

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **THE GROVE INFANT AND NURSERY SCHOOL**

Harpenden

LEA area: Hertfordshire

Unique reference number: 117281

Headteacher: Mrs Sandra Bird

Lead inspector: Alison M Cartlidge

Dates of inspection: 20<sup>th</sup> – 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2003

Inspection number: 258128

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

|                              |   |
|------------------------------|---|
| Type of school:              | Infant                                  |
| School category:             | Community                               |
| Age range of pupils:         | 3 – 7 years                             |
| Gender of pupils:            | Mixed                                   |
| Number on roll:              | 217                                     |
| School address:              | Dark Lane<br>Harpenden<br>Hertfordshire |
| Postcode:                    | AL5 1QD                                 |
| Telephone number:            | (01582) 761 849                         |
| Fax number:                  | (01582) 760 165                         |
| Appropriate authority:       | The governing body                      |
| Name of chair of governors:  | Mr Peter Wheeler                        |
| Date of previous inspection: | April 1998                              |

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The Grove Infant and Nursery School is situated on the outskirts of Harpenden. Most pupils attending the school come from the largely advantaged surrounding area of mixed housing. There are 72 part-time places available in the nursery, 60 of which are currently filled. Over a third of the children in the present reception year received private pre-school education and did not attend the nursery class. Children join the reception classes in the September or January before their fifth birthday. Attainment on entry to the nursery and reception classes is above average overall, though there is a broad range of attainment and pupils come from differing backgrounds. Most of the 157 pupils in the Infant school are of White-British origin with a very small number of travellers and pupils in care. The few pupils with English as an additional language require no additional support. The number of pupils who have been identified as having special educational needs, including those with statements, is broadly average, although there is a higher percentage of these pupils in the present Year 2 than usual. Most pupils with special educational needs have learning difficulties. There are more boys than girls at the school, particularly in Year 2, where over 60 per cent are boys. The mobility of pupils is broadly average. In 2002, the school was successful in being awarded the 'Artsmark' and the local education authority's 'Early Years Quality Mark'.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

| Members of the inspection team |                      |                | Subject responsibilities   |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|----------------|--|
| 23609                          | Alison M. Cartlidge  | Lead inspector | Foundation Stage, Science, Citizenship.  |
| 9545                           | Kevin Greatorex      | Lay inspector  |  |
| 23239                          | Mike Capper          | Team inspector | Special educational needs, English as an additional language, Mathematics, Information and communication technology, Art and design, Design and technology, Music, Physical education. |
| 21686                          | Diana Songer-Hudgell | Team inspector | English, Geography, History, Religious education.  |

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**This is a very good school.** Standards are consistently high by the end of Year 2 in English, mathematics and science and all pupils achieve well throughout the school. Teaching is good overall, and members of staff, governors and parents have high aspirations for the pupils whatever their need or background. The school is very successful in promoting creativity, especially in art and design and music. **The school provides good value for money.**

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The headteacher and governing body provide very good leadership.
- Pupils' attainment is well above average in English, mathematics, science and art and design, and good in information and communication technology (ICT).
- Pupils' achievement and attainment in music are outstanding.
- There is good challenge for pupils during practical activities but expectations for written and recorded work do not meet pupils' differing needs consistently.
- The school provides very effective care and support for all its pupils.
- The partnership between the school, parents and the local community is very effective and parents and carers are very positive about the school.
- Subject co-ordinators have limited opportunities to monitor the effectiveness of teaching and learning.

The school is more effective than at the time of the last inspection. Very good standards in English and good standards in ICT have been maintained and standards have risen further in mathematics, science, art and design and music. Very good leadership and good management, teaching and learning have been maintained. Most issues raised at the time of the last inspection have been dealt with successfully. The role of co-ordinators is improving, although there are limited opportunities for them to monitor teaching and learning.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

**Pupils achieve well throughout the school.** Children in the nursery and reception classes are on target to exceed the goals children are expected to reach by the end of the reception year in personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world and creative development. They are on target to achieve the goals set in physical development. Children's achievement is very good in music.

| Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2, compared with: | all schools |      |      | similar schools |
|---|-------------|------|------|-----------------|
|   | 2000        | 2001 | 2002 | 2002            |
| reading   | A           | A    | A    | B               |
| writing   | A*          | A    | A    | A               |
| mathematics   | A           | A    | A    | B               |

*Key: A\* - very high; 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.*

By the end of Year 2, inspection findings show that standards in English, mathematics and science are very good and all pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve well. There are no significant differences between the attainment and achievement of boys and girls or pupils from differing backgrounds. National Curriculum test results in English and mathematics have been

consistently well above average for the last five years, with standards in writing being in the top five per cent nationally in 2000. The number of pupils achieving the higher level (Level 3) in tests is also well above average. In 2002, attainment in science was average at the expected level (Level 2) and above average at the higher level (Level 3). National Curriculum assessments for 2003, for which there are as yet no national comparisons, indicate a further improvement in results in English, mathematics and science. The school sets and achieves challenging whole-school targets for pupils' attainment.

**Pupils' personal development including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good.** Rates of attendance are well above average and punctuality is consistently good. Pupils have very positive attitudes towards the school and generally behave well.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The quality of education provided by the school is good overall with several significant strengths. Teaching is good overall, helping pupils to learn well throughout the school.** The teaching of music by the specialist teacher is excellent. Good quality teaching assistant support in lessons means that pupils with special educational needs are enabled to take part in all class activities. There are good assessment procedures in English, mathematics and science, enabling teachers to monitor pupils' progress successfully. There is good breadth to the curriculum and a very good range of opportunities that extend learning, including practical activities, clubs, visits and visitors. Restrictions in the outdoor accommodation and resources limit opportunities for reception children to extend their physical skills. The provision for the care, welfare and safety of pupils is very good, making pupils feel confident and secure. Effective support and guidance is given and pupils are given good opportunities to share their views and feel part of the school and wider community.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**Leadership and management are very good overall.** The headteacher provides very effective leadership for the work of the school and there is a very clear, shared vision to raise standards further. There is a strong commitment towards welcoming and supporting pupils from differing backgrounds, including those with special educational needs, and good management ensures that the school runs smoothly. Governance is very effective, with the governing body being well informed and fulfilling all responsibilities very well.

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

Parents and pupils are highly supportive of the school's work, and the very good links between the school, parents and the community have a very positive impact on pupils' learning. Parents and carers are especially pleased with the way the school is led and managed, the approachability of members of staff and the progress made by their children. One-third of the pupils that responded (25 out of 76) to the pre-inspection questionnaire feel that behaviour is not always good and the inspection team agrees that on very few occasions pupils showed a lack of self-control in some lessons.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- Ensure that teachers plan written and recorded tasks that match pupils' differing needs.
- Increase the opportunities for subject co-ordinators to monitor the effectiveness of teaching and learning.





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

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

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

Standards in English, mathematics and science are very good and all pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve well throughout the school. There are no significant differences between the attainment and achievement of boys and girls, or pupils from differing backgrounds.

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

- Attainment is well above average in English, mathematics and science.
- Pupils' attainment and achievement is outstanding in music and very good in art and design.
- Attainment is good in information and communication technology (ICT) and personal, social and health education and citizenship.
- Children in the nursery and reception classes achieve well and attainment is good overall.
- Some written work is not matched well to pupils' differing needs.

#### **Commentary**

##### Reception and nursery classes

1. Children in the reception and nursery classes achieve well and are on target to exceed the early learning goals in personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world and creative development. They are on target to achieve the early learning goals in physical development. The school has identified the need to improve the outdoor accommodation and resources for children in the reception class so that they have greater opportunity to practise and develop physical skills. Children's achievement is very good in music.

##### Years 1 and 2

2. National Curriculum test results in English and mathematics have been consistently well above average for the last five years, with standards in writing being in the top five per cent nationally in 2000. In 2002, results were well above average in writing and above average in reading and mathematics when compared with similar schools. The number of pupils achieving the higher level (Level 3) in tests is also well above average. Attainment in science was average at the expected level (Level 2) and above average at the higher level (Level 3). National Curriculum assessments for 2003, for which there are as yet no national comparisons, indicate a further improvement in results in English, mathematics and science. Pupils achieve well in mathematics and science and very well in English.
3. Very good standards in English have been maintained since the time of the last inspection, with good improvements in attainment in mathematics and science due to these subjects being areas of focus for school development. Members of staff have high aspirations for the pupils and set and achieve challenging whole-school targets. The school identifies and provides effective support for individual pupils, including those with special educational needs, ensuring they make the expected or better progress given their prior attainment. The few pupils with English as an additional language achieve well and require no additional support. Gifted and talented pupils are identified, encouraged and challenged, enabling them to achieve well.

## **Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 – average point scores in 2002**

| Standards in: | School results | National results |
|---------------|----------------|------------------|
| reading       | 17.3 (18.2)    | 15.8 (15.7)      |
| writing       | 16.7 (16.6)    | 14.4 (14.3)      |
| mathematics   | 18.0 (17.8)    | 16.5 (16.2)      |

*There were 70 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

4. The school is very successful in promoting the creative arts and pupils make outstanding progress in music, especially in singing and percussion accompaniment, and very good progress in art and design, with the school being awarded the 'Artsmark' in 2002. Pupils' achievement and attainment have risen further in these subjects since the time of the last inspection.
5. Good attainment and achievement in ICT have been maintained since the last inspection and the new curriculum for personal, social and health education and citizenship is well established and promotes good standards. As at the time of the last inspection, pupils achieve satisfactory standards in religious education.
6. Whilst all pupils achieve well overall, and literacy and numeracy skills are used effectively to support learning in other subjects, some written work is not well matched to pupils' differing needs, being either too difficult for lower-attaining pupils or insufficiently challenging for higher attainers. At these times, pupils make less progress than they should. Ninety-five per cent of parents are pleased with the progress their children make and several are especially pleased with the progress made in art and design, music and English.

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

Rates of attendance are well above average and punctuality is consistently good. Pupils have very positive attitudes towards the school and generally behave well. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Effective opportunities for pupils to work together enable them to learn to co-operate very well.
- Pupils are very enthusiastic and enjoy school.
- There are very good opportunities for pupils to learn about their own and other cultures in art and design and music.
- Pupils gain a very good understanding about living in a community and are willing to take responsibility.
- Members of staff provide good role models, enabling pupils to form very good relationships and learn to respect different views and beliefs very well.
- Praise is used effectively, building pupils' confidence and self-esteem successfully.
- Pupils develop good spiritual awareness.
- Children in the reception class become inattentive when expected to sit still for too long.
- Older pupils occasionally show a lack of self-control when given insufficient challenge.

### **Commentary**

7. The school is successful in monitoring and promoting very good attendance and good punctuality and the vast majority of pupils enjoy attending. Ninety-nine per cent of parents find their children to be happy at school and very few pupils state that they are not always happy.

Parents and carers take good responsibility in ensuring that their children attend regularly, and rates of attendance have improved since the time of the last inspection.

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

| Authorised absence |     | Unauthorised absence |     |
|--------------------|-----|----------------------|-----|
| School data        | 4.1 | School data          | 0.0 |
| National data      | 5.4 | National data        | 0.5 |

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

8. Pupils develop good attitudes towards learning and behave well most of the time. They take part in drawing up rules for their classrooms and behave sensibly in most lessons. However, 36 per cent of pupils in the questionnaire thought that behaviour is only good sometimes and whilst 94 per cent of parents are pleased with the pupils' behaviour, seven per cent raised concerns about bullying. There have been no exclusions since the last inspection. Overall, pupil behaviour is not quite as good as it was at the time of the last inspection. Nevertheless, the school is committed to including pupils from a wide range of backgrounds and with differing needs, including some with behavioural difficulties. Whilst teachers have high expectations and manage behaviour successfully in most lessons, behaviour was unsatisfactory in one physical education lesson when pupils were given insufficient challenge. The school brochure provides clear guidelines on how the school expects pupils to behave and most parents are happy with the way the school deals with instances of bullying or harassment. Children in the nursery and reception classes achieve well in their personal, social and emotional development.
  
9. Pupils are attentive in most lessons and take part in practical activities with great enthusiasm. Children in the nursery and reception classes achieve well in personal, social and emotional development. They are confident and independent and form good relationships. Children concentrate well in the nursery, although in the reception class, children lose concentration in some lessons when expected to stay working on one activity for too long. Throughout the school pupils work together very well when sharing ideas in discussion pairs and by playing games together. Members of staff work hard at building the pupils' confidence and the 'Brilliant Board' is used well to share achievements of all kinds during assembly. In lessons, pupils are quick to congratulate each other on their work. Parents are pleased with the way pupils develop very good confidence and high levels of self-esteem.

## Exclusions

### *Ethnic background of pupils*

### *Exclusions in the last school year*

| Categories used in the Annual School Census         | No of pupils on roll | Number of fixed period exclusions | Number of permanent exclusions |
|---|----------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| White – British                                     | 117                  | 0                                 | 0                              |
| White – any other White background                  | 2                    | 0                                 | 0                              |
| Mixed – White and Asian                             | 2                    | 0                                 | 0                              |
| Mixed – any other mixed background                  | 2                    | 0                                 | 0                              |
| Asian or Asian British – Indian                     | 2                    | 0                                 | 0                              |
| Asian or Asian British – Pakistani                  | 1                    | 0                                 | 0                              |
| Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi                | 1                    | 0                                 | 0                              |
| Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background | 1                    | 0                                 | 0                              |
| Black or Black British – any other Black background | 1                    | 0                                 | 0                              |
| Chinese   | 1                    | 0                                 | 0                              |
| Any other ethnic group                              | 1                    | 0                                 | 0                              |
| No ethnic group recorded                            | 1                    | 0                                 | 0                              |

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

10. The programme for supporting pupils' personal development is good overall. Pupils show a good understanding of the impact of their actions on others in their writing when they identify how they can support each other by sharing, being friendly and kind. Pupils develop very good relationships. During discussions, they trust and listen to each other very well, share their feelings and learn how to accept and appreciate diversity. They gain a very good insight into citizenship and employment by taking part in specific projects led by working parents and by visiting places of work in the local community such as a research centre and the supermarket. Other cultures are promoted very successfully during assemblies, through the use of a wide range of multicultural resources, talks from visitors from overseas and in music and art and design lessons. For example, pupils learn Diwali songs and play instruments from around the world. Provision for pupils' spiritual development has been improved since the time of the last inspection and is now good and the very good provision for cultural development has been maintained.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL**

The school provides a good quality of education for its pupils with several significant strengths. Teaching, learning and assessment procedures are good and the curriculum is broad and includes very good opportunities for pupils to take part in educational visits. The school cares for its pupils very well and very strong links between the school, parents and local community have a very positive impact on pupils' learning.

### **Teaching and learning**

Teaching is good overall, helping pupils to learn well throughout the school. There are good assessment procedures.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- In the nursery and reception classes, teachers make very good use of questioning of individual children.
- Teachers help to make learning purposeful by establishing good links between different subjects and telling pupils what they are going to learn.
- There is good challenge for higher-attaining pupils in English, mathematics and science.
- Good quality teaching assistants' support in lessons means that pupils with special educational needs are enabled to take part in all class activities.
- Teachers use a very good range of teaching methods, with a very strong and effective emphasis being given to learning through practical activities.
- There are good assessment procedures in English, mathematics and science and target setting is well established.
- Recorded work is sometimes too hard for some pupils, slowing the pace of learning.

## Commentary

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 38 lessons

| Excellent | Very good | Good     | Satisfactory | Unsatisfactory | Poor   | Very poor |
|-----------|-----------|----------|--------------|----------------|--------|-----------|
| 2 (5%)    | 5 (13%)   | 20 (53%) | 10 (26%)     | 1 (3%)         | 0 (0%) | 0 (0%)    |

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

11. The good teaching found at the time of the last inspection has been maintained. Teachers know their pupils very well and establish very good relationships with them.
12. Teaching and learning in the nursery and reception class is good overall. In both classes, members of staff are caring and patient. They work together effectively as a team, providing a good range of exciting and purposeful activities. They have a good knowledge of the early years' curriculum and are successful at ensuring that children make good progress in improving skills across the curriculum. Teachers use a very good range of methods to make learning fun, with well-chosen activities encouraging children to work quickly and become fully involved in their learning. Members of staff use questioning very effectively to assess learning and to challenge children's thinking. Teachers have high expectations of behaviour and work hard to ensure that children understand what they are doing so that they are fully engaged in their work. However, there are occasions in the reception class where children are expected to sit for too long. When this happens, children get fidgety and the pace of learning slows.
13. Teaching and learning are good overall in Years 1 and 2. There was one unsatisfactory lesson where behaviour was not managed effectively and pupils' skills were not extended. Teaching in music is consistently excellent when a specialist teacher takes lessons. Pupils benefit from this outstanding support, with the teacher challenging the pupils to reach very high levels of attainment. In both music and art and design, the very secure understanding of what pupils should be learning is a key factor in the pupils' achievement.
14. Teachers have good subject knowledge overall and plan challenging and exciting work that motivates and engages pupils. Very good use is made of a range of teaching methods that include whole-class teaching, paired work, group and individual work. The high amount of time allowed for pupils to learn through practical activities and the good links that are made between different subjects help to make tasks purposeful. Teachers make good use of ICT to support pupils' learning across the curriculum.
15. In Years 1 and 2, teachers manage behaviour effectively and give pupils good opportunities to

work collaboratively. The few pupils identified as having behavioural problems respond well to the good expectations of teachers. Teachers make good use of resources to provide challenge in lessons and to make learning fun.

16. Pupils with special educational needs are supported effectively in lessons, often working with well-qualified teaching assistants. This good quality support means that pupils with special educational needs are fully included in all activities and are helped to make good progress. A teacher who does not currently take a class gives appropriate support in many lessons, but there are occasions when her valuable skills are not used enough. Although much of the support for special educational needs takes place in class, pupils are also withdrawn from class for short periods for additional help. At these times, the teacher works hard to ensure that work is closely matched to need. However, the current special educational needs group in Year 2, which is withdrawn from class for literacy support, is too large (15 pupils) to be fully successful. Teaching at these times is satisfactory rather than better, due to the difficulties in meeting the wide range of diverse needs within the group.
17. There are good assessment procedures throughout the school. They are particularly thorough in English, mathematics and science, where a wide range of short and long term assessment procedures are in place. Target setting is well established, especially in Year 2. Pupils have written targets in literacy and numeracy and in Year 2, they understand what they need to do to improve and how this relates to their targets.
18. In the nursery and reception classes, assessment information is used well to ensure that work is closely matched to individual needs. This is not always the case in Years 1 and 2, with some recorded work not being matched closely enough to pupils' prior attainment. When this happens, pupils find work too hard and it is left incomplete. In contrast, there is good challenge for higher-attaining pupils in English, mathematics and science, although there are missed opportunities to extend the learning of these pupils in subjects such as history, geography and religious education.
19. Parents and pupils are very pleased with the quality of teaching across the school. Homework is used effectively to extend pupils' learning and to develop home/school links.

## **The curriculum**

There is good breadth to the curriculum and a very good range of opportunities that extend learning, including practical activities, clubs, visits and visitors.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There is a very good curriculum for English and good curricula for mathematics and science.
- Provision for music and art is very broad, exciting and stimulating.
- Good provision is made for pupils with special educational needs, so that they are included fully.
- The curriculum is planned carefully to include experiences that offer pupils a very good and interesting range of practical and enrichment activities.
- Very good accommodation and provision of educational resources assist teachers to help pupils learn.
- Links with the local community, other schools and parents are very good and have a significant impact on pupils' learning and in preparing them for when they leave the school.

## **Commentary**

20. The school provides a broad curriculum that meets statutory requirements, with appropriate time being allowed for each subject. There is a very good range of music, art and practical activities and good provision for English, mathematics and science, all of which are thoroughly enjoyed by pupils. Every opportunity is taken to promote language and literacy in all subject

areas and to provide experiences which pupils can relate to and discuss. Displays, artefacts and photographs reflect the broad curriculum offered and provide a good stimulus for learning and an interesting environment.

21. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good, enabling them to achieve well. Teachers think carefully about the next steps in learning for these pupils and plan suitable work. Teaching assistants give high quality support to groups and individuals and work well reinforcing the learning of skills, knowledge and understanding of all pupils. The curriculum does not disadvantage girls or boys or pupils from differing backgrounds.
22. Very good enriching activities are included in the policies and schemes of work. These include visits to places of interest, visitors from a wide variety of cultures, faiths and experiences, and after-school clubs. These all extend the curriculum very well, and add significant interest and stimulus for pupils' learning. The curriculum and the way it is taught through a topic approach helps pupils to understand and see connections across subjects and between learning in school and the outside world.
23. Provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is good and many opportunities are taken in the topic work and through the strategy of whole-class discussions to ensure this is a strong feature in the ethos of the school. The programme promotes good co-operation between pupils in lessons and provides good opportunities for them to learn about various topics such as healthy eating. Statutory requirements are met in teaching pupils about drugs, sex and relationships education.
24. The curriculum is reviewed regularly and is continuously developing. Members of staff receive effective training and encouragement to develop good innovative strategies to deliver the curriculum. Staffing levels are good and teachers are well qualified for all aspects of the curriculum. Overall, accommodation and resources for learning are very good and assist teachers in their work. There are clear plans to improve the outdoor area for the reception class and extend the opportunities for outdoor provision.
25. The school liaises closely with parents, other schools and the local community. These very good links help pupils to settle quickly when they start school, progress well and be very well prepared for when they leave the school.

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

The provision for the care, welfare and safety of pupils is very good. Effective support and guidance is given and pupils are given good opportunities to share their views.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Arrangements for child protection are very comprehensive.
- Health and safety arrangements are very effective.
- Members of staff know the pupils well and support their personal development effectively.
- There are very effective procedures for supporting new pupils.
- Pupils are consulted on many issues and their views taken into account.

### **Commentary**

26. There are clear routines for ensuring pupils' health, safety and welfare, including child protection, that are known to all members of staff. The school site is regularly checked for hazards, and maintenance is kept up to date. The school's procedures for ensuring the school is a safe and healthy environment have been improved since the time of the last inspection, when a number of minor health and safety issues caused concern.

27. Pupils trust members of staff and feel confident and secure at school. Parents are pleased with the way their children are cared for, think members of staff treat their children fairly and are approachable and supportive. The warm and friendly ethos ensures that all pupils feel welcome and are included in all aspects of school life. Close links between the co-ordinators for special educational needs and outside agencies ensure that pupils with special educational needs are supported well. The school monitors the progress of all pupils in English, mathematics and science to ensure that they achieve well over time. There are good arrangements for supporting good attendance and behaviour. There are very effective arrangements for helping new children settle into school. Members of staff visit children in their play-groups and there are several opportunities for them to visit with their parents or carers. Welcoming letters are given to the children and their parents. Transition from the nursery into the reception class is smooth. Ninety-nine per cent of parents find induction arrangements to be good.
28. The school provides good opportunities for pupils to discuss their ideas and feelings and this information is listened to sensitively. For example, regular circle times provide a forum for discussions and pupils help to write their class rules. Pupils were consulted about playground facilities and how the sensory garden was to be developed, and the school acted on these suggestions.

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

The very strong links between the school, parents, other schools and the community have a very positive impact on pupils' learning.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Parents and carers are highly supportive of the school.
- Very good links with the community help to enrich the curriculum.
- A very effective parents' and teachers' association provides substantial financial support.
- There are very strong links with other schools, and procedures for transferring pupils are very effective.

### **Commentary**

29. As at the time of the last inspection, the school's partnership with parents is very good. Parents are highly supportive of the school's work, with very positive responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire. Ninety-eight per cent of parents find the school to be approachable. The school has a very impressive list of volunteers and many parents and grandparents help in school, supporting groups of pupils, or at home by making resources. Ninety-eight per cent of parents are happy with the quality and quantity of homework their children receive and are very pleased to support them at home.
30. The school provides parents with good information. Ninety-three per cent of parents are happy with the way the school communicates with them and are especially pleased with the wealth of information they receive on the curriculum. There are clearly-written packs of information for new parents and the school brochure is user-friendly. There are several curriculum meetings to explain to parents and carers what their children will be learning, and these are greatly valued. Seven per cent of parents would welcome more information on their children's attainment and progress. However, the inspection team finds this information to be of good quality. Parents particularly enjoy the 'family morning' when pupils are proud to show their parents around the school. Parents of pupils with special educational needs have good opportunities to take part in reviews of their children's progress. Most parents are happy with the way the school deals with the few complaints received.



31. The school's links with the community have expanded since the last inspection and are now very good. Pupils regularly make visits to churches and places of work, such as a local agricultural research station. Visitors from the community and overseas talk to pupils about their lives, and pupils take part in local festivals.
32. The school has very strong links with other schools, including the adjacent junior school and local playgroups. There are opportunities for pupils to work with other schools in art and design, mathematics, ICT and music.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Leadership and management are very good overall. The headteacher provides very effective leadership for the work of the school and good management ensures that the school runs smoothly. Governance is very effective, with the governing body fulfilling all responsibilities very well.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The headteacher has high aspirations for the pupils and ensures that there is a very clear educational direction based on improving standards further.
- The very well-informed governing body takes an active role in shaping and supporting the work of the school.
- Performance data and self-evaluation are used well to identify what needs to be improved.
- There is a strong commitment towards including pupils from differing backgrounds, and the provision for special educational needs is managed effectively.
- The roles of subject co-ordinators are improving although they have insufficient opportunities for monitoring teaching and learning.

### **Commentary**

33. The governing body has developed its role well since the time of the last inspection and now takes a very active part in long-term planning by contributing to, and monitoring progress towards the school development plan. Individual governors are allocated responsibilities for overseeing specific aspects of the school's work in addition to serving on committees. They ensure that all statutory duties are fulfilled, including the implementation of the race equality policy, by making regular, focused monitoring visits and by asking co-ordinators and the headteacher challenging questions. There is a clear understanding of how the budget is to be used to support areas of greatest need.
34. The headteacher sets a very clear agenda for school development and shares with other members of staff a strong commitment to maintaining and extending further the very good standards that exist in English, mathematics and science. The headteacher and governing body have a realistic overview of the effectiveness of the school and of areas of strength and comparative weakness.
35. The headteacher is skilled in motivating all members of staff and encouraging them to expand their responsibilities. Effective teams are established where all members of staff contribute and feel valued. For example, members of staff in the nursery and reception classes are now working together more closely, sharing planning and improving assessment procedures.
36. The headteacher knows the parents and the local community well and is greatly respected. Parents are pleased with the way the school is run and find the headteacher to be very caring and approachable. The very good leadership of the headteacher has been maintained since the time of the last inspection.
37. Management of the school continues to be effective. The headteacher and members of staff analyse test data and other assessment information in English, mathematics and science and

use this information to identify areas for whole-school development, as well as setting individual targets and noting pupils who have made insufficient gains from one year to the next. The setting of end of Year 2 targets when pupils enter Year 1 enables the school to provide early intervention when needed. The monitoring of pupils' progress has improved since the last inspection, when English was the only subject being monitored closely.

38. Performance management is used effectively to support members of staff in their professional development and to identify relevant training needs to help raise standards. This aspect of the school's work has improved since the time of the last inspection when staff appraisal was not taking place.
39. Whilst subject co-ordinators talk with members of staff informally, scrutinise planning, sample pupils' work and hold discussions with some of the pupils, as at the time of the last inspection, they have insufficient opportunity for monitoring teaching and learning. Ninety-nine per cent of parents are pleased with the way the school is led and managed.

## Financial information

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

| Income and expenditure (£) |         | Balances (£)                        |        |
|----------------------------|---------|-------------------------------------|--------|
| Total income               | 613,548 | Balance from previous year          | 50,110 |
| Total expenditure          | 625,192 | Balance carried forward to the next | 38,467 |
| Expenditure per pupil      | 2,660   |                                     |        |

40. Financial planning is closely linked to the school development plan and there is a strong commitment towards maintaining continuity in staffing. The higher than recommended contingency money carried forward from the last financial year has been appropriately allocated to refurbishing the playground and improving the outdoor provision for the reception class. Spending on additional members of staff to support music and pupils with special educational needs is well considered and used well. As at the time of the last inspection, the school provides good value for money. The school uses its resources appropriately and applies best value principles to its work.
41. There are no particular barriers to learning and the school is successful in recruiting and retaining a full complement of staff.

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

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

42. Children have the opportunity of attending the nursery part-time before joining the reception class in the autumn or spring term before their fifth birthday. Up to a third of the children in the reception class have not been to the school's nursery. Attainment on entry to the nursery and reception classes is above average.
43. Overall, children achieve well throughout their time in the nursery and reception classes and most are on target to exceed the goals children are expected to reach by the end of the reception year. Children with special educational needs receive sensitive support, enabling them to achieve well. Children develop good attitudes towards learning and behave well. They benefit from good learning opportunities for moral, social, and cultural development. The children's achievement is similar to that found at the time of the last inspection.
44. Members of staff work together well as a team and have very good relationships with the children. Particular strengths in teaching are the practical activities planned, the clear instructions given for tasks and the very effective use made of questioning to encourage children to talk about what they are doing. Children with special educational needs are given sensitive support, enabling them to take an active part in all activities and to achieve well. Good teaching has been maintained since the time of the last inspection.
45. The curriculum is broad and balanced and prepares children well for the National Curriculum. There are effective long-term plans for each area of learning, though expectations for children of differing prior attainment are not always made clear in individual lesson plans. Effective use is made of the two outdoor areas to extend learning. Assessment information is good overall, with individual targets being set for children in personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy and mathematical development. Members of staff know the children well and write careful observations about them as they work. Information gathered on the children's attainment and progress is used to help decide future activities and provide the correct level of support.
46. There are very close links between the nursery and local play-groups and one of the nursery teachers has led a worthwhile programme for training and supporting members of staff in local playgroups, as they identify children with special educational needs before they start school.
47. In all areas of learning, leadership and management are good overall. Provision has improved since the time of the last inspection and there are clear plans for future development, though there are limited opportunities for monitoring teaching and learning. Accommodation and resources are good overall and are used effectively and the outdoor area for the reception class is being developed to provide better facilities, especially for developing the children's physical skills.
48. There are very effective links with parents, who are given the opportunity to attend meetings about the curriculum and support children in their reading and writing. A board outside the nursery tells parents what children have been learning that day so that they can discuss their child's day and extend what they have been learning when they get home. In addition, parents and grandparents make a very valuable contribution towards children's learning by regularly helping in class.

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

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children's self-esteem is successfully raised, helping them to become confident and independent when trying new activities.
- Members of staff are very good role models and enable children to form good relationships with adults and with each other.
- Children's attitudes to learning are often very good in the nursery.
- There are limited opportunities for older children to plan their own tasks.

### **Commentary**

49. Children achieve well and most are on target to exceed the goals children are expected to reach by the end of the reception year. In the nursery, children co-operate with each other well and have started to play imaginary games together. They are confident about asking questions and enjoy exploring the environment by digging in the ground and using magnifiers to look closely at the roots of vegetables. They know the importance of washing hands before handling food and follow class routines well. In the reception class, children take part in drawing up their own class rules and share equipment sensibly. They maintain concentration well during practical tasks, although they become inattentive if expected to sit still for too long. Children are tolerant of one another and learn to take turns and respect the views of others.
50. Teaching and learning are good. The teachers, nursery nurses and teaching assistants have high expectations for behaviour and teach manners effectively. They set a very good example by listening to the children and by respecting the suggestions they make during discussions. Whilst children have good opportunities to pursue their own interests, older children in the reception class and nursery have too few opportunities to explain what they intend doing during free choice activities.
51. There is a broad and balanced curriculum that meets the children's differing needs well. Children learn about other cultures and festivals during assemblies and a commercial scheme of work supports teachers in their lesson planning. A parent has made puppets with happy and sad faces that are used effectively to support teaching about feelings.

## **COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Members of staff read stories well, capturing the children's interest in reading successfully.
- Homework makes a good contribution towards children's learning.
- Effective use is made of attractive resources.
- Some lessons are too long in the reception class, leading to a loss of interest.

### **Commentary**

52. All children, including those with special educational needs, achieve well and most are on target to exceed the goals children are expected to reach by the end of the reception year. In the nursery, older children recognise their own names and speak clearly when talking about their own experiences. Younger children enjoy sharing books, taking part in acting out stories such as 'The Enormous Turnip' and listen carefully to members of staff and each other. In the

reception class, children have good vocabularies and use their knowledge of the sounds letters make to help them read and write simple unfamiliar words. Higher-attaining children talk in depth about the characters and events in a book, and all children enjoy choosing books and discussing the illustrations.

53. Teaching and learning are good, overall. In the nursery, members of staff have high expectations of children's use of language and ask them to explain what they intend doing rather than point at activities. Stories and nursery rhymes are used effectively to promote discussion and teach children about story sequence and rhyming words. In the reception class, children are encouraged to use their literacy skills when working in the role-play shop, and clipboards are used to record lists of produce. There is limited use of marking in children's books to show what they need to do next, although individual targets are set each term.
54. There is a broad and balanced curriculum overall, although some lessons in the reception class are too long. Children with special educational needs are supported effectively and good use is made of attractive story sacks made by voluntary helpers and parents to help bring stories to life. Teaching is less effective when children are expected to sit and work for too long, and at these times their concentration wanders.
55. Homework is used well to support learning. In the nursery, children are encouraged to bring in and discuss objects starting with a given letter, and reception children have reading and writing tasks to complete. The reception class teacher provides effective guidance on what each child needs to learn next so that parents are fully involved and can provide good support.

## **MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Interesting, practical activities help to make learning fun.
- Mathematical vocabulary is promoted successfully.
- Reception children lose attentiveness when expected to sit still for too long.

### **Commentary**

56. Children achieve well and most are on target to exceed the goals children are expected to reach by the end of the reception year. Children with special educational needs are supported effectively, enabling them to progress well. In the nursery, children compare vegetables by ordering them according to size, and older children count to 20 accurately. Reception children have a secure knowledge of numbers up to 20, make sensible estimates and add small numbers together mentally. They know the names of regular shapes and can talk about some of their properties. Children enjoy the practical tasks provided and concentrate well most of the time.
57. Teaching and learning in the nursery and reception classes are consistently good. Teachers plan a variety of interesting, practical tasks. For example, in the reception class, children enjoyed counting the prickles on the hedgehogs they were making from play-dough and drinking straws, and they sorted fruit and vegetables in the role-play shop. In the nursery, children collected together and counted autumn leaves and put numerals in order by pegging them to the hedge. Members of staff provide sensitive support as children learn mathematical vocabulary such as 'thickest', 'heaviest', 'one more than' and 'the same as'. For example, in the nursery, a teaching assistant encouraged younger children to make simple predictions about which was the heavier of two objects, before helping them to use the balancing scales to compare weight.

58. There is a broad and balanced curriculum and effective use is made of number rhymes to consolidate learning in a fun and meaningful way. In the nursery, good questioning is used as children work on other activities to provide further challenge. For example, children playing with the train set were asked 'is your train longer or shorter than the mat?'. Occasionally children in the reception class are expected to sit and concentrate for too long, and at these times lower attaining children become tired and less co-operative.

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

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Exciting practical tasks stimulate the children's interest in the environment.
- Specific vocabulary is promoted effectively.
- Questioning is used well to create interest and encourage children to think.

### **Commentary**

59. Children achieve well and most are on target to exceed the goals children are expected to reach by the end of the reception year. In the nursery, older children have already developed a good knowledge of living things and names. For example, they identify a wide range of vegetables and are beginning to know the order of the days of the week. Children in the reception class identify features seen during autumn, identify various parts of the body correctly and know that birds need food to build strength for migration. They are inquisitive and enjoy exploring various materials by using their senses. Higher-attaining children name several animals likely to be found in a desert, such as snakes and scorpions, and know that fish and whales live in the sea.
60. Teaching and learning are consistently good, with an example of very good teaching in the reception class. In the very good lesson, the teacher used resources very well to help children gain a better understanding of how they use their senses. Children were very interested in investigating and identifying objects hidden in containers from the sound they made or by guessing which fruits they could smell. The teacher encouraged groups of children to generate good words to describe a range of fruits such as 'juicy', 'prickly' and 'heavy'. All members of staff are knowledgeable and ask effective questions as children work, encouraging them to make good observations, use the correct scientific vocabulary and think about what they have seen.
61. There is a broad and balanced curriculum. In the reception class, specific lessons enable children to gain good knowledge and understanding. In the nursery, fun activities are used to encourage discussion. For example, toy hedgehogs were hidden amongst leaves for children to find. ICT is used successfully to support learning in other subjects. For example, in the nursery, children use the computer to spell their names and in the reception class, children draw pictures of their pets and play a shape matching game.

## **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in physical development is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Good standards are achieved in the nursery.
- Designated areas for physical activity in the nursery garden ensures safety.

- Some activities provide limited challenge.

### **Commentary**

62. Achievement is satisfactory and children are on target to meet the goals children are expected to reach by the end of the reception year. In the nursery, standards are higher, with children showing a good awareness of space and controlling their movements effectively. They are confident when riding tricycles and use their imaginations well when inventing balancing shapes. When working with construction kits and digging tools, they have good hand control. For example, they use vegetable knives safely when cutting up vegetables to make soup.
63. In the reception class, children follow instructions carefully and move in time with the music. Higher attaining children alter their height to make their dances more interesting. Children enjoy lessons and behave well. However, limited access to a well-resourced outdoor area restricts progress.
64. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, with an example of good teaching in the nursery. In the good lesson for older nursery children, there were high expectations for independence in dressing and undressing, and effective links were made with numeracy as children made shapes with their bodies. The teacher used her voice effectively to gain and hold the children's attention, and activities were challenging and fun. All members of staff have high expectations for behaviour and provide clear instructions, enabling children to respond quickly. Lessons are well organised and paced and children have good opportunities to work alone or with others, improving their social development well.
65. Overall, the curriculum is broad and balanced. However, there are limited opportunities for children to develop their ideas and to extend their learning. For example, when children are using the sit and ride vehicles in the nursery, members of staff do not provide additional challenges such as obstacles to steer around, and in the reception class too much teacher direction inhibits the development of children's own ideas. Members of staff do not make sufficient opportunities for children to evaluate each other's ideas. Leadership and management are good overall. There are clear plans for developing the outdoor area for the reception class to provide more opportunities for physical activity.

## **CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in creative development is **good**, with very good features in music.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children's achievement in music is very good.
- Children are skilled at matching colour.

### **Commentary**

66. Children achieve well and most are on target to exceed the goals children are expected to reach by the end of the reception year. In the nursery, children learn how to make interesting fabric pictures by combining paint and sewing. They work together collaboratively in the role-play vegetable stall and invent their own games and stories when playing with the prams or vehicles. They have a good sense of rhythm, and higher-attaining children maintain a steady beat when playing drums.
67. In the reception class, the role-play area includes plenty of opportunities for children to develop their literacy skills by making lists and they develop good storylines as part of their games. They are observant when studying objects and match colour closely. For example, children chose leaves with the same autumn colours that were painted onto a card. Children made

good models of hedgehogs by shaping and painting clay. Children sing very tunefully, often unaccompanied and solo and build a sequence of rhythms lasting up to eight bars when playing percussion instruments. The standard of singing and playing is much higher than that expected for their age. Children enjoy taking part in creative activities and behave well.

68. Teaching and learning are good overall, with evidence of children learning very quickly in music. A good range of lively action songs encourages children to participate and the teachers and other adults provide effective role models. An exceptionally skilful music specialist works with the reception class each week building up an impressive range of skills. In the nursery, members of staff provide good opportunities for children to learn about colour mixing. For example, when the colour of the week was purple, children mixed together spaghetti dyed red and blue and brought various purple objects from home for the colour table.
69. The good curriculum is broad and balanced with very good opportunities for children to make music. Music is an integral part of many lessons, with the teacher and children in the reception class often making up new words to familiar songs consolidating learning in other subjects well. In the nursery, children are provided with good opportunities to explore various materials and use them to make colourful collages and textured pictures.

## **SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGE 1**

### **ENGLISH**

The quality of provision is **very good**.

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

- Pupils' attainment is well above average.
- Teaching is good overall and teachers have high expectations.
- The curriculum is very good and a wide variety of teaching strategies is used.
- Pupils' writing and speaking skills are very well developed.
- Pupils use a wide range of vocabulary, are confident when speaking publicly and read expressively.
- Very good resources and accommodation support pupils' learning.
- Teachers' marking of work is used effectively to show pupils how to improve.
- Clear targets for improvement are regularly set for all pupils.
- Pupils withdrawn for small group or individual activities miss a significant part of the class lesson.

#### **Commentary**

70. Since the last inspection, despite variance in the numbers of pupils with special educational needs, the school has sustained very good standards of pupil attainment. Test results are consistently well above average by the end of Year 2. The majority of pupils achieve very well and the standards seen in lessons and in books throughout the school indicates they make very good progress in their learning, particularly in developing writing skills.
71. Pupils with special educational needs receive significant attention, and carefully planned work. Good support helps them to achieve well. However, when pupils are withdrawn from the class for individual or small group work, they miss a significant part of the class lesson and have no good role models for higher attainment. Gifted and talented pupils are challenged well and pupils with English as an additional language improve their English skills quickly.
72. All pupils, including lower attainers, read clearly with good expression and confidence. Pupils have good attitudes to all areas of their learning and are keen to try new spelling for themselves, usually with good results. They are articulate and make effective use of a wide



vocabulary. Clear targets are set to help them understand what they need to do to improve. Pupils regularly refer to these and remind each other of the class targets during lessons.

73. Since the last inspection, the quality of teaching and learning has been sustained and is good overall. Particular strengths are the teachers' use of very good strategies to engage and motivate pupils. Teachers ensure pupils understand what they are taught. They ask good questions of individuals and expect replies that use interesting and lively vocabulary. These high expectations promote high-level discussion and the good acquisition of skills. The use of discussion partners and small groups contributes effectively to pupils' social development by ensuring good co-operation and respect for the varied views of individuals. There are effective assessment procedures, enabling teachers to set challenging and realistic targets for pupils.
74. Resources are used very well. There is an exciting range of good quality, interesting support materials. This complements the teachers' good subject knowledge and aids the effectiveness of the large range of strategies they use to teach. Time in lessons is used effectively and homework supports pupils' reading, spelling and research work effectively. Pupils enjoy their lessons and usually work well. Their behaviour is good.
75. Leadership and management of the subject are good and the quality of provision has improved since the last inspection. There is a clear understanding of the way forward to further develop the subject. Members of staff work as an effective team and support each other well when trying new ideas and innovations. Significant training is regularly undertaken and leaders and staff members provide good role models for pupils and each other. The teachers are particularly effective at demonstrating high-quality reading, writing and use of language. There are limited opportunities for monitoring teaching and learning.
76. Drama, which was a weakness at the time of the last inspection, is now a well-established feature of the very good practical activities offered throughout the curriculum. This has a significant impact on pupils' confidence and promotes very well-developed speaking skills.

### **Language and Literacy across the curriculum**

77. Teachers' planning usually identifies the use of language and literacy in other subjects. There are good opportunities for pupils to write in a wide range of styles and for different reasons, though written work in subjects such as science, geography, history and religious education does not always match the needs of all pupils. Every lesson, whatever the subject, includes significant times for extending pupils' speaking and listening skills. ICT is used to support learning in some lessons, though opportunities are sometimes missed when computers are not in use.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- National test results at the end of Year 2 have been well above the national average for the last four years.
- Pupils have a very good knowledge of basic number concepts.
- Good quality teaching means that pupils acquire new skills quickly and achieve well.
- Learning is made fun by the very good use of practical activities.
- Target setting is used effectively, especially in Year 2, to help pupils understand what they need to do to improve.
- The co-ordinator provides good leadership but has not had sufficient opportunity to monitor teaching and learning by visiting classrooms.

- There are occasions when the work is not matched to the needs of all pupils, with some recorded work being left unfinished or incorrect because it is too hard.

## Commentary

78. Pupils' attainment is well above average by the end of Year 2. This is confirmed by national tests at the end of Year 2, which have been well above the national average for the last four years. These high levels of attainment have been maintained in tests taken at the end of Year 2 in 2003. Test results confirm that there is no significant difference between the attainment of boys or girls, or pupils from different backgrounds.
79. Number skills are particularly strong, with pupils showing a very good understanding of basic number concepts such as addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. In the current Year 2, pupils are developing a clear understanding of place value and they confidently carry out mental calculations, explaining clearly the strategies they have used. Higher-attaining pupils solve problems that require more than one calculation.
80. Pupils apply their mathematical skills confidently to the very good range of practical activities that are planned by teachers. They measure accurately, calculate change when 'shopping', and identify the properties of two-dimensional and three-dimensional shapes.
81. Pupils' achievement is good overall, with some pupils making very good progress. The needs of higher-attaining pupils are met well. There is good challenge for these pupils in lessons and they reach the levels of attainment expected for their capabilities. The achievement of other pupils is variable. They progress well in practical activities, when differing needs are carefully considered and levels of challenge are appropriate. However, when recording work, tasks are not always suitably matched to needs, with some recorded work being too hard. This affects, at different times, both lower- and average-attaining pupils. When this happens, the pace of learning is slower than it should be, with work not being completed successfully, leading to some underachievement in these lessons.
82. There have been good improvements since the last inspection. Standards have risen, and there is now a greater focus on learning through practical activities. There was no evidence during the inspection of pupils being given time-filling activities such as colouring sheets. This was identified as a weakness in teaching at the time of the last inspection. Resources have also improved and are now good.
83. Teaching and learning are good overall, with examples of very good and satisfactory teaching. A strong feature of teaching is the use of practical activities to support learning. In nearly every lesson, the main focus of learning is built around carefully-planned and well-resourced practical tasks. This is effective, helping pupils to learn well and leading to good levels of motivation and engagement. At these times, pupils with special educational needs are supported effectively by the good number of teaching assistants. In all practical activities, there are good levels of challenge, and for higher-attaining pupils, this is extended into their recorded work.
84. Throughout the school, teachers successfully encourage pupils to work together in lessons. This makes a good contribution to pupils' social development. Teachers have high expectations of behaviour and they successfully encourage pupils to apply themselves and work hard. ICT is successfully integrated into many lessons, but this is not yet consistent from class to class. Homework is carefully planned, with parental support being a significant factor in the good levels of achievement.
85. Assessment procedures have improved since the time of the last inspection and are now good overall. However, the quality of marking is variable. At its best, in the Year 2 class taught by the subject co-ordinator, it gives pupils a clear indication of what they should do to improve.

However, this is not consistent across the school. Very good use is made of target setting in Year 2. Pupils in this year group understand their targets and can explain what they need to do to improve. However, the good quality assessment information that is available in most classes is not always used effectively to provide recorded work that is matched to pupils' needs.

86. The good mathematics curriculum is broad and balanced. The National Numeracy Strategy is firmly embedded in school practice and is having a good impact on standards. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good.
87. The subject is well led and managed. The subject co-ordinator has a clear vision and high aspirations for developing the subject. Self-evaluation is well established and good use is made of test data to identify strengths and weaknesses. This means that there is a good understanding of which aspects of the curriculum need developing next. The co-ordinator is a good role model in the quality of her teaching, but has limited opportunities to monitor teaching and learning in other classrooms. As a result, she does not have a full picture of the quality of provision throughout the school.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

88. Pupils are given good opportunities to apply their mathematical skills across the curriculum. They measure in science and design and technology. They use their understanding of data to make graphs and charts in ICT that are based on mathematical surveys, such as the eye colours in the class.

### **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **good**.

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

- Attainment is well above average by the end of Year 2 and pupils achieve well.
- The enthusiastic subject leader has a clear vision for further improvement.
- The broad curriculum includes good opportunities for practical investigative work.
- Very effective use is made of visits and links with the community.
- The school grounds provide very good opportunities for pupils to explore the environment.
- Literacy and numeracy are used effectively to support learning.
- Recorded work is sometimes too difficult for lower-attaining pupils.

#### **Commentary**

89. Pupils' attainment by the end of Year 2, in the 2002 National Curriculum teacher assessments, was average at the expected level (Level 2), and above average at the higher level (Level 3). In 2003, results improved, with all pupils achieving the expected level, and over half achieving the higher level. Improvements in the curriculum have had a significant impact on raising standards. Higher-attaining pupils demonstrate good knowledge and record their work neatly. They have a good understanding of cause and effect such as the impact of exercise on the body and make generalisations such as 'the nearer the puppet to the torch the bigger the shadow'. All pupils, including those with lower attainment, make simple predictions and sensible observations. For example, one lower-attaining pupil noted that the vehicles travelled best on flat surfaces. Overall, pupils' attainment has improved since the time of the last inspection, when it was above average.
90. Throughout the school, all pupils, including those with special educational needs, and those who are lower-attainers, are supported effectively in lessons, enabling them to achieve well.

91. Teaching and learning are good overall, with an example of very good teaching being observed in Year 2. In the very good lesson, the teacher found out what pupils already knew about 'light and dark' by asking probing questions, before leading a challenging discussion on what pupils would like to learn about the topic. Throughout the school, teachers explain the purpose of lessons clearly and plan interesting practical activities that enable pupils to concentrate well and participate fully.
92. Skilled teaching assistants provided good support for pupils with a range of differing needs, enabling them to be included in all activities. In most lessons, pupils have good opportunities to use their literacy and numeracy skills by recording findings and by measuring size and temperature during investigations. Teachers' planning shows clearly what pupils are expected to learn in the long-term, although plans for individual lessons do not always show what pupils of differing prior attainment are expected to achieve. Good teaching has been maintained since the time of the last inspection.
93. Procedures for assessing pupils' progress have been improved recently and are now good overall. Targets are set for individual pupils each term, although this information is not used consistently to ensure that expectations for pupils' recorded work always meets their needs. This affects lower-attaining pupils in particular, who are not always able to complete the written work in the time available.
94. The subject leader provides a very effective and knowledgeable role model for other teachers. Good self-evaluation and an analysis of assessment information provide an accurate understanding of general strengths and weaknesses. Provision for the subject has improved since the last inspection and there are very clear plans for further development. However, as at the time of the last inspection, there are limited opportunities for the monitoring of teaching and learning.
95. The subject has been an area of focus for the last two years and there have been a number of positive developments, particularly in improving the breadth of the curriculum. The curriculum is now good overall, with very good opportunities for pupils to learn about the environment by exploring the school grounds, growing vegetables, listening to visitors and taking part in visits. For example, there is an attractive sensory garden designed by the pupils in one of the courtyards, mini-beast safaris are organised, and talks from visitors about endangered species, the life cycle of the bee, and types of local crops, take place. An annual science week is used to raise the profile of the subject through the use of competitions, displays and homework suggestions. All these activities contribute well to pupils' social and cultural development. Limited use is made of ICT to support learning during science lessons.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

Provision in information and communication technology (ICT) is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There is good quality teaching and resources are used effectively.
- Teachers plan good opportunities for pupils to use ICT across the curriculum.
- Pupils acquire a good range of basic skills and have positive attitudes towards learning.
- The subject co-ordinator provides good quality leadership and has a good understanding of where further development is needed.
- Insufficient account is taken of what pupils already know to ensure that there is good challenge for more able pupils.

## Commentary

96. Three short lessons were seen where teachers introduced new skills to their class. Samples of pupils' work were scrutinised and pupils were also observed working on the computers in other lessons.
97. Pupils' attainment is above national expectations by the end of Year 2, with pupils showing a good range of basic skills. Pupils in Year 2 have a good understanding of the different uses of ICT and they control the 'mouse' successfully to move pictures. Word-processing skills are well developed, with pupils beginning to change the style, size and colour of their writing in order to make it more attractive to an audience. Pupils know that machines can be programmed to follow instructions and they are beginning to do this themselves. For example, pupils in Year 2 program a 'Roamer' floor robot to move different distances and to follow the path of a 'roadway'. Good use is made of ICT skills to make pictures in different styles using art programs.
98. Pupils are achieving well throughout the school. Good use is made of available resources to ensure that differing needs are met. Pupils with special educational needs use ICT in lessons as well as when they are receiving additional support outside lessons. This means that work can be well matched to their needs. As a result, they acquire new skills quickly and they show good levels of competence in relation to their prior attainment.
99. There have been good improvements since the last inspection. Good standards of attainment have been maintained, and planning and assessment have been successfully developed. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers show good levels of competence and successfully break down basic skills so that all pupils understand. Good use is made of a range of teaching methods. New skills are introduced and demonstrated by the teacher at the start of the week in a short whole class lesson, and pupils are then given good opportunities to practise these skills in other lessons. This is effective, with pupils making good gains in knowledge from week to week and showing positive attitudes towards learning. There are good assessment procedures. The co-ordinator has devised informative 'school certificates' which give a clear picture of how well pupils are achieving. However, teachers do not yet take full account of this information when planning, and the introduction of new skills to a whole class at the same time means that for some pupils there is a lack of challenge. This particularly affects those pupils who have computers at home and who already have well-developed skills.
100. The curriculum is good, with all aspects of the National Curriculum covered. Good links are made between different subjects, helping to make learning purposeful.
101. Resources are barely adequate, with the pupil/computer ratio being lower than average. However, available resources are used effectively and the school is steadily improving the number of computers.
102. The subject is well led and managed. The co-ordinator is a good role model in her teaching and use of ICT. She has a good understanding of strengths and weaknesses in the subject, with a clear and detailed action plan setting out appropriate priorities for improvement. Colleagues are given good quality support if they have a problem and the co-ordinator has helpfully identified useful websites to support learning across the curriculum. However, there have been limited opportunities for the co-ordinator to monitor teaching and learning in the classroom.
103. Good quality displays of pupils' work show how skills are used in different subjects. These displays help to make learning purposeful to the pupils and show the progression of skills across the school.

## Information and communication technology across the curriculum

104. Good use is made of ICT in different curriculum areas. During the inspection, ICT was used to support learning in art and design, mathematics, geography and literacy. The links that are made between subjects help to make learning purposeful and mean that pupils are given good opportunities to practise and consolidate their skills. However, whilst current cross-curricular links are good, there are still some missed opportunities to use ICT in lessons, and there were occasions during the inspection when computers were not in use, especially in some literacy and numeracy lessons.

## HUMANITIES

This was not a focus for the inspection and it is not possible to make an overall judgement on provision in history.

### History

No lessons were on the timetable during the inspection. As a result, it is not possible to make judgements about teaching, learning or standards.

Photographs, displays, teachers' records and books from past years indicate the curriculum is being covered as planned and samples of work indicate that standards of work are satisfactory. However, written tasks are not always planned to meet the needs of all pupils.

Visits to places of historical interest involve pupils in drama and significant practical 'first-hand' activities. Older pupils talk enthusiastically about when the teachers dress up a pupil to role-play a famous character such as George Stephenson. These experiences help bring history to life for the pupils. There is insufficient evidence to form a judgement on leadership and management.

### Geography

The quality of provision in geography is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are good practical learning opportunities.
- Written work is not always planned to meet all pupils' needs.

### Commentary

105. Pupils' attainment and achievement are satisfactory overall. These standards have been maintained since the time of the last inspection. In Year 2, pupils draw from memory buildings seen on a local walk and place them correctly onto a route map. The majority of pupils are able to indicate the distinctive features of the buildings and to discuss their main characteristics. Pupils show good attitudes to their learning and apply themselves well to their tasks.

106. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, with an example of a good lesson in Year 1. In the good lesson, the teacher asked very good questions and gave good support to individuals to help them to understand the concept of a plan. This resulted in good quality and detailed observations, with pupils being clear about what they were expected to learn. When teaching is satisfactory, the needs of all pupils are not met fully and higher-attaining pupils in particular are given insufficient challenge in their written work.

107. A scrutiny of photographs, teachers' files and past work indicates that the curriculum is planned to provide good opportunities for a broad variety of practical experiences, including visits, visitors and the very good use of the local environment. Classroom displays show links with other subjects such as art and design and enable pupils to appreciate the cultural and global aspects of geography. There is insufficient evidence to form a judgement on leadership and management.

### **Religious education**

The quality of provision is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Visits and visitors provide good first-hand evidence.
- Drama and lively story-telling are used effectively.
- Written work is not always planned to meet all pupils' needs.

### **Commentary**

108. One lesson and three assemblies were on the timetable during the inspection.

109. As at the time of the last inspection, the standards of work seen in pupils' books in Year 2 is satisfactory. Past work indicates satisfactory coverage of the intended curriculum, with pupils in all years achieving satisfactory standards and making satisfactory progress in line with the locally-agreed syllabus. Photographs, displays and visits, for example, to the local church indicate pupils receive a significant amount of 'first-hand' practical experience that they are able to talk about and recall well. Pupils in assembly listen and concentrate hard, responding to questions enthusiastically. For example, pupils were interested to learn more about the festival of Diwali.

110. There is insufficient evidence to judge the quality of teaching overall. Teaching in the Year 1 lesson observed was satisfactory, with good features. These included lively story-telling related to the reasons why Jews build a Sukkah at harvest time, and use of the Internet to find further information about the festival. Pupils listened well and enjoyed acting out the story, even though the hour session was rather long. However, throughout the school, written tasks are not always planned to meet all the pupils' needs. There is insufficient evidence to judge the effectiveness of assessment procedures.

111. The subject co-ordinator has set a clear direction for the further development of the subject. Policies and the scheme of work indicate that an appropriate curriculum which meets statutory requirements is planned to build on pupils' past experiences and extend learning further. There are insufficient opportunities for monitoring teaching and learning.

112. At the time of the last inspection, lessons did not have a strong sense of spiritual significance. There was insufficient evidence to establish if this has improved.

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

### **Design and technology**

This subject was not an area of focus for the inspection and only a limited range of evidence was sampled. There is insufficient evidence to make an overall judgement on the quality of provision.

113. Only one lesson was seen during the inspection. Evidence was supplemented by looking at photographs of pupils' previous work and teachers' planning. There is insufficient evidence to

make an overall judgement on pupils' attainment or the quality of teaching. Nevertheless, there is some good quality work evident around school and in photographs. In the lesson seen in Year 2, pupils showed a good understanding of the design process. In this satisfactory lesson, pupils used a range of techniques to execute their previously drawn plans of a sock puppet. These plans indicated clearly what the puppet would look like, as well as what materials would be used. The teacher and adult helpers gave appropriate support as pupils began to make their puppets.

114. There is a good curriculum, with work in design and technology making a good contribution to the award of the gold 'Artsmark' to the school.

### **Physical education**

This subject was not an area of focus for the inspection and only a limited range of evidence was sampled. There is insufficient evidence to make an overall judgement on the quality of provision.

115. Three lessons were seen during the inspection. In these lessons, pupils' attainment was good in dance and satisfactory in games. In dance, pupils are making good progress and are achieving well. By Year 2, pupils are beginning to develop a range of movements, showing an awareness of rhythm and responding appropriately to various pieces of music. Pupils work together well in small groups, following the teacher's instructions and devising simple dances, making good use of available space. Pupils perform their work to each other sensibly and are able to sustain energetic activity for a reasonable length of time. In games, pupils in Year 2 have appropriate catching and throwing skills for their age, but do not always concentrate well. This slows the pace of learning and limits pupils' achievement.
116. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. There was an example of good teaching in a dance lesson in Year 2 but also an example of unsatisfactory teaching in a games lesson, where behaviour was not managed effectively and pupils' skills were not extended enough. In dance lessons, teachers have good subject knowledge. There is a good pace to learning and activities are fun and purposeful. Teachers make imaginative use of music and pupils are given good opportunities to perform to each other. However, there are few opportunities for pupils to evaluate each other's work. Occasionally, comments from the teacher on performances lack a critical edge and do not give a clear indication of how a dance could be improved.
117. There is insufficient evidence to make an overall judgement on the quality of leadership and management. However, recent improvements such as the longer lessons, the training and support of teachers, and purchasing of resources, including playground games, have had a good impact on learning and attainment, especially in dance. The co-ordinator is aware of where further developments are needed, especially in assessment, where monitoring from lesson to lesson is satisfactory, but there are not yet formal procedures in place to measure learning or achievement.
118. The school provides a satisfactory curriculum. Pupils benefit from good quality resources and accommodation, including spacious playing fields.

### **Art and design**

Provision in art and design is **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils produce very high quality work, showing a very wide range of skills.
- There is a very wide and interesting curriculum.



- Impressive displays around school reflect the commitment of members of staff to developing art and design throughout the curriculum.
- Teachers give pupils very good opportunities to try out ideas for themselves, leading to high levels of motivation and very secure teaching of basic skills.

## Commentary

119. Pupils' attainment is well above national expectations by the end of Year 2. There is a range of very good work on display around the school and in lessons, pupils show very good painting skills. They are very skilled at mixing colours and making sensible choices about the techniques that they are going to use to complete a painting. They have a good knowledge of other artists and their work. For example, they talk knowledgeably about Monet and Kandinsky, expressing clear preferences and applying techniques used by these artists in their own work.
120. Pupils make good progress throughout the school, and they achieve well. The good start to developing art skills that is made in the nursery and reception classes is maintained, with pupils' needs being met well. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good and they are supported effectively by teachers and teaching assistants. They are given full access to the curriculum and produce work that reflects good quality learning.
121. There has been good improvement since the last inspection. Pupils are now achieving higher standards, reflecting the strong commitment to the creative arts that is evident throughout the school and resulted in the award of a gold 'Artsmark' being given to the school in 2002.
122. The quality of teaching and learning are good overall. There was an example of very good teaching in Year 2. In this lesson, very good use was made of resources to encourage pupils to experiment with mixing leaf colours. The activity built very successfully on previous learning, by giving pupils opportunities to reflect on what they had seen on a walk around the school grounds when they had collected 'leaf colour charts'. The pupils were given high quality support from a very knowledgeable teacher.
123. Throughout the school, teachers are very knowledgeable and enthusiastic about art and they have very high expectations of what pupils should achieve. They work hard to make learning fun and lessons are very well resourced. Basic skills are taught very effectively and pupils are given very good opportunities to try out ideas for themselves. Little time is wasted in lessons and pupils respond well to the teachers' expectations for good behaviour. Pupils are very well motivated and are fully engaged in their learning. They co-operate well, sharing resources and helping each other to mix colours. Assessment procedures are good overall. However, there are some missed opportunities for pupils to talk about their work and to explain what they have done and why.
124. There is a very good curriculum, which includes a wide range of opportunities to learn in and out of lessons. The subject makes a very good contribution towards pupils' cultural development. The quality of work produced by a sculpture club is very good and learning is further supplemented by an annual arts week, participation in local art competitions and the good use of visitors, such as book illustrators and artistic parents. All of these activities make a significant contribution to pupils' achievement, helping to bring the subject to life and making learning purposeful.
125. Pupils are given a wide range of opportunities to put their work on show, both in and out of school. This helps them to understand that their work is valued and important. The school has good quality resources. This means that pupils have very good opportunities to use different media, apply various techniques and evaluate the work of various artists. ICT is used well to support learning in the subject and to produce pictures in different styles. There is insufficient evidence to form a judgement on leadership and management.

## Music

Provision in music is **excellent**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The specialist music teacher makes an outstanding contribution to pupils' learning.
- Pupils have excellent singing skills, very skilfully adding accompaniment using percussion instruments.
- The specialist teacher has ensured that, throughout the school, teachers feel confident about teaching music.
- An extensive range of activities leads to pupils having high levels of motivation and working very hard in lessons.
- Excellent opportunities for performing to different audiences make learning very purposeful.
- The curriculum makes a very good contribution to pupils' cultural development by giving them many opportunities to appreciate music from different countries and traditions.

### Commentary

126. By the end of Year 2, pupils' attainment is very high. The quality of pupils' singing in assemblies and lessons is outstanding. Pupils understand and use musical devices such as 'rhythm', 'ostinato' and 'drone' in their performances, adding musical accompaniment using various percussion instruments. When playing an instrument, they are very skilled at keeping a beat and responding to changes in the pattern of the music. Pupils have a very good knowledge of the names of types of instruments, including what they are made of and how they are played. They talk confidently about music that they like or dislike. Pupils in Year 2 who are learning to play the recorder are making rapid gains in knowledge, even though they have only been taking lessons for half a term.
127. The achievement of pupils is excellent. The very high quality of teaching ensures that differing needs are met well, meaning that all pupils, including those with special educational needs, make excellent progress, with teaching taking very good account of previous learning.
128. There has been good improvement since the last inspection, with the high quality provision found at that time extended further.
129. The quality of teaching and learning are excellent overall, with most lessons seen during the inspection being taken by a specialist music teacher. Lessons are planned in great detail, identifying very clearly what pupils are expected to learn. The outstanding subject knowledge of the specialist teacher, including very clear use of subject specific vocabulary, means that there are consistently high levels of challenge for pupils of differing capability. The teacher has very high expectations of pupils and uses an exceptionally wide range of teaching methods, adjusted according to the ability of the group. The teacher consistently challenges pupils to improve, leading to a very fast pace to learning, with pupils being very well motivated and fully engaged in tasks. All pupils, including those with behavioural difficulties, are managed very well and enabled to take a full part in activities.
130. The specialist music teacher is well supported by class teachers, who have significantly developed their skills since the last inspection. There are very good assessment procedures. This information is shared with the class teacher so that skills can be extended in class lessons.
131. The quality of leadership and management is excellent. The co-ordinator is an outstanding role model and has worked very hard to improve the confidence of class teachers. She is very

hardworking, showing great commitment to providing high quality opportunities for all pupils. Inspection findings show that she successfully achieves these aims.

132. There is an excellent musical curriculum, with pupils given many additional opportunities to learn music outside lessons. The level of pupil participation in these activities is very good and pupils put on very high quality performances to a range of audiences. For example, during the inspection the choir was preparing for a performance at St. Alban's Cathedral.
133. The subject is very well resourced, meaning that pupils are able to practise skills using a very wide range of musical instruments.

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

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Very good use is made of the local community to enrich the curriculum.
- Members of staff provide very good role models and support pupils with sensitivity.
- The school ensures that all pupils are included and feel part of the community.

### **Commentary**

134. Pupils achieve well and gain a good understanding of what it means to be a responsible citizen within a community. Pupils are successful in helping to establish class rules and understand the importance of caring for the environment and helping each other. They discuss ways that they can show their consideration by being patient, helpful, kind and friendly. Pupils collaborate with each other sensibly when discussing topics, take turns and listen well.
135. Teaching and learning during personal, social and health education lessons are good. Teachers are knowledgeable and provide interesting opportunities for all pupils to explore and share their ideas and feelings and their responses are handled with great sensitivity, helping pupils to become more mature. The mutual trust and respect between pupils and members of staff mean that all members of the school community are challenged to discuss personal issues such as what makes them angry or sad, knowing that their contributions will be listened to and valued. Pupils know the rules for discussions and that they do not have to speak until ready to contribute. This means that time is used effectively.
136. Provision in the subject is led and managed successfully. There is a clear scheme of work to assist teachers in their lesson planning and an action plan showing how the subject is to be developed further. The school is successful in meeting its aims to develop pupils' confidence and their sense of responsibility, enabling them to become active citizens, with healthy lifestyles and good relationships. Pupils with special educational needs are supported effectively, enabling them to contribute fully. Leaders in the school provide very good role models for citizenship and are caring and supportive of other members of staff and pupils. The broad curriculum includes the statutory requirement for teaching drugs, sex and relationships education and makes a very good contribution towards pupils' social, moral and cultural development. The school teaches pupils about the world of work and community life through a series of topics linked to the 'Young Enterprise Scheme'. Parents have been trained to support pupils in Year 1 as they learn about 'ourselves' and in Year 2 as they find out about 'the community' and 'working together'. A theatre group recently performed a play about 'The Selfish Giant'. All these activities help to enrich the curriculum.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

### *Inspection judgement*

### *Grade*

|  |          |
|--|----------|
| <b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>                       | <b>2</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>2</b> |
| Pupils' achievement               | 3        |

|   |          |
|---|----------|
| <b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b> | <b>3</b> |
| Attendance  | 2        |
| 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 | 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              | 3        |
| The effectiveness of the school's links with parents             | 2        |
| The quality of the school's links with the community             | 2        |
| The school's links with other schools and colleges               | 2        |

|  |          |
|--|----------|
| <b>The leadership and management of the school</b> | <b>2</b> |
| The governance of the school                       | 2        |
| 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).*