

# INSPECTION REPORT

## UPPERTHONG JUNIOR AND INFANT SCHOOL

Holmfirth

LEA area: Kirklees

Unique reference number: 107680

Headteacher: Mr A Beaumont

Lead inspector: Mr M Carter

Dates of inspection: 19<sup>th</sup> - 21<sup>st</sup> January 2004

Inspection number: 258261

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 – 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	210
School address:	Upperthong Junior and Infant School Burnlee Road Holmfirth West Yorkshire
Postcode:	HD9 2LE
Telephone number:	(01484) 222 488
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr P Clarke
Date of previous inspection:	18 <sup>th</sup> May 1998

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The school is a little below average size with 210 pupils. Its pupils come from a wide range of backgrounds, for which socio-economic indicators are above average overall. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is below average (4.4 per cent) but the range of socio-economic backgrounds is wide. There is a very small number (3 per cent) of pupils from minority ethnic background, but currently there are none at an early stage of acquiring spoken English. Prior to starting school, most pupils have some pre-school experience. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs (15.7 per cent) is close to average and they represent a range of disadvantages. Three per cent of pupils have statements of special educational needs and this is above average. The attainment of pupils on entry to the school is about average and varies year-to-year from a little below average to a little above, depending on the proportions of pupils at different stages of development.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
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19558	Mr M Hammond	Lay inspector	
30590	Mr P Tuttle	Team inspector	Science Information and communication technology Physical education Special educational needs
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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

The school's **effectiveness is satisfactory** and there are a good number of strategies to make improvements. The **leadership of the headteacher is good** and the school's **management is satisfactory** overall but with weaknesses, which in part led to a fall in Year 6 national test results in 2003. **Teaching is satisfactory** overall with many lessons seen that were **good** or better. The leadership and the proportion of very good teaching provide significant strengths from which to make improvements and overcome inconsistencies in implementing policies. The current pupils have **satisfactory standards** overall and in some cases they are good; however, the work for more capable pupils is not well enough matched to their needs. Provision for pupils with **special educational needs is good**, being significantly supported by teaching assistants. The **work of the governors is satisfactory** and quickly gaining in effectiveness. The school's finances are capably run, the cost for each pupil is below the national average and the school represents **satisfactory value for money**.

#### The main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Standards in the 2003 national tests were atypically weak.
- Whilst standards are strong in speaking and listening, reading, art and design, music and religious education, in science they are unsatisfactory by the end of Year 6.
- The strong leadership of the headteacher is helping the school to improve.
- Pupils in the Foundation Stage and those with special educational needs achieve well but for a number of more capable pupils achievement is unsatisfactory.
- Inconsistencies in teaching, aspects of management and the implementation of whole-school policies have limited the speed of improvement.
- The school's self-evaluation has correctly identified some key strengths and weaknesses but systems for checking pupils' attainment are not rigorous enough.

Since its last inspection in May 1998, results of the national tests have fallen, largely because those for Year 6 fell significantly in 2003. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) have improved and in many other subjects that are not tested nationally they have been maintained. The school's good provision for performance skills, for example, in music and drama, has been maintained well. Reasons for the poor Year 6 test results are: teaching inconsistencies; a high turnover of pupils in the year group; and some gaps in the pupils' knowledge due to the late implementation of the National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy. The school has yet to complete all the work suggested by the key issues from the last inspection, although the majority has been effective. For example, most lessons are taught at a good pace, ICT is much improved and records of progress have improved well. However, curriculum guidance is still incomplete, work for pupils of high capability does not consistently meet their needs and some teachers still need more guidance about judging National Curriculum Levels. Overall, taking account of the 2003 national test results, the school's improvement is unsatisfactory but the inspectors are confident that the school is now improving.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

*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 is satisfactory overall.** Most pupils achieve well in the Foundation Stage, satisfactorily by Year 2 but unsatisfactorily by Year 6 because too few more capable pupils reach high standards. The 2003 results of the Year 6 national tests were unusually low, especially in mathematics and science, but the results for Year 2 pupils were above average in reading, well above in mathematics but below average in writing. However, current standards are good in speaking and listening and in reading at both ages. In writing, standards are average at Year 6, and above average at Year 2. Standards of the current pupils in mathematics are average at both ages. Nevertheless, the proportions of high attainment are lower than they could be because expectations of these pupils are often too low. This is also so in science, where standards are below average by Year 6 with little high achievement. The goals children are expected to reach by the end of reception are met by the large majority of the children, who generally achieve well at this age. Standards in ICT have improved and are now satisfactory while in music and religious education they are good throughout the school and in art and design they are very good. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because of the good support they receive. Standards in the pupils' **personal development are good.** They gain self-knowledge and spiritual awareness well and develop a good sense of morality. They learn well to live in the school community and to understand about cultural differences, respecting others' beliefs and values very well. **Behaviour is good** and attendance figures are better than average. Overall, the pupils have **good attitudes** to school and to learning.

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The **quality of education provided is satisfactory.** **Teaching is satisfactory** with strengths shown in the lessons seen, which were of good quality overall in each part of the school. Although there are inconsistencies in aspects of teaching, **pupils learn well in the Foundation Stage and at least satisfactorily in the rest of the school,** partly because they are keen to do so. There were no unsatisfactory lessons seen in the inspection and this is an improvement since the last inspection. Whilst in some subjects, such as art and design and music, the teaching is particularly effective, the use of assessments, challenge for more capable pupils, marking and homework are inconsistent. Curriculum guidance has improved and **the curriculum is now satisfactory** and good for pupils with special educational needs and in the Foundation Stage. It still lacks detail about time for different subjects and in promoting progression in skills and understanding but it is enriched well. The **care, guidance and support offered to pupils are good** and a strength of the school. Parents and pupils value these features. The school's **links with parents are also good** and the school provides satisfactory information about the pupils' progress.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are **satisfactory overall.** The headteacher's leadership is good with a clear vision for improvement and appropriate strategies being employed. However, these are not yet fully effective because there are weaknesses in the management of how teachers are guided to implement them and how they are checked and evaluated, both by senior teachers and subject co-ordinators. Governors play a sound role in supporting and overseeing the school's work and are improving their own effectiveness. Statutory requirements are carried out fully.

## PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents' views are overwhelmingly positive about the school and questionnaires indicate no significant criticisms. However, a minority of parents attending a meeting with inspectors indicated a number of issues that they felt needed improvement such as inconsistencies in teaching and the setting of homework. Inspectors found some justification for these comments. Pupils' views are also very positive and suggest a happy and purposeful school.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

**The most important things the school should do to raise standards, especially in science by Year 6, are to:**

- improve the consistency of teaching in more accurate assessment and well-matched challenge for more capable pupils;
- improve management through more detailed guidance about: the curriculum and levels; more rigorous checks on teaching, the curriculum and assessments; and clearer chains of responsibility; and
- gain greater consistency in the implementation of agreed practices such as marking, subject leadership and setting homework.



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

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

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

The pupils' achievement is **satisfactory** overall; the good teaching helps them achieve well in the Foundation Stage, but more capable pupils do not achieve as much as they could by the end of Year 6. Standards are satisfactory overall with some variation between subjects.

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

- Standards are good in speaking and listening, reading, music and religious education and very good in art and design.
- Standards in science by Year 6 are below what they should be.
- Standards have improved significantly in information and communication technology (ICT).
- By Year 6, the pupils do not achieve enough in writing, mathematics and science.
- The pupils with special educational needs make good progress and achieve well.
- Pupils of high capability underachieve in a significant minority of lessons.

#### **Commentary**

1. On entry to the school, the children's attainment is varied but at least in line with that expected for their age. In some years and some aspects, it is above the average for the local education authority area. The children generally make good progress in reception and most meet the nationally agreed Early Learning Goals by the time they join Year 1. By the end of Year 2, standards are good in speaking and listening, reading and writing. At this stage, standards in mathematics and science are average. Of the current Year 2 pupils, fewer than might be expected have high standards in mathematics, writing or science, although nearly all the pupils achieve the expected standards. Achievement in the Foundation Stage is good and it is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2.
2. Through Years 3 to 6, the pupils make satisfactory progress in some subjects but in mathematics, science and writing, achievement is unsatisfactory because too few pupils achieve highly. By the end of Year 6, standards in speaking and listening, which is strongly promoted, are good and in reading there is a good proportion of pupils reading above their age. Writing standards are average and, in this, there is some underachievement. In mathematics, standards are average with most pupils close to the expected levels but a smaller than usual proportion above this. In science, standards are below average because there are very few pupils achieving a high level.
3. The 2003 national test results for Year 2 showed that standards were above average in reading, below average in writing and well above average in mathematics. These suggested underachievement in writing, where the trend had fallen in 2002. Although well above average the results in mathematics had also fallen since 2002. Nevertheless, in reading and mathematics, there were few pupils not achieving the expected standards. The standards of the current Year 2 pupils are generally better than last year in writing and science, although in mathematics fewer pupils have high standards.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	16.9 (16.6)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	14.2 (13.8)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	17.7 (18.4)	16.3 (16.5)

*There were 29 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

4. The national test results for Year 6 in 2003 were unusually low and in each of the core subjects of English, mathematics and science fewer than the national average proportion achieved the expected level and fewer achieved the above average level. All these results were significantly lower than those for 2002 and below those of similar schools. For example, in mathematics, the results were in the lowest five per cent of schools having the same proportion of pupils with free school meals. Prior to this, results were above average and had been rising in science and mathematics. Consequently, the overall trend in results is below the national trend. Reasons for these poor Year 6 test results are:
- teaching inconsistencies;
  - a high turnover of pupils in the year group; and
  - some gaps in the pupils' knowledge due to the late implementation of the National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy.
5. However, inspection evidence indicates that the 2003 results were unusually low and the picture is stronger for the current Year 6 pupils. The trend over five years shows that girls' performance is similar to the boys' in English but below in mathematics and science. No significant differences were observed during the inspection.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	27.2 (27.9)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	24.9 (28.7)	26.8 (26.7)
science	27.4 (29.4)	28.6 (28.3)

*There were 29 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

6. Overall, the achievement of pupils with low capability or special educational needs is good. Pupils who have special educational needs generally make good progress and achieve well because of the good provision made for them. They are given good quality teaching and support towards meeting the targets set for them in their individual education plans, particularly by the very good teaching assistance, which is well organised across the school. The teaching of pupils of high capability is not organised on a whole-school basis and class teachers make their own provision, which is sometimes not effective enough. Nevertheless, these pupils' own interest in learning and their articulate questions help them make progress, albeit sometimes limited. The few pupils who are not from white British backgrounds make progress that is no different from others because they are offered equal opportunities in every way.
7. Provision for ICT has improved since the last inspection and throughout the school standards are sound and pupils achieve satisfactorily. This was not the case during the last inspection. The pupils are able to use their ICT capability in other subjects as they do from time to time with literacy and numeracy skills. The good opportunities offered for pupils to develop skills in the performing arts have been maintained and there is a range of activities which promote good standards in these skills. Throughout the school, standards in music and religious education are good and in art and design they are very good. For some subjects, no

judgements about standards and teaching could be made due to there being insufficient evidence collected in the time available.

Subject	Standards by end of Year 2	Standards by end of Year 6
English	Above average	Average
Mathematics	Average	Average
Science	Average	Below average
*ICT	Average	Average
*Art and design	Well above average	Well above average
*Design and technology	No overall judgement	No overall judgement
*Geography	Average	Average
*History	No overall judgement	No overall judgement
*Music	Above average	Above average
*Physical education	No overall judgement	No overall judgement
Religious education	Above average	Above average

\* These are the non-core subjects.

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

Attendance is **very good**, punctuality is **good** and the pupils are eager to come to school. The pupils behave well and have good attitudes to school and their learning. Their personal development is good, including the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, and they have very good respect for others' feelings, values and beliefs.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Attendance is very good and punctuality is good.
- The pupils show positive attitudes and are keen to learn.
- The school has a strong ethos, which contributes to the pupils' good attitudes and the school's purposeful atmosphere and supportive environment.
- Parents and children report that they are happy at school, which is fair and understanding.
- The school council helps to promote a sense of responsibility and of living in a community, supporting the pupils' attitudes to others.

### Commentary

The good ethos of the school encourages very good attendance. This in turn supports the pupils' learning and sense of commitment. There is very little lateness. Systems to promote attendance and punctuality are effective.

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

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	3.7	School data	0.1
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.*

8. The pupils' attitudes to school and their learning are good throughout the school and very good in the Foundation Stage. In lessons, they show a good interest and concentrate well on their tasks. One parent explained how, from the start, the reception class engenders a love for learning. A new scheme of work supports the pupils' learning in personal, social, health and citizenship development, although there is currently inconsistency in the frequency of its implementation. Pupils relate well to each other, showing positive attitudes and responsible behaviour. This was seen in many of the investigative science lessons when the pupils interacted very well in their group tasks.

9. Behaviour is good. Whilst the large majority of pupils behave well and discipline is kept well by all the staff, there is a small number of pupils whose reactions are more impulsive and can be distracting. Staff deal with these pupils effectively, avoiding confrontation and supporting their needs without compromising those of others. The pupils overwhelmingly feel that staff are fair and that older pupils are supportive and friendly.
10. The pupils are polite and confident in talking with adults. They quickly learn right from wrong and that they need to take responsibility for their own actions. The many opportunities for collaboration help them to learn social skills well, to care for each other and look to other people's needs. The school's ethos and range of visits, visitors and activities support their social development well. Assemblies and lessons often add significantly to the pupils' understanding and care for others. A "buddy" system enables older pupils to help and support others. The school council has elected representatives from each class and these pupils have opportunities to explain council business and gain class views to take forward. They treat this with a good sense of responsibility.
11. The school's range of visits and visitors also supports the pupils' cultural development. For example, during the inspection, a visiting string quartet helped pupils gain awareness of different types of music and provided strong opportunities for the pupils to respond emotionally. The school's enrichment activities also provide a good number of spiritually rewarding experiences, together with widening the pupils' cultural horizons. The strong tradition of performance often draws upon the pupils' learning in lessons such as literacy, music, drama and dance, while also extending the pupils' community awareness. For example, a parent told of events in which the pupils enjoy performing for the community. Pupils also extend their cultural awareness through lessons such as religious education covering several different cultures and faiths. Their awareness of cultural differences is good.

## Exclusions

### *Ethnic background of pupils*

### *Exclusions in the last school year*

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No. of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	156	2	0
White – any other White background	2	0	0
Mixed - white and Black Caribbean	1	0	0
Mixed - White and Asian	2	0	0
Asian and Asian British - Indian	2	0	0
Information unavailable	12	0	0

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

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided is **satisfactory**. Teaching is satisfactory overall and the curriculum is enriched well with a good climate for learning. The care, guidance and support provided for pupils is a strength and the links with parents and the community are generally good.

### Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are **satisfactory** overall and **good** in the Foundation Stage. Assessments are very good in the Foundation Stage but in the rest of the school they are inconsistently used to plan work that is matched well to the pupils' past knowledge, skills and understanding.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- The teaching seen in lessons was good overall but there are some weak aspects of teachers' provision.
- Planning for, and the teaching of, pupils with special educational needs is good.
- There are inconsistencies in teaching between subjects and teachers' implementation of agreed policies.
- The expectations and provision made for pupils with higher capability are too low.

## Commentary

12. The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection and there were no unsatisfactory lessons taught during the inspection. Teaching was good overall in the lessons seen throughout the school with one lesson in five being very well taught. The proportion of very well taught lessons was highest for pupils in the Foundation Stage. Several weaknesses identified at the last inspection, such as lack of pace in lessons and clarity of objectives for lessons, have been improved significantly. For example, in a very well taught science lesson for Year 4 pupils, challenging questions helped all the pupils to extend their learning and understand how to separate solids from liquids. Good support enabled pupils of different abilities to achieve well and record their learning using a well chosen list of words. Reception pupils enjoyed a very well taught lesson, extending their physical development in the hall. Expectations were high and the children learnt to follow instructions carefully. A common feature of the good lessons is how well adult support is used and is effective. For example, in a very good mathematics lesson for Year 6 pupils identified as needing help, the teacher and the assistant gave them a very good degree of individual support, resulting in their greater awareness of what they still needed to learn and then confidently asking questions. In most lessons, teachers manage the pupils well and so know what is expected of their behaviour. Many lessons also engage the pupils' interest well through the use of a range of resources and a variety of planned activities.

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

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0 (0%)	7 (20%)	20 (57%)	8 (23%)	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.*

13. This profile of teaching is very similar to the latest national one. However, the impact of teaching is no better than satisfactory, due to significant inconsistencies in aspects of teachers' work, such as:
- the accuracy and use of assessments;
  - marking;
  - the overall planning for and expectations of pupils with high capability; and
  - the setting of homework.
14. School policies in these aspects are not consistently carried out and these factors contributed to the reduction in the school's performance in the Year 6 national test results in 2003. Parents generally have positive views of the teaching in the school and the pupils echo this. However, several parents identified a number of inconsistencies, feeling that the differences between classes were significant.
15. The expectations and provision made for pupils with higher capability are too low in about a quarter of lessons. Teachers' knowledge of the National Curriculum Levels and the use of day-to-day checks on the pupils' learning are insufficiently effective. This leads to some under-expectation of these more capable pupils and tasks that are not well enough matched to their different capabilities. For example, in a mathematics lesson for Year 5 pupils, a significant

minority found difficulty in learning long-division methods because their ideas about division were limited and this gap had not been identified previously. The marking of pupils' work is inconsistent. Seldom is it used to identify gaps in pupils' learning or to suggest improvements. However, some teachers make supportive remarks that encourage further efforts and spoken remarks are usually very supportive. Whilst most parents felt homework was about right, a few felt that it was very inconsistent. During the inspection, there was little evidence of consistency and the guidance for teachers is not specific enough about the regularity and the amount to be set. Generally, the quality of teaching varies between teachers, often because of their different degrees of knowledge of the National Curriculum and Levels of attainment but also because of the differences in teachers' implementation of school policies. For example, some teachers clearly carry out the guidance of the National Numeracy Strategy fully while others are less clear.

16. Pupils who have special educational needs achieve well because teachers plan work that matches their needs and teaching assistants are used effectively to provide extra help for these pupils. Early identification of pupils with special educational needs enables teachers to plan effectively to meet their needs and to target additional support for them. Teaching and learning provision for pupils with special educational needs is backed by individual education plans that clearly state what pupils need to learn. Additional help runs alongside literacy and numeracy lessons. The teaching assistants give valuable support in teaching pupils necessary skills within these subjects either in the classroom or in adjacent working areas. Parents appreciate the support their children receive.

**Teaching and learning in subjects where judgements were possible:**

	English	Mathem-atics	Science	ICT	Art and design	Geography	Music	Religious education
Years 1 & 2	3	4	4	3	3	3	3	3
Years 3 to 6	4	4	4	3	3	4	3	3

4 is equivalent to "satisfactory". 3 is equivalent to "good".

17. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is good and effectively helps the large majority of pupils to learn well and achieve the Early Learning Goals expected before they start learning from the National Curriculum. This is partly because of the effective assessment procedures, which are not consistent through the rest of the school, despite their identification as an issue in the last inspection. ICT provision has improved, since the last inspection and it is now usually taught well. Much of the teaching seen was by teachers' assistants, who also promote the use of computers to support learning in other subjects. Teaching is now good for speaking and listening because teachers often ask questions that promote reflection and extended answers. The teaching of reading is good because lessons directly teach pupils the strategies to gain more from books.

**The curriculum**

Curriculum provision is **satisfactory**. All pupils, including those who have special educational needs, have equal access to the curriculum, which is enriched well. The curriculum and resources in the Foundation Stage are good. Overall, the accommodation and resources are satisfactory.

**Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The curriculum in the Foundation Stage and for pupils with special educational needs is good but it is limited for more capable pupils.
- There are good opportunities for curriculum enrichment in sports and the creative arts and the school's strength in performance work has been maintained well.
- Pupils are given good opportunities for investigative work in science, mental calculation of numbers and to gain meaning from reading.

- Pupils' learning is enhanced by the good level of effective support provided by the teaching assistants.
- The curriculum that pupils experience is not checked effectively enough, especially about time and issues concerning progression in the non-core subjects.

## Commentary

18. The curriculum provided for the children in the Foundation Stage is good. It provides valuable opportunities for them to learn, to develop and to practise skills within each of the six areas of learning. A good range of appropriate activities are provided and supported with engaging resources. There are also strengths in the provision of opportunities for pupils to develop their understanding of scientific investigations, their skills in calculating numbers and the guided reading lessons, which help the pupils gain the full meaning of the books they read.
19. There is a good range of opportunities for enrichment within the curriculum. The school emphasises the importance of developing a healthy lifestyle through its provision of sporting activities. Extra-curricular activities are attended well by the older pupils in the school. The good provision for creative and performing arts within the curriculum is also a prominent feature, sometimes as extra-curricular events.
20. Pupils who have special educational needs are provided with well chosen learning through their individual education plans that target the development of their skills in literacy and numeracy. Teaching assistants use a variety of interesting strategies and effective schemes to promote these pupils' learning by improving their basic skills. The individual education plans are reviewed at least once a term and parents are involved in this process. New plans are then made that are relevant to the next stages of learning for these pupils. All pupils who have special educational needs have access to a full curriculum and the extra-curricular activities that the school provides. Provision for personal, social and health education is satisfactory, although there is some inconsistency in its implementation. Nevertheless, all statutory requirements for the curriculum are met and the support offered by assistants is particularly effective.
21. The curriculum does not extend the more capable pupils and as such they do not reach the higher levels of attainment expected of them. Whilst these pupils are identified, any extra support and challenge is left to teachers, who are inconsistent in this. Reviews of curriculum content and planning have not been rigorous enough to identify how these pupils can achieve their full potential on a whole-school and subject-by-subject basis. The school has initiated a full review of long-term planning with more guidance to be provided about the balance of time to be spent on subjects. Current guidance insufficiently promotes the progression of skills and understanding in the non-core subjects. The completion of this review is important to the school's provision and the balance of curriculum time used by subjects.
22. The accommodation provides adequate space, with a number of rooms that are well used in addition to the main classrooms. The school is well maintained by cleaning staff but some areas are in need of refurbishment, for example, to prevent roof leaks. The outdoor areas have recently been improved and further plans are in development; however, there are many steps, making wheelchair access difficult. There is a good number of support staff and sufficient number of appropriately trained teachers for the number of pupils. The school's resources for learning are generally satisfactory and in some aspects good.

## Care, guidance and support

**The care, welfare, health and safety of pupils is good.** The school provides **good support and guidance** and, for example, through the school council, involves pupils in decisions well.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- The whole-school ethos promotes a supportive, positive atmosphere of care and respect, especially for pupils with special educational needs.
- Health and safety policy and procedures are good.
- Good pastoral care providing well-informed guidance is offered by all the staff and consequently each pupil has a good and trusting relationship with one or more adults in the school.
- The school council is effective in promoting an ethos of mature responsibility.
- The induction arrangements for starting school are very good.

## Commentary

23. The school is a very caring community that reflects well its stated aims. The friendliness and courtesy of the staff and pupils is a strong characteristic. The pupils are well cared for and the procedures for tracking and supporting each pupil's achievements and personal development are generally effective but limited by the inconsistent use of check-ups made on what the pupils know and can do in the non-core subjects. Pupils' achievements are celebrated in assemblies and at other times and the pupils say they feel happy and well cared for. There are effective procedures for child protection in line with locally agreed arrangements and staff are aware of these through regular staff meetings. Induction arrangements are very good and include a half-day pre-school visit to the reception class. Parents feel this is strong and the arrangements help their children to settle in quickly and start learning.
24. The children's questionnaire clearly indicates that every pupil knows at least one adult who they can go to if they are worried or hurt. The vast majority of pupils like being at the school and say that teachers listen to their ideas. Pupils clearly appreciate the school council and the opportunities it gives to share their ideas. The council has made recommendations for the spending of funds given by the parents association and its business is discussed in each class, helping all to feel involved. Older pupils value the opportunities for caring for younger pupils through the buddy scheme, acting as play leaders and other supportive roles for which they are trained.
25. Pupils who have special educational needs receive planned support with their work to enable them to achieve well in line with their capabilities. Early identification, ongoing assessment and careful tracking of their progress ensure that these pupils receive extra help when it is needed.
26. The school follows the local education authority's health and safety policy and the caretaker conducts weekly checks of the premises. Once a term, this is carried out with a governor, who reports findings back to the governing body, who are very concerned to minimise any risks to pupils or staff. Risk assessments are made for visits.

## Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Links with parents are **good**. There are effective links with the local playgroup and high school. Strong links exist with the local community through the local church and village hall.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are good partnerships with parents, which include an active school support group.
- A valued weekly newsletter gives parents relevant information about the school but annual reports lack details about the children's progress.
- Parents and community volunteers support pupils and teachers in the school.
- Links with the community through performances, the local church and village hall are good.
- There are some inconsistencies, for example, in the setting of homework.



## Commentary

27. Parents' views of the school are very positive and help to form effective partnerships. The views of the large majority of parents and carers are that the school is good and the staff care deeply for the children. Usually, parents are provided well with information about the school and their children's progress. There are three parents' meetings each year and an annual report. Parents are encouraged to come and discuss the annual report and any issues that they may have. These reports are succinct and barely cover legal requirements or details of progress. However, parents appreciate the accessibility and approachability of the headteacher and staff. The school prospectus is a helpful document, despite omitting the school's telephone number, and the governors' annual report to parents gives much information about each governor. Parents are encouraged to play an active part in the school and many act as volunteers in classrooms or on trips. The school seeks parents' views through a questionnaire and informally. Whilst the large majority of parents are very supportive, a small minority have criticisms about lack of action and inconsistencies, for example, in the setting of homework. Some feel that there is a lack of meetings for parents about aspects of the curriculum. Nevertheless, the overall picture is of good links with parents, which support the pupils' learning effectively.
28. There are close links with the local playgroup and with the secondary school to which many pupils transfer at the age of 11. There are effective links with the community, which includes the local church; for example, the pupils help to run a coffee morning for people from the local community. There are also effective links with local Beacon schools and a local special school. The school supports the training of teachers in partnership with colleges.
29. The school has developed good partnerships with the parents of pupils who have special educational needs. Parents are involved in reviews of individual plans provided for their children and are kept informed of progress towards meeting set targets at least once a term. The school, under the guidance of the special educational needs co-ordinator, works closely with outside agencies to give additional support to any pupils with additional specific needs.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are **satisfactory** overall. The headteacher provides good leadership and that for other key staff is satisfactory. Management is satisfactory. The governance of the school is satisfactory.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher has a clear vision for the development of the school.
- A good self-evaluation has identified areas for improvement.
- The leadership of the work for pupils who have special educational needs is good.
- Procedures for financial management and ensuring best value for money are good.
- Procedures for regularly checking up on the curriculum and standards and teaching in subjects are not rigorous enough.
- Most subject co-ordinators do not have planned opportunities to check the quality of provision in their subjects.
- The governors are developing a better awareness of the school's strengths and weaknesses.

## Commentary

30. The headteacher, who has been in post for two years, has established a clear vision for the future development of the school. He is a good leader and a sound manager. He has initiated and led important changes at the school following an in-depth self-evaluation. Working closely with staff, parents and governors, he has drawn up new school aims in keeping with the vision of the school. He has been instrumental in leading the implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy as well as extending the implementation of the National Literacy Strategy.

The impact of these initiatives has not yet raised standards in national test results. The procedures for checking and evaluating the impact of these strategies and other work in the school are not yet rigorous enough. The headteacher works closely with the deputy headteacher, but there has not been effective enough promotion of agreed policies, such as accurate target setting.

31. The headteacher recently took responsibility for the co-ordination of provision for pupils with special educational needs. He gives a good lead for the teaching staff and the teaching assistants. All work is effectively managed in the organisation of support for these pupils, measured against the targets set in their individual education plans. Pupils who have special educational needs make good progress as a result of the good provision made for them and the high quality of teaching and support they receive. The school has also devised systems to support pupils of high capability but these are largely left to class teachers to implement and are inconsistent.
32. The role of the subject co-ordinator is defined in a standard job description. Many provide a good lead to their colleagues. However, their role in checking and evaluating standards and the quality of teaching and learning in their subjects is not developed sufficiently well. Guidance on strategies to use in the check-up and evaluation process is not detailed enough in job descriptions.
33. There are good procedures for the financial management of the school. Good use is made of ICT in this work and the school secretary is effective in managing this process. The school ensures that it applies the principles of best value appropriately, for example, by comparing its costs with other like schools and in some cases it does this very well. Principles of competitive tendering and competitive quotations are managed well and enable the school to obtain best value in its purchase of services and resources.
34. Governors fulfil their statutory duties well. They are developing a better understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and now take an active part in partnership with the school in formulating the school improvement plan based upon their involvement in setting aims. Governance at the school is currently satisfactory with systems and awareness growing due to increased training and awareness of the need to know the school's main strengths and weaknesses.

## Financial information

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

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	448,882	Balance from previous year	32,412
Total expenditure	424,973	Balance carried forward to the next	23,909
Expenditure per pupil	2,083		

35. The school spends less than the national average per pupil. Its effectiveness is satisfactory, although results for 2003 Year 6 pupils were well below what could be expected and there is some underachievement by pupils of high capability. Nevertheless, standards are now average and the value for money is satisfactory.

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

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

Children receive a good start to their education because of good provision. In some areas of learning, the provision is very good. Teaching is good overall but with several areas of learning where teaching is very good. The Foundation Stage leader makes very good use of detailed checking and recording of achievements to plan activities and support children's individual needs. By the time they reach Year 1, the majority achieve the expected Early Learning Goals and a significant minority exceed them. Children with special educational needs are very well supported in all areas of learning. Support staff make a very good contribution to the standards achieved by the children.

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

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

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

- The quality of teaching and learning is very good.
- Standards of behaviour and attitudes are very good.

#### **Commentary**

36. Staff have high expectations of good behaviour and create many opportunities for children to develop their independence. As a result, they are able to listen very well and to carry out increasingly complex tasks, such as relaying messages accurately. Teaching is very good with firm, fair and consistent discipline. Consequently, the children quickly learn routines and understand how to behave within different groups. The emphasis on personal development is reflected in the children's ability to interact effectively with different groups of pupils and adults and to take responsibility for organising themselves. Older pupils help to develop the children's confidence by playing with them in a 'buddy system'. Consequently, they develop good relationships and achieve well. They enter Year 1 well prepared for the challenges ahead.

### **COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY**

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

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

- The quality of teaching and learning is very good.
- Very good opportunities are provided to extend speaking and listening skills.
- Good opportunities are provided to use language skills in other areas of learning.

#### **Commentary**

37. Lessons are planned well and include opportunities for children to develop their speaking and listening skills alongside early reading and writing skills. For example, in the role-play 'baby clinic' children were convincing in their use of language within the roles. Another group evaluated 'baby welcome' cards and used these to design, make and write their own. All staff use questioning well and tailor this to extend individual pupils' language. Staff give good examples of speech and children copy structures correctly. Children work in a variety of groups and use language well in different settings. For example, they talk socially during snack time and use negotiation when building together.

38. Children have a growing understanding of a range of texts. Most are beginning to successfully read and enjoy a variety of books because they are encouraged to do so. Achievement is usually good, regularly checked and books are changed frequently. The school encourages parents to become fully involved in their children's learning, resulting in improvement. The National Literacy Strategy is incorporated within the Foundation Stage curriculum, forming a practical and flexible curriculum, which also stresses the importance of basic skills, such as spelling. The children therefore learn to read and write within meaningful activities. Most reach the Early Learning Goals and several enter Year 1 working above this.

## **MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The quality of teaching and learning is good.
- There is good support for all groups.
- There are good opportunities for mathematical development within other areas of learning.

### **Commentary**

39. Staff plan many mathematical opportunities within other areas of learning and link these to basic skills planned from the National Numeracy Strategy. As a result, children learn number, shapes and measurement through a variety of activities. Staff make good use of resources. For example, children are motivated by a puppet who counts with them. Expectations are high and children achieve well. They learn mathematical language naturally as staff act as good role models. Mathematical development is supported well by educational support assistants who help groups and individuals to reach their potential. Children's work is carefully planned to help them achieve success. They learn well from daily routines, such as changing the calendar, clapping and counting for birthdays. Lessons are timed well and as a result children listen and try their best. They generally achieve above average standards.

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

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The quality of teaching and learning is good, with very good checks on the children's learning.
- A wide range of learning opportunities is offered.

### **Commentary**

40. Teaching provides many opportunities to learn about their locality through investigating their environment and visits such as those to the local church. They learn about the wider world through sensory experiences such as tasting foods and listening to music from other cultures. Children have used art and dance to respond to these experiences. These result in a deepening of understanding and the development of appropriate vocabulary to help explain or question their findings. Very good assessment leads to learning, which is appropriately linked to the children's prior knowledge and other areas of learning. Children can make simple evaluations and are beginning to understand how they could improve their work. Teaching and achievement are good. From an average start, almost all pupils reach the Early Learning Goals. A significant minority exceeds this.

## PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching and learning is good and sometimes very good.
- The provision for outdoor play has improved but remains insufficient.

### Commentary

41. Provision for this area of learning is satisfactory overall because teaching and learning are generally good and sometimes very good. However, the provision for outside play is not yet sufficiently developed to provide fully for all the areas of learning. There has been a significant improvement in the outside environment since the previous inspection. Children now have a pleasant, safe and well-maintained area. Further development is planned for the near future, which will provide greater opportunities. There is no covered area and this limits opportunities in poorer weather.
42. Staff plan opportunities to develop children's fine motor skills successfully. For example, they learn to manipulate scissors, and to use the computer with some skill. In the hall, children develop their awareness of space and control their bodies well. In one lesson in the hall, very good use of time and very high expectations ensured very good response and the full involvement of every child. Overall, standards of attainment are above national expectations and the children achieve well.

## CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **very good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching and learning is very good.
- Standards reached are above national expectations and are sometimes well above.

### Commentary

43. This is a strength of the Foundation Stage because children are given the opportunities to be creative and imaginative whilst learning specific skills. As the children are taught to become independent, they are enabled to make decisions and choices about their preferences and to take risks. For example, a group of children mixed powder paints very carefully and selected shades for their pictures. Another child used a program on the computer to create a whirl of colours, excitedly telling her teacher that it represented the 'wind in America'.
44. Children rapidly learn songs and to use musical instruments because expectations are high and they are challenged to do well. These lessons are timed very well and children improve because they are given specific targets to reach. Singing is of a very high standard for this age group. Almost all the children start and stop playing instruments immediately on command and keep time very well. Achievement is good.

## SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

### ENGLISH

#### English

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards of attainment have recently improved.
- There is insufficient challenge for more capable pupils.
- Assessment of pupils' work is not used effectively enough.
- Subject leadership is good.
- There is good teaching by support staff.

#### Commentary

45. In the 2003 national tests, the Year 2 pupils' standards in reading were above those of schools nationally and in line with similar schools. However, standards of writing were below those found nationally and well below those of similar schools. Pupils' achievement in writing, at the end of Year 2, was unsatisfactory. Standards for Year 6 were in line with schools nationally but below those of schools having pupils from similar economic backgrounds. This is because the National Literacy Strategy, introduced in 2002 following previous disappointing results, had not been in place long enough to impact favourably on the 2003 results. There was also a reluctance of some staff to fully embrace the National Literacy Strategy. Therefore, it was applied inconsistently as teachers lacked confidence in linking it to their classes' needs. Overall, standards are similar to those described in the last report, although compared to national averages, they have fallen from the high results recorded in 1999, particularly in 2003, which was not a typical year.
46. There has been a recent improvement in standards because teachers are more confident in using the Strategy. This is beginning to impact on the quality of lessons. Good leadership of the subject has ensured that poor resources have improved significantly and the school's policy is supported better through guidance for staff. Lessons where pupils are taught how to read are beginning to improve pupils' comprehension skills and the many new books motivate them to take a greater interest in a range of texts. Parents and volunteers are valued and used well to support groups for reading. However, there are still too few challenging texts for more capable pupils. The subject co-ordinator also recognises that substantial support is still needed to train staff and provide resources to implement fully the writing programmes of the National Literacy Strategy. Whilst the teaching of reading is good overall throughout, the teaching of writing is weaker in Years 3 to 6 but it is good in Years 1 and 2. The pupils learn well in most lessons and overall achievement is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2 and in Years 3 to 6. Teachers give good opportunities for pupils to talk and to listen, helping them to gain good standards in spoken English. Teachers' questions often encourage pupils to reflect and give extended answers.
47. Standards in reading are now above average for Year 6 pupils and, in writing, their standards are average. Pupils in Year 2 achieve satisfactorily and reach above average standards in reading and writing. However, teachers' subject knowledge is not always secure enough and some lack a clear understanding of the requirements for the highest levels for the age groups. Generally, teaching seen in lessons was good but checks on their learning are not used well enough to provide challenge and raise expectations for the more capable pupils. Clear support programmes and good teaching by the educational teaching assistants have improved the self-esteem and confidence of pupils they work with, particularly less capable pupils. This impacts favourably on their achievement. The teaching of speaking and listening and of reading

is good throughout but in writing the teaching is good in Years 1 and 2 and satisfactory in Years 3 to 6.

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

48. Some teachers make significant links to language and literacy within other subjects, such as religious education, music and art and design. For example, a Year 4 lesson used a poem from a reading lesson as an inspiration for the pupils' musical compositions. However, these links are not always planned as well across the school and the impact is not clearly assessed.

### **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

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

- Pupils' competence in mental calculation is generally strong.
- National test results for Year 6 were particularly low in 2003.
- The accuracy and use of assessments and teachers' knowledge of the National Curriculum Levels are inconsistent.
- The provision for the most capable pupils is weak.
- The pupils are keen to learn and enterprising in their efforts.
- The National Numeracy Strategy has been satisfactorily adopted.

#### **Commentary**

49. Standards of the current pupils are average in Years 2 and 6. The attainment of the current Year 6 pupils is typical with a minority approaching above average attainment. The standards indicated by the national tests for Year 6 in 2003 were well below average and in the lowest five per cent of schools having pupils from similar economic backgrounds. This was a very significant fall since the 2002 results, which were previously rising and above average. However, the results of 2003 are not typical of the school. The 2003 results of the Year 2 pupils were well above average and above the average for similar schools, although slightly lower than those of 2002. Currently, Year 2 standards are typical with fewer pupils of high capability than in 2003 but very few pupils not achieving the expected standards. The standards of the current pupils are similar to those reported in the last inspection, although the 2003 Year 6 test results were considerably lower.
50. Achievement is unsatisfactory because of the proportion of pupils with high capability who do not achieve their potential. For example, the number of pupils who had above average standards when they were in Year 2 was smaller by the end of Year 6. This is exemplified in the 2003 test for Year 6 pupils where, in comparison to similar schools, the results were well below average by prior attainment and free school meals. Achievement by the end of Year 2 is satisfactory. However, throughout the school, there is a degree of under-expectation of pupils of higher capability. This is shown in the minority of lessons in which the learning for these pupils is not hard enough and through their past work, where there are few examples at a high standard. Some pupils also report that work is easy on occasions. Despite these findings, there are some gaps in the pupils' knowledge and understanding dating back to when the school did not use the National Numeracy framework sufficiently. These gaps have not been accurately identified because check-ups on learning have been inconsistent and some teachers' knowledge of the different National Curriculum Levels is weak. For example, the targets set last year for the proportion of the Year 6 pupils to achieve above average Levels were much too high.
51. Teaching promotes well the pupils' capability in calculating numbers mentally. For example, in a well taught lesson for Year 2, the pupils counted in 100s to 1000 and every opportunity was used to help them consolidate counting and calculating numbers in a variety of situations. Only

occasionally are tasks made significantly harder for pupils of high capability and these pupils occasionally express boredom. Nevertheless, they are very keen to learn and they behave well because classroom management is effective. For example, in a Year 5 lesson, a group of pupils did not understand the teacher's explanation of a long division method. They were keen to find out and did so later after a second explanation. Learning in other aspects of the subject, such as problem solving and shapes, space and measures, is satisfactory. The pupils' learning is generally satisfactory and their own wish to learn strongly supports their progress. Nevertheless, there were several examples where teachers were not fully aware of the pupils' levels of understanding and what they needed to learn next. Those pupils with lower capability and those with special educational needs, of whom a few have targets for learning in mathematics, are taught and supported well, often by the teaching assistants. Occasionally, relevant computer programs are used to help these pupils effectively. Overall, teaching is satisfactory and strong in mental calculation throughout the school, but there are weaknesses in a few teachers' knowledge of the pupils' next learning needs.

52. Co-ordination is satisfactory because a new action plan, devised in response to the 2003 test results, is helping to make improvements. Since the last inspection, the National Numeracy Strategy has been implemented and is largely being effective. However, there is an emphasis on the teaching of the key objectives at the expense of the learning needs of pupils, which are not always known well enough. The significant fall in the 2003 results was not adequately predicted and, while provision for pupils with low capability is well organised and supported, teachers have insufficient guidance about providing for the more capable pupils.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

53. Teachers make use of activities in other lessons and through the school day to promote the pupils' learning of numbers and there are occasional uses of mathematical skills in other lessons, for example, through measuring and recording graphically in geography and science.

## **SCIENCE**

Provision for science is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards are too low for the older more capable pupils and achievement by the end of Year 6 is unsatisfactory.
- The provision for and the teaching of investigative skills is good.
- Pupils have good attitudes towards the subject.
- The co-ordination of the subject is not sufficiently effective.

### **Commentary**

54. The standards attained by Year 2 pupils are average and they have satisfactory achievement. The standards pupils attain in Year 6 are below average. This is because more capable pupils are not achieving as well as they could. Standards in the most recent national tests (2003) for pupils in Year 6 were well below those found nationally and when compared with similar schools. Standards are lower than at the time of the last inspection but they are now rising and are above those indicated by the 2003 national tests. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well in relation to their abilities, having good support.
55. Pupils work with enthusiasm in lessons that focus on experimentation and investigational science, which are planned and organised well by the teachers. Because of this, pupils make good progress developing the necessary skills and achieve to a satisfactory level. Pupils in Year 1 learn about fair testing in their work on forces. They measure distances travelled by their model fire engines down ramps of different heights. These pupils build up effective skills of questioning and reporting. Pupils in Year 2 show a satisfactory understanding of the foods



that make them healthy and the effects of exercise on their bodies and their heart rates. Pupils in Year 4 make good progress and achieve well in their work on separating solids from water. In a lesson seen, the level of co-operation when working in groups was very good. All pupil, including those with special educational needs, made very good gains in their personal development during this lesson, as well as developing good investigating and experimenting skills.

56. Analysis of the pupils' completed work and discussions with Year 6 pupils indicate that pupils' levels of knowledge and understanding in three aspects - called 'life processes and living things', 'materials and their properties' and 'physical properties' - are underdeveloped. More capable pupils are not being challenged enough to acquire the knowledge and understanding necessary to attain high standards in line with their capabilities but there are also some gaps in their previous learning.
57. Teaching and the learning of the majority of pupils, including those with special educational needs, are satisfactory. However, the more capable pupils are not provided with enough challenging work to match their capabilities, nor have they been taught all the necessary knowledge in all the aspects of science necessary for them to achieve their full potential. As a result, these pupils do not attain the higher levels they are capable of in the Year 6 national tests. The best teaching is in lessons involving scientific enquiry. In three out of four lessons during the inspection, it was good or better, with the others being satisfactory. Teachers do not make enough use of checks done at the end of groups of lessons to track pupils' progress and achievement against set objectives and to record their levels of attainment.
58. Pupils make satisfactory use of their writing and mathematical skills in reporting their findings and recording their results. Graphs are sometimes used but there is insufficient use made of ICT sensors to record changes in temperature, sound or light.
59. The newly appointed co-ordinator has received support and training and has monitored the results of the 2003 national tests and suggested points for improvement. However, at present, the co-ordination of science is not being effective enough in identifying the levels of knowledge and understanding of the teachers to deliver the science curriculum to sufficient depth. There is no monitoring of teaching or learning across the school that would help to identify areas for development with a view to raising standards further.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There has been significant improvement in provision since the previous inspection.
- There is good quality teaching from well-trained teachers and teaching assistants.
- The school has provided good quality resources to support teaching and learning.
- ICT is well led by a skilled co-ordinator who supports all the staff very well.
- There are insufficient opportunities provided for the co-ordinator to check the quality of teaching, learning and standards.
- Resources to support the teaching and learning of 'control and monitoring' are unsatisfactory.

### **Commentary**

60. When the school was last inspected, standards attained were below those expected of pupils. Progress was inconsistent and mainly unsatisfactory for all pupils, including those with special educational needs. Since then, standards have risen and pupils throughout the school are now attaining in line with national expectations. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, are making good progress and achieving to a satisfactory level. This is as a result of

good well-planned strategies to improve provision and to raise standards that are being effectively implemented.

61. Pupils in Year 1 show good mouse control skills in commanding operations on their computers. Their word-processing skills are developing well and they can print out their work at the completion of the tasks they do. Pupils in Year 2 learn how to use a programmable toy effectively to plot distance and direction in their geography lesson on a large map of the Isle of Struay. Pupils from Year 3 to Year 6 develop skills progressively and show confidence in logging on to computers, carrying out instructions and making decisions to refine their ideas. Pupils in Year 5 successfully create pictures and designs in the style of the artist, Matisse. The pupils show imagination in their work; they organise, amend and present their work and then readily discuss how they have achieved their final creations. Most pupils are readily able to save, retrieve and to print out their completed work. Older pupils use the Internet effectively and some have used e-mail to exchange and share information successfully.
62. A major contribution to improvement in standards is the good quality teaching given to the pupils by class teachers and the teaching assistants. Good quality training, organised and given by the co-ordinator under the New Opportunities Fund, is proving to be effective. Teachers' knowledge, understanding and skills in ICT have improved since the previous inspection. The confidence shown by teachers and teaching assistants in teaching and supporting pupils in lessons during the inspection was noteworthy.
63. The subject co-ordinator provides good leadership and management for his subject. He uses his considerable knowledge and expertise to ensure all teachers and teaching assistants are confident in the use of the range of computers in the school. He has provided good quality training for the staff to gain the knowledge and skills necessary to cover the curriculum requirements for ICT and use the good supply of computers. There is a clear and informative ICT development plan for the next three years that should take teaching and learning forward and raise standards even further. However, the co-ordinator is aware that 'control and monitoring' resources for ICT within the school need to be improved; the school has made plans to make use of the local secondary school resources in the meantime. As yet, there are no formal procedures for checking the quality of teaching and learning across the school that would help to raise standards further.

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

64. ICT is used well to support other areas of the curriculum. Word-processing is used appropriately in supporting English and data handling through graphs and tables to support mathematics. Number skills practice programs are used effectively in supporting pupils who have special educational needs. Pupils also use their acquired knowledge and skills well to support work in art and design, geography, history and design and technology.

## **HUMANITIES**

### **History**

Work in history was sampled but no lessons were seen and judgements cannot be made. The pupils indicated strong knowledge of a few periods in history and a strong interest. However, there is little to suggest progression in their learning of skills and gaining understanding. Long-term planning provides too little guidance in what should be taught and assessments and check-ups of planning are insufficient to provide the co-ordinator with knowledge of the main strengths and weaknesses in provision.

### **Geography**

Provision in geography is unsatisfactory but with some significant strengths. One Year 2 lesson and one Year 6 lesson was seen. The past work of pupils was reviewed and there were discussions with pupils.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is some good and enthusiastic teaching which make the subject interesting to pupils.
- The scheme of work lacks precision and guidance on the progression of skills.
- Resources are barely adequate and time given for teaching the subject is not checked.
- There is no means of accurately knowing how high standards are in the school.

## Commentary

65. Standards are satisfactory at Year 2 and 6. In each case, the lesson observed indicated standards that were at least sound and the pupils' level of discussion was good. This is because the lessons were very well planned and included a good range of interesting activities and most pupils were asked to make challenging geographical deductions. For example, some pupils of Year 2 acted as tourist officers for the Island of Struay identifying key features of the island. Pupils of Year 6 were asked to identify the causes and effects of flooding in Bangladesh, following a video they saw. The pupils' responses indicated good deduction and understanding of key geographical features. Achievement is satisfactory overall.
66. However, the past work of pupils lacks clear progression in skills, for example, there is little to indicate pupils' growing skills of reading and making maps. The amount of work is very inconsistent between classes and patchy in covering the programmes of study. Whilst there are occasional bits of high quality work, much is undated with large gaps indicated in the pupils' learning. This was also found to be the case through discussions with pupils.
67. The teaching indicated is of satisfactory quality overall in Years 3 - 6 and good in Years 1 and 2. There is some enthusiastic teaching but there is little extra challenge for pupils of high capability and no system to gain knowledge of how high standards are in the school. Assessments are insufficient to provide records of what pupils know, understand and can do. This makes the planning of well-matched learning difficult and suggests a lack of teachers' knowledge of National Curriculum Levels in skills and understanding. However, the patches of high quality work suggest that teachers have some good knowledge of the factual elements of the subject.
68. Co-ordination is unsatisfactory since the scheme of work is not consistently implemented, key skills are not taught bit-by-bit and assessment is inadequate to gain knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses in the standard pupils achieve. However, the subject is included in the school improvement plan and will benefit from the review of the overall curriculum about to be carried out.

## Religious education

Provision in religious education is **good**.

## Main strengths and weakness

- The quality of teaching is good.
- Throughout the school, standards of attainment are above expectations and sometimes well above.
- Leadership of the subject is good.
- There are very good links to other subjects.

## Commentary

69. Teachers are confident in their subject knowledge and use a range of opportunities for pupils to respond to their learning. For example, very well observed pen, water and chalk pictures illustrated Year 4's visit to a local church and pictures by Year 3 capture the emotion of a

mother and child bond. Staff are encouraged to use drama, art and music in the lessons. As a result of teachers' enthusiasm, good planning and teaching, pupils achieve well. Older pupils offer their own opinions and look at other points of view. For example, Year 6 compared their own view of creation to that of science. Teachers demonstrate respect in these lessons, which engenders good relationships. This results in pupils who are eager to find out more and show interest in religions.

70. The subject leader's very good knowledge and expertise has had a significant impact on the continuing high standard of attainment. She has kept staff well informed and issued guidance files for each class teacher. She has maintained the high profile of the subject through innovations such as workshops and drama productions. At the moment, the school is trialling a new Locally Agreed Syllabus, which will be reviewed next year. This has some implication for changes in the curriculum but these are being managed well and has led to renewed interest and focus in the subject. The curriculum makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural development.
71. Teachers check pupils' work to see how well they are doing and complete assessment sheets. However, sometimes there is insufficient consideration of the level of tasks for higher attaining pupils. There is an assessment system built into the new syllabus and local primary schools are considering a specified unit of religious education to be completed for assessment before pupils enter secondary school. This will give good support to planning for all levels.
72. Analysis of pupils' work revealed a good quantity of varied work of a high standard. In a good lesson in Year 1, pupils understood the lessons learnt from two Bible stories because they were presented well and related to the pupils' own lives. Pupils in Year 5 deepened their understanding of prayer across a range of religions through their own research and their teacher's good subject knowledge. The work of the pupils has been used as an example of good practice in the Local Education Authority Handbook.

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

### **Design and technology**

There were no lessons observed in design and technology and therefore no judgement was made regarding overall provision.

73. There has been recent improvement in curriculum organisation, which allows pupils more time to complete projects satisfactorily. Standards of work seen around school are in line with national expectations and some age groups produce products that are above expectations. Teachers are beginning to make links between design and technology and other areas of the curriculum. For example, pupils in Year 4 extended their learning about electrical circuits through designing and making lamps. Improved resources, such as construction kits, have helped to develop pupils' fine motor skills, improve their skills in using tools and to understand how things work. For example, a group of Year 1 pupils considered the needs of a bridge for the Billy Goats Gruff and built this using Lego. Resources are well stored and pupils have easy access to the materials and tools they need.

### **Physical education**

No lessons were observed in Years 1 to 6 and no judgement could be made regarding overall provision.

74. Physical education is given a high profile by the school. Insufficient evidence was available during the inspection for judgements to be made. There is full coverage of the curriculum. The school's curriculum provision has been audited by the Sports Council and the school was awarded the 'Activemark Gold' standard in January 2002. Pupils in Year 5 and Year 6 are given planned opportunities to learn the skills of swimming on a regular basis. This is successful as all pupils reach the minimum expected distance by the time they leave the school. There is a

good range of extra-curricular activities for pupils; mini-athletics, cross-country, swimming, folk dance, dance, cricket, netball, rugby and football. These activities enrich the curriculum helping pupils to understand how exercise can make them healthy and feel good; a stated sporting aim of the school. The school makes good use of local sporting groups to support its teaching of relevant skills. The school takes part in local sporting occasions such as swimming and cross-country running. Pupil participation is high; half of all pupils in the junior age group entered a swimming gala, many achieving success.

## **Art and design**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards of attainment are well above expectations at Years 2 and 6.
- Leadership of the subject is very good.
- There is a very exciting curriculum.

### **Commentary**

75. Standards of attainment across the school are high because the subject leader's passion and knowledge motivate both staff and pupils. Expectations for all abilities are very high. She promotes an exciting, rich and varied curriculum, linking the subject across the curriculum. Every class is given the opportunity to work with a range of artists, including sculptors and textile artists. This results in very high standards of achievement and is particularly successful for pupils with special educational needs. The pupils and staff are rightly proud of their achievements, which are renowned in the area. The school is fortunate to be in the heart of an arts rich community. Many local artists and parents have given time to work with the pupils, who are inspired to produce very good pieces. The school supports a highly successful 'Arts Week' and the subject leader co-ordinates this very well, using a range of artists, parents and students to work in school. She continues to develop her own very good knowledge through a business development link and observations in other schools and colleges.
76. Teaching throughout the school is good as teachers are well supported. They use resources well and learn from the expertise available. Staff value all contributions and encourage pupils to talk about their work. For example, in a well-planned lesson in Year 1, landscape designs were translated into woven fabric pictures. These pupils learnt the technique well and were given the opportunity to discuss and select their own colours and textures from a well-organised range of exciting fabrics. Year 3 pupils worked with an artist to produce clay insects. He encouraged them to use books to research information and very patiently explained techniques and improvements to their work. He encouraged them to talk about what they were doing and to do as much as possible themselves. This helped them to learn techniques through practice. As a result, the models were of a high standard.
77. Pupils' work around the school is exciting and varied and reflects the high profile of art. Artists and art from other cultures are celebrated and pupils' interests are included in planning for lessons and activities. For example, the study of the work of a modern American artist was planned to motivate boys. Pupils in Year 5 used their own special memory boxes to inspire designs for a patchwork wall hanging, resulting in a very good contribution of art to pupils' spiritual, moral, social, personal and cultural development. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection.

## Music

Provision in **music** is **good**.

### Main strengths and weakness

- Standards of attainment are above national expectations throughout.
- There is a rich and varied curriculum.
- The quality of teaching is good.
- There is very good support for music by parents and the local community.

### Commentary

78. Music is highly valued in the school and is used successfully as a tool for developing confidence and self-esteem. Standards have improved since the last inspection. Pupils also enjoy music very much because of the opportunities provided for them to listen, to play or sing. Live musicians are regularly invited to play a wide range of music from different cultures, times and styles. Pupils respond with enthusiasm. For example, a rap artist opened the 'Arts Week,' and a string quintet played both classical and folk pieces during inspection week. Such events have resulted in pupils having a good understanding of music.
79. The school is fortunate to have the very good support of parents who also value music and fund lessons for their children in and out of school. Over 50 pupils have instrumental tuition from peripatetic teachers and others have private lessons outside school. Another parent ran the school choir for many years until very recently. This means that pupils have a wealth of knowledge, which they are able to share in class lessons. Teachers incorporate these skills within group work. For example, in a good lesson in Year 4, pupils were given good opportunities to be creative and independent in their group compositions. Good links are made with other subjects, such as when Year 1 pupils developed their understanding of rhythm by clapping nursery rhyme titles, using symbol cards. Teachers link music to dance, history, literacy and art, offering further opportunities for pupils to express feelings and emotions. This is particularly successful for pupils with special educational needs. Discussions with pupils in Year 2 revealed good and sometimes very good understanding. They can suggest different ways to record, using musical symbols to show when to play fast and slow or loud and soft. Pupils sing tunefully and teachers successfully model clear diction.
80. The subject leader ensures that extra-curricular activities are planned for pupils who do not have instrumental tuition. For example, through a bell ringing team and the choir. Pupils are given opportunities to perform in the community and in school. Higher attaining pupils are identified and their needs met through a musical group, which is preparing for a musical performance evening. This results in an improvement in performance skills. Sometimes, the extra-curricular activities and tuition can clash, causing confusion for pupils. There is sometimes insufficient communication about changes. Most teachers are competent and have good subject knowledge; however, the subject leader hopes to raise confidence through a review of schemes of work, improving resources and further training.

## PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

81. No lessons were seen in this aspect of the curriculum and judgements cannot be made about overall provision. However, a new policy and scheme of work are available but not yet consistently applied. Nevertheless, the school's ethos is very conducive to learning in these areas. Requirements for sex education and drugs awareness are met through governors' policies. The school council provides well for pupils' awareness of living in a community and being responsible. Through class work and pastoral care, the pupils' personal development is provided for well, but check-ups on teachers' planning and the curriculum are insufficiently rigorous to promote secure provision for all pupils.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

### *Inspection judgement*

### *Grade*

<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>4</b>
How inclusive the school is	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	5
Value for money provided by the school	4

<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>4</b>
Pupils' achievement	4

<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>	<b>3</b>
Attendance	3
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>	<b>4</b>
The quality of teaching	4
How well pupils learn	4
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	3
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	3
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>4</b>
The governance of the school	4
The leadership of the headteacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	4
The effectiveness of management	4

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