

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **TONER AVENUE PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Hebburn, Tyne and Wear

LEA area: South Tyneside

Unique reference number: 108704

Headteacher: Mrs C Inkster

Lead inspector: Mr G Cooper

Dates of inspection: 24 – 26 May 2004

Inspection number: 258218

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 – 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	354
School address:	Johnston Avenue Hebburn Tyne and Wear
Postcode:	NE31 2LJ
Telephone number:	0191 420 2588
Fax number:	0191 420 3524
Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr B McLoughlin

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Toner Avenue Primary School currently has 354 pupils on roll, including the full time equivalent of 23 children attending the Nursery part-time. Almost all pupils come from a white British background and English is the home language of all the pupils. There are no children from an asylum or refugee background. The school is situated in a residential area of the Tyne and Wear conurbation and close to local industry. However, the decline of shipbuilding and coalmining has seen a relatively high level of unemployment locally. A moderately high proportion of pupils (about one in four) are entitled to a free school meal. Census data shows that few adults locally have experienced higher education and that there are few privileged households with children. Despite this, the community is stable and the school has a relatively low degree of mobility (that is, children who join and leave the school at times other than the usual time of joining and leaving the school). For the size and context of the school a small proportion of pupils are identified as having special educational needs. Of these pupils, three have a statement of special education needs in recognition of their more profound learning difficulties. The school was part of the local education action zone and is now a partner in the area's excellence in cities initiative. In recognition of unusually high results in National Curriculum tests in 2000, the school was given a schools' achievement award. When children first enter the Nursery, their acquired skills, knowledge and understanding are a little below those expected of children of similar age, especially in the area of communication, language and literacy.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
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13450	Mrs J Madden	Lay inspector	
30724	Mrs D Hiscock	Team inspector	English, Geography, History, Religious education, English as an additional language.
22421	Mrs V McGrath	Team inspector	Mathematics, Art and design, Design and technology.
11419	Mrs PJ Underwood	Team inspector	Areas of Learning in the Foundation Stage, Music, Physical education.

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

Toner Avenue is a rapidly improving school. Its effectiveness is **satisfactory**. By the age of eleven standards are above average in mathematics and average in English and science. Achievement is satisfactory overall. The school currently provides a good quality of education, including good teaching and learning. However achievement has only recently stabilised, and the improvements brought in by the new head have not had their full effect yet. The leadership of the headteacher is very good. She is well supported by the senior staff. Governors ensure that they fulfil their legal requirements. The school spends a relatively small amount on the education of each pupil and overall, **good** value for money is provided.

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

- The vision and sense of direction provided by the headteacher are excellent.
- Standards and achievement are improving but the standards of work seen in Years 1 and 2 are overall below average.
- Pupils' attitudes, values and behaviour are very good, because the school has very good arrangements for their care and welfare.
- Both parents and pupils have a great deal of confidence in the school.
- Recent improvements have secured a better quality of teaching; however, some lessons concentrate more on what is to be taught than on what should be learned.
- While provision in the Reception and Nursery classes is improving, the accommodation does not meet the needs of the curriculum for children at this stage.
- Provision for pupils who find learning difficult is good but some targets set for these pupils are not sufficiently specific.
- The school is rapidly establishing an effective strategy for monitoring pupils' progress but the information is not yet used sufficiently well.

The school has made satisfactory improvement since the previous inspection, but has made rapid progress in the past two terms. In responding to the key issues of the previous inspection, very good progress has been made in standards and provision for information and communication technology (ICT) and good improvement in the quality of education for children in the Nursery and in the monitoring of planning throughout the school. Progress in raising standards in mathematics in Years 1 and 2 has been satisfactory. In addition, good improvement has been made in the quality of teaching and very good improvement in the care and welfare of pupils and in leadership and management overall.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

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

Achievement in the work seen is **satisfactory** overall but currently very good in mathematics for eleven-year-olds. Standards are below average in English and mathematics for seven-year-olds. Standards are average in science throughout the school and in English for eleven-year-olds. Standards in mathematics are above average when pupils are eleven. Given their acquired skills, knowledge and understanding on entry to full time education, children in the Nursery and Reception Classes achieve well. They are well on target to attain the goals set for them by the end of the Reception Year, except in writing, where fewer than expected will reach the goals.

Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are **very good**. Their attitudes to lessons are very good. They relate to each other very well and behaviour is usually exemplary. The school makes good provision for pupils' personal development. Attendance matches the average of schools nationally.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

The quality of education is **good**. It is well supported by **effective** teaching. As a result pupils learn well. A particular strength throughout the school is teachers' very high expectation of behaviour, which has a strong effect on the quality of learning. Planning, challenge and the use of support are significant strengths in the Nursery and Reception Classes. While most lessons are good elsewhere in the school, a few do not have the pace and challenge necessary to inspire pupils in their learning. Some lessons are too teacher-directed and do not engage pupils sufficiently through demanding questioning.

The curriculum is satisfactory and well enriched by a broad range of additional opportunities for learning, such as visits out of school, visitors into school and activities out of normal school time. Very good arrangements ensure that pupils can learn in a healthy and safe environment. Strong links with parents and very effective links with other schools and colleges give good support to the quality of learning. The school is aware of the need to strengthen its arrangements for receiving pupils and transferring them to other schools.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Leadership and management are **good** overall, with a particular strength in the leadership of the headteacher. Her high aspiration and clarity of vision are excellent, giving the school a clear and re-energised sense of purpose. She is well supported by the governing body and by the adults working in the school. Together, they ensure that the school is very well managed so that a positive environment for learning is maintained at all times.

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

Parents and pupils are very positive about the school. Parents identify many school strengths, including the fact that their child likes school and makes good progress, that behaviour and teaching are good. Some parents feel that the school does not listen sufficiently to their views but this is an aspect of school that its new leadership is determined to improve. Pupils talk confidently about how much they like their teachers (and their teachers' sense of humour). Pupils do not like the school toilets and governors have an action plan for deficiencies to be rectified. A few pupils regret that some physical education lessons do not get taught as timetabled.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- Raise standards in English and mathematics in Years 1 and 2.
- Continue to improve the quality of learning by ensuring that all adults working in the classroom know how pupils learn best, using the good information available about progress to plan what needs to be taught next.
- Develop specific and measurable targets for all pupils but especially for those who find learning difficult.
- Continue to develop provision in the Foundation Stage so that all children have regular opportunities for learning out of doors.



## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

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

Achievement is **satisfactory** overall. Pupils attain standards that are **broadly in line** with those expected by the age of eleven. Standards are rising slowly, having previously been consistently average or below average.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement is good in the Foundation Stage, in mathematics by the age of eleven and in information and communication technology throughout the school.
- Children in the Foundation Stage are well on course to attain and sometimes exceed the expected levels for the end of the Reception Year.
- By the time pupils are eleven standards are above average in mathematics because of the impact of very good teaching.
- Pupils' standards in information and communication technology have improved dramatically since the last inspection.
- Standards are below average in writing and mathematics towards the end of Year 2.

#### Commentary

1. Children enter the Nursery with a range of knowledge, skills and understanding that is overall below that expected of children of the same age. Because they are well taught they make good progress and achieve very well. Most are well on target to achieve, and a few will exceed, the goals set nationally for the end of the Reception Year. The only exception is writing. This is because most children are still writing initial letter sounds or the words as they sound rather than as they are spelt. Sentence construction is limited and very few children write more than one sentence.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	15.4 (16.3)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	13.2 (13.4)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	15.8 (16.4)	16.3 (16.5)

*There were 45 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

#### *Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 – average point scores in 2003*

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	26.3 (27.3)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	27.9 (27.7)	26.8 (26.7)
science	28.4 (29.0)	28.6 (28.3)

*There were 54 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

2. The results of the school's National Curriculum standard tests have been variable over the past five years, both for seven year olds and eleven year olds, with some fairly profound peaks and troughs. For example in 2001 standards fell dramatically after a good year in 2000, when the school received an achievement award. They rose again in 2002 particularly for eleven-year-olds. This degree of variation in results is not common for such large cohorts. Variations are due to some extent to differences between the year groups of pupils but also to past difficulties in the quality of teaching and overall provision.
3. At the age of seven the trend in reading and mathematics is overall upwards, despite a decline in 2003, whilst writing is steadily declining. The results of the National Curriculum tests for 2003 showed further decline in all areas tested: below average in reading and mathematics and well below in writing when compared to all schools. However, compared to similar schools (that is, schools in a similar social and economic setting), reading was above average, writing below average and mathematics average. Analysing results for seven year olds further shows that they are lower than the previous year and below average overall. A greater percentage of pupils attained the expected level and fewer attained the higher level. This pattern is most marked in writing. There is some trend of gender difference over the years but this is not consistent – boys tend to perform better than girls. However in 2003 the trend was reversed with girls out performing boys. The national trend of difference is that girls perform better than girls at this age. Writing and investigative science have already been identified by the school as weaker areas. In all areas tested higher attainers do not perform as well as they could. However, this is not a factor in the work seen during inspection.
4. The variation from year to year is particularly noticeable in the results of eleven-year-olds. Standards in English are declining whilst those in science and mathematics are showing signs of a gradual improvement. The 2003 results for this age were above average in mathematics and below average in science and English when compared to schools nationally. When compared to similar schools the picture is very different: English and science were above average and mathematics was well above. Based on prior attainment (the test results at the age of seven) for this cohort, English and science were below average and mathematics was above average. As in the results for seven year olds, a preponderance of eleven year olds attain below the expected level and fewer pupils attain at the higher level. The levels achieved in mathematics and science are closer to the national levels. A considerable number of pupils attain below the expected level in English and fewer than in most schools attain the higher levels possible. The overall trend in performance is for boys to do better than girls over time: this is against the national trend. The difference was particularly noticeable in 2003 especially in English and science – whilst boys were close to or above the national average in all areas tested girls were close to the average in mathematics but below in science and well below in English. There is evidence that in the past some pupils have not performed as well as they should have done in national tests.
5. Overall pupils' achievement is satisfactory in both key stages, although in some subjects achievement is good. This is particularly so in mathematics by the age of eleven where very good teaching has had a positive impact on standards. The situation is similar in religious education where pupils demonstrated a good knowledge base at the age of eleven and a mature spiritual understanding at the age of seven. In the previous report information and communication technology was criticised both for provision and standards. The school has made great strides in improving teachers'

knowledge and confidence so pupils are now achieving well and standards are rising. The achievement of pupils identified with special educational needs is satisfactory especially when they are well supported in small groups or individually.

6. Standards of work seen during inspection:

Subject	Key Stage 1	Key Stage 2
English	Below Average	Average
Mathematics	Below Average	Above Average
Science	Average	Average
ICT	Average	Average
RE	Above expectations	In line with expectations
History	Insufficient evidence to make judgements	In line with expectations
Music		In line with expectations

7. Standards in English and mathematics by the age of seven are below average. Pupils' skills in writing, speaking and listening, are underdeveloped but reading is much stronger. In mathematics pupils lack the opportunity to investigate number and develop the skills of problem solving. One of the reasons for these lower than expected standards at present is the lack of sufficient challenge for middle attaining pupils. . By the age of eleven standards are average in English as pupils make good progress in developing their literacy skills. Standards in mathematics are above average. The better standards in Years 5 and 6 are partly due to the very good teaching and enthusiasm of the staff, which motivates the pupils to succeed. Standards in science are rising slowly because of a greater emphasis on investigations and practical experiments. However there is still some reliance on worksheets that limits the pupils' opportunities to record in their own words and further develop their literacy skills.
8. There was sufficient evidence to make judgements about standards in religious education, history and music, but no other areas of the curriculum. In religious education at the age of seven, pupils demonstrated a depth of spiritual understanding not often found in those so young, whilst the older pupils have a good knowledge base typical of most eleven year olds.

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

The school makes **good** provision for the development of pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development good. Attendance and punctuality are satisfactory.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- This is a happy school where most pupils approach learning with fresh interest for every lesson.
- Pupils are very well behaved, exercising self-control and calmness inside and outside the building.
- Relationships and social development within the school are very good, providing a secure environment for work and play.
- The very good moral development of pupils is based on the clear standards and expectations that lie at the heart of the school.

### **Commentary**

9. Pupils are proud of the school and enjoy taking a full part in all that it offers. They value the teachers and learning support assistants highly and have made good friends with their peers in their time at the school. In lessons pupils are keen to succeed and fully absorbed in their work for the majority of the time as a result their learning benefits. Great value is attached to the reward system and pupils are enthusiastic about being house captains and members of the school council. They are very good role models in the way they carry out these responsibilities.
10. Behaviour is very good in and around the school. Pupils have a natural courtesy. They readily open doors and show respect for each other in many small ways during the school day. In lessons minimal time is wasted on reminders about behaviour and at playtimes pupils relate happily with no boisterous or rough play, especially in the large field available to junior pupils in fine weather. Minimal bullying is reported in the school. Pupils and parents are confident that the school deals swiftly and effectively with the few instances that occur.
11. The school works hard to ensure very good relationships. Social development is a particular focus. Working in groups and pairs is an objective in many lessons and pupils co-operate very well, forming working groups quickly and effectively. The positive relationships with teachers enhance learning. Pupils are enthused and confident so that they can tackle new work. They are happy to acknowledge a lack of understanding, knowing they will be given skilled help and support by the staff.
12. Pupils in the school are developing a moral awareness from the time they enter the school. As a result, in the infant classes they are able to discuss the differences between right and wrong and develop very firm opinions about what is fair and what is not. As they get older the school continues to develop pupils' awareness through discussion, assemblies and in the curriculum.
13. Attendance is typical of schools of this type. Most pupils come to school in time to get lessons off to a good start.

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

Authorised absence	
School data	5.3
National data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	
School data	0.0
National data	0.4

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

**Exclusions**

**Ethnic background of pupils**

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
Mixed – White and Asian

**Exclusions in the last school year**

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
310	5	0
1	0	0

Black or Black British – African	1	0	0
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The table gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

14. The temporary exclusions in the previous school year were in order to preserve health and safety of adults and other pupils. There have been no exclusions in the current academic year.

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided is **good**. Teaching and learning are good overall. The achievement of pupils is enhanced by a very strong partnership with parents, very good links with other schools and colleges and by very effective arrangements for pupils' care, welfare, health and safety. The school provides a well-enriched curriculum.

### Teaching and learning

Pupils **learn well** because they are **well taught**. For many pupils, recent improvements in the quality of teaching means that they are still catching up with a backlog of achievement. New but effective systems for tracking progress have not yet made their full impact on standards achieved.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching, learning and assessment are good for children in Nursery and Reception Classes.
- The pace of teaching quickens in Year 5 and 6.
- A consistent strength of the school is the insistence on high standards of behaviour.
- Basic skills in English and mathematics are now being taught effectively, with the strongest immediate impact on achievement in mathematics in Years 3 to 6.
- There is improved attention to the teaching of science through developing practical and investigative skills.
- Some lessons lack pace and challenge; this is sometimes the result of an overemphasis on teaching, rather than consideration of how pupils learn best.

### Commentary

#### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 63 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0 (0%)	15 (24%)	33 (52%)	15 (24%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

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

15. The quality of teaching is considerably better than at the time of the previous inspection. A greater proportion of teaching is good or better and there is now no unsatisfactory teaching. Although there is good and very good teaching across the school, most very good lessons were found in the junior classes and the greater volume of very good teaching was in Years 5 and 6. Teachers pay good attention to planning their English and mathematics lessons to fit in with the expectations of the national strategies for literacy and numeracy. Both English and mathematics are well taught. Recent

improvements in measuring pupils' progress puts teachers in a good position to know what needs to be taught next. However, not all assessment information is used precisely enough. The recent improvement in the quality of teaching has had most effect in mathematics where achievement is very good at present in Years 3 to 6. There are signs of improvement in English standards but brisk improvement in literacy skills is more difficult to manage than in numeracy. Better learning in science has been the result of a stronger focus on practical and investigative work. However, some tasks continue to be dominated by worksheets that do not always allow higher attaining pupils reach their potential. A particular developing strength of teaching is the use of ICT to prepare and introduce lessons, especially through the use of interactive whiteboards. Where these are best used, pupils are encouraged to use them, too, in support of their explanations.

16. All lessons seen in the Foundation Stage (Nursery and Reception Year Classes) were good or better. Adults are skilled in creating learning opportunities from all the activities planned. Good strategies for assessing the progress of children ensure that teachers know how well they are getting on in relation to the National Curriculum guidance for this age. Good teamwork among adults gives good support to children as they learn. Good relationships give children confidence in the learning environment. All adults have high expectations of children's achievement and behaviour. As a result, children are achieving and learning well.
17. Although very good lessons were found in all parts of the school, the brightest and briskest lessons, those lessons that intrigue and inspire pupils most, were in Years 5 and 6. Here lessons are lively in pace, interspersed with questions that engage and challenge pupils, making them think and reflect. These lessons are characterised by acute knowledge of the curriculum presented in a manner well calculated to interest pupils. Pupils respond well to a sense of humour that provokes and maintains an atmosphere of alert concentration. Tasks are designed to capture the flavour of strong lessons in the work pupils are set. These qualities result in learning that enables pupils to make good progress and to achieve well given their prior learning. Pupils who find learning difficult are well supported, either by tasks that are designed to match their needs or by additional adult help as they work. This enables them to stay in contact with the work involved and to make progress.
18. Throughout the school, pupils behave very well. This is an important factor in the quality of their learning and their achievement. Teachers are consistent in their high expectations and pupils live up to what is expected of them. As a result, no time need be wasted on reminders about behaviour or on reprimands or teachers' control strategies. This characteristic of the school is well supported by the school's policy for learning and by the systems and strategies in place to care for pupils. The school builds well on the values encouraged at home.
19. Historically the school has done poorly in achieving the higher levels possible in National Curriculum test results, especially in Year 2. Some of this can be attributed to the use of work sheets that do not give higher attaining pupils enough opportunity to think and to write about what they know and understand. However, there is a priority in the school to improve the teaching of investigative and practical science. There are clear signs of this having an impact on achievement. For example, this year the school expects more Year 2 pupils to attain the higher level 3 of the National Curriculum in science.

20. The school has a newly developed and challenging policy for learning. This makes some very strong points about how pupils learn best. The influence of this policy is clear in the improved quality of teaching seen. However, some of the characteristics of effective teaching are not yet seen in some lessons. Seen consistently is the identification and discussion of specific learning objectives in lessons with a check up session at the end of the lesson to clarify what has been learned. Some teachers are very good at marking pupils' work and some ask a wide range of questions that both challenge and engage pupils but also check up on what progress is being made. However, some lessons are slower paced where the teacher does too much of the work, not expecting a high degree of pupil involvement in the introduction of the lesson. Occasionally, not enough use is made of assessment information about how pupils are progressing. As a result, at times, tasks are not well matched to pupils' needs. These lessons do not grip and enthral pupils and the teacher has to work hard to maintain the quality of learning as concentration and effort wane.

## The curriculum

The school's curriculum provides **satisfactory** opportunities for pupils' learning. Opportunities for enrichment in activities outside lessons are **good**. Staffing, accommodation and learning resources are **satisfactory** overall, although accommodation for the Foundation Stage is unsatisfactory.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Much is on offer to provide learning outside the school day and extend pupils' interests.
- The school provides very well for pupils' personal development.
- The curriculum is well planned.
- Provision for pupils who have special educational needs is good.
- Some aspects of the planned curriculum are not fully implemented.

## Commentary

21. The curriculum meets requirements for all subjects. Planning of the curriculum is good and has improved considerably since the last inspection. Literacy and numeracy are well planned against national strategies and other subjects in line with national guidelines. The school is beginning to establish links across subjects, for example in science, history, art and design and technology, but this does not extend to the planned use of literacy and numeracy across the curriculum.
22. There is a very good range of activities outside the school day. Sporting activities are extensive and pupils have the chance to represent the school in many of these. There is good participation in music. The planned curriculum for physical education includes all the required activities, but discussions with pupils indicate gymnastics and dance are not taught in all year groups. In addition there are gaps in the mathematics curriculum, where pupils are given insufficient opportunities to investigate mathematics and to use and apply their skills.
23. Pupils' social skills are well developed and this results in very good behaviour and attitudes. The school council gives opportunities for consultation and opportunities are

given for pupils to talk about things that affect them. Sex and relationships and drugs education are taught in personal, social and health education and in science.

24. Overall the school provides a good ethos where pupils work confidently and collaboratively. The curriculum is taught to two parallel classes in each year group. There is some imbalance in the range of ability and social background in these classes, which is a legacy of pupil grouping implemented in the past. This is a barrier to the equality of access to the curriculum and opportunity for all pupils.
25. The provision for special educational needs is good. The school has good tracking systems that quickly identify any pupil who is not making expected progress. Targets are developed that address learning needs in the basic skills of literacy and numeracy and sometimes for emotional and behavioural needs. Good guidance is sought from outside agencies. Parents are involved in the development of targets. Suitable arrangements are made for pupils to receive additional adult support, sometimes in class and sometimes individually or in small groups withdrawn from the lesson. However, some targets are not sufficiently well refined to be achievable in the time between reviews and need to be repeated.
26. Accommodation and resources for infant and junior classes are satisfactory. The improved use of ICT makes a very positive contribution to the quality of teaching. The cramped conditions in the Nursery, however, means accommodation is unsatisfactory for this phase. The outdoor learning environment for Nursery and Reception children is also unsatisfactory.

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

The school provides pupils with **good** care, guidance and support. There is **very good** care, welfare, health and safety and **good** support, advice and guidance based on monitoring. Similarly pupils' involvement in the school through seeking, valuing and acting on their views is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The quality of care is apparent in the way staff promote the very best interests of pupils in regard to their welfare.
- Pupils are well known in the school by staff and their personal and educational well-being is a priority. However the assessment procedures are not yet developed enough to create individual targeting to develop each pupil's potential to the full.
- The school is making good progress in the involvement of pupils in the life of the school.

### **Commentary**

27. Staff and governors are very aware of the need to safeguard the health and safety of pupils and during the last year the school has been thoroughly checked and action taken where necessary to ensure their safety and security. Further action will be taken as money becomes available. Comprehensive arrangements for child protection are in place and the school works very closely with all the agencies concerned to ensure pupils are monitored and helped effectively. Recent development to promote healthy living is having a positive impact on the school. For example, fruit is now regularly available in the school.
28. Staff know and respect pupils and respond well to their personal needs Their well-being is a priority for staff who do their best to ensure pupils receive support outside the



school when necessary as well as during the school day. Pupils spoken to are confident that they each had a member of staff they would be happy to discuss problems with should that be necessary. In lessons, pupils are well supported by the teachers and assistants so that they can all take a full part in lessons. When different levels of work are prepared for pupils at different levels of attainment pupils are challenged at their level of ability and confidently attempt work. However, the school has yet to develop the assessment system to the extent that pupils have individual or group targets in which they are involved and which enable teachers to give well targeted, support, advice and guidance for each pupil. Pupils who find learning difficult get good support whatever their challenges. They are well supported socially. Teachers make good plans for their learning, although some targets set for them are too general to be achievable in the time available.

29. Pupils now know that their views matter and that they can have a positive effect on the standards of provision made for them by the school. This has happened through the formation of the school council. Staff respect the council and pupils know adults are willing to act on its suggestions. Pupils have been encouraged to think of ways in which the school can be improved and have made the most of the opportunity. In classrooms pupils' views are respected and they are happy to discuss issues, to ask questions and for further explanation.

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

The school works **very well** in partnership with parents, other schools and the community. Links with parents and other schools are **very good** whilst links with the community are **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The formal and informal links now in place with other schools have provided an impressive range of opportunities for development and training for staff.
- The recent innovations in the levels of partnership with parents are ensuring a much deeper involvement of parents in the learning of their children and the life of the school.
- The school is now outward looking and community links are making a good contribution to the curriculum and pupils' development.

### **Commentary**

30. The recently appointed head teacher has made great strides in developing teachers' potential through contact with other schools in joint training and activities. Opportunities have been provided for all staff to visit other schools to see good practice including visits to Beacon Schools. The headteacher has used her wide range of contacts and work with other schools to benefit the school through inspirational ideals. The school acts as a placement venue for students studying for national vocational and nursery nurse qualifications. In addition, through the excellence in cities action zone, the school has been able to draw on support for classrooms.
31. Parents are highly delighted with the school and the provision it makes for the children. They are pleased with the recent developments to involve them in a closer partnership. For example, the number of times parents are able to discuss their child's progress has been increased to three times a year, parents are invited to class assemblies and have been consulted about school development. Parents are kept well informed about

everyday school life as well as about activities involving their child. The only real problem for parents, especially those who work, is the lack of notice for events so that they can make arrangements in their workplace to attend. Good arrangements ensure that parents of pupils with special educational needs are consulted when targets need to be reviewed.

32. The school has involved pupils in many areas of life in the local community developing especially pupils' musical and sporting abilities through performances at the music festival and coaching on football and netball. The science curriculum has been considerably enhanced by the work in school on science demonstrations by staff from a local firm for Year 5 and 6 pupils. The school is well placed to take advantage of the considerable geographical and historical sites in the locality to develop pupils' interest and understanding for history and geography.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Leadership and management of the school are **good** overall. Governors fill their role **well**, ensuring that statutory requirements are met efficiently. The leadership of the headteacher is very good. She is well supported by other key staff. The school is **very well** managed, creating a supportive learning environment.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The headteacher's clarity of vision, sense of purpose and aspirational leadership are excellent, leading to rapid improvement since her appointment.
- The school plans very well for its future development.
- Very good teamwork is supporting current improvements.
- The school strives to ensure that all pupils benefit from the opportunities it offers.
- The role played by members of staff is being enhanced through skilful management and very good opportunities for professional development through strategies for performance management.
- The school provides well for its pupils on limited funding; its financial management is very good.

### **Commentary**

33. A new headteacher was appointed in September 2003. Since then the school has been abuzz with new ideas, updated policies and precise plans for further development. Progress in establishing a purposeful sense of direction has been rapid. It is very clear to all involved – staff, governors, parents and pupils – where the school is heading and that sense of direction is motivated by high expectations of all involved and high aspirations towards standards to be achieved. The school has opened its doors to parents and seeks to involve them in its work and development and to keep them very well informed about the progress of their child. Staff have found that opportunities for training and development have invigorated them and enhanced their role. The quietly determined leadership of the headteacher has made this possible. The effect can already be seen in the quality of learning, in the confident application of school policies and procedures and in achievement. Governors and school leaders agree that now is a time for embedding policies and practices as improvements take root. Some areas of performance are still to bear fruit: standards are rising but they are not yet as the school wishes them to be; teaching is improving but is not yet the sharply tuned tool for learning

towards which the policy aspires; assessment procedures are much better at tracking pupils' progress but are not yet fully used to raise standards and achievement.

34. Until recently, school improvement planning was not an efficient tool for raising standards. The school now has a very good idea of how good it is through effective self-evaluation and through listening to external guidance and advice. This makes it well placed to create its very precise improvement plan, the result of careful dialogue with staff and governors. Because the school is getting much better at listening to the views of pupils and parents, their aspirations are entrenched in the plan. The improvement plan is regularly evaluated to ensure priorities remain on target. The plan is clear about what needs to be done, when it should be done, who is responsible and when targets should be achieved. The evaluation includes measurements of success against clear criteria. As a result, the plan is a very effective management tool for development.
35. The school is building very effective teams. The teamwork begins with the governing body. They bring a wide range of experience and expertise, which they are using well to support the future direction of the school. Above all, their teamwork ensures that their legal obligations are fulfilled. The headteacher is well supported by the team of senior members of staff around her. They are finding that expectations of the role they play are much more demanding. They are also finding that they benefit from good training opportunities to prepare them for expanding roles. Some management responsibilities are new and staff are relishing the opportunity to play a much more significant role in the work and life of the school. Together, the adults working in the school set a good example for pupils through their approach to teamwork and the consistent application of school procedures. The performance management of teachers provides senior managers and staff with a good overview of how individuals need to progress in their professional development and how individuals can make a strong contribution to the school's aims and objectives.
36. Because the school has a good understanding of its level of provision and a good sense of its effectiveness, it is well placed to understand the needs of its pupils. It is determined that all pupils benefit from the broad range of opportunities provided. Pupils who find learning difficult get support to make progress. The school identifies pupils who are gifted and talented. It is coming to terms with provision for these pupils, although this is a new concept for staff. It does all it can to track the relative progression of boys and girls, through the analysis of test data, and to then ensure that any irregularities are addressed. Very few pupils come from a background other than white British but the school ensures that all pupils benefit and are cared and supported whatever their background and origin. Until recently parallel classes were imbalanced in the way they were organised and this created some significant differences in the overall pattern of standards and achievement. The school is taking steps to remedy this potential threat to equality of opportunity and inclusion.
37. The school spends significantly less than most schools on the education of each pupil. To provide effectively, school finances have to be very well controlled. Little money is left for development and building maintenance. The balance carried forward from the previous year's funding is earmarked for building improvements and maintenance. There are some deficiencies – in accommodation for Nursery and Reception Classes, in school toilets and in the outside fabric – which governors are aware of and are endeavouring to rectify. At the same time the school ensures that there is enough money for staffing the school well, for ensuring that there are enough books and other

learning resources. A particular point of improvement since the previous inspection has been resource provision and the provision of training in ICT. The school's relationship with the former education action zone has been of great benefit in this. Overall, the school pays good attention to the principles of best value: consultation, challenge, comparison and competition. Given the amount of money to spend and taking all other factors into account, the school provides good value for money.

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

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	841,420
Total expenditure	838,372
Expenditure per pupil	1,959

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	75,033
Balance carried forward to the next	78,081

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

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

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

#### **Commentary**

38. The Foundation Stage has the potential to become a real strength of the school and to provide children with a very good basis for learning. Because members of staff are newly appointed their skills have had insufficient time to raise standards, apart from those in the Reception. Children are admitted into the Nursery after their third birthday and attend either a morning or afternoon session. They are then admitted in the Reception Classes in the September before their fifth birthday. Presently there are two parallel Reception Classes. All classrooms provide a welcoming, stimulating environment with displays that require a response from the children as well as displays of children's work. The accommodation for the Nursery is unsatisfactory because one group works outside the toilets by the washbasins. Consequently children are disturbed by others who need to use the toilets. These interruptions are not conducive to learning. The Nursery has a secure outdoor area but this is not yet sufficiently developed because does not provide a very exciting or stimulating area for the children. The Nursery teacher is aware of this and has plans to improve the facilities. The Reception Classes have no access to a secure outdoor area, a weakness of the provision in the Foundation Stage. This limits opportunities for physical development and for activities to be planned outside. The school has already highlighted this lack in provision.
39. Attainment on entry to the Nursery is below average and the children make good progress and achieve very well so that by the time they enter the Reception Classes their attainment is very broadly average. However, attainment on entry can vary greatly from cohort to cohort.
40. The quality of teaching is good overall but there were examples of very good teaching. This is another improvement since the last inspection when some lessons were judged to be unsatisfactory. The Nursery staff plan as a team as do the Reception staff. However, Nursery staff and Reception staff do not plan as a unit to ensure continuity of skills development and progression. Teachers' knowledge and understanding of the needs of young children mean they are provided with a wide variety of experiences in all areas of learning. Planning is closely linked to either the national levels agreed for children in the Nursery or the early learning goals, the nationally agreed levels for children at the end of the Reception Year. This ensures all children make good progress towards achieving the expected levels and has a positive effect on their learning.

#### **Personal, social and emotional development**

Provision in this area of learning is **very good**.

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

- Every opportunity is taken to enhance children's learning in this area so the majority will achieve, and some will exceed, the expected level.
- Very good relationships are being established so children feel secure and happy.

## Commentary

41. Children enter the school with some underdeveloped social skills. Through the many opportunities provided in both the Nursery and the Reception Classes the majority are on course to achieve or exceed the expected levels. The majority of children conform to the high expectations of good behaviour set by the staff. They know the routines well, settle quickly to tasks with minimum of fuss and behave sensibly. Children are mostly well focused, interested in their work and concentrate well. They are eager to learn. A calm working atmosphere pervades most sessions. The very good teamwork provides the children with very good role models for co-operation. All adults expect the children to listen and respect each other's opinions and views. The majority of children in the Nursery are learning to wait patiently for their turn although the youngest ones find this more difficult. However, in sessions observed in the Reception Classes very few children were heard to call out: they would put up their hand first. Because of supportive relationships and the welcome in all classes children are happy to come to school and confident to ask for help. There were many examples of children helping each other, particularly on the computers.

## Communication, language and literacy

The provision in this area is **very good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- All staff use every opportunity to develop children's language skills and extend their vocabulary.
- A range of activities provides children with many opportunities to develop the skill of early writing.
- The enthusiasm of adults for reading is helping to instil a love of books in children.

## Commentary

42. Early indications suggest that although many children will achieve the expected levels for reading, speaking and listening, few will achieve the level for writing. Despite this all children, including those with special educational needs, make good progress and achieve well, as their attainment on entry to the Nursery is below average. Every opportunity is used to ensure children's language skills are extended either through effective questioning or through talking about an activity. Children in the Nursery are encouraged to talk about their chosen activity and to question the others about what they have done. This helps children to begin to appreciate the need for open-ended questions that require more than "yes" or "no" for an answer. In the previous inspection children's progress in language and literacy was judged to be unsatisfactory: that is no longer the case. Children in the Reception Classes are confident articulate speakers and often respond to questions in complex sentences. All children enjoy sharing or reading books. This love is fostered in the Nursery where time is set aside for children to talk about their library books. The majority of children in the Reception Classes are beginning to recognise familiar words in their reading books and are developing strategies to work out those that are new. Books are enjoyed and stories shared. The Reception children really enjoyed their big book about a cat that liked to hide in boxes, joining in enthusiastically with the repeated text. Many older children in the Nursery know

that marks can communicate meaning and explore this either through role-play or at the writing table. However, despite a wide range of experiences in early writing few children in the Reception Classes will achieve the expected level because many are still writing words as they sound and not as they are spelt. Also most only write a single sentence rather than two or three as would be expected of higher attaining children at this time of the year.

### **Mathematical development**

Provision in this area of learning is **very good**.

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

- Every opportunity is taken to encourage children to develop their counting skills.
- A range of practical activities is provided to extend children's understanding in different areas of mathematics.

#### **Commentary**

43. No group teaching was observed in the Nursery but children explored number and matching skills as part of adult directed activities. They were keen to count and show how well they could match numbers and objects. Because of good teaching children are on course to achieve the expected levels by the end of the Reception Year: a few will exceed the goals set for the end of the Reception Year. Number songs and rhymes are used regularly to enhance children's understanding of numbers: counting on or one less than. Children confidently count to ten: many count beyond this. They are beginning to add three single digits together accurately and enjoy the challenge of using number fans to show their answers. Because of very good relationships children are confident to have a go at explaining how they found the answer even if they are incorrect. Occasionally opportunities are missed to provide a greater challenge for the higher attaining children.

### **Knowledge and understanding of the world**

Provision in this area of learning is **very good**.

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

- A very good range of relevant experiences enhances children's understanding of the world around them.
- Children have opportunities to use the computers and develop their skills.

#### **Commentary**

44. During the inspection the topic in the Nursery was related to small creatures, such as ladybirds, spiders, centipedes and pond life. The electronic microscope attached to the computer and the size of the magnified creature fascinated children. There were gasps of amazement when the creature's enlarged photograph was printed. Children talked knowledgeably about spiders, insects and tadpoles. Reception children enjoy a topic about the rain forest looking at animal camouflage and the bright colours that act as



deterrents to other animals. An effective rainforest had been created as a role-play area – enjoyed by all. A wide range of topics had been covered during the year with relevant visits and visitors to enhance children’s understanding. Photographic evidence shows many of the visits, visitors and activities staff provided for the children. Religious education helps children learn to understand the importance of their family, friends and people who help them. A range of different religious festivals is celebrated. Computer skills are developing well as children carefully control the mouse to move the cursor. Some print their own work efficiently without adult support and like to work with friends to help them.

### **Physical development**

45. As there were no opportunities to observe sessions dedicated to physical development it was not possible to make any judgements about provision or standards. However, the lack of a secure outdoor area for the Reception children means that there are very limited opportunities for physical development. The school has already highlighted this need.
46. There are opportunities within the planned curriculum for children to develop their skills of pencil control and use of tools such as scissors, using through specific worksheets for colouring or practising letter formation. Additional activities using tools with play dough or scissors for collage also help children to develop their skills.

### **Creative development**

The provision for creative development is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- An interesting range of experiences is provided to encourage children to explore different media.

### **Commentary**

47. Children in the Reception Year are on course to achieve the expected levels in this area of learning. Nursery children were observed making spiders, spider’s webs using a range of materials whilst another group decorated a large caterpillar with paints or prints of shapes. Children make good use of these opportunities. Paints are always available for children to express themselves. Nursery rhymes and action songs are practised daily during carpet. Most children know the words and join in enthusiastically – sometimes too enthusiastically, shouting rather than singing. In the Reception Year children demonstrate greater skill with the paintbrush and enjoy decorating a parrot with wax crayon then painting a wash on the paper. They are amazed at the effect. Many of the creative tasks are closely matched to the topic. A range of percussion instruments are used to accompany “going on a bear hunt” and children make good choices for themselves using the instruments they feel best match the sound words. Most choose appropriate instruments and effectively accompany the story.

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

## ENGLISH

Provision for English is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils reach average standards at the age of 11 years but standards are below average for pupils aged 7.
- The vision of the headteacher and management of the subject leader have brought new rigour to the subject.
- At the point of transfer to secondary education, pupils enjoy reading and writing.
- Pupils listen well in their lessons.
- Pupils in Years 5 and 6 achieve very well.
- Learning support assistants help pupils with learning difficulties to achieve well.
- Targets for learning are starting to help pupils in their work.
- There is unevenness in the pace and quality of teaching in Years 1 to 4.

### Commentary

48. Standards are below average at the end of Year 2 and average at the end of Year 6. The school's performance in national tests at age 7 and 11 years show that reading results are stronger than writing. The school's own assessment reflects the same view and is accurately mirrored in effective action plans to improve writing. Inspection findings confirm this and show that at 11 years, most pupils do well enough in reading and writing. Conversely, the performance of higher and lower attaining 7 year olds is below that reached by pupils the same age when compared with schools nationally and those with similar features. Overall, achievement is satisfactory.
49. Speaking and listening are as expected for pupils' ages and sometimes above average. The pupils in this school listen very well in their lessons. In some classes, teachers have introduced "Talk Partners" and although early days, pupils benefit from the "talking for learning" approach. They come up with many ideas and have the confidence from working together, especially when they are asked to interpret new facts or give their views in subjects such as science or religious education. When children start school their communication skills are lower than those of most children so this valuable approach is an early sign of the school's response to a recognised need to buoy up the quality of language that pupils use for learning.
50. By the end of Year 2, pupils' skills in reading and writing are below the level of most 7-year-olds. Pupils enjoy reading and are eager to share a book and discuss it with others at their level. Some of them deal with new words well enough but too many of them have below average knowledge of letter sounds in simple words and correct spelling of common words. This adversely affects their writing also. In addition, handwriting skills are not taught early enough in the school. The legacy can be seen in lower junior classes where the confidence of pupils has been jeopardised by a history of inadequate teaching of basic skills; remnants of which are starting to be tackled by management. Not all pupils in the infants achieve as well as they could.
51. Year 6 pupils read with good understanding that shows itself when they explain their favourite authors and types of stories. Junior pupils achieve soundly overall having had

a variable diet of literacy experiences, some of which were not good enough in writing, since the previous inspection. Now teaching does ensure that the breadth of reading and writing experiences has improved but there are some key features of literacy that remain untapped. Teachers do not emphasise enough the qualities of language that authors use to craft different types of writing so pupils do not have the chance to explore these well enough in their own work. For example, a scrutiny of pupils' work showed that in Years 2 to 4 pupils were encouraged to use a similar list of words to connect sentences whatever the type of writing. A broader variety of writing tasks in different subjects is planned to help them to explore suitable words and phrases more profitably.

52. Pleasingly, the progress that pupils make in Years 5 and 6 accelerates. Very good and often complementary teaching between the two Year 6 teachers boosts pupils' confidence and skills in literacy and helps them to do their best. One of strengths evident in the teaching here is the robust efforts that go into successfully narrowing the huge gaps in spelling and handwriting of lower attaining pupils by the end of Year 4. This is not to say that teaching is unsuccessful here; rather that additional intervention has not tackled the problems early and rigorously enough to make enough difference. In Years 5 and 6, pupils want to learn. Moreover, they are enthralled by lessons that make very good use of technology to enhance learning and build the confidence needed for the next stage of their education.
53. One of the hallmarks of most lessons is very good behaviour. Pupils know what is expected of them and conform very well. Many of them show an eagerness to learn but have not always had enough support to help them. Newly introduced targets for learning for each pupil are one of the measures in place that outline what comes next in the learning journey. In writing, where teachers mark with these in mind pupils achieve more because they understand what they need to do to improve features in their work.
54. In the best lessons in the infants and juniors, teachers and learning support assistants use questions well to help pupils to explain themselves. Here there is an expectation that one answer may not be enough and teachers pursue a teaching point to deepen pupils' understanding. This builds pupils' vocabulary in different subjects and makes an important contribution to their speaking skills. This also helps the small number of pupils with difficulties in expression or with additional needs in learning by prompting them to make explanations. Good support from learning support assistants helps these pupils by providing a close running commentary in lessons. So much so that they can deal with the same information as everyone else in the class. Often though teachers do too much of the talking so pupils do not achieve as well as they could. Where lessons are ordinary, there is a lack of pace to learning and not enough challenge for those pupils who have the capacity to do more or to work faster in the time set. In Year 2 this results in a plateau of achievement and the pace of learning does not pick up momentum until Year 5. This unevenness shows itself in pupils' writing. In these year groups, pupils could achieve more. To be fair, teachers have made huge strides in a short time and with strong leadership, are set to even out this dip.
55. Leadership in the subject is good. The new headteacher has generated vibrant professional discussion and forged vital partnerships between the school and outside agencies including the local authority. So much so that the subject leader has greater opportunity now to manage the subject and deal with the inconsistencies she has identified in her analysis of pupils' results in their annual tests. Her strong lead helps the pupils she teaches to achieve more so teachers learn from her work and are adapting

their own teaching accordingly. The subject leader knows that there is some way to go to ensure that all pupils achieve consistently well. Already, there is a drive to strengthen weaker aspects of writing. A careful eye is kept on the progress of all pupils now, and the new systematic tracking means that weaknesses in the work of individuals can be dealt with. Recent improvements in the organisation of the subject and in overall provision have been good.

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

56. There is satisfactory use of language and literacy across the curriculum. Generally, pupils have suitable opportunities to use their reading skills to support their learning in science, history, geography and religious education. Throughout the school, but especially in Years 5 and 6 pupils get the opportunity they need to use their writing skills to reflect what they know and understand. Some tasks are structured by the use of a work sheet. Although most work sheets provide opportunities for pupils to create their own written response, some lower attaining pupils have difficulty completing the worksheets and some higher attaining pupils find the work sheet a restriction to the flow of their ideas and creativity. In history, Year 6 pupils write at length and with some insight.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision for mathematics is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Good management of the subject is supporting improved achievement.
- Good teaching in junior classes is raising standards: the quality of teaching in Years 5 and 6 ensures that standards are above average by Year 6.
- While achievement is improving, standards are still below average by Year 2: the quality of teaching in infant classes has not yet had a strong effect on raising standards.

### **Commentary**

57. There has been a trend of rising standards over the last five years when pupils leave the school. Present standards are judged to be above average when compared with schools nationally, and are well above average when compared with similar schools. In Year 2 the percentage of pupils working at above average levels has been lower than normally found in the past but has improved this year. However, standards overall are still below average when compared with schools nationally, but are in line with standards found in similar schools. Pupils are achieving satisfactorily in infant and lower junior classes and very well in upper junior classes.
58. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall in infant classes, with some examples of good teaching. The same picture emerges for lower junior classes and is consistently good or better in Years 5 and 6. It is particularly strong in Year 6. All teachers insist on high standards of behaviour and there are good relationships. This leads to pupils being attentive and learning well. In the best lessons the teachers use the interactive whiteboards to good effect. Well-planned demonstrations of calculating strategies are presented clearly. This is very effective in bringing pace and motivation to lessons. Where teaching is less effective the good quality planning for lessons is not

implemented. As a consequence over emphasis is placed in recording mathematics in lower infant classes, with insufficient focus on pupils working practically and mentally.

59. The leadership of the subject is good. The subject leader has worked hard to identify strengths and weaknesses in the subject and has a clear view of what needs to be done to raise standards. She has monitored teaching and has acknowledged the need to improve opportunities for pupils to explore and investigate in mathematics. In all years pupils need more opportunities to use and apply their mathematical knowledge and to experience data handling. She has raised mathematical awareness with parents and encouraged them to work with their children. Under the new leadership of the school she has shown a strong commitment to continuing professional development, and has drawn on the expertise from beyond the school to improve aspects needing further development. There is very good improvement in the leadership and management of the subject and the planned curriculum since the last inspection.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

60. Satisfactory use is made of mathematics to support learning in other subjects across the curriculum. Pupils use careful measurements in support of their observations and investigations in science. There is increasingly good use of ICT to teach mathematical modelling, data collection and graphical presentation. However, this direct teaching in ICT does not yet appear frequently in pupils' day-to-day work in mathematics. The use of numeracy skills is used to support the development of a sense of chronology in history as pupils create time lines and in geography when pupils are involved in data collection for fieldwork. Teachers are finding opportunities to make the connections between mathematics and other subjects, but this is currently incidental to lessons, rather than consciously planned.

## **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- A renewed emphasis on practical and investigative science is the result of good subject leadership: this is beginning to benefit pupils' achievement.
- Good coverage of the curriculum ensures that pupils have a broad and deep knowledge of the subject.
- A strong link with local industry brings significant advantage to older pupils.
- The subject policy does not give guidance on health and safety matters when teaching science.

### **Commentary**

61. Standard test results have improved since the previous inspection. The results of National Curriculum tests for eleven-year-olds have varied widely from year to year, from average to well below average and in 2003 the results were below average. Teachers' assessments for seven-year-olds in 2003 indicated standards that were above average overall at level 2 and average at level 3. However, seven-year-olds performed poorly at practical and investigative skills while performing well in the knowledge based targets. In the eleven year olds tests, boys do consistently better than girls and this trend was

confirmed in the results in 2003. The standards reflected in the work seen are similar but not the same.

62. Standards are broadly average for both seven-year-olds and eleven-year-olds. However, the tasks designed for seven-year-olds are often work sheet led and do not always give pupils the opportunity to show the full range of their knowledge and skills. There was no marked difference in the work seen of boys and girls at the age of eleven. The school has put into place arrangements for a greater emphasis on practical and investigative science and this is paying dividends, in that pupils have more opportunity to think creatively in their activities, more opportunity to demonstrate the skills of scientific cooperation and more opportunity to observe and investigate scientific phenomena at first hand. As a result, achievement is improving although this has only a marginal impact on standards at present.
63. Teaching is good overall but it is particularly lively and vibrant in Year 6. The learning is best where it is strongly practical and closely allied to pupils' first hand experiences. For example, Year 2 pupils found their 'mini-beast' observations of snails fascinating and their discussions supported the development of valuable word pictures of what they were seeing. Year 6 pupils were greatly stimulated through their replication of an experiment of Galileo Galilei on the swinging of a pendulum. The collaborative work, the hypothesis making and testing were of good quality. These pupils have a good understanding of how a scientist works, predicts and tests under scientifically valid conditions. Common strengths across the school in learning are the very good behaviour of pupils during their investigations, the concentration they show as they listen to introductions to lessons and their very good attitudes towards their tasks. A growing strength of the work is the use made of interactive whiteboards. Teachers frequently plan their lessons around whiteboard presentations that grip and interest pupils. The best use of the whiteboards is when teachers involve pupils in giving the presentation. Although there are good skills being developed in other directions in ICT, very little of this is seen in the copious work in pupils' books. For example, pupils have good ICT data collection skills and know how to present the data in a variety of graphs. However, no examples of this were seen in pupils' workbooks. The school has a strong link with a local scientifically based industry. This practical link, where workers from the factory visit the school to support learning on particular topics, brings a bonus to the work of the school. It is a link that the firm is proud to report on through its circular to all workers throughout the country.
64. There is a good sense of direction for the subject. The subject leader has recently revised the policy that guides the overall approach to science in the school. However, the policy does not give guidance for health and safety requirements in lessons, for example, when investigating substances or when working with electricity. Resources are sufficient to enable a good and full coverage of the science curriculum. Resources for Year 1 and 2, where the subject leader has most influence are very well stored and very easily accessible. Now that there is a good collective understanding of the nature of and value of practical work, the curriculum has a stronger balance of skills allied to knowledge. However, some pupils, especially higher attaining pupils in Years 1 and 2, do not get the opportunity they need to show the full range of their attainment in the tasks designed for them. Some tasks, work sheet led, define too rigidly what they should do and record and restrict their opportunity to show the full extent of their understanding. Although there are worksheet opportunities for pupils to develop their own language,

they do not give extensive opportunities for pupils to practise their literacy skills. Overall, the subject has made good progress since the previous inspection.

## INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good improvement has been made since the previous inspection.
- The subject leader has played a strong role in improving resources, staff expertise, standards and achievement.
- Standards are now at the level expected for pupils' ages.
- Pupils learn and achieve well.
- Although a good range of skills is taught across the ICT curriculum, opportunities are missed to make links with learning in other subjects of the curriculum.

### Commentary

65. Although there is little work to be seen in pupils' books and although few teachers maintain a file of completed tasks, there is ample other evidence to support a judgement of satisfactory standards. The subject leader's comprehensive portfolio of samples of work from each year group give him a clear picture of what pupils are achieving. A good range of completed tasks was seen in the work sample for Year 4. Year 6 pupils hold a range of their completed tasks on floppy disk. ICT lessons were seen with all year groups in the school. Pupils have a broad range of accomplishments across the curriculum. They access on-screen features, operating the mouse (pointing device) with agility and skill. They know how to 'drag and drop'. Keyboard entry is brisk and accurate in Years 1 and 2, indicating that pupils get plentiful opportunities to practice. Older pupils enjoy the challenge of programming the 'Roamer', either with the floor model, or simulated on screen. Others have a good understanding of the use of the spreadsheet, calculating a balanced (or in some cases a not-so-balanced) diet with a given sum of money and then going through the process of what not to buy when prices rise. Pupils collect, tabulate and present data in graphs and analyse the information that results from the graphs. Taken together, these strengths mean that achievement is now good overall. However, although the learning is good, much of this work is separate and not many specific connections are made across the curriculum.
66. The teaching is much better than it was at the time of the previous inspection. There is no unsatisfactory teaching, because teachers have learned a great deal since then from their training. Most teaching is good with examples of very good teaching. Lessons are taken confidently and with a sense of humour. Pupils enjoyed the lesson the teacher called 'Roamer Therapy' and enjoyed the word play, too. Explanations are good, given briskly, in a good listening environment and this means that pupils can quickly get to task and that they have a good idea of what they need to do. Planning is clear, ensuring good coverage of the full ICT curriculum, which was not the case at the time of the previous inspection. These factors go together to provide good opportunities for pupils' learning and achievement. Because pupils are enthusiastic and because they are well behaved, they learn well from their time at the keyboard. Although standards are overall at the level expected, some pupils are performing better than expected. Pupils with special educational needs enjoy the release of being able to type their work and not to have to worry about handwriting. Because they know a range of editing features they can be much more accurate with, for example, correct spelling.



67. At the time of the previous inspection, provision, progress, some aspects of teaching and standards were unsatisfactory. That is no longer the case. The school has made very good improvement in all areas of ICT. Much of this is due to the work of the subject leader, who knows very clearly what needs to be done, has enhanced his own expertise at the same time as the expertise of staff has been enhanced and who has overseen the development of sufficient resources to enable staff teach the full curriculum for ICT. His work has been well supported by individual members of staff who have reached out willingly towards training opportunities offered. There are no significant gaps in teachers' expertise. Shortly, a course will run for learning support assistants. Other contributions towards the improvements made are the intervention of governors and senior staff in seeing that necessary funding has been available, the development of the computer suite, the support of the Education Action Zone and the enthusiasm of pupils. All these factors have culminated in a much-improved position where standards now meet expectations throughout the school, where achievement is good overall and where teaching is good and sometimes very good.

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

68. The use of ICT across the curriculum is satisfactory. Pupils now have an extensive and broad range of skills across the curriculum for ICT. They have a good range of word processing features to support their literacy skills. Access to CD ROMs opens up a wider world of research skills. Spreadsheets and graphing programs take the hard labour out of problem solving, data collection, tabulations and the interpretation of graphs. Some pupils have learned about sensing temperature. The youngest children in the school experience the awe and wonder of mini-beasts under the digital microscope. A strong point of the teaching is that teachers frequently refer to the value of ICT in everyday life, a message that pupils appear to appreciate and understand. However, planning does not consistently bring into lessons across the curriculum opportunities to use computers to support learning on a day-to-day basis. This is partly because separate specialist lessons are planned for the computer suite and teachers and pupils have less day-to-day access to computers for individual or small group use. There is good and growing use of digital whiteboards, frequently for demonstration purposes but increasingly for pupils' use too. However, the use of ICT across the curriculum remains an area for further school development.

### **HUMANITIES**

69. Inspectors did not see any lessons in the geography and history. They looked at the work pupils had already done in these subjects and talked with subject leaders and with pupils in Year 6 about their work.
70. In **history**, pupils' achievement is typical of that of pupils of age 7 and 11. Infant pupils have suitable support that helps them to understand about the past and some of them write accounts of the famous people and events. New resources for role-play add refreshing ways for pupils to enter into the experiences of the past and begin to identify the differences between then and now. Displays help pupils to understand the work of Florence Nightingale in Scutari and a world map promotes a growing awareness of linked places. Often pupils record information in bullet points and factual writing though there are few examples of different kinds of writing that might help more able pupils to use their literacy skills.

71. In Year 6 creative teaching methods help pupils to ask questions and imagine what life was like in World War Two. In one example, pupils took part in “hot-seating” roles as characters dramatized from the life and times of the 1940s. As a result of this interesting work, pupils wrote with feeling as though present at the time: “I still haven’t heard from Frank... I’m so worried about him.... It’s one thing expecting us to deal with all our injured troops but what with D – day ... and bringing Germans in.... is a whole different story!” This represents good achievement and strong teaching.
72. In **geography** there was too little evidence to judge the standards achieved by pupils in either key stages. Indications from pupils’ work in Year 5 show good use of maps, the local area and Internet web pages for pupils to suggest ways to solve the local traffic problems. Key geographical questions such as: “Should Johnston Avenue be closed to traffic?” prompted lively ideas from pupils. Developments in the subject are well underway and include the use of new technology in teaching and learning and increasing links with other subjects.

## **Religious Education**

Provision is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Year 2 pupils show an above average awareness of what prayer means to people.
- There is a good balance between pupils learning about Christianity and other world religions.
- Teachers plan well to relate the subject to pupils’ life experiences.
- Pupils are encouraged to think about important values and life’s big questions.
- Junior pupils learn a wealth of facts and some important messages about different religions.

### **Commentary**

73. Standards are above average when pupils are seven and average at the age of eleven. Achievement is good overall. Standards meet the expectation of the locally agreed syllabus. The quality of pupils’ responses in discussions shows that they achieve well. At the point of transfer to secondary school, they demonstrate typical understanding of different world religions and a higher level of respect and interest than most pupils the same age. This is because teachers plan and guide pupils well in their lessons and are strong models themselves. Genuinely very good relationships between staff and pupils and between pupils make a strong contribution to the qualities of lessons in the subject. In addition, teachers are enthusiastic. They support pupils to handle unfamiliar stories and resources well, even in more ordinary lessons. Good use of resources (often borrowed) help to make the subject come alive for pupils. Displays throughout the school stimulate pupils’ interest and especially so in the infants where shared messages abound and pupils respond with a vibrancy through their paintings.
74. Teaching is good and especially knowledgeable in infant classes. Pupils learn well as a result. Throughout the school, pupils are encouraged to reflect on what it means to have a faith and to learn from religions as well as about them. Both infant and junior pupils discuss, illustrate or write about right and wrong as well as life’s important questions at an appropriate level. This broadens pupils’ horizons and promotes good reflection on

life's big questions. For example, in a Year 2 lesson observed, pupils pondered on the nature of prayer, offered their own family messages and a large group of them spontaneously burst into "The Lord's Prayer." Older pupils in Year 4 learn about the messages we can take from different faiths through studying stories, for example of Christian saints. Thoughtful planning made links to other areas of life such as a Titian painting of a saint and a very good display of a Hindu "Puja" or shrine. Teaching makes a good effort to link these with pupils' life experiences so pupils make sense of new knowledge. For example, pupils in Year 6 are encouraged to consider common facts from stories from the Life of Mohammed and information about parallel Christian figures. This heightens their awareness of the facts and poses bigger questions about the similarities and differences in world religions. By the time they are 7 years old, pupils have a good grasp of a range of stories from different faiths. By the age of 11 years, pupils understand some of the differences and commonalities of the way people of different religions worship. They know about their different customs and festivals. Increasingly, pupils write in the subject though the range of work tends to be mainly factual. The subject is aptly led and managed to ensure pupils build progressively on their understanding from year-to-year. New and exciting use of technology for teaching and learning is significantly adding to pupils' interest and achievement.

75. The subject is well led. Standards of attainment have improved in the infants in comparison with those at the time of the last inspection and are in line with those expected in the locally agreed syllabus for pupils at the age of 11 years. The strengths identified in the previous report have been maintained.

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

76. These subjects were not a main focus of the inspection. As few lessons were seen, no judgements are given for provision, achievement, teaching and learning in the school overall. The few lessons seen were good, with some very good music teaching in Years 3 to 6.
77. No lessons were observed in **art and design**. No firm judgements are made about provision or standards. Displayed work shows pupils regularly learn from the work of other artists and use a good range of materials, including paint, clay, collage and ICT. The provision of planning guidance and resources for teachers, in art and design unit packs, has improved since the previous inspection.
78. Only one lesson was observed in **design and technology** and, again, it is not possible to make a firm judgement about provision or standards. Evidence in teachers' planning shows that pupils are given opportunities design, make and evaluate in a good range of contexts. Displayed work shows pupils have made effective and creative fabric purses, based on individual designs. In the lesson observed, the torch and light models completed by Year 4 were also based on pupils' plans. Pupils were encouraged to identify how their models could be improved and refined. Good links were made with a study of electricity in science. The curriculum planning and provision of resources has improved since the last inspection.
79. At the last inspection **music** was taught across the school by a visiting specialist. Presently a member of staff, who is a musician, now teaches the subject to all pupils in Years 3 to 6. However, teachers in the Reception Classes and Years 1 and 2 are responsible for their class music. During the inspection there were few opportunities to observe music being taught so it was not possible to make a judgement about standards at the age of seven. Standards at the end of Year 6 are average and as expected for their age. In their lesson they were learning a backing for a song but struggled to pitch the higher notes. However, when singing the melody, the singing was

tuneful and pleasant. Groups playing percussion instruments followed a graphic score but the pupils found it hard to keep the beat. Singing heard during assemblies was good, especially when pupils accompanied it very effectively when playing violins, recorders and keyboards. Younger pupils explore percussion and body sounds to effectively paint a musical picture of a busy supermarket.

80. Insufficient evidence was gathered to make judgements about provision or standards in **physical education**. However pupils are offered a very good range of extra curricular sporting activities, which are proving very popular. Teams regularly participate in inter-school matches. Recently a grant has been received to provide basketball training. The subject leader has introduced a new scheme into school, which is currently being trialled across the school: it has, however, had insufficient time to impact on provision. Although the required areas of physical education are planned for, discussions with pupils suggest that there are occasions when certain aspects are not regularly taught, particularly in gymnastics and dance lessons for the oldest pupils.

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

81. The inspection provided limited evidence of the school's provision for this area of study. It is a regular part of the weekly timetable for all classes in the school. Four lessons were seen across the age range of the school, of which one was very good, two were good and one satisfactory. From the lessons seen, it is clear that provision is systematic and planned, and provides a secure framework for pupils' continuing personal development. Discussions and activities are relevant, supporting the positive ethos of the school. Lessons in this area of study are complemented by themes for assembly and some science topics, such as healthy living and areas of sex and relationships education. Overall, the work in this area of study gives good support to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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