

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **TOWN LANE INFANT SCHOOL**

Bebington, Wirral

LEA area: Wirral

Unique reference number: 105010

Headteacher: Mrs Y Body

Lead inspector: Mrs J E Platt

Dates of inspection: 1 – 3 December 2003

Inspection number: 258224

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

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## **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Type of school:	Infant
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 to 7
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	258
School address:	Town Lane Bebington Wirral
Postcode:	CH63 8LD
Telephone number:	0151 6081918
Fax number:	0151 6091130
Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr P Challinor
Date of previous inspection:	18 May 1998

## **CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL**

Town Lane Infant School is an average sized school situated in Bebington on the Wirral. It provides education for 258 pupils including 48 attending on a part time basis in the nursery. A very low number of pupils are from minority ethnic groups and these receive support because English is not their first spoken language. A below average number of pupils (10 per cent) are entitled to free school meals. Twenty-nine pupils are on the school's register of special educational needs and one pupil has a formal Statement of Special Educational Need. Identified concerns include moderate learning difficulties as well as physical need. The area served by the school is varied but is broadly similar to the average picture. Children start the nursery with a broad range of abilities but overall attainment is average with strengths in social skills and speaking and listening.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
11565	Mrs J E Platt	Lead inspector	English English as an additional language
11457	Mrs J Beattie	Lay inspector	
30935	Mrs K McArthur	Team inspector	Mathematics Areas of learning in the Foundation Stage Creative, aesthetic, practical and physical subjects
7994	Mrs P Weston	Team inspector	Science Information and communication technology Humanities including religious education Special educational needs

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# PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

## OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a **very good** school. The overall quality of teaching is very good and pupils achieve very well. Standards have been consistently high in the school and are currently well above average in Year 2. Leadership from the headteacher is very strong and there is a great determination in the school to improve the quality of education and build on the school's many strengths. The budget is managed very well and **the school provides very good value for money**.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Achievement is very good in Years 1 and 2 and standards are well above average in reading, writing, mathematics and science. Pupils with special educational needs and the small number whose first spoken language is not English also make very good progress.
- Teaching is consistently good and often very good. Lessons are exciting and capture pupils' enthusiasm. Planning of lessons is good but it is not always made clear to pupils what they are to learn in lessons. Assessment is used effectively to track pupils' progress. Teachers have targets for pupils but do not share these with them so that they know the next steps they need to take to improve.
- The overall quality of leadership and management is very good. Future decisions are firmly based on self-evaluation. Subject leaders produce detailed action plans. However, they do not have an opportunity to observe changes in the classroom or to share their information with governors who do not have enough first hand knowledge about what is happening in school.
- Pupils benefit from a very rich range of learning experiences including exciting visits, visitors and after school clubs. Their interest in and enthusiasm for all on offer are excellent.
- This is a very caring community because of the excellent trust between pupils and all staff.
- Parents are very active in supporting the school and the Parents' Association raises considerable funds for the benefit of the pupils.

Since the school was inspected in May 1998 the rate of improvement has been good. High standards have been sustained. In 2002 results were outstanding and this was recognised by a national Achievement Award. The nursery is now fully integrated into the school. Staff long-term absences have hampered the development of the role of subject co-ordinators because time has not been available for them to observe what is happening in lessons. Nevertheless, they have extended their monitoring roles by looking closely at pupils' work and test results. Governors are more involved in setting targets for the school but a few rely on the headteacher for most of their information. Very good progress has been made in improving the information provided to parents.

## STANDARDS ACHIEVED

### Year 2 results

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2, compared with:	All schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
Reading	A	A*	A	B
Writing	A	A*	A	B
Mathematics	A	A*	A	C

*Key: A\* - very high (in the top five per cent of school across the country) A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average*

*Similar schools are those with similar percentages of pupils eligible for free school meals*

## **Overall achievement is very good.**

The results show that the school has sustained very high standards and the overall improvement has been above the national trend. Results are high because of the impressive number of pupils who exceed the level expected for their age. Current standards in Year 2 are higher than the 2003 results and are well above average in reading, writing, mathematics and science. Overall achievement is very good. Pupils get off to a flying start in the Foundation Stage.<sup>1</sup> From an average starting point on entry to the nursery the children make good progress and exceed the learning goals set for them. Support staff make a very positive contribution to pupils' learning. This enables the school to meet in full the needs of pupils with special educational needs and those learning through English as an additional language and they achieve very well.

**Overall provision for pupils' personal development including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good.** These aspects are developed very well in an atmosphere of care and respect. Pupils are highly motivated to learn and play a full and lively part in all the school provides. Behaviour is very good and pupils in Year 2 show a very mature attitude to their support for the younger children. Attendance is satisfactory and pupils arrive punctually.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

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

**The overall quality of teaching and learning is very good.** In the vast majority of lessons seen teaching was good and often better. Teaching is very good in English, mathematics and science in Years 1 and 2 with the major strength being in the teachers' high expectations for their pupils. Pupils rise to their teachers' challenges and achievement is very high in these subjects. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is good. The warm relationships and variety of activities ensure children enjoy lessons and provide a good base for future learning. Throughout the school lessons are stimulating and teachers are rarely short of responses or volunteers. Planning is good. However, teachers do not always make it clear what they want pupils to learn and so pupils do not fully understand the focus of their tasks. Procedures to assess pupils' progress are good. Teachers share with parents what their children need to do to improve but these targets are not shared regularly with pupils. The curriculum is very good. It is well matched to the pupils' age and interests. Accommodation is good although the outside temporary classroom is unsuitable as it has no access to water. The school has very good procedures to ensure pupils learn in a safe and secure environment. The school's partnership with parents is very good and parents make a significant contribution to their children's learning. Links with other schools and the community are effective.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**The overall quality of leadership and management is very good.** Governors carry out their role effectively and ensure all statutory requirements are met. A few governors need to form closer links with the school. Leadership is very good. Very purposeful leadership from the headteacher and key staff ensures a clear educational direction for the future. Management is very effective and the school runs smoothly. Financial control is very good and money is spent wisely.

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

Parents and pupils justifiably hold the school in high esteem and raised no concerns about any features of the education provided.

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

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- In lessons, make it clearer to pupils what they are to learn and revisit this at the end of the lesson to check that pupils have fully understood the purpose of their tasks.
- Make further use of assessment information by sharing targets with pupils so that they know the next steps they need to take to improve their work.
- Provide subject co-ordinators with more time to see what is happening in lessons. Enable them to share their action plans so that the governors can be more closely involved in the school.

## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

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

Overall achievement is **very good**. Standards in Year 2 are well above average in reading, writing, mathematics and science.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- From an average starting point children in the Foundation Stage make good progress and exceed the early learning goals<sup>2</sup> expected for their age.
- Results in national tests have been consistently above and often well above average.
- Pupils with special educational needs and those pupils who are learning through English as an additional language make very good progress.
- Standards are above average in information and communication technology (ICT).
- Pupils who are gifted academically and those with musical and sporting talents make very good progress because of teachers' high aspirations and stimulating curriculum.

#### Commentary

1. Part of the school's success is linked to the flying start children get to their education in the Foundation Stage. Teaching and learning are good and the children experience a stimulating and rich variety of activities. Consequently, children enjoy school and make good progress in all areas of learning. Children's social skills are good when they start school and staff successfully build on these strengths so that the children work independently and take responsibility for their own actions. Letters and their sounds and numbers are taught imaginatively through play and rhymes. Consequently, children are well launched in early reading, writing and the use of number by the time they start in Year 1.

#### *Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 – average point<sup>3</sup> scores in 2003*

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	17.3 (18.5)	15.7 (15.8)
Writing	16.4 (17.0)	14.6 (14.4)
Mathematics	17.4 (18.8)	16.3 (16.5)

*There were 75 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

2. The grid shows that the school's results in national tests in 2003 were well above the national average in all three areas. When compared with similar schools, results were above average in reading and writing and average in mathematics. Results in mathematics were slightly lower than the other areas because, when compared with similar schools, the number of pupils exceeding the level expected for their age was average. This was linked to the ability of the cohort and does not identify a dip in standards which have been consistently high in the school.

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

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

The trend in results is higher than the national trend. In 2002, the results were outstanding, being in the top five per cent in the country in reading, writing and mathematics.

The school received an Achievement Award for this impressive set of results. Current standards in Year 2 are well above average in all aspects of English and mathematics. In response to teachers' high expectations and challenging tasks, many pupils are working at levels higher than expected for their age. Overall achievement is very good. There is no difference in the progress of pupils of different abilities and boys and girls make similarly very good progress. The school maintains a register of those assessed as academically gifted and those talented in music, art and sport. These pupils thrive on the school's high aspirations and extend their skills at a very good rate.

3. Pupils with special educational needs are spotted promptly and receive very effective help from teachers and support assistants. Several sessions are specifically tailored to their needs and led by trained and experienced staff and learning is very good. Although the school has very few pupils who do not speak English as their first language, their needs are not neglected. The local authority helps provide detailed assessments and advice which enables these pupils to achieve very well. They benefit from the school's friendly ethos and soon establish warm friendships which help them to overcome quickly their initial difficulties.
4. Effective teaching and interesting activities lead to standards in other subjects also being impressive. Teachers' assessments in science in 2003 were above the national average and standards are currently well above average. A strength is in pupils' ability to carry out investigations and explain their findings. Very effective leadership has improved resources and teachers' confidence to teach ICT and standards are now above average. Achievement is good in the majority of subjects and pupils reach high standards.

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

Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development are **very good**. Their spiritual, moral and social development are very good. Pupils' attendance is satisfactory.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' interest in school life and their desire to learn are very good.
- Behaviour is very good and leads to very effective learning.
- Relationships throughout the school are very good and pupils work and play together very co-operatively.
- Pupils' confidence and self-esteem develop very well.
- Pupils' personal development is very good and pupils are taught how to care for each other and to appreciate the world in which they live.

### **Commentary**

5. Pupils' eagerness to learn, and the interest they take in all that the school offers them, contributes very well to their education. The large majority of pupils play an enthusiastic part in the very good range of extra-curricular activities which enrich and extend their education.
6. Pupils say that they are expected to work hard and they respond very well to their teachers' requirements and achieve very high standards. Behaviour in class, in the playground and about the school is very good. Pupils know what is expected of them and they respond very well to the individual and class rewards and recognition of good work and conduct. From the earliest years they learn to work and play well together, sharing resources, discussing ideas and offering each other encouragement and support. The small number of pupils who do not speak English as their first language flourish in this caring environment and in Year 2 confidently join in all activities and are working at the level expected for their age.
7. All pupils are willing to take on extra responsibilities and older pupils volunteer to sit with the younger ones at lunchtime. They all develop a good sense of ownership of their school and

the part that they play in the well being of the whole community. Pupils grow quickly in confidence and develop a good level of self-esteem. They know that they must report any bullying or oppressive behaviour, consequently incidents are few and playtimes are safe, happy occasions.

8. Spiritual development is very good. Central to the education provided is the promotion of pupils' self-esteem and awareness of others. The development of the school's grounds is just a small example of the focus on appreciation of the natural world and in many lessons pupils experience excitement in learning. Pupils learn to treat others with a high level of respect. From the nursery onwards pupils develop a good sense of right and wrong and they trust their teachers and other staff to guide them in a sensitive way. Pupils' social skills are developed well in the nursery and continue to be very good in the supportive environment of Years 1 and 2 so that all pupils, whatever their needs, play a full part in this friendly community. Pupils develop a good awareness of the needs of others and are encouraged to help by raising funds for charities. In many lessons, they celebrate their own culture and learn about their past and famous people. Pupils also have very good opportunities to learn about traditions and beliefs which are different from their own. They celebrate non-Christian festivals so that the children learn to value other people's traditions. The school has some imaginative links with other countries. For example, pupils have made contact with a school in Japan and have exchanged portraits of each other and this has increased their understanding of the wider world.

**Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%) 2003**

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	5.8	School data	0.0
National data	5.4	National data	0.4

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

Attendance is satisfactory and is similar to the national figure. Pupils are almost invariably keen to come to school, but holidays in term time reduce the school's attendance figures. Punctuality is good.

**QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL**

The school provides a **very good** quality of education. Teaching and learning are very effective and are the major factor for the school's high standards. A very stimulating and rich curriculum inspires pupils so that they enjoy school. The school gives very close attention to the pupils' safety and welfare.

**Teaching and learning**

The overall quality of teaching and learning is **very good**. Assessment procedures are good and teachers have a clear understanding of the needs of their pupils.

**Main strengths and weaknesses**

- In Years 1 and 2 teachers have very high expectations of their pupils and set challenging tasks that considerably increase the rate of learning.
- Teachers have very good knowledge of the subjects they teach and plan interesting activities which capture pupils' interest.
- Teachers insist on very high standards of behaviour and lessons are rarely interrupted by any misbehaviour.

- The support for pupils with special educational needs and those learning through English as an additional language is very good and these pupils are fully included in all activities.
- Planning is good although teachers do not always make it clear to pupils what they want them to learn.
- Assessment is good and teachers tell pupils how to correct mistakes as they work. As yet, the school does not share individual targets with pupils so that they know how to improve.

## Commentary

### **Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 42 lessons**

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0 (0 %)	17 (40 %)	22 (52 %)	3 (7 %)	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.*

9. The grid above shows that a high number of lessons were good and many were better. This is an improvement on the last inspection with more very good teaching being seen. Parents are justified in their belief that teaching is a strength of the school. The majority of the best teaching was in Years 1 and 2 and the overall quality of teaching in English, mathematics and science is very good.
10. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is good and leads to effective learning. Teachers plan imaginative activities which stimulate children's interest so that they not only increase their knowledge but also retain the information. Teachers and support staff make a strong team and all have a good understanding of the needs of this age range. They know when to stand back and encourage independence and when to offer a helping hand. Most tasks are matching children's needs but occasionally higher attaining children could be given harder work to increase their achievement in lessons. Planning is good but the learning focus of a few tasks is not always clear which makes it difficult for staff to assess children's understanding.
11. Teachers in Years 1 and 2 build successfully on the firm foundation put in place in the nursery and reception classes. Teachers' secure subject knowledge allows them to lead their pupils on at a very fast rate of learning. Questioning skills are very effective. Teachers encourage pupils to answer in detail and often follow up with another question to keep pupils on their toes. Reading and writing are taught very well. Teachers' high expectations make a significant contribution to achievement in these subjects. Teachers organise their classrooms very effectively with frequently used words on display and dictionaries readily available so that pupils of all abilities are helped to write. This gives pupils the confidence they need to *have a go* and they enjoy writing. Numeracy lessons are characterised by a buzz of activity and very effective learning.
12. Overall planning is good and lessons are carefully organised. Teachers follow the school's detailed planning guidelines and build effectively on previous learning. Teachers promote literacy very well in many subjects and this successfully increases pupils' skills especially in writing. In numeracy lessons, teachers make it very clear to pupils what they are to learn and revisit this at the end of the lesson to evaluate pupils' learning. This is not the case in all lessons especially in literacy lessons and teachers' plans make too much reference to the tasks to be completed rather than the learning outcome. This makes the conclusion of lessons not as effective as they could be as teachers celebrate the completion of tasks but do not check that pupils have fully grasped the intended learning outcome.

13. The best lessons go at a brisk pace and include an imaginative variety of tasks so that pupils are actively involved in worthwhile activities from start to finish. Teaching in a few lessons observed, although always at least satisfactory, lost pace as teachers talked for too long. In physical education, insufficient attention is given to developing pupils' skills and learning is less effective.
14. Support staff make a significant contribution to learning. They are well trained and involved in planning so that they have an informed picture of the role they play in lessons. This is very effective for the pupils with special educational needs and those who are learning through English as an additional language. All staff are very aware of the academic and social needs of these pupils and check closely that their needs are met. Information and communication technology is used effectively to teach specific literacy and numeracy skills and this enables pupils to remain in class and so feel a full part of the lesson. When pupils are withdrawn for help they follow a full literacy or numeracy lesson matched to their level of ability and this enables them to learn very effectively.
15. Assessment procedures are good in English and mathematics and provide teachers with valuable information about the needs of their pupils. This is used well to match tasks to need and is especially useful in setting challenging tasks so that many pupils are working at levels above what is usually seen for this age group. Although a few pupils retain the advice teachers give them and have an idea how to make their work better, teachers do not share formal targets with pupils to help them be clear what steps they need to take to reach even higher standards.

## The curriculum

The overall quality of the curriculum is **very good**. The school provides its pupils with a very good range of worthwhile, stimulating learning experiences, which very successfully meets their interests and particular needs.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Provision for pupils with special educational needs and those pupils learning through English as an additional language is very good. The school values each individual and makes very good arrangements to promote equality of access in all areas of school life.
- Provision for personal, social and health education is good. However, the school lacks a scheme of work to guide teachers with their planning.
- Pupils transfer smoothly to the next stage of their education because of the very good planning which takes place.
- The curriculum is made richer by a very good range of visits, visitors and after school activities.
- The very good number of well-trained support staff makes a significant contribution to pupils' learning.
- The accommodation is good overall, and much improved since the last inspection. There is improved accessibility to the nursery and the outdoor learning environment. However, the temporary outside classroom lacks running water and, although the staff make it into an attractive learning environment, it is very inconvenient for teaching.

## Commentary

16. The curriculum for all pupils is very good and provides a rich and balanced programme of activities, which interests the pupils and makes them eager to learn. The particular emphasis on personal, social and emotional development in the nursery and reception classes has helped the children to settle quickly into school life. The curriculum for Years 1 and 2 meets statutory requirements. The National Numeracy and Literacy Strategies have been well promoted and led to standards improving. Both of these strategies have been adapted very well to meet the needs of those pupils who have special educational needs. In all other

subjects the school has successfully adapted national guidance, supplemented by the school's own scheme, and these provide a very good basis for teachers' long-term plans. Careful planning in the mixed age class ensures there is no repetition of work and all pupils cover the correct curriculum. The use of the ICT suite supports learning very successfully in other subjects. The newly acquired interactive whiteboard is a very useful tool and is used very successfully by the teachers to support the pupils' learning.

17. The curriculum is considerably enhanced by many wide and varied initiatives, for example an arts week. Here a visiting artist worked with the pupils and staff sharing her expertise. As a result of this the pupils' work is on display in a local art gallery. There is a modern foreign language assistant who is engendering a love of the Italian language in her lessons. This is extended effectively through an after school club where pupils enjoy learning Italian songs and games.
18. More than three quarters of the school take part in one or more of the after school activities and this is an indication of their quality and popularity. Pupils also extend their learning through many school trips and visitors into school. These are interesting and relevant and are available to all pupils, both boys and girls. The recent visit from a Sikh, speaking about his religion and form of dress was of great interest, particularly when some pupils were given the opportunity to make a turban.
19. Provision for pupils with special educational needs and those few learning through English as an additional language is very good. The school is committed to ensuring these pupils have full access to the curriculum and this is very beneficial. Detailed individual education plans are in place which enable teachers to set tasks that closely match pupils' needs. The very good number of support staff very effectively supports these pupils. Many are highly trained and very experienced in their work and the school makes very effective use of their skills.
20. Most of the issues from the last inspection have been resolved. Nursery children are now fully integrated into the school's overall planning and are well prepared for their transfer into the next stage of their education. Resources overall are now good and are, particularly good for example, in ICT. Since her appointment, the headteacher has given considerable attention to refurbishment and improving the school's grounds. This has greatly enhanced the learning environment and more plans are afoot to tackle other areas. The overall quality of the accommodation is now good. The outdoor play area and toilet facilities are not as easily accessible for one of the reception classes. This issue is overcome by careful planning by the school.

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

The school provides a **very good** level of pastoral care, support and guidance. Staff pay careful attention to pupils' views and concerns.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Staff pay careful attention to pupils' views and concerns and this leads to very trusting relationships between adults and pupils.
- Pupils' access to well-informed support, care and guidance is very good.
- Procedures to ensure pupils work in a healthy and safe environment are very good. Risk assessments are extended to include after school and evening functions.
- The school provides very well for pupils who have specific needs.
- Pupils' academic progress is closely monitored but pupils do not have sufficiently defined targets so that they know how to improve their work.

## Commentary

21. The arrangements to introduce pupils to the nursery and reception classes are good and most pupils settle quickly and develop good relationships with their class teacher, the assistants and with other pupils. The very good relationships throughout the school contribute very well to the happy atmosphere in which pupils thrive and grow in self-confidence. Pupils know that they can turn to adults with any concerns and that they will be given good advice to help them through any difficulties. The school goes to great lengths to meet the needs of all its members and to make the best possible provision for any specific medical or educational needs.
22. Child protection procedures are securely in place and all staff know what to do if they have any concerns.
23. The school provides very well for the health and safety of all members of the community including those who attend after school activities and evening functions. Pupils' medical needs are monitored by the school nurse and, from the nursery onwards, pupils learn about safe and healthy living. Specialist help, information and advice from visitors to school, outside agencies and essential services contribute well to procedures to make sure that pupils have a good knowledge of the world outside school and are well prepared for their next school.
24. The school has good procedures to monitor and assess pupils' progress and uses this information well to inform parents at the end of the year about future targets. This enables parents to support their children's learning at home. A few pupils are aware of these areas for improvement. However, as yet these targets are not sufficiently well defined or shared with pupils to ensure they know the next step they need to take to improve their work.
25. All staff listen carefully to pupils' views, questions and concerns. The school values the ideas of its pupils and incorporates them in plans, for example, the design of the playground. Together with their teachers, pupils formulate their classroom rules and promises and, consequently, they respect the rules which they have helped to put in place. Pupils sometimes initiate and plan their own activities, for example, in art and design and design and technology lessons.

## Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school's partnership with parents is **very good** and links with the community and other schools and colleges are **good**.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- The financial and social contribution of the Parent Teacher Association to the school and its life are outstandingly good.
- The school provides very good quality information to parents about school events, the curriculum and their children's standards and progress.
- Links with parents make a very good contribution to their children's learning in school and at home. The school provides parents with a good programme of educational support.
- Links with the community and other schools contribute effectively to the quality of education the school provides.

## Commentary

26. The school benefits greatly from a very active Parent Teacher Association which raises very large sums of money for extra resources. Members of the local community as well as parents are included in some of the activities and this has increased both the social and financial benefits for the school and the local community.

27. Parents who completed the questionnaire expressed a high level of satisfaction with all aspects of school provision. The majority strongly agrees that their children like school, behave well and work hard, benefit from good teaching, are treated fairly and that the school is well led and managed. In addition, parents consider that staff are approachable, help pupils to mature and give good explanations how parents can help their children. Parents say that their children are helped to settle well and that the range of activities is good.
28. The quality of information provided about the school and the curriculum has greatly improved since the last inspection and is now very good. Parents have very good opportunities to discuss their children's progress. The school has very good procedures to meet with any concerns raised by parents and staff are readily accessible for discussions with parents.
29. The school has provided several training sessions for parents to learn how to help their children with literacy and numeracy. Parents who completed these courses said that they found the information very helpful. The school has co-operated with the local authority to encourage parents to learn how to listen to readers so that more are offering effective support to the school by helping pupils with their reading.
30. Good links with the community include links with the church, with industry and essential services. The school also uses a nearby centre that helps schools to provide well for pupils who have special educational needs.
31. Close links with the junior school provide for a very smooth transfer. The school has close curriculum links and very good procedures to provide for the transfer of pupils who have specific needs. Links with a local school enables the school to have access to a range of helpful information. The school has good procedures to offer placements to university and college students.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Leadership and management of the school are **very good** overall and have improved since the last inspection. Governance is good. The headteacher provides very good leadership and is supported effectively by the deputy headteacher and other key staff. The school is very well managed and this has enabled the school to sustain the high standards at the same time as bringing in changes to teaching and learning, the curriculum and the accommodation.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The commitment of the headteacher and key staff to provide the very best for the pupils is very good.
- The headteacher provides very purposeful leadership and has carried out a detailed audit of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Staff are deployed effectively to make full use of their talents. The commitment to developing the skills of all the staff is very good.
- The school is committed to self-evaluation and the school's development plan is based on collaboration as well as analysis of assessment information.
- The deputy headteacher and many of the other staff with management roles carry them out effectively. However, subject co-ordinators do not have an opportunity to see how their action plans are affecting practice in lessons.
- Governors know the school well and all statutory requirements are met. A few have not fully developed their roles and rely too much on the headteacher for information.
- Financial management is very good.

## Commentary

32. Governors have a good picture of the school's strengths and weaknesses and have a clear focus on maintaining high standards. They have a good overview of the school's performance because the headteacher shares a thorough analysis of test results with the governors. Since the last inspection governors have established tentative links with subject co-ordinators. These are not fully developed and governors are not really aware of the detailed action plans co-ordinators produce for their subjects. Governors carry out their duties in an organised way and they bring a good range of expertise to the governing body. Many have attended training to increase their knowledge. These skills are generally used effectively by the school with individual skills being channeled through a system of committees. This means a few governors are more informed about certain aspects of the school than others who rely too much on staff for information.
33. Since her appointment, the headteacher has carefully assessed the school's many strengths and accurately earmarked areas needing attention. She has very high aspirations for the school and every step taken has been checked to see that the high standards so much appreciated by parents have not been affected. This has earned her the respect of parents and governors who consider the school is well led and managed. By making full use of everyone's individual skills and experiences, the process of self-evaluation has been very profitable. Subject co-ordinators carry out detailed audits of their subjects which are then fed into the school's development plan. This ensures that the school's plan for the future is firmly based on evaluation and collaboration and so is supported by all. Most subject leaders provide good leadership and offer effective advice to their colleagues. The co-ordinator for ICT provides very effective leadership having high aspirations for the subject and successfully developing teachers' confidence. Long term staff absences and limited funding to enable the co-ordinators to have time away from their teaching commitments has restricted their opportunity to see how their suggested changes are working in practice. However, the headteacher closely monitors teaching and shares any concerns with staff so that adjustments can be made if a common concern is noted. The deputy headteacher offers very effective support for the headteacher especially in the role of assessment co-ordinator and in providing a very good role model as a teacher in Year 2.
34. All who work for the school embrace the principles of inclusion very successfully. The management of special education provision is very good and the requirements of the Code of Practice<sup>4</sup> are fully in place. The school gives very close attention to meeting the needs of the very few pupils who do not speak English as their first language and checks that their needs are fully met.
35. Overall management of the school is very good and allows the school to run very smoothly on a day-to-day basis. Performance management operates very well despite the staff changes and leads effectively to improvement through well-targeted staff training. The results of national tests are analysed meticulously and findings contribute to areas for development for the school. Parents expressed a concern about the number of temporary teachers employed recently. This has been unavoidable because of illness and the headteacher does everything to ensure temporary staff are fully informed about school policies and procedures. This ensures that the high quality teaching, which is a feature of the school, is not compromised.

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<sup>4</sup> Code of Practice – this gives practical advice to schools and local education authorities about their responsibilities, duties and tasks to ensure that pupils who have special educational needs receive the most appropriate help and support to further their learning and personal development. This is a statutory duty under the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001.

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

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	463,394
Total expenditure	467,234
Expenditure per pupil	1,939

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	21,597
Balance carried forward to the next	17,757

36. The school has very good procedures to monitor its financial position, identify trends and set budgets. Close links with the local authority auditor enable the headteacher and governors to monitor its financial position carefully. The monthly audit enables management and governors to identify trends and to set future budgets. Spending decisions are made with careful reference to best value and in comparison with the experiences of other schools. For example, governors and the headteacher are very aware of the positive effect the support assistants have on progress in the school. This is seen as good value for money and these staff members are encouraged to extend their skills so that their contribution can be even greater. Governors who serve on the finance committee have considerable financial management experience which is shared well with the headteacher so that spending decisions are firmly based on good advice and money is spent prudently.

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

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

Provision in the Foundation Stage is **good**, similar to that at the time of the previous inspection.

When children enter the nursery, their overall attainment is average for their age. However, speaking and listening skills, vocabulary and personal and social development are above average. Children's achievement is good, and the majority are working at levels higher than those expected for their age.

The quality of teaching and learning is good in each of the separate areas of learning. Teaching and support staff form a strong team, have good knowledge of the early years curriculum, and all contribute to the well-planned activities. Relationships between staff and children are very good. The children feel valued and secure, and leave their parents happily and confidently when they come into class.

The outdoor learning areas have been improved since the previous inspection. Reception children have access to a partially covered area, and the nursery children have their own separate area. One reception class is accommodated in a classroom away from the others, and this limits the children's easy access to practical activities.

Leadership and management are good. Thorough assessment procedures are used to track children's progress and plan work that matches their interest. Work is usually closely matched to children's needs although in reading and writing higher attaining children are not always fully challenged and occasionally could work at a faster pace. Children with special educational needs and who speak English as an additional language are supported well, and fully included in the wide range of activities offered. There are good arrangements to prepare children for starting nursery, and also to help children transfer confidently to Year 1.

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

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

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

- Standards are above average, and achievement is good.
- A warm, secure atmosphere makes the children feel valued, and they enjoy coming to school.
- Children share resources and take turns, they are co-operative and help each other.
- Children get themselves ready independently for physical education lessons.

#### **Commentary**

37. When children enter the nursery, their personal and social skills are above average. Very good relationships between staff and children enable children to make good progress as they build on these skills to develop independence and confidence further. The simple 'Class Promises' provide a clear, secure framework for behaviour, and being selected as 'Star of the Week' boosts children's self-esteem. Children happily share equipment, take turns to use the bikes or the class computers and are able to take responsibility for their own actions. They need little help when getting ready for physical education and participate eagerly in all activities. Staff are clear about the way young children learn and plan activities which encourage choice so that they grow in confidence to make independent choices and remain involved with their work.

## COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children have a good vocabulary and their speaking and listening skills are above average.
- Good resources, displays and well planned lessons make learning enjoyable.
- Writing skills are developed effectively through practical activities.
- Regular practice enables children to link letters and sounds and they use this knowledge well in their early reading.
- Tasks generally match children's abilities but higher attaining children could be set more challenging work.

### Commentary

38. Achievement in speaking and listening is good and skills are further developed through varied opportunities. Teachers use questions effectively and children explain clearly their answers in mathematics and talk at length about the experiences of the class teddy bear. Each class has a well-resourced writing area and children are encouraged to write independently from the start. A more able child in reception wrote the rhyme '*Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star*' without help, and spelt most of the words correctly. Teachers take every opportunity to model reading and writing to show children that print has meaning. Nursery children enjoy a book during registration, and recognise many characters in '*Thomas the Tank Engine*'. Most reception children make good use of pictures and their knowledge of letters and sounds when tackling their early reading books. Parents give good support with reading at home. Assessment is generally used well to track children's progress but tasks for higher attaining children are not always sufficiently challenging to ensure they are making as much progress as possible.

## MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good equipment, activities and displays of numbers help children to learn.
- Lively mental warm-up games and songs make learning fun.
- Occasionally, lessons lack focus and the pace is slow.

### Commentary

39. Many children make good progress and will reach the goals expected of them before the end of their time in the reception class. Children in the nursery get off to a good start and count how many are present each day, confidently counting to 25. They are taught effectively about shapes and correctly name a square and a circle. A good variety of practical activities reinforce children's understanding of number. As a result, younger children in the nursery quickly recognise numbers to 4 and record their score by making the correct number of marks when they play a beanbag game. These skills are further developed in the reception class and most reception class children are starting to use their number skills to solve simple problems when they go shopping in the class *supermarket*. A few find it difficult to explain their calculations and to understand more complicated problems, such as why two pennies only buy one candle. Occasionally, the focus of a lesson is not made clear, or the pace is slow. This results in children losing concentration and learning is not effective.

## KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- A wide variety of activities is used to broaden the children's experiences.
- Collaborative planning between classes is effective and results in shared themes and topics.
- Children's ICT skills are above average.
- The outdoor areas are stimulating learning resources.
- One reception class is sited away from the other classes and this prevents the children having as much spontaneous experience of the indoor resources.

### Commentary

40. Achievement is good because of the carefully thought-out activities which capture children's enthusiasm for learning. Interactive displays are stimulating and encourage children to investigate shadows, scented items and light sources. Regular lessons and good support from the knowledgeable classroom assistant enable children to acquire ICT skills that are above those normally seen for this age. They control the mouse well, fill the background with colour and draw recognisable pictures, including a birthday cake for the class puppet. Older pupils are beginning to 'log on' independently. Staff plan visits and visitors to enable children to learn through first hand experiences. Play in class *supermarket* was imaginative because of the children's visit to a local supermarket. Children work outside every day, investigate the changing seasons at first hand, and learn a sense of direction by following the pathway. One reception class is sited away from the others and does not have the same opportunities for frequent access to the indoor resource. Children acknowledge the existence of a higher being in Christian assemblies, and also learn about the importance of festivals in other major world religions.

## PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children make good progress in their physical development and their movements are well co-ordinated, balanced and controlled.
- Manipulative skills are well developed.
- Reception classes do not have outdoor climbing apparatus on which to experience greater physical challenge.

### Commentary

41. Children move confidently, with good control, balance and co-ordination. They travel sensibly in a variety of ways including hopping, jumping and running and confidently ride the wheeled toys. The reception classes benefit from regular use of the school hall for physical education lessons. Children respond quickly to the teachers' directions but sometimes bunch together as they do not yet use large spaces effectively. Nursery children have a climbing frame in the outdoor area to develop their co-ordination skills but this is not available to reception children. Manipulative skills are good. Children model with clay, handle pencils and brushes well, and use small toys, tools and scissors safely.

## CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good opportunities are provided for children to express their ideas through a variety of materials, media and colours.
- Role-play areas encourage imaginative activities and language development.
- Children enjoy singing.

### Commentary

42. Children in the nursery mix pastel colours successfully and paint while listening to peaceful music from the '*Sugar Plum Fairy*'. Well-displayed artwork brightens the rooms. Children use paint, collage and modelling materials creatively to express their ideas boldly, and study the work of great artists. They are eager to enter into the role of chef, waiter or customer in the popular *café* area. This enhances their language development well, particularly when staff enter into role and extend the activities. The children recall the words to their favourite songs. Nursery children sing and clap together maintaining a rhythm successfully when playing musical instruments. Teachers skillfully extend these skills in the Reception class and these children sing clearly, follow the tune and know that sitting correctly improves the quality of their singing.

## SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGE 1

### ENGLISH

The overall provision for English is **very good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement is very good and overall standards are well above average.
- Pupils with special educational needs and the few pupils who do not speak English as their first language make very good progress.
- Teaching is very good and leads to very effective learning.
- Teachers plan carefully for the needs of all pupils but do not always make it clear to pupils what they want them to learn.
- Assessment procedures are good and allow the school to track pupils' progress effectively. The information gained from assessment is not being used to share targets with pupils so that they know what they need to do to improve.
- Management is good and a clear action plan is in place to raise standards. However, the co-ordinator does not have an opportunity to see how changes are working in lessons or to share this information with the governor who is linked to literacy.

### Commentary

43. Effective leadership has enabled the school to build effectively on the high standards identified at the last inspection. Although the co-ordinator does not have an opportunity to observe lessons, close monitoring of work in pupils' books and an analysis of test results provides the subject co-ordinator with a clear picture of standards in the subject. This information is used very effectively by the co-ordinator to draw up an action plan to ensure the subject continues to move forward. When a weakness is spotted, prompt action is taken to remedy it. This has led to the purchase of books especially to interest boys and this has

raised their standards in reading. This improvement can be seen in the results of national tests at the end of Year 2. Results were very impressive in reading and writing in 2002 when they were in the top five per cent of schools nationally. In 2003, results were also well above the national average and above the average of similar schools. These results show achievement is better than expected and a high proportion of pupils exceed the level expected for their age. This continues to be the case and standards in Year 2 are well above what is expected for this age in all aspects of English.

44. Teaching is consistently good and often better and leads to very effective learning. The strength is in the teachers' determination that their pupils will achieve their very best. This is very evident in writing when in all lessons pupils are set challenging tasks which involve writing independently. As a result, pupils write confidently. Letters and sounds are taught imaginatively so that pupils use their skills when they come to spelling a new word. An interesting range of experiences is planned and pupils quickly learn the purpose of writing. In Years 1 and 2 pupils recognise how to write a letter and the older pupils are skilful with vocabulary to create a picture for the reader when writing about their experiences as a soldier during the war. Some examples are very impressive for this age and include *I'm terrified, I feel horror every minute*. Expectations of presentation are high and most have a neat, legible print. Reading is taught well and pupils have an enthusiasm for reading. The story sacks made by parents and staff have imaginatively nurtured this. These contain a stimulating range of resources to support the book, which increases pupils' interest as well as improving their reading skills.
45. Speaking and listening skills are promoted in most subjects. Role-play is a natural part of the curriculum with most rooms having an attractive role-play area. As a result, pupils speak confidently when responding to adults and talk readily about their interests and experiences. Teachers are rarely short of a response to their questions. The focus on respect for others leads to attentive listening. Class discussions are orderly with pupils taking turns to contribute their ideas.
46. Teachers follow the guidance in the National Literacy Strategy and build effectively on pupils' previous experiences. However, in lesson plans teachers give too much attention to the tasks rather than what they intend pupils to learn. This makes the conclusions of lessons not as effective as they could be because teachers celebrate achievement rather than checking that pupils have understood the focus of the activities as well. A more positive feature of planning is the joint planning between classes and the inclusion of support staff. This is very effective in fully meeting the needs of the pupils with special educational needs and those who do not speak English as their first language. Detailed assessments are carried out and tasks set to match their needs and this enables them to make very good progress. These pupils benefit from individual targets so that it is clear how to improve their work. Other pupils are less clear about how to improve because teachers do not share their individual targets with them.

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

47. Teachers grasp every opportunity to promote reading and writing in other subjects. A very positive feature of the planning is the way subjects are linked together so that learning is more relevant to pupils' interests. For example, in the mixed Year 1 and 2 class, the literacy lesson built effectively on history so pupils were really involved in their writing task. In science, pupils label their diagrams and understand how to use bullet points when writing instructions. There are some good examples in lessons in the ICT suite of the use of computers to extend and develop literacy skills, but opportunities for this in class are not always taken.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **very good**.

There has been good improvement since the previous inspection and standards in national tests have been well above average since 2001.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards are well above average and achievement is very good.
- Teaching and learning are very good.
- The National Numeracy Strategy is implemented very well to guide teachers' planning.
- Pupils' understanding is extended well through a varied range of meaningful, practical problem solving activities.
- Pupils are not always made aware of what they should do to improve their work.
- The subject co-ordinator has not had time out of class to monitor areas for development.

### **Commentary**

48. Pupils achieve very high standards in mathematics, enjoy being challenged and are keen and eager to learn. They respond to their teachers' high expectations by working well together, sharing resources and helping each other willingly. These very good attitudes have a strong, positive impact on pupils' learning. As a result, pupils in Year 2 are confident mathematicians. They know and use mathematical vocabulary correctly. They make sensible estimates when calculating the length of ribbon they need for different presents but as yet, few pupils assess how accurate their estimates are. Mental mathematics is developed well. Pupils solve number problems competently and confidently explain how they reach their answers. They have good understanding of numbers to 100, and many pupils go beyond. Higher attaining pupils can 'round up' numbers to the nearest 10. A significant number of the pupils in Year 2 already exceed the expected levels for their age. Boys and girls make similar progress.
49. Pupils who have special educational needs and those learning through English as an additional language are very well supported by all staff and make very good progress. They may be withdrawn to work in small targeted groups, or receive extra help in class that enables them to have full access to the curriculum.
50. Standards are well above average due to the overall very good quality of teaching. The National Numeracy Strategy is implemented well, and provides a good framework for pupils to build up and practise number skills progressively. Mental warm-ups at the start of lessons are lively, and stimulate pupils' enthusiasm and interest well. All teachers have good knowledge of mathematics. They plan purposeful activities that are well matched to their pupils' abilities while very effectively challenging them to extend their knowledge and understanding. Pupils of all abilities are encouraged to take some responsibility for their own learning, to think for themselves and to work independently. Pupils are able to do this because the teachers give clear directions and ensure their pupils know what they are aiming to learn. At the end of each lesson, teachers set further activities and challenges to assess their pupils' understanding and progress.
51. Good leadership and management play a significant part in the school's success in this subject. The co-ordinator has a good overview of standards and areas for development. This is based on monitoring of work because limited time has been available for observing what is happening in lessons. Nevertheless, the current action plan is well matched to current need and includes the consolidation of knowledge through practical, problem solving activities. This detailed action plan is not shared with the governor for numeracy and this link is not fully developed. Pupils' progress over time is monitored carefully, and results are analysed to ascertain where extra attention should be directed. For example, when analysis showed that

many pupils found it difficult to add three numbers accurately, or to understand place value, strategies were developed to help them improve these skills. The marking of pupils' work encourages and praises them, but assessment is not used systematically to inform pupils how to improve their work.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

52. Pupils make satisfactory use of their mathematical skills in other subjects, in particular in ICT, geography and physical education. They use the computer competently to draw and measure shapes, and to create repeating patterns. In a very good physical education lesson, Year 2 pupils made shapes when moving in different ways then doubled the amount of movements, linking to their mental practice of doubling numbers.

### **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **very good**.

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

- Standards are well above average and boys and girls achieve very well in all the elements of the subject.
- Teaching and learning are very good with very good opportunities for investigations.
- Teaching assistants make a significant contribution to lessons and this enables all pupils to be fully engaged in the investigations.
- In classroom lessons ICT is not always used enough to support pupils learning.
- Assessment systems are used successfully to monitor pupils' progress but pupils are unclear about how to improve.

#### **Commentary**

53. In response to very good teaching and effective management, improvement since the last inspection has been good.
54. Pupils in Year 2 enjoy science and are eager to take part because lessons are interesting and exciting. Lessons and resources are carefully prepared so that activities are carried out in an organised way and pupils confidently carry out investigations. Year 2 pupils investigate making a circuit with two bulbs, and successfully compare their results with a circuit with one bulb. Pupils draw accurate conclusions from their observations and recognise that the lights are less bright when using two bulbs from the battery instead of one. Teachers have good subject knowledge and insist on the correct terminology and the individual recording of findings. As a result, pupils write up their results in their own words, such as *Santa should have a one bulb circuit in his grotto because it would be brighter*. Pupils use their literacy and numeracy skills very well in science. A review of past work shows that pupils experience very thorough coverage of the curriculum at a very high level, and that they have had very good opportunities to develop their investigative skills. Teaching and learning are very good with a significant strength being the high aspirations teachers have for their pupils. As a result, tasks are challenging and pupils of all abilities rise to meet the challenges and achieve very well in lessons. There is relatively little use made of ICT in lessons and this is an area for development.
55. Relationships are very good, with pupils working exceptionally well together in groups or pairs. This is very helpful for the pupils with special educational needs and those who do not speak English as their first language. They are fully included in lessons and achieve very well.

56. Leadership and management of the subject are good. The staff teams work well together in planning for teaching the subject. Staff training in media links has been a recent initiative. As a result of this the pupils produced a short science based animation and received an award from the local authority. Assessment systems are effective and carried out at the end of each study unit which makes it clear to the pupils how well they are doing compared with the level expected for their age.

## INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision for ICT is **very good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Improvement since the last inspection has been very good and the improvement in the quality and quantity of resources significantly enhances pupils' progress.
- Standards are good because of the very good opportunities presented through the timetabled use of the computer suite.
- The teaching and learning of skills in the computer suite is good, in particular the use of the interactive whiteboard.
- There is not enough use made of ICT in the classrooms to consolidate skills learned and to support learning in other subjects.
- Leadership and management are very good and a clear plan is in place to lead the subject forward.

### Commentary

57. The very effective leadership of the subject has considerably improved staff confidence and resources in the subject. The co-ordinator is very knowledgeable about the subject and shares this information willingly so that staff are more confident teaching in the new computer suite. This has led to very good improvement since the last inspection and standards in Year 2 are now above average. Overall achievement is very good with a significant number of pupils achieving well above the levels expected for their age and exploring a wide range of tools. In a Year 2 lesson on creating their own pattern for Christmas wrapping paper, the pupils achieved very well. They created their own repeating patterns, using the fill tool to colour them and progressed to using the tile tool to alter the size of their repeating pattern. Higher achieving pupils are able to say that *the pictures are getting smaller because they are being repeated more, the smaller you make them the more they will be repeated*.
58. Pupils with special educational needs and those learning through English as an additional language are very well supported by all staff and make very good progress. On occasions, there is one to one support and this is of a very high quality. Those pupils with individual education programmes of work have ICT targets built into their plans.
59. Teaching and learning are very good overall. Pupils are challenged by the activities and achieve very well. They respond with great excitement and enthusiasm to activities using the whiteboard. On one occasion, when a Year 2 teacher demonstrated to the pupils how to use the tile tool there were gasps of pleasure, spontaneous applause and whispers of *its magic*. Staff generally are becoming more confident in the use of ICT and this is demonstrated by, for example, the increasing use in their own presentation of planning, recording and topic letters to parents. The very careful timetabling of the use of the computer suite is enabling skills to be practised more frequently. As a result, pupils become very confident in basic and more advanced skills, for example constructing and placing features on a map.

## Information and communication technology across the curriculum

60. There are weekly planning meetings when the use of the computer suite is carefully planned so that literacy and numeracy skills are effectively taught and there are plans to provide more software to aid the teaching of humanities. However, the very good practices observed during the inspection are not carried over into the classroom. There was very little evidence of the use of computers in class to support teaching and learning.

## Humanities

Work was sampled in history and geography, with only two lessons observed in history and one lesson in geography. It is therefore not possible to make an overall judgement in geography. Provision in history is good.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- In both subjects the school has adapted national guidelines to provide a rich curriculum, which meets the needs of all pupils.
  - There are very good links with other subject areas which often provide opportunities to learn about other cultures, for example African art.
  - Fieldwork skills are developed well during investigations outside the classroom.
  - Termly assessment is in place but information is not monitored by the co-ordinator.
  - The co-ordinator does not have any opportunity to observe lessons across the school.
  - There is limited evidence in books of ICT supporting learning.
61. The work seen in geography was good with some excellent displays of pupils' work when investigating the local environment. This is a similar judgement to that made in the previous report. In the one lesson observed, Year 1 pupils investigated the road outside school and considered how the traffic is controlled. Higher attaining pupils produced very detailed drawings showing good recall including road and playground markings. All pupils achieved well in relation to their previous knowledge and understanding of the road outside. Year 2 pupils explore the local environment further with visits to, for example, Lady Lever Art Gallery and the Albert Dock. There are good links with other areas of the curriculum. For example, the portraits of pupils sent by a Japanese school are used to open up the wider world, which enables teachers to discuss different cultures and countries.
62. Standards and achievement in history are good overall. Teaching and learning are good. In one very good lesson the pupils gained a real flavour of the need for creativity and resourcefulness during the war years. They were highly motivated and therefore achieved very well, listening carefully and volunteering their ideas. As a result, pupils in Year 2 have a good understanding about the horrors of World War Two and the effect it had on Christmas at that time. They are visibly moved to hear that the best Christmas present of all at this time was for a child to be told that their father would be coming home and that they might receive a whole orange. Planning is good especially in linking history to other subjects. For example, in art and design pupils make simple Christmas decorations using newspaper decorated with sponge printing and then compare these with today's glittery baubles and fairy lights.
63. The curriculum co-ordinator provides good leadership and management, but the role in monitoring standards of work and the quality of teaching and learning is not fully developed. Nevertheless, in a short space of time, policy documents have been revised, planning of the curriculum has been reorganised and assessment procedures are in place, and high standards are being maintained.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

Only one lesson was observed during the inspection and because a great deal of teaching is based on discussion there is insufficient evidence to make a secure judgement on provision in religious education. From discussions with pupils and the co-ordinator plus the one lesson observed, it would appear that the subject has a high priority within the school curriculum. There are very good links with the local church and the local vicar visits regularly. The church will host the school's carol concert, which will be a joint enterprise between the infant school and the junior school to which the pupils usually transfer.

### **Strengths and weaknesses**

- Long term planning is good and follows national guidelines and the locally agreed syllabus.
- The curriculum provides very well for the teaching of world religions.
- Assessment procedures are satisfactory but not yet fully developed.
- There are very good links with other subjects, for example literacy.
- Pupils show very good recall of their lessons and can retell their favourite stories.
- Leadership of the subject is good.

### **Commentary**

64. A review of pupils' work shows a good understanding of stories from other religions. For example, pupils appreciate the significance of Diwali and Hanukkah. They understand the importance of Easter and Christmas to Christians. In the one lesson observed the pupils listened attentively to the story of the Christingle. The pupils showed good recall of the information when making and labeling their own Christingles. Teaching was very good in this lesson and resources were well chosen to offer some challenge and because they had carefully observed the teacher, pupils were well prepared with suggestions on how to put their candles together. In the final session the lit candles and the pupils' singing offered a spiritual dimension. This very good lesson increased the pupils' knowledge of the Christingle and they understood the significance of the orange, the sweets, the candle and the ribbon.
65. Work on display shows very good links with other subject areas, for example the story of Diwali is very well written and there are very good examples of class poems.

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

It was not possible to make overall judgements about teaching in design and technology or art and design because no lessons were seen during the inspection. Scrutiny of work indicates that all statutory requirements are met in both subjects. The subjects are well managed although co-ordinators do not have time to observe what is happening in class. Assessment procedures are satisfactory. In design and technology this involves an end-of-unit assessment and in other subjects assessment is based on teachers' informal observations.

### **Design and technology**

Evidence from samples of pupils' work shows that standards are above average. Pupils in Year 2 understand and use the full design process. They build up their skills and knowledge through a well planned series of practical and carefully structured tasks. They design and make moving mechanisms for toys and wishing wells, glove puppets using textiles, fruit salads and cakes. Pupils in Year 2 evaluate their products for possible improvements. Good use is made of the digital camera to record pupils' work.

## Art and design

Standards of pupils' work in folders and on display are above average and show good coverage of all aspects. Pupils express their ideas and blend colours creatively and complete work with great care and detail. They investigate paint, charcoal, pastel, clay and fabrics, drawing, weaving, creating collages and making bold batik wall hangings. Studies of the work of famous artists, including Georgia O'Keefe, Andy Goldsworthy and William Morris contribute well to pupils' cultural development. In addition, they work in the style of African and Native American art. Across the curriculum, art is used well to illustrate poems and vocabulary in literacy, and healthy foods in science. Pupils used their ICT skills well to produce bold self-portraits using the computer.

## Music

Provision for music is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching, standards and achievement are good.
- A wide range of musical activities enables pupils of all ability to enjoy music.
- The school has a good variety of resources for music.
- There are few opportunities for pupils to learn to play a musical instrument.

## Commentary

66. Pupils in Year 2 have a good feel for rhythm and pulse, and sense of pitch. They differentiate between *'loud and soft'* and *'high and low'*. Teachers use musical vocabulary at all times, and pupils quickly learn to use the correct terms. In one very good lesson, early composition was very effectively taught. Year 2 pupils demonstrated their knowledge of an *octave* when they played hand bells. They listened carefully to each other's composition, and responded to the conductor well. They explain that the conductor's role is *'to keep the beat and the rhythm.'*
67. Pupils sing tunefully and improve their response to the rhythm in a song. They enjoy singing and participate enthusiastically in clapping games and action songs. They show good recall of the words of favourite songs and carols. Good opportunities enable pupils to participate in large performances with an audience, for example at Christmas. These performances involve dance and drama as well as music and singing. Good links with the local church provide more opportunities for public performances which increase pupils' self-confidence.
68. Pupils make good use of tuned and untuned percussion instruments in lessons. There are no further opportunities for pupils to learn to play an instrument other than by paying for additional tuition provided by visiting music teachers. There is a temporary subject co-ordinator at present and the management is satisfactory.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

The provision for physical education is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching, standards and achievement are good overall.
- The curriculum provides a wide range of activities.
- In some lessons, there is limited emphasis on the development of skills.

## Commentary

69. All lessons start with a lively, warm-up session. Pupils know this is important and work safely. Year 2 pupils can explain why their heartbeat increases as they exercise. Pupils move freely, controlling and adapting their movements well, and have a good sense of balance. In a very good lesson, Year 2 pupils developed a good variety of ways to move along, under and over a bench. They moved to different areas of the hall independently, collaborated well and observed and commented helpfully on each others' routines. This was due to very good teaching that successfully stimulated their interest and involvement. Pupils with special educational needs and the few learning through English as an additional language are involved in all activities, and make good progress.
70. Pupils show good skills in games activities. Most pupils confidently catch and throw, kick and dribble large or small balls. They use and control the equipment well. Teachers make good use of pupils to demonstrate successful routines, but sometimes do not make clear to other pupils the reasons why a particular routine is good. Occasionally, teachers do not give sufficient attention to extending pupils' skills and this slows their progress.
71. The recently introduced scheme of work has led to an improvement in the quality of teaching and learning by offering a wider range of activities, and increasing teachers' knowledge and confidence. The co-ordinator provides good leadership and management. Regular assessment of progress covers gymnastics, games and dance. Opportunities to perform dances are often included in performances for parents. The football club is well attended by both boys and girls.

## PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

No lessons were seen so it is not possible to make an overall judgement on provision for pupils' personal, social and health education.

However, it is clear from the very caring ethos in the school that good attention is given to developing pupils' personal and social skills. Every class has a separate lesson allocated to this aspect of the curriculum and in some cases Circle Time<sup>5</sup> is used to encourage discussion. In most lessons teachers grasp every opportunity to encourage collaboration and sharing. For example, in literacy lessons teachers often say, *turn to your neighbour and share your thoughts and ideas*. This leads to pupils having respect for each other as well as acquiring the important skill of taking turns in conversations. It is very evident from the very good relationships observed that teachers are successful in promoting an understanding of the need to respect each other and to consider how their actions affect other people. Pupils learn the importance of belonging to a community as they carry out daily tasks to help their teachers. They also raise funds for different charities and understand that they have a role to play in helping those who are less fortunate than they are. Older pupils are encouraged to help the younger ones and discussions with the Year 2 pupils show many have a very mature attitude to this and see it as their responsibility to check the younger pupils are happy in school.

Overall management is satisfactory. Changes have been delayed because of the long-term absence of the co-ordinator and so the school does not have any clear guidelines to help teachers plan lessons. This makes it difficult for them to build on pupils' prior learning. However, a full and interesting range of topics are covered. These include themes in whole school acts of worship which include showing respect for friends and an appreciation of the environment. There are no assessment procedures but teachers include an informative comment about pupils' personal development in the annual report to parents.

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<sup>5</sup> Circle Time- during Circle Time pupils discuss a wide range of personal and general issues. It is agreed by all pupils that no interruptions should occur and only one person will speak at a time. Respect for other pupils' views will occur at all times and therefore pupils feel confident that they can talk with ease and free from any form of interference of interruption from other children.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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