport are catered for well with additional tuition from experts. This has resulted in some high standards and examples of art on display are proof of the effectiveness of this support.

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

Attendance and punctuality are **good**. Pupils have **very good** attitudes towards their school and behave **very well**. Their personal development is **good**. Provision for spiritual development is **good**, for social and moral development is **very good** and cultural development is **satisfactory**.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school has taken effective action to improve overall attendance and punctuality.
- Pupils are very interested in their work and accept responsibility willingly.
- The school expects pupils to behave and they respond very well to the ethos that the school provides. Relationships are very good.
- Pupils experience a wide range of cultures but do not relate those sufficiently to everyday life in modern Britain.

## Commentary

6. Pupils enjoy coming to school. Parents are lavish in praise of the motivation the school provides. There is very little unauthorised absence and few, if any, pupils are late. The school has rigorous procedures for monitoring attendance and rewarding good attenders. The closing of all external doors apart from the main entrance as soon as school starts has dramatically reduced lateness. When asked, pupils could think of little they would improve about their school. They appreciate the help that teachers give them to improve and the companionship of friends who are cheerful and rarely unkind to each other.

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

Authorised absence	
School data	4.7
National data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	
School data	0.0
National data	0.4

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

7. When the children in the reception class arrive at school they immediately start to socialise and enjoy the learning opportunities provided. They work at activities with enthusiasm, because the staff make learning exiting and relevant, join in question and answer sessions and are learning to wait until asked for an answer. In the rest of the school, pupils are attentive in lessons and keen to answer questions. They generally work hard and try to solve problems. When lessons are less exciting pupils' interest wanes and in the infants some work in history and geography is not presented neatly. Older pupils often ask perceptive questions, which enables teachers to develop learning more quickly. Pupils' overall behaviour is very good and teachers rarely have to correct them. Pupils willingly accept the many responsibilities offered, for example, the play leaders who have been trained to help *lost souls* in the playground. They collect money for a variety of charities and take their work on the school environment very seriously.
8. All pupils feel valued as individuals and respond with equal respect to all staff, whether teachers or lunchtime supervisors. Although there are almost no ethnic minority pupils in the school, pupils show they are tolerant and respect others' beliefs and feelings.
9. The school raises pupils' spiritual and social awareness through assemblies and class sessions in which they discuss personal issues. Pupils understand right from wrong and talk confidently about their feelings and the impact of their actions on others. Good teaching is often successful because it lifts pupils' spirits, raises their self-esteem and encourages them to share the experiences of others. For example, Year 3 pupils in a science lesson made good progress in their investigative skills because the teacher encouraged and valued all their ideas for conducting the experiment on hardness of rocks.
10. Pupils participate enthusiastically in art and music and older pupils in particular write poems that are thoughtful and show a good perception of the beauty of nature. They sing and dance for audiences outside the school. Classrooms are alive with art and artefacts from a

wide range of cultures from Ancient Egypt to Australian aborigines, but there are few examples of classical European art. Their knowledge of the traditions of other main cultures found in Britain today is superficial and they have little understanding of the significance of these, for example, of the current discussion on the importance to Muslims of wearing headscarves.

#### ***Ethnic background of pupils***

#### ***Exclusions in the last school year***

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	203	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	1	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	2	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. This is the result of good teaching, a rich curriculum, very good attention to pupils' welfare and a very close partnership with parents.

#### **Teaching and learning**

The overall quality of teaching and learning is **good**. Procedures to assess progress are **satisfactory** overall with some good features in the Foundation Stage and the juniors but is unsatisfactory in the infants.

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

- Children in the Foundation Stage get off to a flying start because of the warm relationships and effective teaching.
- Teachers in Years 3 to 6 have high expectations of their pupils and this significantly increases the rate of learning.
- Teaching is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2 but lessons are not sufficiently challenging and this does not encourage effective learning especially in mathematics.
- Teaching of ICT is good and teachers make good use of ICT to support learning in many subjects.
- Assessment information is not giving a clear picture of progress through the year. In Year 2 records are not closely matched to the level expected for this age so it is difficult to compare pupils' standards to national levels.
- Teachers offer good advice as pupils work but marking is not telling pupils how to improve.

#### **Commentary**

##### ***Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 29 lessons***

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	6	16	6	1	0	0

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

11. The grid above shows that teaching was good in a high number of lessons seen. More good and very good teaching was seen during this inspection than identified in the last report but the weaknesses in the infants have not been fully resolved.

### *Teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage*

12. Teaching seen was consistently good and often very good and is the major factor for the good progress children make in the reception class. All staff have a good understanding of how young children learn and the focus is very much on practical activities and first hand experiences. A strength in the teaching is the team approach with everyone having a clear understanding about their role so that the day runs smoothly. The room is organised well to encourage independence and staff have high expectations of children's behaviour and social skills. Consequently, children learn to accept responsibility for small duties and to work collaboratively. Children have a secure knowledge of letters and their sounds because these are taught through practical activities which capture children's interest. Staff also encourage counting throughout the day so children learn their numbers in meaningful situations.

### *Teaching and learning in Years 1 and 2*

13. The overall quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. There are pockets of good teaching especially in the teaching of ICT and in Year 1 in the consolidation of pupils' knowledge of number, letters and sounds. A positive feature is the warm relationships that teachers have with their pupils so that pupils feel comfortable and confident to ask questions to clarify any misunderstandings. Planning is satisfactory. However, the intended outcomes of activities are often expressed in terms of what the children will do rather than what they will learn. This results in teachers being unsure about the learning focus of the activities that they supervise. When teaching seen was unsatisfactory the pace of lessons was not lively enough to maintain pupils' interest and in Year 2 this led to pupils becoming restless and not sticking at their work. A contributory factor to this restlessness is the lack of challenge for the higher attaining pupils who find the work too easy and so lose enthusiasm for learning. This especially limits achievement in mathematics because tasks set give little scope for interpretation and this leads to some pupils plodding through work which is too easy rather than going at their own pace.

### *Teaching and learning in Years 3 to 6*

14. In almost every lesson seen the teaching was at least good. The major reason for teaching being better in these lessons is the teachers' very high expectations that challenge pupils. In Year 6 the teacher's determination to get the very best from the pupils shines through. The pace of learning is brisk with time constraints set so a buzz of activity is present as pupils strive to complete their work. Teachers are imaginative in their presentations and drama is often included which adds that extra dimension to capture pupils' interest. The imaginative *science laboratory* in Year 3 sets the scene for an exciting day and pupils are constantly kept involved with a variety of stimulating ideas. Relationships between teachers and pupils are very good and based on mutual respect. Humour and joshing is a regular part of lessons that makes learning enjoyable. Although the planning system is the same as in the infants teachers in the juniors break down the weekly plan into more manageable chunks or keep informal notes which make it clear what the outcome of each lessons is. These outcomes are shared with pupils and then revisited in the conclusions at the end of lessons. These conclusions are generally effective but occasionally are too long and the overall focus of consolidation in learning is lost in the celebration of achievement.
15. Marking of work throughout the school was a minor weakness which was identified in the last inspection and this issue has not been resolved in all classes. Teachers effectively intervene whilst pupils are working in order to challenge their thinking, pose open questions leading pupils forward while they work. However, this good practice is not always seen in the marking of pupils' work and this leaves pupils unsure how they can correct errors and improve their work.

16. Teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good because teachers and support staff work closely together to help these pupils. Individual education plans exist for these pupils and these are well structured and helpful as they set clear targets linked to pupils' identified needs. Support staff maintain individual records for the pupils they support and when one target is achieved another is set so pupils make good progress.
17. Since the last inspection the school has improved assessment procedures and these are now satisfactory with some good features. The individual profile is a useful collection of information that shows the progress pupils make. It includes examples of work which have been closely marked and used to identify individual targets for improvement. In Years 3 to 6 these targets are referred to regularly by staff so that pupils are aware of the next steps they need to take to improve. This is less successful in Years 1 and 2 because targets are not written in child friendly language and pupils are not reminded of what they need to do to improve. In the juniors teachers are guided in their assessments by the use of additional tests at the end of each year. This enables teachers to track progress and compare pupils' levels to the average expected nationally for their age. This is not the case in Years 1 and 2 and so the teacher in Year 2 does not have any records of the levels pupils are expected to gain in the end of year assessments. This means the link between ability and planning is unclear and is a contributory factor for tasks being set that do not closely match ability.

## **The curriculum**

The overall quality of the curriculum is **good**. Provision for enrichment, including extra-curricular activities, is very **good**. The accommodation is **very good**, and the curriculum is supported by resources of **very good** range and quality. The school has a **good** number of experienced staff.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The overall curriculum is clearly planned, carefully monitored and developed so that its richness is particularly relevant to the school's needs and aims.
- The provision for the development of reading skills is good.
- Opportunities for investigational work and problem solving in mathematics and science are limited.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good and learning support assistants make a valuable contribution to learning.
- The very good range of extra-curricular activities and enrichment during the school day support the development of the whole child and are a particular strength of the school.
- Resources and accommodation have been considerably improved since the last inspection.

## **Commentary**

18. Statutory requirements are met in all subjects.
19. The school provides a rich curriculum which promotes the all round development of each pupil. Subjects are carefully integrated to provide rich relevant experiences from which pupils learn well. The senior management team regularly review the progress of action plans drawn up with subject co-ordinators. This ensures that the school responds to national and local needs and the curriculum continues to provide a secure yet exciting framework for learning.
20. The curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage is lively and stimulating. Whilst appropriate emphasis is given to personal, social and emotional development, and communication, language and literacy, a rich variety of first-hand, practical experiences is well organised to promote learning effectively in all areas. The only drawback is the very limited provision for outdoor play.

21. In Years 1 to 6 the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies are fully implemented and providing useful guidance for teachers. The school supplements the numeracy strategy with a commercial scheme and some teachers follow this too closely and fail to adjust work to the ability of the pupils. This especially restricts progress in Year 2. The organisation of the curriculum to promote reading skills is effective and individual support and booster groups are well organised to meet specific needs. In Year 2, opportunities are limited for pupils to use and apply their knowledge in mathematics or to become independent in investigational skills in science. This hinders progress in these areas. Since the previous inspection, there has been a great improvement in the ICT curriculum. Use of ICT is planned efficiently in many subjects. This enhances learning across the curriculum as well as promoting skill development in ICT itself.
22. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good and enables pupils to make good progress towards the targets in their individual education plans. The school employs a generous number of learning support assistants who provide very good support for the pupils in class and in withdrawal groups. School based training is used effectively to enhance staff's skills to meet the school's particular needs. For example, support assistants lead individual reading sessions and these are extremely well organised and effective in raising standards. Teachers are eager to extend their knowledge and attend training so that they are fully informed about the specific needs of their pupils. This has been most effective in organising classrooms and planning tasks that support pupils and enable them to have full access to the curriculum.
23. Extra-curricular provision is very good. There is a very wide range of after school and lunchtime clubs which include a variety of sports, art and music as well as computer and science. A residential visit effectively promotes social skills and independence in Year 6, and well planned educational visits and interesting visitors support the curriculum effectively. Peripatetic lessons in woodwind, keyboard and percussion help some pupils develop their musical talents. All pupils from Year 2 onwards learn French or Italian which is teaching them not only the language but more about life in these countries.
24. The accommodation and resources have been greatly improved since the previous inspection. In particular, the new computer suite, library and withdrawal rooms all provide very good resources for learning. The school is now a very attractive place to learn and this includes the imaginative garden areas. The school gives good attention to ensuring the building is accessible to pupils with physical disabilities.

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

Procedures for ensuring pupils' care welfare and safety are **very good**. The school gives **good** support and guidance for pupils based on the monitoring of their achievements and personal development and consults pupils **very well** on what they would like to see improved.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Individual pupils are well cared for and supported in their personal development.
- The very caring, family ethos of the school ensures that all pupils can turn to an adult for advice.
- Induction arrangements for new pupils are very good and pupils feel themselves very much part of the school community.
- The school sets pupils individual literacy and numeracy targets so that they know how to improve their work. These are being more effective in the juniors than in the infants.



## Commentary

25. The school is a very happy, secure place where pupils feel confident and are hence able to learn. Most pupils in the survey for the inspection agree that there is an adult they can turn to if they have concerns. Conversations with pupils and parents confirm that they could rely on staff to resolve minor conflicts and personal worries. Teachers and pupils have regular discussions in Circle Time<sup>4</sup> and also discuss any issues that have arisen within the class. Staff know the pupils very well and support them sensitively individually. They work well together, teachers using consistent rewards and sanctions so that pupils know exactly where they stand. The pupils appreciate the fairness and security that this promotes. Systems for supporting pupils with behavioural or emotional problems are very good and have a very strong element of motivation by praise. For example, currently some pupils have *Catch me* sheets on which staff can reward them for a specific behaviour, even a smile at the start of the day for a reluctant starter. Pupils are given targets in English and mathematics so that they know what they have to do to achieve better standards. These work well for the junior pupils because teachers refer regularly to the pupils' target cards which are highly visible. In the reception class children have a simpler, but effective system. Targets in Years 1 and 2 are not written in language that pupils understand and teachers are not reminding pupils of them and so they are less effective. Pupils said they were unsure how to improve their work.
26. The premises are formally inspected each term for safety hazards and any necessary remedial action taken promptly. The school lacks procedures for formally assessing risks when taking pupils on educational and residential visits. The school is well aware of this omission and is carrying out a thorough consultation and planning audit to ensure staff are fully aware of the procedures. All equipment is correctly maintained. Child protection procedures are effective and all staff have been trained which resolves a minor concern from the previous inspection.
27. Before their children start school in the reception class, parents have the opportunity to visit the school. They are given good information about routines and procedures. The actual process of starting is phased in and if the need arises, parents can stay and support their child. As a result, children quickly and happily settle into the routines of school life.
28. Pupils from Years 2 to 6 are elected to the school council, which discusses a wide range of issues. The election process itself is good preparation for citizenship with candidates having to persuade the voters of their worth. They feel valued by the staff and can see the fruits of their efforts when suggestions for changes are adopted. They are encouraged to back up some ideas by raising money to implement them. Pupils put ideas into suggestion or worry boxes and contribute towards consultations, such as school uniform changes, on the school's web site.

## Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Pupils benefit from **very good** links with parents and with other schools. Links with the community are **good** and contribute well to school life.

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<sup>4</sup> Circle Time – during Circle Time pupils discuss a wide range of personal and general issues. It is agreed by all pupils that no interruptions should occur and only one person will speak at a time. Respect for other pupils' views will occur at all times and therefore pupils feel confident that they can talk free from any form of interference of interruption from other children.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school provides very good general information to parents but pupil reports require some improvement.
- Parents provide very good support at home for their children's work and work well with staff to raise their standards.
- The liaison between the staff of this school and other educational establishments is very good and enriches the curriculum.
- The local community offers much practical support to the school.

## Commentary

29. When their child starts school, parents receive comprehensive information about what is taught, and how it is taught, for example how letters are formed in writing. This is updated by interesting class newsletters. This enables parents to give very good help at home. Parents are also sent practical information in regular newsletters and on the school's web site. This web site is also used as an effective vehicle for consultation. Both parents and pupils can e-mail the school with specific queries or answer specific questions about aspects of school life. Staff and governors mingle with parents at social events and at the annual open evening. They take this opportunity to canvass parental opinions. Parents feel that their views are valued.
30. The annual pupil reports are satisfactory. They describe what pupils have learnt in the year in all subjects as well as giving a perceptive comment on their personal development. The last inspection identified some inconsistency in the quality of comments in these reports and this continues to be the case. Some are detailed but the use of a computer comment bank makes some reports appear stilted and for some pupils appear to be rather discouraging. Parents have noticed that comments are repetitious and feel that the words don't always value their child as an individual. This is in contrast to the reality. Parents found last year's reception reports incomprehensible and so the school plans to radically change the way these are presented. Parents also have regular formal opportunities to meet the teacher to discuss their child's work. The structure of these also caused some concerns last year, but again the school is listening to parents and is changing the system.
31. Almost all parents hear their child read at home and give very good support with this and other homework. Parents of children in the reception class often complete a diary when their child takes home the class toy. This forms the basis for class discussion and effectively improves the children's communication skills. A good number of parents, as well as other adult volunteers, give valued support in classrooms and around the school, hearing readers or supporting groups in lessons. The Friends of the School organise fund-raising and social events that contribute to resources and parents have raised very substantial amounts which are matched by the authority for the renovation of the building.
32. The school calls on local people to broaden pupils' experiences and bring lessons to life, for example in art and English. In particular there are good links with local churches and clergymen and others talk to pupils about their work and beliefs. Pupils visit churches for festivals and significant events, such as a baptism in the Baptist Church. A 'Teachers in Industry' organisation uses the school to pilot educational programmes, such as electrical safety, given by a power generation company. Local business help raise funds which again have helped improve resources.
33. The reception teacher has good relationships with local nurseries and playgroups. Staff visit the children before they start and they visit the school so that they settle happily when they start school. Staff liaise well with other primary schools, co-operating in developing the

curriculum, such as the literacy project with the Network Learning Group. The school has drawn upon expert support from local Beacon School<sup>5</sup> which has been very successful in helping to raise standards in ICT and creating an exiting environment in the Foundation Stage. Links with secondary school benefit learning in many subjects for example creative and dramatic arts, sports and ICT. When pupils transfer they are helped by effective information which helps the transfer to go smoothly.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The overall quality of leadership and management is **good**. Leadership by the headteacher is **very good** and many changes have been effectively introduced under the leadership of the new headteacher. Governance is **very good**. Management from the headteacher and key staff is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The very purposeful leadership from the headteacher promotes a strong team spirit in the school.
- The commitment from governors is very good and they are determined to provide the very best for the pupils.
- The management of the needs of pupils with special educational needs is very good.
- The headteacher is eager to take on new ideas especially in the use of ICT to streamline self-evaluation and strategic planning.
- Most subjects are well managed but the management of mathematics in the infants fails to give enough attention to raising standards.
- Financial management is very good and money is spent wisely with very good attention given to the principle of best value.

### Commentary

34. The headteacher has a very clear vision for the school. She communicates clearly and consults staff and takes on board their ideas so that all feel a valued member of the community. The headteacher shows a vast appetite for hard work and has been instrumental in improving and extending the school's accommodation. This has raised morale in the staff as well as confidence in the community. Consequently, numbers have risen in the school and instead of having falling rolls the school is now oversubscribed. Parents are justified in their confidence in the leadership of the school.
35. A weakness at the time of the last inspection was the involvement of the governing body. This is certainly not the case now. The governors' response was instant and sub-committees set up so that duties are now carried out in an extremely organised and thorough way. Governors have played a major part in the improvements in the school. A major strength is their ability to work independently and lead initiatives for the benefit of the school. They have high levels of personal and professional expertise which they share willingly. This can best be illustrated by the marketing sub-committee which takes every opportunity to promote the school in the locality. Governors are linked with a class and this enables them to gain a fully informed picture of the school's many strengths and areas needing attention.
36. Leadership from subject co-ordinators is variable but satisfactory overall. The work of the ICT co-ordinator shows what can be done to initiate change. Resources and teaching have improved and so standards are now above average. Leadership of other subjects is limited by new appointments and staff changes and so as yet staff have not fully developed their

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<sup>5</sup> Schools are awarded Beacon status to raise standards in schools by improving communication and sharing and spreading good practice.

management role. English is managed effectively with a great determination to raise standards. However, mathematics is not effectively managed in the infants because insufficient attention is being given to evaluating that the initiatives identified in the action plan are having an effect on standards.

37. There is no cycle of planning for the school improvement plan because of the way the school uses the new computer software. All monitoring and evaluation is carried out using this software and so self-evaluation is on-going and is at the heart of all decision making. The senior management team make a positive contribution to this planning process and they meet regularly to evaluate progress, update information and prepare reports for staff and governors. This system of planning is most effective because it is on-going and flexible. Action plans drawn up by staff are very easy to follow and the headteacher has added costing to the system so that spending is linked closely to identified need.
38. The school embraces inclusion for all pupils. This is very evident in the provision for pupils with special educational needs. This provision is managed very well by a new co-ordinator who has carried out a detailed audit of procedures to support these pupils. Records are now meticulous and a strength is in the diary of support maintained by support assistants. The co-ordinator meets regularly with these staff to check on the quality of support and this ensures pupils are receiving effective help to meet their needs in their individual education plans.
39. Overall management of the school is good. Performance management is fully in place. Funding is very tight and currently the school is struggling to provide funds for external training. Nevertheless, training has been provided and is closely linked to identified need. Although not involved in performance management support staff are fully included in training. Many have taken advantage of this to extend their own skills and this is of great benefit to the school.
40. The school monitors its performance well by analysing the results of national tests. This information is used effectively in the juniors to adjust the curriculum when a potential weakness is identified. This analysis of performance is not as effective in Year 2 because the school is not checking closely how pupils are performing against national expectations. Currently, there is no overall record to check that the pupils in Year 2 are making as much progress as possible. The school is tackling this loophole in their assessment procedures with a new computer program which should provide a clear record of progress.
41. The systems to monitor teachings' planning and to observe the quality of teaching are yielding valuable information. This has led to additional training and sharing of skills when a weaknesses is identified. Nevertheless, an element of unsatisfactory teaching remains because not all staff show equal commitment to raising standards and so are not acting upon recommended changes.
42. Financial monitoring is very good. The headteacher is constantly seeking ways to raise additional funds. The school maintains a good level of staff especially support staff and manages its budget effectively. Clear plans are in place to continue the refurbishment of the school. Governors clearly understand the principles of best value and consult widely before making any major spending decisions. They recognise the financial implications of keeping the number on roll high and work tirelessly to help the school achieve this aim.

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

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	488,022
Total expenditure	475,744
Expenditure per pupil	2,366

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	23,710
Balance carried forward to the next	37,021

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

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

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

The learning environment in the Foundation Stage classroom is particularly attractive and stimulating. The teacher and learning support assistant work closely together to provide challenging practical activities which promote learning successfully across all areas. A good balance of adult directed tasks and opportunities encourage independent structured play. There are, however, very limited opportunities to use the outdoor area as a learning resource. The school currently sees this, rightly, as an area for development and has an action plan in place to improve facilities. Staff monitor children's progress carefully and plan work which closely meets their needs. Close links with the private nursery on site and gradual admission arrangements help children settle quickly into school life. Leadership and management are effective in establishing a clear vision and action plan.

Children's attainment when they start school is broadly average with a slight weakness in mathematical development. Achievement is good due to effective teaching. The vast majority of the children reach the nationally expected standards in each area of learning by the time they start in Year 1. They reach above average standards in personal and social skills, speaking and listening, reading and knowledge and understanding of the world. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because their needs are identified early and staff set clear targets to help them to improve.

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

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

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

- Pupils achieve very well due to very good teaching.
- Very good relationships between adults and children promote self-esteem so that children become increasingly confident and independent learners.
- Opportunities for co-operative and collaborative work are strongly promoted.

#### **Commentary**

43. This area of learning is rightly given high priority across the curriculum. Adults treat children and their ideas with respect and use praise and encouragement effectively to reward effort. As a result, children try hard to please and are developing positive attitudes to learning. Activities are carefully planned to promote independence. Resources are accessible so that children successfully learn to make choices and select equipment for themselves. Staff make clear their high expectations and class rules are consistently established and frequently reinforced. Consequently, children are happy and secure in a well managed and organised environment. Through efficiently organised group activities, like sharing ideas in the imaginative play area, children become good at co-operating and collaborating with others. Good opportunities to take responsibility as monitors are taken up with enthusiasm and children respond positively to staff's expectations that they all tidy up at the end of sessions. Pupils learn to appreciate the diversity of cultures through high quality imaginative play in areas like the Soreti Mud Hut. However, there is a danger of roles becoming stereotyped and children believing that all people in Africa live like this.

## COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching leads to good overall achievement.
- Speaking and listening skills are promoted strongly across the curriculum.
- The structured teaching of letters and their sounds leads to good progress in reading.

### Commentary

44. The teacher uses questions effectively to ensure that all children are challenged to join in daily *Newstime* sessions. Imaginative use is made of the class diary, which each child takes home in turn, to focus discussion. All are keen to be chosen, and ask or answer questions with clarity. The teacher provides very positive feedback, '*That was a very good question*', which promotes confidence. Adults intervene effectively in role-play to promote language development, and children report back confidently on their activities at the end of sessions. Most children listen attentively. They concentrate and show good understanding of adult and other children's comments. Teaching of letters and their sounds is good. Brisk well focused sessions, concentrate on the *sound of the week*. As a result, children have good recall of the sounds already learnt. These sessions, together with a range of purposeful follow-up activities, promote early reading skills successfully. Most children suggest words beginning with *P* accurately and higher attainers spell out simple words like *pen* orally. They are beginning to make good use of their knowledge of letters and their sounds in their writing.

## MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve well due to good teaching.
- Incidental opportunities are seized across the curriculum to promote number skills.
- Imaginative teaching of shape and pattern heightens children's interest and leads to good progress.

### Commentary

45. Whole-class, group and individual activities are clearly focused and well organised to promote mathematical skills. Teachers plan work carefully to build on what children already know, so that steady progress is made in counting and matching. Staff also take every opportunity throughout the day to promote number skills meaningfully, for instance, checking their groups of four in a physical education lesson, or finding out how many more reward stickers a pupil needs to reach the desired ten. Most children recite numbers reliably to 10 and many to 20 with a few higher attainers confidently count beyond this. Most children are beginning use their skills to carry out simple calculations, such as to add two sets of objects correctly by counting. Higher attainers are competent at subtraction with numbers up to 10. Children's knowledge of shapes and pattern is good because of the interesting input from adults and the stimulating, attractive reinforcement activities provided.

## KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- In response to good teaching children's achievement is good.
- The rich classroom environment is imaginatively planned to engage children's interest and promote independent learning.
- Insufficient use is made of the outdoor area as a learning resource.
- Oral and written questions are used effectively to provoke thought and extend children's ideas.

### Commentary

46. Opportunities to explore what magnets can do in the *space laboratory* are carefully structured by stimulating questions, such as *do magnets work through water?* or *can you make the arrows move with the magnet?* Children respond enthusiastically and confidently to find out for themselves using the carefully prepared resources. Teachers effectively support children on the computers and many can now use the computer independently and are competent at controlling objects on screen with the mouse. Group activities, for instance, making fruit salad are carefully planned so that children use their senses of touch, sight, smell and taste to learn about familiar and exotic fruit. The learning support assistant ensures children observe closely through perceptive questioning. Expectations are high and good opportunities are grasped to extend children's speaking and listening skills as well as their ability to compare and contrast. Stories and role-play activities are used effectively to raise children's awareness of other cultures. Adverse weather conditions prevented use of the secure outdoor area during the inspection. However, planning for outdoor learning is at an early stage and is not well developed.

## PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **satisfactory**. Overall achievement is sound.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good and staff manage pupils well.
- Good use is made of the school hall for physical education and dance lessons.
- Children enjoy physical activity and produce some creative dance movements.
- Limited outdoor play facilities affects progress in the development of gross motor skills.

### Commentary

47. The teacher successfully employs a range of positive strategies to manage children in physical education lessons in the hall. As a result, children perform energetically but also safely. Very good opportunities are provided for the children to collaborate in pairs or fours so that they share the large space with good awareness of others. The teacher's precise instructions and carefully chosen demonstrations by other children enable children to improve their own performances. They are imaginative in response to *'happy, sad or angry'* music and move rhythmically with good control of their bodies. Progress in some aspects, for instance, in controlling large wheeled toys is hampered by the lack of opportunities. The pace of lessons is too slow when the children take a long time to undress and the teacher's introduction goes on too long. Challenging tasks are set which enable children to use tools adeptly and safely. For example, under close supervision, they use knives competently to cut up fruit for the fruit salad.

## CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

No sessions were observed and so no judgement can be made about teaching or the overall provision in this area of learning. However, evidence from the quality of role-play observed and from the art work on display indicates that children are in line to reach the early learning goals by the time they start in Year 1. The attractive role-play areas and thoughtfully chosen dressing-up materials stimulate the children's imaginations very well. In independent play children take on roles imaginatively, such as princes and princesses. Sensitive intervention by staff helps extend children's ideas to act out a simple narrative based on a traditional tale with a happy ending.

## SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

### ENGLISH

The overall provision in English is **good**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement in Years 3 to 6 is good and pupils reach above average standards. In Years 1 and 2 overall achievement is satisfactory and standards are average. Higher attaining pupils are underachieving in writing.
- Pupils with special educational needs make good progress.
- Teaching and learning are good overall although in Years 1 and 2 teaching is not fully challenging pupils.
- Assessment procedures in Years 1 and 2 are not being used effectively to track pupils' progress and match work to pupils' ability.
- Leadership and management are good and the co-ordinator has successfully improved resources and assessment procedures.

#### Commentary

48. Good teaching and learning in Years 3 to 6 have enabled the school to build on the high standards identified in the last inspection. All aspects of English are now above average which reflects an improvement in writing. Standards are not quite as high as the most recent test results because this class includes more pupils with special educational needs. Nevertheless, achievement is good and many are working extremely hard in response to the high expectations of the Year 6 teacher. Standards in speaking and listening are above average because teachers provide many opportunities to extend speaking and listening skills, not only in literacy lessons but across the curriculum. For example, in Year 3 pupils acted the characters of Theseus and the Minotaur and pupils planned questions showing great confidence speaking in front of the class as well as an informed knowledge of the story. Reading is a regular part of the day. Pupils' records in Year 6 show not only high standards but an enthusiasm for reading. Many have favourite authors and can explain the reasons for their preference. They are very clear about what makes a good story. Reading is used effectively to support learning in other lessons and pupils are confident locating information from different sources. Imaginative ideas for writing have successfully taught pupils how to write in a range of different styles. Poetry is on display in most classes and many pupils show a flare for descriptive writing and include phrases, such as *a golden shadow is placed on children gifted with pretty faces*. Again the good quality of teaching is evident as the focus for writing was *Silver* by *Walter de la Mare* which obviously inspired the pupils. Teachers value pupils' work and this is attractively displayed on walls and in attractive booklets. As a result, pupils are eager to learn and work is neatly presented and spelling and punctuation are generally correct.



49. Teaching in Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory but the weaknesses identified in the last inspection remain and learning is not as effective as it should be. Expectations in Year 2 are not high enough especially in writing and the skills developed in Year 1 are not being fully extended. Standards in writing are satisfactory but the well above average standards identified in the results of national tests are not currently evident in Year 2. Overall achievement is satisfactory but a review of work shows work is not being closely matched to ability. Too many tasks include copying or the framework provided by the teacher gives too much support for the higher attaining pupils who so far this year have had limited opportunities to write independently. Most understand writing changes for different purposes and have written a letter in the correct style. Handwriting is legible print but not always neat. Spellings are taught regularly and many spell correctly or make good use of their knowledge of letters and sounds to tackle new words. Pupils get off to a good start with reading in Year 1 because letters and sounds are taught effectively through a range of practical activities. Support assistants play an important role in these lessons checking pupils not only learn the new sound or skill but through repetition remember it. In reading Year 2 pupils reach the level expected for their age but few are enthusiastic readers and most refer to the school's reading scheme book as their favourite story. Many listen attentively and are confident speakers and enjoy talking about their experiences but in class discussions have not learnt the importance of taking turns and call out their responses.
50. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress. They are well supported in class and when necessary in small groups withdrawn for specialist help. These sessions focus on specific difficulties and are effective in providing pupils with systems to help them cope in class. The support assistants lead individual reading session when it is identified a pupil needs extra help. These sessions are most effective because they are firmly based on assessment and are carefully structured to meet pupils' needs. Not only do they raise standards but they also give pupils confidence to play a full part in lessons.
51. Common strengths in the teaching seen include the positive management of lessons so that behaviour is good and pupils can work undisturbed by other pupils. Planning is satisfactory and in the best lessons teachers share with pupils what they are to learn and return to this in the conclusion. This is not always the case and a contributory factor to this confusion is the school's weekly planning format which does not always make it clear what the focus for the lesson is to be. In practice most teachers have adapted these plans to clarify what they intend pupils to learn and teaching is sharper in these classes. Most teachers are confident teaching English and offer good advice as pupils complete tasks. This is not followed up in marking when it is not always made clear to pupils how to make their work better.
52. Leadership and management are good. The co-ordinator has considerably improved the library and the range of books in the school is now very good. This has raised pupils' enthusiasm for reading. Advice and training has taken place in an attempt to resolve the issues raised in the last inspection. These have been more effective in raising standards in Year 6 than Year 2. The introduction to individual targets for pupils is working well in the Juniors. This is less successful in the Infants because targets are not clearly understood by pupils. The co-ordinator gives considerable attention to making the curriculum exciting by organising visiting authors and planning a literacy exhibition so that pupils can experience a greater sense of achievement in their work.

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

53. Staff give considerable attention to promoting literacy in other subjects. For example, in Year 4 pupils use books about the Vikings, their history topic, when learning how to scan for information and take notes. Consequently, the task had relevance for pupils and added to their interest and led to effective learning. Other examples were seen in other subjects especially in information and communication technology. The production of the school's magazine reflects a good understanding of editing and writing in a range of styles to attract the attention of the reader.

## MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in Year 6 are above average and have improved since the last inspection. Pupils in the junior classes work hard and achieve well because the quality of teaching and learning is good, and sometimes very good.
- Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and gifted pupils work with a much older class in mathematics so that they can increase their rate of learning.
- Standards in Year 2 are below average, maintaining the falling trend since 2001.
- The overall quality of teaching in the infants is unsatisfactory because most pupils in Year 2, particularly those who are more able, do not always have work that challenges and motivates them to do as well as they can.
- Management is satisfactory in the juniors but is ineffective in the infants and monitoring systems and targets are not making enough impact where pupils' achievement is not good enough.
- Teachers' marking does not consistently help pupils to do better.

### Commentary

54. Attainment is above average in Year 6 and maintains the rising trend since the average test results in 2001. Standards are better than when the school was last inspected. Pupils of differing attainments, including those with special educational needs, achieve well, and more pupils are exceeding the standard expected for their age. After four years in which, counter to the national trend, girls have gained better results than boys, the reverse is now true and, overall, boys and girls achieve equally well in relation to their prior attainment. Consistent patterns of good achievement across the junior years reflect the quality of teaching and learning in these classes.
55. In Year 2 the picture is very different. Test results have fallen steadily from a well-above-average position in 2001, and current standards are below average and much lower than they were at the last inspection. This is an unsatisfactory situation, largely brought about by low expectations, shortcomings in the way work is matched to pupils' different learning needs, and some lax management of time, resources and work ethic. Whilst a few lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs do well enough because of appropriate work, pace and support, many others, including the higher attaining pupils, are underachieving because they lack consistent challenge and motivation to do as well as they can.
56. The previous report drew attention to the tendency of the commercial scheme then used by the school to narrow the curriculum and also to restrict attainment at the higher levels. Current provision has more strengths. The scheme meshes well with the National Numeracy Strategy and encourages a consistent emphasis through the school on coherent, step-by-step progress in numeracy. This helps to ensure that all pupils develop secure understandings and skills across the range of oral and written methods of calculation. The scheme covers all aspects of mathematics but it is less effective in areas such as data handling, shape and measure, and practical investigation. Also at times its text-book tasks invite a one-size-fits-all approach that can hold back the more capable pupils. Thus, although the scheme supports teachers' planning, its effectiveness depends on a rigorous use of good information about individual attainments and capabilities.
57. The quality of teaching and learning ranges from unsatisfactory to very good. In most classes teaching is both rigorous and effective in promoting good achievement, but it is only satisfactory overall because it is not raising standards in Year 2. In Years 3 to 6, teaching is good, and sometimes very good. In these classes, good teamwork between teachers and

high quality teaching assistants ensures that pupils who find mathematics difficult are strongly supported without slowing the progress of other groups. These teachers make good use of assessment information to set clear personal targets for progress, and to devise the specific methods and resources that will best help different groups to grasp the intended new learning. They also use assessments well to maintain a good level of demand, and to ensure that pupils' work is pitched at the right level of challenge. To do this they make flexible and judicious use of text-book tasks and their own supplementary materials. Typically, these lessons have very brisk, focused and interactive "mental mathematics" sessions that maintain an element of fun, whilst engaging and challenging all pupils, and insisting on correct mathematical vocabulary, explanations and methods. A strong focus on correct methods of working leads to frequent involvement of pupils in practical demonstrations. Even in these lessons, however, there are shortcomings. For example, the teaching assistant is sometimes underused during the whole-class session, and some conclusions to lessons do not involve pupils in reflecting on the quality and use of their new learning.

58. Although some good teaching was seen in the infants it is unsatisfactory overall there because it is not leading to effective learning. Where teaching is unsatisfactory, it lacks pace and sharpness, variety and impact of approach, and consistently effective expectations of pupils' effort and achievement. In particular, the agreed assessment procedures are not being used to track and target individual progress through the year so as to ensure that all pupils learn at a good rate in relation to their capabilities and prior attainments. Work in pupils' books shows that it is not uncommon for all pupils to start tasks at the same level, and that teachers' marking makes few references to pupils' targets and seldom offers pupils clear guidance on how to improve their work.
59. Overall the management of the subject is satisfactory. Detailed audits and evaluations have led to improvement in resources and assessment procedures since the last inspection. In Years 3 to 6 rigorous use of these systems promotes good achievement for all pupils in most classes. Management is less effective in the infants. In Year 2 assessment systems are not used effectively enough to raise standards. The current action plan appropriately focuses on this issue. Its details reflect a clear understanding of the factors involved, and of the prime need to make teaching and learning more effective. As yet, however, there are few signs of these plans being put in place to raise standards.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

60. The school does not plan consistently for pupils to use and develop their mathematical skills to support learning in other subjects. Work in ICT provides good opportunities for pupils to extend their understanding and use of graphs, tables and databases. Similar skills are used in science and geography, where pupils also have opportunities to measure quantities and distances, and to use scale. However, these opportunities are driven more by coincidence than policy and do not amount to a coherent and systematic extension of the numeracy strategy across the curriculum. In particular, not enough is done across the curriculum to create opportunities for pupils to use their mathematical skills to investigate and solve practical everyday problems.

## **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards in Year 6 are above average.
- Overall achievement is good but is better in the juniors than in the infants.

- Higher attainers do not always do as well as they can in the infants.
- Skills of scientific enquiry are consistently taught well in Years 3 to 6.
- Recently introduced assessment procedures are not used consistently to track progress or focus planning.
- Resources have been much improved since the previous inspection and are now good.

## Commentary

61. Achievement in the juniors is good. Standards in Year 6 are above average and have improved since the last inspection due to consistently good teaching and the provision of a challenging curriculum in all areas of science. In national tests last year, standards were above average with almost all pupils reaching the expected level and an above average percentage reaching the higher level. The school's standards as reached in national tests in Year 6 have risen year-on-year since 2001. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress throughout the school because of the good quality small group help provided in class by well deployed learning support assistants. There is no significant difference in the performance of boys and girls.
62. Standards in Year 2 are average and are similar to those in the previous report. Pupils achieve satisfactorily. In statutory teacher assessments in Year 2 in 2003, standards were judged to be average overall. However, the percentage of pupils reaching the higher level was below that of most schools and well below that of similar schools. Current standards are similar to the most recent teacher assessments with few pupils working towards the higher level. In Year 2, work in class and in books indicates that potential higher attainers are not always given tasks which challenge them fully and enable them to reach above average standards.
63. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. Teachers share clear lesson objectives with pupils so that learning is purposeful and successful. They have good subject knowledge and use technical language effectively to clarify demonstrations and descriptions. Questions are used skillfully to help pupils develop their own ideas. Marking is usually encouraging but is rarely effective in showing pupils how to improve. Whole-school systems of assessment have recently been put into place. These are not used consistently, to track individual and class progress or focus planning. In the juniors, well-organised group work challenges pupils of all levels of ability to do their best and leads to good development of independent investigational skills. Pupils collaborate very successfully and concentrate hard to solve problems. In Year 2, expectations are not always high enough and insufficient attention is given to the promotion of skills of scientific enquiry. In Year 6, brief and brisk consolidation sessions reinforce learning very successfully.
64. Leadership of the subject is sound. The curriculum co-ordinator is only recently in post and is well supported by the headteacher. His role in monitoring standards and teaching is at an early stage of development. Good quality resources, including ICT support the delivery of the curriculum very well.

## INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision for ICT is **very good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good achievement and rising standards show that the school's impressive investment in resources and training is paying off handsomely.
- The extensive links between ICT and other subjects are a growing strength of the whole curriculum.

- The co-ordinator leads and supports improvement with clear vision and effect, and is well supported by the headteacher and all other colleagues.
- Improved assessment information supports better use of targets to help all pupils to achieve well.

## Commentary

65. In both Year 2 and Year 6, achievement is good and pupils reach standards that are above those expected for their age. This marks a very significant improvement since the school's previous inspection. At that time, standards were below average, and progress was unsatisfactory because major elements of the subject were neglected. For the same reason, teaching and learning, resources and assessment were also unsatisfactory. The inspection identified ICT as an issue needing attention.
66. The school has responded very effectively to this challenge. Decisive, far-reaching and well-orchestrated action has transformed the whole range of provision, enriching pupils' learning experience in the process. Following an important period of staff training that has been strongly supported by a nearby Beacon School, all teachers make good use of the very good ICT suite and class-based computers. All pupils benefit from effective teaching of the required range of skills, based on a good and improving scheme of work. Teachers in all classes plan a good range and quality of opportunities for pupils to use a wide variety of ICT equipment and software to support their learning. A computer club and school website further extend these opportunities.
67. The driving force in all this improvement has been the energy, enterprise and technical know-how of the co-ordinator, backed by the vision and efficiency of the headteacher. Together, they ensure that provision keeps pace with changing demands to maintain rising standards. For example, a new assessment program readily accesses each pupil's folder of completed work to assess individual attainment across the range of skills. This transfers teachers' efforts from recording assessment information to using it. As a result, teachers are now matching work to challenging targets based on accurate assessments. Such targets give pupils better understanding and control of their own learning, and the school uses technology to refine this further. For instance, a video facility in the hall enables pupils to replay and evaluate their own performance in order to see how it could be better. The action plan for further improvement is far-sighted, systematic, rigorously informed by the monitoring of provisions, and strongly focused on raising standards across both the subject and the whole curriculum. For example, recognising the effectiveness of interactive white-boards in supporting teaching and learning, the school is extending this facility to all classrooms as rapidly as possible.
68. The very good impact of improved provisions is evident in the work of teachers and pupils alike. As a result of good staff training, teachers and teaching assistants work confidently and skillfully together. Their shared understanding of learning intentions and pupils' needs enables them to challenge and support pupils so that all maintain a good rate of learning. Pupils with special educational needs are watchfully supported and fully included in the lesson. Equally, the more able pupils have opportunities to extend their skills. The youngest pupils achieve just as well as the oldest. Pupils in Year 1 use secure basic skills with mouse and tools, and grasp new skills quickly, in order to 'paint' and print backdrops for their puppet theatres. At the same time, talented pupils in Year 6 have good opportunities to work in small teams and produce an excellent school magazine, create multi-media presentations of various kinds, and use a computer to project large-screen displays of words, music and images to support and enhance school assemblies. The maturity, team responsibilities, creative flair and high achievement of these pupils are a credit and inspiration to the school, and a true reflection of its vision.

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

69. The use of ICT to support learning in other subjects is good, both in the computer suite and in classrooms and the library. It strongly supports subjects such as art, music and physical education as well as literacy, numeracy, science and humanities. The school gives high priority to extending the range and effectiveness of this support, and the co-ordinator is tenacious in finding and introducing new technical devices and software programs to advance this aim. All lessons in the suite involve a carefully planned link to another subject, and computers in classrooms are used consistently well to help particular pupils achieve the intended learning for the lesson.

## **HUMANITIES**

### **Geography and history**

70. These subjects could only be sampled during the inspection. Examples of pupils' work were examined and one history lesson was observed. Whilst this evidence does not support a firm judgement on the overall quality of provision, the following points are noted:
- The limited evidence of work in Year 2 shows a lack of challenge in both subjects with the examples in books being lower than the level expected for their age. All pupils do the same tasks, write identical answers and work is not well presented. Work on such famous figures of the past as Elizabeth I and Florence Nightingale also shows that expectations are low, and pupils have few opportunities to explore and express their own learning in their own way and at their best level.
  - Pupils in Year 1 have better learning opportunities in their study of their own environment. Their drawn and labelled plans of their bedrooms, classroom and routes to school show good independent use of their learning about plan views, directions and relative positions in space.
  - Work in Years 3 to 6 shows good range and quality of learning opportunities, approaches and skills through a variety of interesting topics. These opportunities cover all curricular requirements in both subjects, and make steadily increasing demands. Pupils respond with interest, and use a variety of techniques to learn and to present their learning. They make effective use of skills learned in other subjects such as art, literacy and ICT.
  - In the lesson observed, pupils in Year 3 showed good knowledge of Ancient Greece, and could explain differences in daily life between Athens and Sparta. They discussed their work well with partners when planning their own investigations. They responded eagerly to lively and challenging teaching, and developed their research skills well in role as 'history detectives'. Their research made effective use of the good artefacts and ICT resources available.
  - Overall management is satisfactory but there has been limited opportunity to observe what is happening in lessons.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

Two lessons were seen in religious education. Both were led by a visiting minister. No judgement is made on teaching, therefore none on overall provision.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- A comprehensive scheme of work supports teachers well in their planning.
- Good use is made of the talents and experience of visiting speakers.
- Assessment procedures are not fully in place.
- Resources are of good quality and quantity.

## Commentary

71. Standards in Year 2 and Year 6 meet the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. They are not as high as seen in the previous inspection. Achievement is satisfactory. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress alongside their peers. In discussion with the inspector, pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 showed good knowledge, appropriate to their age, of some central beliefs and festivals of Christianity, and sound knowledge of Hinduism. The older pupils' knowledge of Judaism, studied in the juniors, was weak and they were unable to make connections between Judaism and Christianity. Pupils become increasingly thoughtful and reflective about the nature of religious belief. They benefit enormously from first-hand opportunities to enter into discussions with visiting speakers like the Baptist minister. In the lessons seen, pupils reflected on the authority of religious leaders. In Year 2, pupils gained good insights into the pastor's role in caring for others. Through careful questioning of the minister, pupils in Year 6 are beginning to appreciate the importance of religion to some people, and how religious conversion can change some people's lives.
72. The school's scheme of work is based on the locally agreed syllabus and provides good support in planning for the structured development of skills and knowledge over time. Resources, including interesting artefacts and pictures, together with the contribution of visits and visitors bring the subject to life and support stimulating discussion. At present there are no formal systems to assess attainment or track progress consistently as pupils move through the school. Leadership is satisfactory, the curriculum co-ordinator has recently taken on this subject, and a clear action plan is in place for further development.

## CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

73. No lessons were seen in design and technology or in music, only one in art and design and two (both in dance in the juniors) in physical education. It is not, therefore, possible to make a firm judgement on provision. Scrutiny of teachers' planning, of pupils' work where possible and discussions with curriculum co-ordinators indicate that statutory requirements are met in all subjects and that the school provides a rich curriculum to support creative development.
74. There is insufficient evidence to judge standards in **art and design** in Year 2. Work on display together with a lesson observation indicates that standards are above average in Year 6. In the lesson seen, pupils benefited greatly from the particular skills of a visiting artist. Pupils explored ideas imaginatively in their sketchbooks before collaborating with others to make wall hangings. They showed good imagination in incorporating symbols and observations of Aboriginal art into their own work. Cross-curricular links are very well developed especially with history, ICT and design and technology. For instance, Year 4 pupils who have been studying Kandinsky copy their colour sketches on screen. The annual arts week in particular where pupils, parents and other visitors were inspired by their own poems to design and paint large banners, adds greatly to the pupils' enjoyment of the subject and to the school's ethos.
75. Due to the efficient organisation of the curriculum which involves teaching **design and technology** in blocked topics, little first-hand evidence of pupils' work was available. In discussion, however, pupils in Year 6 were enthusiastic in describing how they designed and made Christmas cakes. Their evaluation of their design and of the finished product was

sound. Very good links are forged with ICT. For instance, pupils in Year 1 use the computer to copy repeated images when designing a backdrop for their puppet theatre.

76. No lessons in **music** were seen during the inspection. However, in a singing lesson for pupils in Years 3 and 4 the teaching was effective in telling pupils how to improve their singing skills. Pupils know the importance of posture and breathing if they want to sing tunefully. Consequently, singing is good and pupils sing clearly and with expression.
77. Two lessons in **dance** were seen in the juniors and teaching was good and standards were above average. In Year 6, pupils worked well in groups planning a small dance using different fabrics. After only a short time many had created imaginative moves of swirls and turns to reflect not only the feeling of the fabric but also the image that the patterns and colours created. The school video *The American Experience* shows this high standard is a feature of the school's performances which are a popular event in the school's calendar.
78. In all of these subjects the role of the curriculum co-ordinator is satisfactory. All have relevant action plans as subjects are highlighted in turn for development. Assessment systems are at an early stage of development.

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

79. No teaching of personal and social development was seen and it would be inappropriate to make an overall judgement about subject provision on this limited evidence.
80. The school gives significant attention to this aspect of the curriculum and every class has a Circle Time session or a lesson devoted to personal and social development. Currently, there are no planning guidelines to help teachers structure these sessions or check to avoid repeating similar topics. Nevertheless, teachers are guided by the suggested topics for Circle Time as well as the guidance for religious education. Hence, teachers know that in Year 4 they will focus on communication and Year 5 on relationships. As well as these specific lessons personal and social development pervades all aspects of school life. To focus on preserving the environment the school has an ecology committee which aims to nurture and improve the school environment. Recognising the importance of accepting responsibility for others is developed in the school council which enables pupils to consult on topics, such as school uniform and resources. Themes for whole-school assemblies include honesty, respect and friendship and visitors lead these sessions to make the message that much stronger. Older pupils carry on with these topics by formal debates which extend their speaking and listening skills as well as developing an understanding of the need to take on the opinions of other pupils. The school sees it as an important duty to aid pupils to grow in maturity. This can be seen in the way older pupils help the younger ones. The school makes sure this is done properly and play leaders in Year 6 are trained so that they know how to encourage play and friendship. Pupils know if they go and stand by the *friendship stop* in the playground someone will involve them in their activities.
81. Management of the subject is good because the co-ordinator checks that this aspect of the curriculum is kept at the forefront of teachers' plans. Monitoring of Circle Time has taken place and ideas shared with staff so all learn from each other.



## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>3</b>
How inclusive the school is	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	2
<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	3
<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	2
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	2
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2
<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>3</b>
The governance of the school	2
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	4
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).*