

# **INSPECTION REPORT**

## **TARDEBIGGE C OF E FIRST SCHOOL**

Bromsgrove

LEA area: Worcestershire

Unique reference number: 116917

Headteacher: Mrs Susan Helps

Lead inspector: Mrs Penny Parrish

Dates of inspection: 19 – 21 January 2004

Inspection number: 258084

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: First  
School category: Voluntary aided  
Age range of pupils: 4-9 years  
Gender of pupils: Mixed  
Number on roll: 147

School address: Church Lane  
Tardebigge  
Bromsgrove  
Worcestershire  
Postcode: B60 3AH

Telephone number: 01527 872886  
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Appropriate authority: Governing body  
Name of chair of governors: Mr Chris Milton

Date of previous inspection: 6 July 1998

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Tardebigge Church of England (Aided) First School is located between Bromsgrove and Redditch. The school is popular in the locality, with many families travelling further than is usual to attend. There is a waiting list for places, with 147 pupils currently on roll and very few vacancies. Very few pupils join or leave the school other than at the usual times. There are five single year group classes for reception to Year 4. Families using the school represent mixed and wide-ranging social backgrounds but the socio-economic circumstances of most are above average, overall. There has been a gradual change as more pupils travel from nearby local authority housing areas.

On admission to the reception class, the attainments of the children are generally above average. A lower than average number of pupils (12 per cent) has special educational needs, generally linked to moderate or specific learning difficulties. One pupil has a formal statement of special educational need. A below average number qualify for free school meals (4.3 per cent). The school has no kitchen facilities and cooked meals are not available. Pupils are almost all of white British ethnic background, with just one pupil in the early stages of learning English.

The school was awarded a Schools' Achievement Award for the significant rise in test results in Year 2 for 2002.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
22380	Mrs Penny Parrish	Lead inspector	English Art and design Music Special educational needs English as an additional language
9327	Mr Stuart Vincent	Lay inspector	
29504	Mrs Shirley Herring	Team inspector	Foundation stage Mathematics Science Physical education
32897	Mrs Carole Snee	Team inspector	Information and communication technology Design and technology Geography History

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

Tardebigge is a **good** school. Its strong family ethos and **good teaching** promotes **very good attitudes** to learning and, consequently, the **good achievement** of pupils. The headteacher's enthusiasm, commitment and energy result in **very good leadership**, setting a clear path forward. The governing body is committed to continuous improvement in provision and safeguards the effectiveness of the school well. The school achieves **standards** that are **above average** on a lower than average budget, providing **good value for money**.

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

- The pupils have very good attitudes to learning because the ethos of the school is positive and very friendly. Relationships in the school are very good.
- The school's partnership with parents is very good and parents think very highly of the school.
- Standards are well above average in English and mathematics by both Year 2 and Year 4, building well on pupils' above average attainments as they start school in reception.
- Teaching is good, overall, and pupils achieve well in English, mathematics and science, in particular.
- Provision for information and communication technology (ICT) is satisfactory overall but teachers are not always able to get round the problem of too few computers. (A new computer suite is at the planning stage, with completion expected in the summer term.)
- In many subjects, standards are inconsistent through the school. In part this is due to frequent changes of staff in recent years but weaknesses are not always resolved at the planning stage by subject leaders.

Since the last inspection, the school has made **good improvement**, overall. Standards in English, mathematics and science have improved well. Provision is now good for pupils with special educational needs. Good improvements have been made both to the building and to outdoor facilities. The effectiveness of the work of subject leaders has improved well in English, mathematics and science but has been slow to improve in other subjects, mainly due to the impact of frequent staff changes in this small school. Staffing issues are now settled and subject leaders are now working to improve the consistency of provision in their subjects but there is more work to be done. In ICT, standards have not kept pace with improvements nationally.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

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

Pupils achieve well, overall. The school generally has a much lower than average proportion of pupils with special educational needs but the class in Year 2 in 2003 was an exception. Although this caused a fallback in results, standards remained in line with those in similar schools except in reading, where results were below average. In the current Year 2, standards are well above average again in reading, writing and mathematics, as they are in Year 4, the oldest class in the school. In science, history and geography, standards are above average through the school but in ICT, standards are average in Year 2 but below average in Year 4. This is in part the effect of too few computers but also weaknesses in the teaching for the older pupils. In the Foundation Stage,

children in the reception class make sound progress from an above average starting point, achieve satisfactorily and are set to exceed the learning goals set for transfer to Year 1. Insufficient evidence was available to make overall judgements in art and design, design and technology, music and physical education or in creative development for children in reception.

This small and friendly school promotes the pupils' personal development well and their **spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good**. They show very good attitudes to their work and are generally very sensitive to the needs of others; relationships are very good. Behaviour varies between classes but is good overall. **Attendance is above average** and pupils' punctuality is satisfactory, with a small number of pupils arriving late each day due to long journeys to school.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

The curriculum is **good** and the quality of teaching is **good**, overall. For pupils in Years 2 and 4, teaching is consistently very good in English and mathematics, leading to very good learning and high standards. Teaching in the reception class and in Year 1 is satisfactory, overall, and in literacy and numeracy does not always build well on the pupils' good attainment as they start school. Occasionally, lessons are unsatisfactory; weaknesses at the planning stage sometimes lead to insufficient learning in ICT, history, and in physical development.

A **good** curriculum is provided, enriched well through visits into the locality to places of educational interest and visitors, such as musicians and artists. The school has not let restrictions within the building affect the curriculum, although limited resources for ICT are impacting on standards for the older pupils. The ethos of the school is friendly and supportive, and pupils feel safe and well cared for. Partnerships with parents and the local community benefit pupils well.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Leadership and management are **good**. Very good leadership by the headteacher sets clear expectations for the school's work although frequent changes in staff over the past three years have set back the pace of improvement. Many subject leaders are new and not yet fully established in ensuring consistently good practice in their subjects across all classes. The governing body has a secure understanding of the school and tracks standards and improvements carefully. All statutory duties are met.

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

Parents are **highly satisfied** with the school's provision and support pupils' learning well through helping in class and with homework, fund-raising and working to improve the school's outdoor environment. Pupils enjoy school and appreciate its warm and supportive atmosphere.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- Raise standards and achievement in information and communication technology.
- Increase the effectiveness of subject leaders in checking the consistency of high standards and good teaching throughout the school.

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

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

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

**Achievement is good**, overall, but varies between classes. Overall judgements were not possible in creative, aesthetic, practical and physical subjects: art and design, design and technology, music and physical education.

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

- Standards and pupils' achievements are good, overall, but vary between the classes.
- By Year 2 and Year 4, standards in English and mathematics are well above average and in science, above average.
- In information and communication technology (ICT), standards are average by Year 2 but below average by Year 4.
- In geography and history, achievement is good and standards are above those expected nationally.

#### **Commentary**

1. Standards and pupils' achievement, although good overall, varies between the classes mainly because frequent changes in staff over the past three years have reduced the effectiveness of checking and improvement systems used by subject leaders. The staffing situation has now stabilised and clear plans are in hand to improve the consistency of teachers' expectations across the school.
2. On starting school in the reception class, children's attainments are generally above average, particularly with regard to personal and social skills, and early literacy and numeracy. The school's very good induction procedures help children to settle quickly into the routines of school, although the children come from a wide range of pre-school education provision. In reception, children achieve satisfactorily and, from an above average starting point, most are likely to exceed the learning goals set for transfer to Year 1. This is a good improvement on outcomes in 2003, when frequent changes in staff for the final term in reception reduced attainment significantly and learning goals for literacy and numeracy were not fully met. Nevertheless, there is more work to be done on improving the children's knowledge of the spelling of frequently used words and on challenging the higher attaining children a little more in numeracy.
3. By Year 2, standards are well above average in reading, writing and mathematics, and these high standards are maintained to Year 4. Very good teaching in English and mathematics in both Year 2 and Year 4 secures these very good results. The target setting system in both subjects effectively focuses teaching and learning throughout the school, and generally makes sure that pupils of all abilities are doing their best.
4. In national tests in Year 2, results show a good improvement since the last inspection although particular difficulties of the class taking the tests in 2003 meant that results fell back to average compared to similar schools in writing and mathematics and below average in reading. Nevertheless, improvements in results for higher attaining pupils were largely maintained. The school has responded well to this dip in results by increasing the support programme for pupils with lower attainment and special educational needs; a systematic daily programme in literacy and numeracy is reaping positive benefits and standards are rising. In Year 1, there is still some catching up to do in literacy, and spelling, in particular, is rightly receiving focused attention. Again, supportive programmes are in place for those needing extra help, including a pupil learning English as an additional language. Thus the school is likely to maintain the overall



upward trend for national test results in Year 2. At the end of Year 4, school tests show that standards are rising with more pupils achieving and exceeding the average level for the age group. Writing has been slowest to improve but results for 2003 were high, and look set to be at least maintained for 2004.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	16.5 (17.5)	15.7 (15.8)
Writing	15.7 (15.9)	14.6 (14.4)
Mathematics	17.2 (19.9)	16.3 (16.5)

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

- In science, priority is given to investigative learning and this ensures good achievement. Pupils thoroughly enjoy their involvement in finding out for themselves, for example, by testing magnets in Year 1, devising a fair test for the best way to slow down a bicycle in Year 2 or which rock is hardest in Year 3. Similarly in history and geography, good opportunities for 'hands on' review of evidence through educational visits into the locality, including the good range of evidence available on site, means that pupils engage well in learning, achieve well and reach standards that are above average.
- Standards are weaker in ICT, mainly due to the school's lack of a computer suite to enable efficient teaching and learning. Pupils have to wait to practise new skills and this affects the pace of teaching as well as the successful consolidation of skills. Nevertheless, ingenious and persistent teaching means that standards meet expectations set nationally for Year 2. Pupils in Year 4 have only had the advantage of the school's adoption of the national scheme of work for two years so are in a 'catch-up' position. In addition, weaknesses in the teaching of ICT in Year 4 mean that work set does not always challenge pupils sufficiently. These disadvantages mean that standards are below average for pupils in Year 4. The school is preparing for the better opportunities to be offered by the new computer suite to be built during the summer term.

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

Pupils have **very good** attitudes to school and the standard of behaviour is **good**. Provision for pupils' personal development is **good**, overall.

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

- Pupils like their school and enjoy arriving each day.
- They have very good attitudes to work and to other activities on offer.
- Pupils get on very well with each other and with all the adults who work with them.
- Pupils' social and moral development is promoted very well.
- There are limited opportunities to prepare pupils for life in a culturally diverse society.

#### **Commentary**

- Pupils enjoy coming to school and are very enthusiastic about all it has to offer; this is evident in the happy family atmosphere in the playground before the start of each day and the concentration and great interest they show in lessons. This is a high priority for the headteacher and has resulted in good improvement on the good attitudes identified in the last inspection.

8. The school plans very good opportunities for pupils to co-operate with each other through 'talking' partners and the buddy system. Pupils become very independent from the start of school in reception, through the regular opportunities to choose an activity and later through the good emphasis placed in subjects, such as science and mathematics, to learn by exploring and investigating. Very good relationships are developed with all adults, for example the lunchtime supervisors were seen having good conversations with the pupils and turning the rope for their skipping game. Pupils accept responsibility readily, from taking the register to the office to helping to plan improvements for all pupils through the elected school council. In all activities, a striking feature of pupils in this school is their maturity and this contributes well to their good achievement. The very good relationships mean that pupils with less confidence, such as those who find it more difficult to learn or who are in the early stages of learning English, build up their confidence in themselves and feel ready to tackle new learning.
9. Pupils develop a very clear sense of right and wrong through devising class rules and through the teachers' consistent use of well understood sanctions and rewards. These contribute well to the good behaviour observed in class and around the school. Lessons in personal, social and health education make a good contribution to pupils' ability to make mature decisions with, for example, pupils in Year 2 working together very successfully to examine how problems can be resolved through discussion.
10. A good sense of spirituality is engendered through the background music and the lighting of candles in assembly and through the strong appreciation in school of the beauty and care for their local environment. Pupils respect each other well by listening to what they have to say and valuing contributions in discussion. The school's good focus on descriptive vocabulary and sensitive expression of ideas in poetry, such as the Excalibur poem composed by pupils in Year 4, lead pupils to develop a strong awareness of nuances of meaning in the description of feelings which can be applied to everyday life.
11. Pupils have a good sense of their local culture through links with the local church, through visits to local places of interest and through studying the work of different artists, both local artists and those of international importance, such as Seurat. The school has set up a link with a school where a large proportion of pupils come from an Asian background, to exchange cultural traditions each year. Nevertheless, opportunities to prepare pupils for life in a culturally diverse society are limited.
12. Attendance is good and is consistently above the national average. The school promotes the benefits of regular attendance well and parents play their part too. Punctuality is satisfactory. However, each day there are one or two pupils who arrive late and this is often connected to the distances which many children travel to get to the school.

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

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	4.7	School data	0.0
National data	5.4	National data	0.4

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

## Exclusions

### *Ethnic background of pupils*

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
White – Any other White background
Mixed – any other mixed background
Asian or Asian British – Indian
No ethnic group recorded

### *Exclusions in the last school year*

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
141	0	0
3	0	0
1	0	0
1	0	0
1	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. Lively and interesting teaching means that pupils generally engage well in productive learning. The curriculum is good, being well ordered and enriched by visits into the locality and visitors such as artists and musicians. Assessment systems are satisfactory overall but at varied stages of development in different subjects. The views of pupils are valued highly and they are encouraged to take a strong interest in their own learning and ways in which the school might be improved.

### Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is **good**, overall, and **very good** for English and mathematics in Years 2 and 4. For the children in the reception class, teaching is **satisfactory**. Occasionally teaching is unsatisfactory, mainly because insufficient involvement of pupils is identified at the planning stage.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- In most lessons, good teaching engages the pupils well and ensures that they learn through practical and stimulating activities. Occasionally pupils are not so well involved and do not learn enough.
- Pupils are clear on what they need to learn and this helps them to focus their efforts well.
- Teachers and their assistants work effectively together to meet the differing learning needs of pupils.
- Teachers' expectations are generally high but, occasionally, higher attaining pupils are not sufficiently challenged.
- Assessment of pupils' learning and the identification of their next steps are good in English and mathematics but satisfactory overall because assessment has not been fully developed in other subjects.

### Commentary

13. The teachers' good knowledge of what pupils need to learn and how it is best taught is generally planned and prepared well, leading to good achievement. In Year 2, for example, the teachers' very good knowledge of the curriculum and an imaginative approach to planning enables her to piece together a good variety of ways of learning, giving pupils rich learning opportunities. A discussion of the characters in the story of 'Tiddalik' was extended very well

through skilful questioning of pupils in role, wearing masks, as the animals featured in the story. 'Good' and 'bad' cards provided simple but valuable aids to deciding on the quality of characters as revealed by their thoughts and likely dialogue. When pupils came to write their own accounts of characters, the good preparation was evident in work of interesting and lively quality.

14. The enthusiasm and interest teachers convey to pupils is a key feature of the above average standards achieved, although occasionally lessons are unsatisfactory because pupils are not well enough involved and do not learn well enough in the time available. This was evident in a history lesson where pupils lost concentration as they sat listening for too long to the teacher's account of life in a monastery, without sufficiently engaging opportunities for learning, such as through tasting similar foods or meditating to monastic music. Similarly, in a lesson in physical development, pupils spent too long listening to the teacher and waiting for a turn on apparatus, without sufficient opportunity to exercise and practise their skills.
15. Teachers help pupils to progress well by making sure that they have a clear understanding of the learning objectives for each lesson. Where teaching is very good, these are returned to during the lesson to keep pupils on track and a good summary is shared with pupils at the end. Pupils are given the opportunity to assess the success of their own learning and to suggest improvements. Charts, for example, in the form of a rocket, record whether pupils need to learn more. In English and mathematics, pupils know what their own individual targets are and that the teacher is tracking improvements. In Year 2 and Year 3, in particular, pupils are given very constructive feedback when the teacher marks their work.
16. The contribution of teaching assistants is generally well planned, systematic and effective in helping to make sure that the needs of all pupils are met. This is of great benefit to the pupils with special educational needs who progress well because trained teaching assistants provide daily practice in the skills required to reach their learning targets. Pupils particularly enjoy this practice when it involves work on the computer. Planning for the teaching assistant's contribution sometimes lacks sufficient detail on what questions are to be asked to help the children learn well. In the reception class, this led to rather superficial discussion on what children were making for the toy factory, for example, which did not challenge children to explain in more detail, to extend their thinking or to improve their model further.
17. Teachers' expectations for pupils are generally high and pupils are provided with tasks that suit their particular needs well. Although lower attaining pupils are supported well, higher attaining pupils are not always sufficiently challenged. This is sometimes the case in reception and Year 1, for example, where not enough is expected of higher attaining pupils in the correct spelling of familiar words or in the use in calculations of higher numbers that they know well. In Year 3, all pupils were required to practise calculations that had already been learnt by the higher attaining pupils.
18. Assessment systems work very well, generally, in English and mathematics but there are gaps in other subjects where systems are not yet in place or where they are not used well enough. In Year 4, for example, an unsatisfactory lesson in ICT was based on learning that had already been acquired by most pupils in the class.

### ***Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 35 lessons***

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	6 (17%)	14 (40%)	12 (34%)	3 (9%)	0	0

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

## The curriculum

The curriculum provided is **good**. It meets all statutory requirements, including those for collective worship. There is a good range of activities outside lessons, and visits into the locality and visitors to the school enrich the pupils' learning well. Accommodation and resources for learning are largely satisfactory, except for physical education, where suitable indoor space is not available and pupils travel by coach to share the facilities of another school.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum is suitably broad and balanced and generally prepares pupils well for the next stage of their education.
- Interesting and relevant learning tasks engage the pupils well and promote good achievement.
- Provision for personal, social and health education and citizenship is good.
- There is no school hall, so that provision for physical education is limited, especially in poor weather when pupils are unable to go outside. This weakness will be resolved largely when the school has access to the new community hall being built next-door and likely to be available later this year.

## Commentary

19. The curriculum meets the needs of the pupils well. Pupils are keen to learn because work is planned carefully to be interesting and stimulating.
20. For the reception class, the school has improved provision significantly since the last inspection by putting national guidance successfully into practice. Pupils are prepared very well for admission to the reception class, with home visits made by staff, visits to school made by children and curriculum workshops for parents. The provision for the children to learn outdoors has improved well, with a pleasant garden providing space for outdoor activities linked to all areas of learning and a good range of fixed equipment installed in the main playground to promote physical development. The class has been re-housed in a small classroom, however, and while access to outdoor facilities is improved, the restricted space indoors affects the success of some activities. In inclement weather, the noise level in the classroom interferes with focused teaching activities and the accommodation becomes unsatisfactory. Plans in hand for a link corridor to the main school building will ease the situation but may not solve the problem.
21. All statutory subjects are taught in Years 1 to 4, with provision for most subjects being good. The school has focused closely on improving the curriculum and teaching methods in the core subjects of English and mathematics and this is where the most successful provision is arranged. There are weaknesses in the provision for information and communication technology, mainly due to limited resources. While most teachers get round the problem with diligent use of the computers available, the curriculum in Year 4 is not planned with due regard for what pupils have learned before or how to link the pupils' learning profitably to other subjects, such as English. Most teachers struggle to make suitable links across all subjects but for pupils in Year 2, this is largely achieved. Similarly, literacy is included in other subjects, such as history and geography to some degree but there is an over-use of prepared worksheets in some classes that limit pupils to brief answers.
22. Extra support for the lower attaining pupils is well organised because the school is dedicated to providing well for every pupil. Teaching assistants are effectively deployed and are very successful in enabling children who need most help to progress smoothly. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good and clear daily programmes support these pupils well. Individual education plans provide generally clear guidance for teaching and learning and are well tracked by the headteacher and the trained special needs support assistant. The small number of pupils without English as their home language are included in all activities with extra

adult help as required to enable similar progress to most other pupils. Higher attaining pupils form a substantial part of most classes and are generally suitably challenged through effective adjustments to lesson planning. For spelling in reception and Year 1, and mathematics in reception, Year 1 and Year 3, expectations for higher attaining pupils are not always high enough and this restricts their progress. A small number of pupils from Years 3 and 4 are chosen to take part in 'Challenge Days' organised for more able pupils in local schools in an innovative attempt to maximise their learning opportunities. While more pupils would benefit from these opportunities, those who take part show improved confidence, initiative and interest in taking their work further forward.

23. There is a good range of extra-curricular clubs and other activities to enrich and extend the curriculum. Sporting and musical clubs supplement learning well for those who take part. Visits and visitors to school support the humanities curriculum well. Support for transition from Year 4 to local middle schools is good and ensures that pupils make the transfer as smoothly as possible.
24. Accommodation and resources are generally adequate to support the statutory requirements of the National Curriculum, but the lack of a school hall means that children have very limited opportunities to develop their physical skills appropriately or to learn to move to music. Although the facilities at a nearby school are used to ensure that pupils are taught the full curriculum, the time taken to get to and from these lessons is costly both in terms of time and finance. The new community hall will go a long way towards addressing this issue. Resources for information and communication technology are limited in quantity and restrict the success of the teaching.

### Care, guidance and support

Pupils are cared for extremely well and given **very good** support for their academic and personal development. Relationships between pupils and adults are very good; the school listens to pupils views very well, and wherever it can, acts upon them.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The standard of care for the welfare of pupils is very good.
- Pupils are supported very well, both for their academic and personal development.
- The school involves pupils very well, respects their views and takes action with their preferences in mind.

### Commentary

25. Pastoral care is very well organised. As they join the school, children are introduced thoughtfully and helped to settle into daily routines. Class teachers have first responsibility for children, but the systems for child protection, health and safety are very well planned and organised. Site inspections and risk assessments, fire drills, medical care, and first aid are all properly in place. Through the curriculum for personal, social and health education children learn about their bodies, how to stay safe, and how to stay healthy. The school is working towards the Healthy School award. Most importantly, the staff work very hard to ensure that the environment is friendly and enjoyable and that each individual child is valued. The pupils' questionnaires show that they have a secure and trusting relationship with adults in the school.
26. The procedures to show how well pupils are doing academically are well developed in the core subjects of English and mathematics. Regular tests and assessments help teachers understand what targets need to be set for groups or individuals. Appropriate, additional support is provided, particularly where a pupil has special educational needs. The pupils understand their targets and respond to them well. Pupils say that teachers help them to succeed. The school monitors attendance, behaviour and social development, so that an

understanding of the whole child is possible. Where problems arise, staff discuss and share their concerns and parents are always closely involved in working towards improvement. Targets are now becoming more refined and are beginning to address pupils' personal skills and matters of 'wellbeing'.

27. Pupils speak highly of their school and rightly believe they play an important part in shaping its work. They also say teachers are fair and listen to their point of view. The school council is now well established and has achieved a number of improvements. It also contributes ideas to the school development plan. There is a questionnaire each year and this allows pupils to make their views known about matters that concern them. This level of consultation and commitment to giving pupils a voice contributes very well to pupils' happiness, comfort and personal development.

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

As a result of the school's very effective work with parents, they have positive views of the school and are very pleased with what it does for their children. Parents are very well informed, give a great deal of help to the school and help their own children to learn. There are **good** links with the local community and the work the school does with its partner institutions benefits pupils very well.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The school has very good relationships with parents and they make a very effective contribution to the school and their children's achievements.
- Links with the local community are good.
- Constructive links with partner schools benefit pupils very well.

### **Commentary**

28. Parents express their very high levels of satisfaction with the work of the school and the pupils themselves confirm these views equally strongly. Communication with parents is very efficient, so that they know clearly what is happening in school. They understand the curriculum and how they can play their part in helping their children. They give their children very good support and help them with tasks to be done at home. Information provided about their children's progress is very thorough, there being both interim and annual reports of high quality. Parents appreciate their talks with teachers about their children's targets and general progress at the termly consultations. There is obvious trust between home and school and as a result, the contribution of parents is very high. More than twenty adult 'reading buddies' come into school regularly to help pupils to practise their reading. Other parents support pupils well by helping in class, going on visits, and helping with the 'Walking Bus'. The school teams and extra-curricular clubs are reliant on the good support of parents. There is a thriving group of 'Friends of Tardebigge' who organise further useful support for the school and its pupils through fund-raising and social events. All parents have an opportunity to offer their views through questionnaires and are invited to contribute ideas to the school development plan. The objectives and responsibilities set out in the home-school agreement, which is signed by the headteacher, pupils and parents, are being achieved very successfully.
29. Community links are strong. These provide meaningful opportunities for pupils to go out of school as well as to receive visitors, both of which enliven their experiences. Church links are strong, both in the management of the school and as a part of the children's spiritual development. The children take part in local festivals and many members of the community come into school, such as parents and grandparents with special skills or memories, farmers, the blacksmith and police officers. The local prison inmates have helped with maintaining and developing the school grounds and local public houses give their premises for social events and support the 'Walking Bus'.

30. The work the school does with its partner schools benefits pupils particularly well. The headteacher and staff meet colleagues from other schools regularly to share skills, as well as to organise sports events, music festivals and 'Challenge Days' for a small group of most able pupils. Pupils and teachers join with a local special school sometimes for art lessons. The same school provides specialist training for teaching assistants. The local college loans laptop computers to the school and their sixth formers run an ICT Club for pupils in Years 3 and 4. Although the number of middle schools involved is large, the school has good links with most of them for the effective transfer of pupils, when the time comes for them to move on.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Leadership and management are **good**, overall. The headteacher generates drive and energy to move the school forward and leads the staff team very well. Subject leaders vary in their effectiveness but are satisfactory overall in checking and improving standards in their subjects. Many in management positions are new to their role after an unsettled spell of staff changes has impacted quite significantly on this small school. The governing body is strongly committed to the success of the school and functions well as a driving force for school improvement.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The headteacher and governing body know the school very well. This enables a clear agenda for continuous improvement.
- Although many co-ordinators are new to their posts, the key leaders who promote the school's provision for English, mathematics and the pupils with special educational needs are well established and their work impacts very well on standards in the school.
- Systems for improving the quality of teaching and learning are generally good, with the staff team firmly committed to high standards. The monitoring of lesson plans, however, sometimes lacks rigour and unsatisfactory lessons are not always picked up at the planning stage.

### **Commentary**

31. The headteacher sets a clear agenda for the school, knows the potential of the pupils and rightly expects higher than average standards in all aspects of the school's work. Good information on the school's success is gleaned from a close analysis of outcomes of teachers' assessments and national tests. The school responds well to information gained by, for example, improving target-setting systems for improving writing and improving attention to specific reading skills throughout the school. This work is limited to some degree by the lack of consistent assessment systems in subjects other than English, mathematics and science. Nevertheless, the headteacher's regular teaching commitment keeps her closely in touch with the school's overall performance. The right priorities are put forward for development within the school improvement plan, a comprehensive document that sets points for improvement for all sections of the school, including the governing body. This represents a good improvement since the last inspection, when the efficiency of the improvement plan was an issue for development. Planning for improvement is suitably shared between all involved in the school, including the parents, and encourages a good team effort in moving the school forward. Parents remark on the staff's positive attitude to improvement, and see this as a very beneficial change since the last inspection.
32. A very clear and balanced analysis of information about the school is provided for the governing body by the headteacher and staff and enables governors to be very well aware of the strengths of the school and areas for development. The strong commitment and close co-operation with the school does not detract from the governors' role as a critical friend, checking standards and making suggestions for improvements. This role has improved well since the last inspection and governors are now proactive in the management of the school. The links of governors to specific subjects and regular visits to school have, for example, raised the issues of the standard of handwriting in the school and behaviour on the playground. Both have been addressed well through the school improvement plan. Governors are good at securing best



value for the school through sensible use of resources, consultations with educational advisers, comparisons with other schools and co-operation with the local community. Parents are regularly consulted for their views on the school and are given the opportunity to contribute to the school's improvement plan. All these measures are productive in ensuring that the school maintains and improves well on its good standards. The school's budget is less than average for first schools but links with the community and extra grants, such as lottery funding, mean that the headteacher and governors secure continuously improving facilities for the school. The new community hall sited next door provides a good example of the school's beneficial co-operation with the local community. The governors' current underspend is planned for use in equipping the proposed new computer suite.

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

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	321,513	Balance from previous year	35,391
Total expenditure	322,594	Balance carried forward to the next	34,310
Expenditure per pupil	2,389		

33. The role of subject leaders has improved satisfactorily since the last inspection but there is more to be done to make sure that standards and the quality of teaching and learning is of a consistently high standard throughout the school. This is achieved well in English, mathematics and science and in the provision for pupils with special educational needs. Staff changes have meant setbacks, however, in the leadership of most other subjects. Occasional unsatisfactory lessons observed during the inspection were the result of inefficient monitoring of lesson plans, with unsuitable teaching methods occasionally evident in history and physical development. In ICT, the lack of efficient assessment systems led to work that did not challenge pupils sufficiently. A checklist for observations of lessons exists but not for the review of plans for teaching. Nevertheless, plans are in place to allow improvements to subject leadership on a rolling programme within the school improvement plan. Performance management systems are efficient and closely linked to school improvement.

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

### AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Pupils start school in the reception class with a wide range of experiences and skills but, overall, their **attainments** are **above average**. **Very good** induction procedures, with children visiting school several times in the term before they start, and staff visiting children in their home and their playgroups, help children to settle quickly.

The quality of teaching is **satisfactory**, overall, with a good emphasis placed on children's developing confidence and independence. There has been good improvement in the range of activities made available since the last inspection, with national recommendations for the age group implemented in each area of learning. The teacher provides suitable opportunities for the children to learn through play. Some of these activities are not sufficiently structured, however, and children do not always have a clear focus for their efforts. Planning for these activities does not take full account of the needs of children of different attainment. Consequently, some higher attaining pupils are not always sufficiently challenged. Teaching is more effective when skills are taught systematically, for example, when learning to write a sentence saying '*My mum is special*'. Bearing in mind that most children's attainment as they are admitted to school is above average, achievement is satisfactory overall. By the time they enter Year 1, a higher than average number of pupils achieve or exceed the nationally recommended learning goals set nationally in personal, social and emotional development; communication, language and literacy; mathematical development; knowledge and understanding of the world; and physical development. There was insufficient evidence to make an overall judgement on standards in creative development.

Assessment procedures are **satisfactory**. Opportunities are missed, however, for adults to note any significant progress for individuals when they happen and unnecessary time is spent on specific testing activities. Satisfactory use is made of the information gained. It is used well to judge progress, for example, in reading but information is used less effectively to plan learning for individuals or groups in other areas of learning.

The reception class has easy access to a large outdoor area to extend learning opportunities but the classroom itself becomes cramped when inclement weather restricts activities outside. On these occasions, the level of noise is disruptive for the concentration of children working in a group with the teacher or the teaching assistant. Good improvement in the facilities outdoors, including the provision of large adventure play equipment, has improved the standards children achieve in physical development.

A strong feature of the reception class is the good number of parents who provide valuable extra support for learning in class. Gaps in planning for the work of the full-time teaching assistant mean that she is not always effectively deployed to enhance children's learning.

### PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The children come to school with above average social skills.
- The curriculum is good and provides many opportunities for children to develop their independence further.
- Children are made aware of what they need to do to improve.
- Adults are not always consistent in requiring courtesies, such as please and thank you, and opportunities are missed to reinforce good behaviour.

## Commentary

34. The quality of teaching is sound, leading to satisfactory achievement overall. Building on their good skills on starting school, children enter Year 1 with above average personal and social skills. This area of learning is given a suitably high priority and interesting activities encourage children to settle quickly into school life. They enjoy coming to school and readily accept the responsibility of registering themselves each morning and, at appropriate times, choosing their own activities. There are clear strategies for helping the children to develop an understanding of right and wrong, such as moving their names up and down a colour chart according to how well they behave. Individual targets are used well so that children are aware of what they need to do to improve. Often, however, the teacher misses opportunities to remark on good behaviour, such as children listening quietly and ready to learn, and instead comments on what is wrong, such as calling out. There are also missed opportunities to develop and reinforce social skills by praising those children who say "Thank you!"

## COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average.
- Teaching and learning are satisfactory, overall. The attainments of most children are above average as they start school and many have the potential to achieve more.
- The small size of the classroom means that it gets unavoidably noisy when play activities are in progress and this limits the development of speaking and listening skills. The situation is much improved in fine weather when the outdoor classroom can be fully used.

## Commentary

35. Most children are likely to exceed the expected learning goals on transfer to Year 1. Their attainments, in speaking and listening especially, are well advanced as they start school and this higher than average attainment is maintained; achievement is sound.
36. The children are very interested in stories and learn to read simple books with increasing confidence, backed by the good interest the teacher instils for building up their knowledge of letter sounds. Sound teaching and regular practice, both in school and at home, means that reading skills develop well. Higher attaining children recognise familiar words quickly and are able to deduce words that are new to them through sensible guesses using their good understanding of letter sounds. Lower attaining children are given more practice and support and are likely to at least achieve the goals set for the age group. None has been identified as having special educational needs.
37. The children's good knowledge of letter sounds pays off at the early stages of writing. They are adept at hearing and identifying sounds within words. When guided by the teacher, the children can produce recognisable sentences. Little support is made available at the writing table, however, for children to remember past learning of letter shapes and frequently appearing words, such as *the*, *went* or *my*. This means that children are more dependent on the teacher than they need to be for these reminders and have to wait sometimes for quite a long time for their turn for help. This reduces their interest in pursuing their work to greater length and often means that time has run out before the children can be helped.
38. The children's innate good language skills mean that the quality of dialogue is good in role-play areas, such as 'the toy factory', and in investigational activities, such as judging the relative speed of toy vehicles down a slope. Plans for teaching, particularly those carried out by support staff and adult volunteers, do not always identify key questions or vocabulary. This means that opportunities are missed to take the children's learning forward. Although plans for

when the children work with the teacher are clear, the help the nursery nurse might give during whole class activities is not always planned in advance and consequently the children's attention wanders while this is established at the time.

## **MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision for mathematical development is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children have good counting skills.
- Learning is more successful when activities have a clear focus, as when working in small groups with the teacher.
- Insufficient work is planned to challenge the higher attaining children to achieve well.

### **Commentary**

39. Teaching is sound. Achievement is satisfactory overall and so pupils maintain above average mathematical skills as they enter Year 1. There are regular opportunities to count, for example, the children count up to the appropriate date and say which date it will be the next day. Children make good gains in their learning when they are working in small groups on specific mathematical activities with the teacher, such as throwing two dice and adding the spots. However, these specific activities make up a comparatively small proportion of children's time and so do not provide sufficient challenge to enable children, particularly higher attainers, to make the more rapid progress of which they are capable.

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

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils have free access to a wide range of activities to extend their knowledge and understanding of the world, both indoors and outside.
- There is sometimes insufficient support from adults to extend children's learning through questioning and discussion.
- Pupils are confident in the use of computers and cassette players.
- Assessment activities are too formal and not integrated into the daily routine of the class.

### **Commentary**

40. Most children start in the reception class with levels of attainment that are above average for their age. They achieve satisfactorily and consequently are likely to exceed the learning goals set nationally.
41. The children enjoy the free access they have to the outdoor area and take pleasure in examining the plants and learning what plants need to help them to grow. They understand that their guinea pigs need food, water and shelter, and should be handled carefully to avoid hurting them. They know that plastic is waterproof, which is why it is on the roof of the hutch.
42. The wide range of activities made available, both indoors and outside, is not always matched by sufficient adult involvement and the quality of teaching is satisfactory, overall. For example, for the children exploring the properties of chocolate-smelling dough, but there was no adult available to encourage them to use their senses of touch, sight and smell to extend their learning and their vocabulary. In the construction area, the task was to build a garage but there

was no guidance on the number or shape of blocks, or the size of finished model to challenge children's abilities and so extend their learning.

43. Programs are made available each day on the computer and children are confident in their use of the 'mouse', and know which computer button to press, with good control, to use the printer. They are encouraged to be independent and are able to load a story or song tape into the cassette player and to operate it without help.
44. Assessment activities are not integrated into the daily routine of the class, with the result that time is wasted as children sit in a group waiting for a turn to answer questions, for example, on old toys. While one child is talking, the rest of the children are disengaged, and assessments are not secure because children are listening to the responses of others and incorporating them into their own.

## **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in physical development is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children have good access to a large outdoor area and large equipment.
- There are a good range of activities to develop fine control and co-ordination.
- Children spend too long listening to instructions in an outdoor physical education lesson and waiting for turns, when they should be moving.

### **Commentary**

45. Teaching is satisfactory overall. Achievement is sound and so children enter Year 1 maintaining above average skills. Children show good control and accuracy as they work with a wide range of tools and equipment, such as scissors, tape, pencils, bricks and jigsaws. They enjoy regular access to the large outdoor area where they benefit from a good range of wheeled toys and climbing equipment to develop their skills well. Learning is most effective when children work in small groups with an adult. For example, one group improved their throwing skills well as a parent helper devised an interesting game of throwing beanbags in a bucket. In an unsatisfactory lesson observed, children became very cold as the whole class spent a long time listening to instructions and waiting for turns on the fixed apparatus. The teaching assistant was not used well enough to divide the class between different activities where children could keep moving and practising their skills.

## **CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in creative development was only sampled and an overall judgement on provision cannot be made. Children enjoy singing songs and number rhymes to accompaniment by the teacher's guitar and exploring the sounds that can be made with simple musical instruments. Imaginary play areas, such as the 'toy factory', encourage role-play opportunities and the invention of imaginary stories. The good support of an adult helper enabled children to develop their imaginative play in a 'den' made from curtains and a clothes airer. Art activities give children suitable opportunities to experiment when drawing and painting their own pictures, mixing paint or using malleable materials, such as dough and clay. Children 'working' in the toy factory enthusiastically created models of toys using reclaimed materials, glue and tape. However, limited space meant that some children worked on their knees as they sat on a chair and became frustrated by the inaccessibility of materials.

## SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

### ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' achievement is good by the end of both Year 2 and Year 4 and standards are well above average.
- Teaching and learning is good, overall, and very good in Years 2 and 4.
- Good, systematic provision for pupils with special educational needs ensures their good progress.
- Although teachers' expectations are generally high, not enough is expected of pupils at the early stages of spelling. This slows the development of writing in reception and Year 1.

#### Commentary

46. Standards are well above average and pupils achieve well because teaching is good, overall, and very good in Years 2 and 4. This builds well on the pupils above average attainments in language and literacy as they start school. Standards have improved well since the last inspection, largely through the adoption of national strategies and a strong commitment by the staff to high standards.
47. Pupils' express their thoughts very well, showing fluency and generally easy understanding in dialogue with others. Pupils chosen to speak in assembly times, for example, are confident and fluent. Opportunities for drama, work with discussion partners and in groups enables pupils to practise speaking and listening to others. These good verbal skills provide a firm foundation for their work in reading and writing.
48. Because planning for lessons is thorough and carefully matched to pupils' differing needs, learning progresses generally at a good pace and pupils achieve well in both reading and writing. Assessment is through a useful system of escalating targets, checked regularly against pupils' work. Where teachers track and update pupils' targets frequently, pupils are well involved in monitoring their own progress and are well motivated to work harder. Pupils in Year 4 enjoy explaining how their writing has improved. In Years 2 and 3 especially, good use of learning targets is reinforced by the careful marking of pupils' work which enables the teachers to point out clearly pupils' specific successes and the next steps needed. Notes kept during reading lessons in small groups help to determine the next focus for teaching and learning. In Years 2 and 4, the teachers' very good knowledge of the curriculum enables them to piece together all the different means of practising skills. This means that opportunities for learning are rarely missed and pupils have frequent friendly reminders of the way forward. Expectations are high in these classes and the teachers' enthusiasm for successful learning inspires pupils to try their best.
49. The school works hard to provide extra practice and support to extend pupils' learning further, such as through involving parents and other volunteers in the Better Reading training project made available by the local education authority. Other adults volunteer to act as Reading Buddies, enabling extra practice each week for selected pupils. Pupils with special educational needs benefit especially from this extra help, in addition to the carefully planned support programmes operated by teaching assistants. Daily practice with a teaching assistant makes a good contribution to the success of individual education plans and supplements the work of the teachers well. The very small number of pupils in the early stages of speaking English make good progress because of the extra opportunities provided to talk with adults, as well as the boost to confidence and self-esteem that results from the very good relationships in the school. Parents ensure that their children complete their homework well and this provides good support for work done in school.

50. Although the school has worked to improve the quality of its provision in the early stages of writing, frequent changes in staff in recent years have slowed progress in developing a well-honed system. The teaching of sounds linked to letters is a strength throughout the school but a review of past work indicates that younger pupils take longer than is necessary, sometimes, to learn to spell frequently used words correctly. In a lesson in Year 1, the pace of learning was slowed because the teacher chose individuals to practise spellings in front of the class, rather than use, for example, individual boards available to enable the whole class to try. Pupils lost interest and concentration, which slowed the pace of learning further. The school's drive on improving handwriting is paying off, however, and the pupils' presentation of their work is satisfactory and improving year-on-year.
51. The subject is well led and managed. A continuous review of standards has led to improvements such as extra reading sessions each morning, where more focused teaching is helping pupils to extract greater meaning from the books they are reading. A thorough review of writing has led to improvements in the quality of targets set and methods of teaching in the early stages. The subject manager has provided model lessons for colleagues as examples of good practice. Concerns about the progress of boys compared to girls has rightly led to a review of books and different writing tasks in order to interest all pupils more fully in their work.

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

52. Good opportunities are planned for pupils to use their skills in reading, writing and discussion in other subjects. Pupils' written work in history, for example, is lively and rich in descriptive vocabulary. The texts studied in English lessons in turn support learning in history with, for example, the composition of the epic poem, 'Excalibur'. Computers are used for word processing but the limited number of computers available restricts opportunities for practice.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching is very good in Year 2 and Year 4.
- Standards are well above average in Year 2 and Year 4, particularly in numeracy.
- There is very good emphasis on developing pupils' understanding through problem solving and investigating throughout the school.
- There is a lack of challenge for some higher attaining pupils in some classes.
- Computers are not used sufficiently to enhance learning.
- There are few opportunities for pupils to display data in graphical form to interpret information.

### **Commentary**

53. Standards are well above average in Year 2 and Year 4. This good improvement since the last inspection reflects the strength of the teaching in these classes. The slight dip in national test results in 2003 was related to the higher proportion of pupils with special educational needs in that particular year group. Pupils' arithmetic skills are particularly good, and the emphasis on solving problems has led to an improvement in this aspect. Analysis of pupils' past work shows that proficiency in handling data is less advanced.
54. Pupils achieve well from a level of attainment that is generally above average when they start school. Good assessment procedures, including good marking as well as regular testing, are used well to set targets for improvement. Higher attaining pupils are challenged through the good pace in lessons in Year 2 and Year 4, but this is not so evident elsewhere. Lower

attaining pupils and those with special educational needs receive a good level of support from the teacher and the teaching assistant in all classes and so their achievement is consistently good.

55. Teaching is good, overall, but it is strongest in Year 2 and Year 4, where the quick pace of questions in the oral sessions accelerates learning and pupils develop their arithmetic skills well. A good feature of teaching, overall, is the regular use of practical work, including investigations, which promote understanding well. This was seen in Year 4 where pupils investigated number patterns to help them to add strings of numbers more quickly. The teacher used her good knowledge of the subject to make seemingly simple problems interesting and challenging for pupils of all abilities. Although learning is satisfactory in Year 1 and Year 3, the teachers do not always expect enough of higher attaining pupils. For example, higher attaining pupils in Year 1 were given the same task as the majority of the class, working with numbers to 10, when in fact many were already confident in counting numbers to 40. In Year 3, higher attaining pupils were included in revision work needed by the rest of the class but unnecessary for them.
56. The use of information and communication technology to support learning is generally underdeveloped, with limited evidence of pupils using the computers, for example to collate information or to generate graphs. However, some good practice was seen in Year 2 and Year 3 where pupils with special educational needs gained confidence by practising numeracy skills on the computer.
57. The subject is well led and managed and this has been an important factor in promoting the development of problem-solving skills to raise standards. However, more needs to be done to support the less confident teachers to improve the pace of lessons to challenge the higher attaining pupils.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

58. Pupils develop their mathematics skills satisfactorily through suitably planned opportunities in other subjects. In science, for example, pupils in Year 2 measured the rate at which ice melted and recorded their results on a table. In the same class, pupils devised a questionnaire to measure responses to a geographical survey. Time lines are used in Years 3 and 4 to place historical events in the context past centuries.

## **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards are above average in Year 2 and Year 4.
- Teaching is consistently good through the school.
- Pupils have very good opportunities to learn through exploration and practical tasks.
- Assessment procedures are in the early stages of development and not yet refined enough to make them useful for raising standards further.
- The use of information and communication technology is underdeveloped.

### **Commentary**

59. Pupils attain standards that are above average in Year 2 and Year 4. This maintains the good standards identified for older pupils in the last inspection. In addition, improvement to the curriculum has led to an increase in the number of pupils now working at the higher level in Year 2.



60. Achievement is good, overall, because teachers plan a good range of practical activities that challenge pupils to explore problems from their own level of understanding. Lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs receive a good level of support from the teachers and classroom assistants to help them achieve well.
61. Teaching is consistently good and so pupils learn well through the school. A strong feature is that teachers plan an interesting range of investigations that interest the pupils and motivate them to learn. This was seen in Year 2 when pupils brought in their bicycles to test how was the best way to slow down. The good discussion encouraged pupils to consider a wide range of options, and to predict and then test the best solution. Parents give regular help in class and this supports learning well, particularly with the very 'hands-on' tasks. Teachers make good reference to the process of scientific enquiry during lessons, using a sectioned wheel diagram to guide the order of work. This has proved to be very effective as pupils are now familiar with discussing various ideas, discussing which they think is the best way to proceed, and then trying it out. This engendered great enthusiasm in Year 3 when pupils were very keen to test their ideas on how to grade the hardness of rock samples. An area for development is to make better use of computers in science, for example to collate and display information.
62. Management of the subject is satisfactory overall. The co-ordinator is new to the post but already has a good understanding of the standards in school. Improvement in assessment procedures has rightly been identified as an area for development by relating assessments more closely to the levels identified in the National Curriculum.

## INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision is **satisfactory**, overall, but weaknesses in teaching in Year 4 and the limited quantity of computers available through the school mean that standards are below average by the end of Year 4.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The limited number of computers means that teachers need to use considerable ingenuity to teach the subject well enough and this is not always achieved fully.
- By the end of Year 2, attainment is average, overall, and pupils' achievement is satisfactory despite good teaching.
- In Years 3 and 4, teaching is satisfactory, overall, but ranges from good to unsatisfactory. Pupils' attainment by the end of Year 4 is below average and pupils' achievement is unsatisfactory, overall.
- Assessment systems are not fully established and teachers do not always know enough about what pupils already know and what they need to learn.
- Information and communication technology is not used systematically in all classes to support learning in other subjects.

### Commentary

63. By Year 2, standards are average and pupils' achievement is satisfactory, overall. Teaching is good and builds adventurously on previous learning. The curriculum is broad and includes word processing, graphics programs and pupils discover, for example, how a digital camera can be used to add pictures to text. Work is linked well to other subjects of the curriculum, such as through devising a questionnaire for geography on the word processor. The three computers available in most classes are not enough, however, to allow sufficient practice and embedding of skills or for pupils to follow up the good teaching adequately. As a result, standards are not as high as they could be considering the good input of the teacher. Despite thorough teaching plans, some pupils in Year 2 still lack confidence in, for example, using the backspace key to correct mistakes. Pupils who have access to computers at home are

competent in word processing skills because they have been able to practise and extend the skills taught in school.

64. The picture is similar in Year 3, where good teaching and interesting tasks, such as data processing, challenge and interest pupils well. The teacher tries to get round the shortage of computers by offering a short daily lesson to update pupils and help those whose turn it is to move forward. Steps are explained well, with a useful recap of yesterday's work. Comparisons are considered between the manual data systems used by pupils working on paper and the electronic version available on the computers. Pupils are well aware of what can be achieved but practise is limited for the consolidation of skills. By Year 4, the tenuous link between good teaching and average attainment falters because the teacher's knowledge of the subject is limited. Assessments of previous learning are not secure in this class and pupils are sometimes asked to complete work that is already familiar to them, such as changing the size and colour of letters on screen. There is little evidence in Year 4 of systematic planning to link information and communication technology skills to work in other subjects. For example, very good work based on newspaper reporting styles was not linked to a study unit where pupils learn to lay out headlines and columns of print on a computer.
65. Although computers in classrooms are supplemented sometimes with the teachers' own laptops or loans from a local high school, there is not a sufficiently regular supply available for the pupils to have enough opportunities to consolidate their learning. Pupils sometimes cannot see clearly enough to learn from the teacher's demonstration. Teachers do not always make sufficient allowances for these shortcomings by, for example, by having an enlarged copy of a toolbar so that pupils can see clearly the correct screen keys to use.
66. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory, overall, with the new co-ordinator well supported by the headteacher. The focus for improvement, however, has centred mainly on the provision of computers and programs, rather than on raising standards through improving the quality of teaching. The lack of focused monitoring means that planning does not always take previous learning fully into account and obvious links with other subjects are not made. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory, overall, in that more computers and a wider range of programs are in use and standards are broadly average to Year 3. However, weaknesses in Year 4 mean that overall standards have not fully kept pace with developments nationally and are lower than they were at the time of the last inspection. The school improvement plan identifies a clear programme of improvement for when the new computer suite is built and equipped in the summer term.

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

67. Systematic links have not been made between all subjects and information and communication technology and the school relies on the initiative of individual teachers to forge successful connections. There is evidence of effective use of information and communication technology, for example, in Year 2, in subjects such as art and design, design and technology and geography but, overall, insufficient use is made of information and communication technology skills across the curriculum.

## **HUMANITIES**

### **Geography**

Provision in geography is **good**, as it was at the time of the last inspection.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good, standards are above average and pupils' achievement is good in both Year 2 and Year 4.
- Visits to local places of geographical interest are used well to extend pupils' learning.
- Good opportunities are found to extend pupils' literacy skills.

## Commentary

68. Standards are above average by the end of Year 2 and Year 4, because of consistently good teaching that enables the pupils to achieve well.
69. In Year 1, pupils focus on their immediate environment and map-work skills develop well through the topic 'Our journey to school.' Pupils learn to express an opinion, stating what they like and do not like about their immediate environment. Opportunities for writing and labelling are included, so that literacy skills are suitably extended. This good work is continued in Year 2, where pupils compare their own locality with the seaside and with the Australian bush. A strength of the teaching in Year 2 is the very good range of opportunities for writing, which include postcards, an Australian fact file and poetry to highlight characteristics of different places. Mathematical skills are also integrated well with, for example, pictograms to record information. Pupils in Year 2 show a good understanding of the subject because teaching is thorough and expectations for learning are high.
70. The above average standards are maintained through the school to Year 4. Good teaching ensures that lessons are lively and well paced, so that pupils listen attentively and learn well. A local litter study helps pupils to develop their investigative skills well, while their work on rivers enables them to discuss, with confidence, geographical vocabulary such as *meander*, *flood plain*, and *tributary*. The teachers' effective use of photographs develops the pupils' skills of observation well and provides a good opportunity for the development of speaking and listening skills, as pupils discuss putting the photographs into categories. The opportunities for writing are limited in Year 4 by the frequent use of worksheets rather than a written task to consolidate or extend the pupils' literacy skills.
71. Leadership and management are satisfactory, overall. Assessment systems are in the early stages and are not yet used fully as a basis for future plans, such as through the setting of targets for further improvements in pupils' learning. Opportunities for the development of pupils' skills in the use of information and communication technology have yet to be identified consistently throughout the subject, although occasional use is made, for example, in devising a questionnaire in Year 2.

## History

In Years 3 and 4, provision is **good**, overall, but varies between the classes. No lessons were observed in Years 1 and 2, so no overall judgement can be made on provision for the younger pupils, although discussions with pupils and a review of past work indicates that standards are **above average** in both Year 2 and Year 4.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards are above average by the end of both Year 2 and Year 4 and achievement is good, overall, maintaining the good standards reported at the time of the last inspection.
- The quality of teaching for Years 3 and 4 is good, overall, but varies from very good to unsatisfactory, so that pupils do not make consistent progress in their learning.
- Studies of the school's own history and visits to other sites of historical interest extend and enrich the curriculum well.
- The subject leader does not always monitor teaching plans well enough to ensure consistently good learning opportunities throughout the school.

## **Commentary**

72. In Year 2, pupils have a good understanding of the differences between the past and the present. Good resources are made available and pupils talk knowledgeably, for example, about the toys their grandparents would have played with and compare them with toys of today. The school's own history is used to good effect and pupils speak confidently about the different ages of the church, the school house and the school, discussing features which distinguish the older buildings, such as the shape of the windows. Links with art and design encourage close observation of the church through careful drawings.
73. For the older pupils, further visits, such as that made by pupils in Year 3 to Bordesley Abbey, continue to enrich the curriculum and ensure that pupils achieve a sound understanding of historical sites as a prime source of evidence about the past. By Year 4, pupils begin to balance evidence through considering the benefits and drawbacks of the Roman invasion of Britain. Pupils are encouraged to develop an empathy with people from the past by, for example, writing a letter from the point of view of a homesick soldier.
74. Although the curriculum is good, the quality of teaching varies so that pupils are not always able to achieve a sufficient understanding of their work. Very good teaching in Year 4 ensures that history is presented in a stimulating and interesting way, so that pupils are always involved and keen to learn; as a result, achievement is good. For example, pupils are encouraged to examine artefacts of high quality, such as pottery and replica love pendants, noting materials and their uses. They are helped to make connections with the past through tasting foods the Romans would have eaten, such as figs and olives. In an unsatisfactory lesson in Year 3, however, the subject was not brought to life in the same way and pupils listened for a long time to an explanation by the teacher of life in a monastery, where not all facts given were correct. During the short time left for pupils to take part, it was evident that they had achieved too little understanding of the likely diet of monks to complete a possible menu.
75. The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory, overall. An audit by the subject leader has led to good improvements in the curriculum but the monitoring of plans for teaching is inconsistent and does not always identify unsuitable methods in advance of lessons. Assessment systems are not fully established and plans for lessons are not always based on a clear understanding of pupils' previous learning. Literacy skills are practised satisfactorily but not always to the same high standards as in English lessons. Links with the information and communication technology curriculum have been identified but are not yet being consistently used.

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

### **Art and design**

One lesson in art and design was observed during the inspection and the outcomes of work in another. Pupils' past work indicates that standards are at least average, but no overall judgement about provision can be made.

### **Commentary**

76. Pupils respond well to the opportunity to use materials creatively, as was evident in Year 1 when pupils produced a good range of work in response to a lesson on paper technology. Prompted by a good review of possible ways of folding, pleating, scrunching and twirling paper strips, pupils set about the task with vigour. The teacher had prepared pupils well through the scrutiny of prints of abstract designs by other artists and an interesting sketchbook belonging to a parent. This good preparation provided a valuable source of inspiration and pupils' work was varied, interesting and colourful, showing good evidence that they had benefited well from the thorough introduction. Other work on display indicates that teaching is at least good on other occasions, enabling pupils to reach a good level of sensitivity to shape and colour in their portraits in crayon or pastel chalks.
77. In Year 2, evidence of past work indicates a thorough approach to units of study. For example, pupils progressed from making simple leaf prints to string designs glued onto blocks, which were then used to print patterns onto both paper and fabric. Recent drawings of the local church show careful observation of line, with work of a suitable standard for the pupils' ages.
78. In Years 3 and 4, work in sketchbooks is sparse and shows little evidence of the thoughtful units of work seen earlier in the school. In a lesson observed in Year 4, the teaching was satisfactory, overall, but varied throughout, with opportunities missed for the pupils to achieve well. The teacher gave a good introduction to the work of Georges Seurat, with examples prompting good discussion of the way he represented light and shade through the use of dots or 'points'. Contrasting work by other artists was used to highlight Seurat's distinctive style and pupils prepared with enthusiasm to create their own pictures in the pointillist style. The wide range of objects available to provide a focus for study distracted from the learning objective and pupils became swamped by the task in most cases, wanting to represent the object before they had achieved the skills of representing light and shade with points. Possible links with graphics computer programs to achieve a similar style were not made.
79. The new co-ordinator has a good understanding of art and design and knows where the school needs to improve to consolidate the good practice evident in some classes. Visiting artists working with pupils extend their knowledge and understanding in the subject very well. Clay work on display in the school provides evidence of a workshop held for pupils in Year 4 last year, where work of an excellent standard was produced. Similarly pupils learned to work into shaded areas with erasers to form lines to represent leaves and plants. Assessment tasks are at the planning stage as a basis for a portfolio of work to exemplify the standards expected.

### **Design and technology**

Only one lesson was observed in design and technology and only limited evidence of current work was available to make judgements on standards. Therefore, an overall judgement on provision cannot be made.

## Commentary

80. In a good lesson observed in Year 2, pupils were in the early stages of preparing to design a wheeled vehicle. The lesson was prepared well and pupils observed a car, which provided an interesting starting point to identifying key parts and associated technical vocabulary. A computer program allowed pupils to move from vehicle to diagram, to remember and identify similar features.
81. Evidence from samples of past work, discussions with pupils and plans indicates that a satisfactory range of materials and tools is used throughout the school. Pupils are encouraged to evaluate their work critically, looking at the tools and materials they have used, and selecting areas for improvement in their designs. By Year 4, pupils can incorporate lights and buzzers into greeting cards and, again, a strength is in the careful evaluation of both design and outcome.
82. The subject manager has rightly identified the need to raise the quality of teaching and learning at the design stage. Monitoring is limited to lesson plans but will extend to lessons when the subject features, on a cyclical basis, in the school improvement plan. 'Challenge days' arranged in co-operation with other local schools enable a small number of high attaining pupils to work on more challenging projects; this serves to extend their learning experience very well. Overall, resources for this subject are adequate but the lack of water in classrooms means that there are practical difficulties in ensuring that hygiene requirements for food technology are met.

## Music

Only one lesson was observed and no overall judgement on provision can be made. Discussion with the subject leader and a review of the planning scheme used by teachers indicates that the statutory curriculum is taught. Singing heard during school assemblies and in recordings of performances for parents indicates that the quality of pupils' singing by both Year 2 and Year 4 is at least satisfactory. An appropriate variety of music is played daily in school assemblies and the headteacher actively involves pupils in satisfactory discussions about its significant features. Opportunities to learn to play musical instruments, such as the electronic keyboard, brass and stringed instruments are made available and recent reminders to parents that these are subsidised has led to a greater interest in taking part. A teaching assistant leads a choir for annual performances in a local music festival, which extends learning well for those who take part. School musical performances in the church are well attended by parents and promote the ethos of the school well.

## Physical education

No overall judgement can be made on provision as no lessons were observed. Discussions with the subject leader and photographic evidence indicate that the school makes very good efforts to ensure that the pupils are offered the full range of physical education activities, despite the lack of indoor facilities on site. The school is looking forward to the opening of a new community hall next door.

## PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Provision for the pupils' personal, social and health education and citizenship is **good**. It makes a good contribution to the very good attitudes and relationships and the good behaviour of pupils in school. The programme of study includes discrete lessons on aspects such as not judging people just by appearances, friendships and how to resolve problems through discussion. There are good links with science and physical education as pupils learn about the value of healthy eating and exercise. The school council, to which pupils are elected, is valued by the pupils and contributes significantly to their understanding of citizenship. The council also helps pupils to know that their views are valued and this contributes well to the commitment that pupils have to the school.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgements</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	3
<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>3</b>
Pupils' achievement	3
<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>	<b>2</b>
Attendance	3
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
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	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	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	3
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	3

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