

# INSPECTION REPORT

## VANGE PRIMARY SCHOOL AND NURSERY

Vange

Basildon

LEA area: Essex

Unique reference number: 114811

Headteacher: Mrs S Andrews

Lead inspector: Mike Capper

Dates of inspection: 10<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> November 2003

Inspection number: 258270

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary and nursery
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	144
School address:	London Road Vange Basildon
Postcode:	SS16 4QA
Telephone number:	(01268) 552 160
Fax number:	(01268) 581 840
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs E Chidgey
Date of previous inspection:	December 2001

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This is a smaller than average primary and nursery school, which admits pupils between the ages of three and 11. There are 144 pupils on roll and they are taught in six mixed-age classes. In the nursery, children attend on a part-time basis for either a morning or afternoon session. Pupils come from an area where a large number of families have low incomes and the percentage (29 per cent) eligible for free school meals is above average. There is a high level of pupil mobility. Only 39 per cent of pupils who took national tests at the end of Year 6 in 2003 started their education in the school. In the 2002-2003 academic year ten pupils joined and 31 left the school at times other than at the start of the year. There are 38 pupils on the register of special educational needs. As a proportion this is above average, with most of these pupils identified as having moderate learning difficulties. The proportion of pupils with statements of special educational need (one pupil) is also broadly average for the size of school. When they start school in the nursery, pupils' attainment is below average. There are no pupils with English as an additional language.

Over the last two years there has been an exceptionally high turnover of staff, with two more teachers due to leave at the end of the current term. This means that the school will have had an almost total change in teaching staff in one term. There are currently two unqualified overseas teachers on the staff, and a nursery instructor teaches the nursery class because the school has been unable to appoint a qualified teacher.

The school is part of an education action zone and received a School Achievement Award in 2002.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
23239	Mike Capper	Lead inspector	Foundation Stage, science, information and communication technology (ICT), citizenship
19322	Judi Bedawi	Lay inspector	
23609	Alison Cartlidge	Team inspector	Mathematics, art and design, design and technology, music, physical education
23658	Stephen Parker	Team inspector	English, geography, history, religious education, special educational needs

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**The school provides an unsatisfactory standard of education and unsatisfactory value for money.** Although most pupils are keen to learn, standards of attainment are too low. Pupils are not achieving as well as they should due to weaknesses in teaching in Years 1 to 6. Leadership and management are unsatisfactory. The turnover of staff has had a significant impact on the effectiveness of the school and the development of a management team.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The school is not led or managed effectively: self-evaluation is not firmly established; there are weaknesses in communication, and there is a lack of management procedures to alleviate the problems caused by the exceptionally high staff turnover. Pupils' attainment is well below average overall in English, mathematics and science.
- Teaching is unsatisfactory in one in five lessons in Years 1 to 6.
- The school has successfully focused on developing personal and social skills, resulting in pupils having improved behaviour and attitudes towards learning.
- There is good teaching in the nursery and reception class, giving children a good start to their education.
- Rates of attendance are very low. This has a negative impact on learning.

The school has made **unsatisfactory progress** since the last inspection in 2001. Despite intensive support from the local education authority, pupils' attainment has not risen significantly. There have been some areas of considerable improvement. Behaviour and attitudes have improved significantly and there is better teaching in the reception class. Provision for information and communication technology is now satisfactory. However, many of the key weaknesses from the last inspection have not been addressed.

***In accordance with section 13 (7) of the School Inspection Act 1996 I am of the opinion, and Her Majesty's Chief Inspector (HMCI) agrees, that special measures are required in relation to this school.***

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
English	E	E	E	D
Mathematics	E*	E	C	A
Science	E	E	E	E

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

**Pupils' achievement is unsatisfactory overall.** In Years 1 to 6 work is not matched closely enough to need, limiting pupils' achievement. In contrast, in the nursery and reception class children's achievement is satisfactory overall, with strengths in personal, social and emotional development, mathematical development and reading. Children are on target to achieve the expectations for their age in personal, social and emotional development, but not in communication, language and literacy, mathematical development and physical development. There is insufficient evidence to make a judgement on children's attainment in knowledge and understanding of the world and creative development.

Inspection findings show that, by the end of Year 2 and Year 6, pupils' attainment is well below average overall in English, mathematics and science. Reading skills, although still below average, are stronger than writing skills, with pupils benefiting from a structured teaching programme. Speaking skills are weak throughout the school. Poor literacy skills are a barrier to learning, leading to pupils' attainment being below average by the end of Year 6 in ICT, history, geography and religious education, although achievement in these subjects is satisfactory.

Test results in mathematics in 2001 placed the school in the bottom five per cent of all schools in the country. Results showed good improvement in 2003 in reading and writing at the end of Year 2 and in mathematics at the end of Year 6. This was the result of a sustained support programme, with help from specialist teachers from another school. However, improvements in achievement have not been maintained and these higher levels of attainment are not evident in current work in Years 2, 3 or 6.

There is **good provision for developing pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development**, enabling them to become caring, thoughtful and responsible. Behaviour is now satisfactory and pupils have good attitudes towards learning. However, the rate of attendance is very low. Punctuality is unsatisfactory and initiatives to raise levels of attendance have not had a significant long-term impact.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The quality of education** provided by the school is **unsatisfactory**. Although teaching is good in 38 per cent of lessons, overall the quality of **teaching and learning is unsatisfactory**. Throughout the school, teaching is most effective when pupils are engaged in interesting practical tasks. Assessment information is not used consistently to ensure that work meets the needs of all pupils. In all classes, well-trained teaching assistants give good support, especially in helping lower-attaining pupils and those with special educational needs.

There is a satisfactory curriculum and the school provides good welfare, health and safety for all pupils. Pupils' pastoral support is good and there are good relationships between pupils and adults. Links with other local schools are good and enhance the quality of learning.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**The leadership and management of the headteacher and key staff are unsatisfactory**. Although the headteacher is well organised and has been very effective in improving the ethos of the school, her leadership has not helped to raise standards. Other key members of staff have only a limited involvement in monitoring the work of the school so that strengths and weaknesses can be identified and improvements made. Many governors have only recently been appointed. They are fully supportive of the school. The governing body ensures that statutory requirements are met, with governance being satisfactory overall.

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

Most parents feel that their children like school. They are very concerned about the turnover of staff and believe that communication could be improved. Pupils are happy at school, but some feel that behaviour could still be improved. They are pleased that teachers listen to and value their views.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- Raise pupils' attainment and achievement in English, mathematics and science.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management by improving communication and by developing rigorous and effective management procedures, including the monitoring of teaching and learning by the headteacher and other staff.
- Improve teaching by making better use of assessment information to plan work.

- Continue to work with the education welfare service and parents to improve attendance.
- Identify effective strategies for recruiting and retaining qualified and experienced staff.

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

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

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

Pupils' attainment is poor in English, mathematics and science and their achievement is unsatisfactory overall. In Years 1 to 6 work is not matched closely enough to need, limiting pupils' achievement. In contrast, in the nursery and reception year, achievement is never less than satisfactory and it is good in some areas of learning. There is no significant difference between the attainment of boys or girls or pupils from different backgrounds, although boys write more slowly than girls in Years 5 and 6.

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

- In the nursery and reception class, children achieve well in relation to their prior attainment in personal, social and emotional development, mathematical development and reading.
- Standards are well below average overall by the end of Year 2 and 6 in English, mathematics and science.
- Reading improves well in Years 1 and 2 because of a very structured approach to the teaching of reading.
- Weak literacy skills are a barrier to learning, leading to pupils' attainment being below average by the end of Years 2 and 6 in ICT, history, geography and religious education.

#### **Commentary**

##### ***Foundation Stage (reception year)***

1. Overall, children start school with attainment that is below expectations. By the end of the reception year, children's attainment is as expected in personal, social and emotional development and below expectations overall in communication, language and literacy, mathematical development and physical development. There is insufficient evidence to make an overall judgement on children's attainment in knowledge and understanding of the world and creative development.
2. Children's achievement is good in personal, social and emotional development, mathematical development and the reading aspect of communication, language and literacy because of the good teaching in these areas of learning. In mathematical development, children quickly improve their number skills because of the wide range of practical activities that successfully reinforce learning. In reading, children benefit from a structured approach to teaching letter sounds that improves confidence quickly.

##### ***Key Stage 1 (Years 1 and 2)***

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	16.8 (14.5)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	15.0 ( 13.8)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	14.0 ( 13.3)	16.3 (16.5)

*There were 16 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*



3. Inspection findings show that, by the end of Year 2, pupils' attainment is below average in reading and well below average in writing, mathematics and science. This is lower than at the time of the last inspection. In these subjects, pupils' achievement is unsatisfactory in relation to their prior attainment. However, standards in reading are improving in Years 1 and 2 following the adoption of a recommended scheme that focuses on basic skills.
4. National test results at the end of Year 2 vary significantly from year to year. In 2003 they show that attainment was:
  - in reading, above the national average and well above the average for similar schools;
  - in writing, in line with the national average and well above the average for similar schools; and
  - in mathematics, well below both the national average and that for similar schools.
5. The better test scores in English in 2003 are not reflected in the work of pupils currently in either Year 2 or Year 3. The school acknowledges that test results improved because of high levels of test preparation as well as pupils benefiting from additional training given to teachers and support staff.
6. In science, teacher assessments at the end of Year 2 in 2003 show that attainment was broadly in line with the national average and above the average for similar schools. However, these levels of attainment are not evident in current work, indicating that, as in other subjects, teacher assessments were inaccurate and overestimated levels of attainment.

**Key Stage 2 (Years 3 to 6)**

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	24.5 (24.8)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	27.0 (24.4)	26.8 (26.7)
science	25.5 (26.3)	28.6 (28.3)

*There were 12 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

7. Inspection findings show that pupils are not achieving as well as they should, with attainment being well below average in English, mathematics and science in the current Year 6.
8. National test results have been consistently at least well below average for the last four years, except in mathematics in 2003, which showed considerable improvement from previous years as pupils benefited from intensive support from an advanced skills teacher and support staff. However, these higher levels of attainment have not been maintained in the current Year 6.
9. In 2003, test scores indicated that attainment was:
  - in English and science, well below both the national average and that of similar schools; and
  - in mathematics, in line with the national average and well above the average for similar schools.
10. The trend in pupils' attainment by the end of Year 6 over the last four year has been above the national average, reflecting the much higher test results in mathematics in 2003. Targets for the end of Year 6 were exceeded in mathematics but were missed by a small margin in English.

### ***Whole school (Years 1 to 6)***

11. Pupils' attainment is below average in listening and well below average in speaking. Many pupils enter school with poor speech, limited vocabulary and sentence patterns. These problems continue through the school, with pupils finding difficulty in formal speaking and writing. Topics discussed in most lessons catch pupils' interest. Many offer answers willingly, but their responses are brief and they need prompting to speak more clearly and at greater length.
12. Attainment is below average in ICT by the end of Year 6, although pupils are now achieving appropriately in relation to their prior learning, benefiting from the improved teaching and more effective use of resources. Pupils in the current Year 2 are beginning to show the benefits of having prolonged access to regular ICT teaching and they have sound basic skills. In contrast, older pupils still find it hard to find their way around a keyboard and have an insecure understanding of the many applications of ICT. Nevertheless, they show a greater range of basic skills than were found at the time of the last inspection.
13. The inspection team also looked in detail at pupils' work in history, geography and religious education, where there has been a decline in standards since the last inspection. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 have not completed enough work in the current year for a secure judgement to be made on standards in geography and history. Pupils' attainment is below average in religious education by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 and in geography and history by the end of Year 6. However, pupils' achievement is broadly satisfactory in relation to the below average attainment on entry to the school.
14. Weak numeracy and literacy skills are a significant barrier to learning across the curriculum and pupils are not given enough opportunities to apply skills purposefully. Where better writing is seen in Years 5 and 6, it is because pupils have had more opportunity to plan, develop and correct work for display.

### ***Special educational needs***

15. The proportion of pupils on the school's special educational needs register is a little above the national average, although this does not reflect the high number of pupils with low literacy and numeracy standards in the school. Only one pupil has a formal statement of special educational need. The overall achievement of pupils with special needs is satisfactory. They are given a high level of support in class and so make sound progress. However, tasks they are given are not always pitched at the right level for them to succeed on their own and they rely on adult support. When that is not available, evidence in their books shows incomplete and incorrect work.

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

There is good provision for developing pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils have good attitudes towards learning and behaviour is satisfactory. Attendance is very poor, with punctuality unsatisfactory.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Members of staff are successful in ensuring that most pupils like school and are keen to learn.
- Pupils get on well together and support each other effectively.
- The school has set good expectations for behaviour and has clear procedures that are understood and accepted by the pupils.
- Pupils are given good opportunities to take responsibility for aspects of school life.
- Attendance figures are too low, with high levels of unauthorised absence.
- The school does not have effective whole-school procedures to ensure good attendance or raise the profile of good attendance.

## Commentary

16. There have been good improvements since the last inspection. The behaviour and attitudes of pupils are no longer a significant barrier to raising attainment and achievement, although there are still some occasions when pupils do not listen or behave as well as they should.
17. The headteacher has established clear boundaries for what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour and teachers have been successful in improving both pupils' attitudes towards learning and their behaviour. There are now clearly understood school rules. Teachers have good expectations of how pupils should behave in lessons and work hard to make learning interesting. As a result, behaviour is now satisfactory and pupils have good attitudes towards learning. This means that there is a better working atmosphere in lessons, with pupils more responsive to the work they are given. However, the pace of learning slows when the quality of teaching is weaker and pupils become inattentive in lessons and show less desire to learn. When this happens, pupils do not achieve as well as they should.
18. Relationships are good throughout the school. Pupils play and work together happily, co-operate well and most like school now. They report that they feel well supported, although some still feel that behaviour could be better. Nevertheless, they have a clear understanding of what to do if they think that they are being bullied or harassed. There was no evidence of this occurring during the inspection and the school's records show that incidents have significantly decreased over the last two years.
19. Pupils are given good opportunities to take responsibility and they do this well. Activities such as the recently developed school council and the play leaders' scheme mean that pupils are able to contribute to school life and to make their views known. Pupils say that they find these opportunities valuable.
20. The school places a strong emphasis on developing pupils' moral and social skills. They are successful in doing this, helping pupils to become caring, thoughtful and responsible. Pupils are taught to appreciate that there are many children less fortunate than themselves and they support different charities to help them.

## Attendance

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

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	6.5	School data	2.5
National data	5.4	National data	0.5

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

21. Attendance is well below the average for primary schools. Over the last year, unauthorised absence has risen. It is still too high, with bouts of illness accounting for some, but not all, absences. Some parents let their children miss school without real reason. The educational welfare officer (EWO) gives considerable time and expertise to the school to support improvement; the attendance information provided by the office is much appreciated. A joint letter from the EWO and school went to parents, detailing action that could be taken against them, so weekly attendance dramatically improved, showing that good attendance is achievable. However, this improvement was not maintained and attendance again fell.
22. Pupils like the recent strategies such as the weekly 100 per cent attendance raffle and "Best Class of the Week" award, but this has little impact on their parents. Strategies and initiatives are not successfully ensuring parental co-operation to bring about rapid improvement. Most

pupils show little sense of urgency when late; records do not give reasons. Parents are not reminded frequently enough about the vital importance of good attendance and punctuality, or of the impact on their children's learning and achievements. Attendance does not have a sufficiently high profile, so parents are not doing all they can to support the school and bring about sustained improvement.

## 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	146	7	0
White – any other White background	3	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	3	0	0
Black or Black British – African	2	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	5	0	0

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

23. Over the last two years the number of exclusions has been significantly higher than found in most schools as the headteacher has addressed the serious incidents of poor behaviour from a small number of boys at the time of the last inspection. The number of exclusions has decreased over the last two years and there have been none in the current academic year. This improvement is confirmed by the better behaviour seen around the school during the inspection.

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is unsatisfactory. Teaching and learning are unsatisfactory overall. Assessment procedures are satisfactory, though they are not applied consistently to ensure that work meets the needs of all pupils. Members of staff provide good levels of care. The support and guidance given to pupils are satisfactory. There are good links with local schools and satisfactory links with parents and the local community.

### Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are unsatisfactory overall, with the high turnover of teachers and weaknesses in the use of assessment leading to pupils' needs not being met consistently. There is good teaching in the Foundation Stage.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Members of staff have good expectations of behaviour.
- Teachers do not plan work that meets the wide range of needs closely enough.
- Assessment information is not used successfully to help teachers build on what pupils already know or to involve them in their learning.
- In the nursery and reception classes, members of staff have a good understanding of the needs of young children.
- Teaching assistants are well trained and provide good support for lower-attaining pupils during lessons.
- Members of staff are caring and work hard to build pupils' self-esteem and confidence.

## Commentary

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 34 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0 (0 %)	0 (0 %)	13 (38 %)	16 (47 %)	5 (15 %)	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.*

### Nursery and Reception class

24. Teaching has improved since the time of the last inspection and is now good overall. A teacher and a nursery instructor share responsibility for teaching the children. They plan an exciting range of activities that support the children's learning effectively and they use educational resources well. Members of staff have a good understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum meaning that they provide a good mix of practical and more formal tasks that encourage enthusiasm and perseverance. All members of staff are caring and patient and teaching assistants are used effectively to provide relevant and sensitive support, enabling children to learn new skills and knowledge at their own pace. There is a particularly good focus on personal, social and emotional development. Expectations of behaviour are good and children follow the good example set by members of staff, learning how to work alongside others by negotiating and sharing. Questioning is used effectively and new vocabulary is promoted well. Procedures for assessing the children's attainment and progress are satisfactory and used appropriately when planning work.

### Years 1 to 6

25. Although there is some good teaching, teaching and learning are unsatisfactory overall because lessons vary in quality and work does not meet pupils' needs well enough. The high turnover of staff has led to great variations in the quality of teaching over time and this has had a negative impact on overall achievement. The turnover of staff continues to be a concern in the current academic year.
26. Most good teaching occurred in the classes for Years 2 and 3 and Years 5 and 6. In both these classes, there is generally a good pace to learning and teachers have good subject knowledge. Explanations are clear and pupils are expected to work independently. Pupils are given good individual support and challenging behaviour is handled sensitively.
27. Throughout the school, teachers have good expectations of behaviour and use praise effectively to develop pupils' self-esteem and confidence. Relationships between teachers and pupils are good, leading to a good working atmosphere in most lessons. Teachers use questioning effectively and work hard to make learning fun. Tasks are explained clearly and teachers clearly explain the purpose of work at the start of lessons to help pupils understand what they are expected to learn. This has led to improved attitudes and greater involvement in learning.
28. Teaching is most effective when pupils are engaged in interesting practical tasks. However, on many occasions, work is not matched closely enough to the very wide range of needs found in each mixed-age class. This restricts achievement and means that pupils do not acquire new skills as quickly as they should. Too often all pupils are expected to complete the same or very similar work whatever their prior attainment and this means that more-able pupils are not challenged enough and lower-attaining pupils are unable to complete tasks. For example, in science, work for lower-attaining pupils is often left incomplete because it has been too difficult.

29. Teachers do not make enough use of assessment data to help them plan work. Although there is a satisfactory amount of assessment information, it is not used adequately to plan work that builds on what pupils already know. Marking varies in quality. It does not always show the pupil what to do to improve. As a result, pupils' understanding of what they can do to improve is unsatisfactory.
30. The teaching of literacy and numeracy is unsatisfactory. Important weaknesses hinder pupils' progress and restrict their achievement.
  - Opportunities are missed in lessons for adults to focus on a particular group whilst others work on their own.
  - Expectations of presentation and accuracy are not high enough, so pupils do not learn to be self-critical.
  - Target setting has been established, but is too general to be helpful to pupils.

### ***Special educational needs***

31. Pupils with special educational needs are fully included in all class activities. Well-trained teaching assistants give them good support in lessons, helping them to succeed and praising their achievements to boost their confidence. These pupils have individual education plans that set out clear targets to guide teachers' planning. This is broadly successful, but often these pupils need considerable adult help to complete the work set because it is too difficult for them. Their progress is monitored regularly and the targets in their individual education plans are adjusted as necessary.

### **The curriculum**

The curriculum is satisfactory overall.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Frequent staff changes have limited the impact of curriculum developments. Curriculum planning is thorough in the nursery and reception class.
- The curriculum does not always take sufficient account of the pupils' differing needs.
- There are insufficient opportunities to use literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum.
- Personal, social, health and citizenship education is supported well through specific lessons and other activities.
- The school is well staffed with teaching assistants who contribute well to pupils' learning.
- Good quality accommodation means that the full curriculum can be offered to pupils.

### **Commentary**

32. The school has sufficient teachers at present, but the high staff turnover in recent years has affected pupils' progress. The turnover of staff has not been well managed and the situation is still not stable because some members of staff do not feel that their work is appreciated and there is low morale. This is a significant weakness as it means that it has been difficult to establish a cohesive approach to planning and improving the curriculum. There has been insufficient evaluation of the effectiveness of the curriculum and initiatives have not been fully developed. Members of staff have been given considerable training and guidance since the previous inspection, but the benefit has been lost, as teachers have left. The advice given has not been developed into strategies that are specific enough to guide new teachers.
33. The curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage is carefully planned, taking good account of the personal and social needs of pupils. In Years 1 to 6, topics are planned on a two-year cycle to avoid repetition by pupils in mixed-age classes. All pupils are fully included in these topics, which are generally well planned to catch their interest. However, medium- and short-

term planning is imprecise about how differing needs are going to be met, meaning that teaching and tasks are not adjusted carefully enough for the different ages and abilities in each class. As a result, individual pupils do not have equal access to the curriculum or the opportunity to benefit from it and this is unsatisfactory.

34. There are not enough opportunities for pupils to apply and develop literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum. Planning for other subjects does not make the development of numeracy and literacy skills a high-enough priority and pupils get too few opportunities to write or count purposefully. This has a significant impact on pupils' achievement in English and mathematics.
35. By contrast, pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress because they are provided with individual education plans that set out precise targets for their development. These targets reflect their identified needs, mainly in literacy, numeracy and behaviour and are adjusted appropriately in the light of assessments. In these and other subjects they are often given extra adult help, though work does not always encourage independence. They are withdrawn at times for intensive instruction in basic skills. Such instruction is guided by recommended programmes and this is a good feature since it ensures that they learn successfully in small steps.
36. There is good provision for pupils' personal, social and health education helping to develop pupils' awareness of life skills. Carefully planned support includes specific lessons, as well as circle time and the use of visits and visitors.
37. The curriculum is extended through a satisfactory range of clubs, visits and after-class activities. There is a well-organised and worthwhile breakfast club that is run by teaching assistants, who organise craft and other activities for up to 20 pupils each day. This club makes a good contribution to learning because it means that pupils have a happy start to the school day. There are well-attended clubs for netball and football and school teams take part in local competitions. Pupils can choose from a range of activities in "golden time" at the end of the week. The inclusion of French has been popular and two Year 6 girls interviewed were keen to introduce themselves and count up to 20 in French. This helps to prepare pupils well for when they start to learn a modern foreign language at their next school.
38. There is a good number of teaching assistants, who show strong commitment to the school and offer stable relationships and good role models to pupils. They are involved in planning lessons so that they play an effective role in helping specific groups. They are well trained and some take the lead in teaching support programmes to groups of pupils withdrawn for intensive instruction at different times of the year. This was a significant factor in the improved test results in mathematics at the end of Year 6 in 2003.
39. Resources are satisfactory and deficiencies noted in the previous report have been corrected. The school has worked successfully to raise pupils' interest in the library and book borrowing. The computer suite is a useful addition to the accommodation. The standard of displays has improved since the previous inspection and now complements the good quality and attractive accommodation, which makes a good contribution to the school's ethos and helps to make pupils aware of how they can achieve.

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

The school provides good welfare, health and safety for all pupils. Pupils' pastoral support is good and there are good relationships between pupils and adults. Links with other local schools are good and enhance the quality of learning.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The good attention to pupils' wellbeing and the support for personal development.
- Health, safety and child protection are promoted well.
- There are good induction procedures for children when they join the nursery.
- There is insufficient assessment information to support teachers when planning work.

## **Commentary**

40. All members of staff provide good care and attention to the personal needs of pupils in their care. They work as a team to ensure that any pastoral needs are met, so that pupils can concentrate on learning. At play and in lessons, pupils are well supervised and given good support, enhanced by the good, trusting relationships. Pupils like the adults who care for them and confidently ask for help when it is needed, always finding someone ready to listen. The headteacher sets a good example in her positive expectations of pupil behaviour and personal development. Praise is used well to enhance pupils' self-esteem and confidence; strengths are celebrated and help is given to overcome weaker areas of personal development.
41. Pupils with special educational needs are well cared for, including those with a formal statement of special educational need. Teachers and teaching assistants develop good relationships with pupils, successfully encouraging them to take a full part in school life. Those who need it are given additional help by visiting specialists.
42. Practices related to child protection and health and safety are good. All members of staff know how to follow procedures and so support the children. There is good access to external support.
43. Induction for families and for children starting school in the nursery is good. Children are given good opportunities to settle into nursery life and before they move into the reception they join the class for some lessons to help them to get to know the teacher.
44. Although the school successfully monitors and supports pupils' personal and emotional needs, there are important weaknesses in the monitoring of pupils' academic progress and achievement. Staff turnover has affected the continuity of record keeping, so that there are gaps in records and work is not always focused enough to meet pupils' needs. Pupils do not all know about their learning targets and cannot say what they need to do to improve their work.

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

There is a satisfactory partnership with parents and the local community. Links with other schools and colleges are good.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Some recent initiatives are giving parents more opportunities to be involved in school life.
- Parents are worried about the high staff turnover affecting learning and do not feel confident that the school can address the issue.
- Reports to parents on their children's progress vary in helpfulness.
- Learning is supported effectively by well-established links with other schools and colleges, including good transfer arrangements for Year 6 pupils.



## **Commentary**

45. The school is working hard to develop a partnership with parents through worthwhile activities such as the recently established coffee mornings and the Family Learning programme. This is beginning to help parents to be more involved in the day-to-day life of the school, but the headteacher acknowledges that there are still areas where significant improvement is needed. For example, the school continues to strive to ensure that parents send their children to school regularly.
46. Very few parents responded to the questionnaire or attended the parents' meeting. Informal discussions with parents during the inspection highlighted some positive aspects but a considerable degree of dissatisfaction. Most parents say that their children like and are happy at school. However, they are concerned about the ongoing high turnover of teaching staff. They feel that children often have little time to build a lasting relationship before teachers leave; this is unsettling. Parents rightly feel that this has a significant impact on their children's learning and some lack confidence in the school's ability to resolve the situation effectively.
47. Information to parents is satisfactory overall and the prospectus and other information comply with statutory requirements. Pupil reports are satisfactory, overall, with good practice in the provision of targets for children in the nursery and reception class, but this is not shared or continued for older pupils, who have no overall targets to help them to improve their work.
48. There are satisfactory links with the local community and good links with other schools and colleges, including a good system for Year 6 transfer. Pupils in Year 6 benefit from a thorough programme of visits, meeting their new teachers and 'Taster' days, so that they are ready and confident to move on. Members of staff discuss pupils and any concerns or particular learning needs. Visiting specialist teachers have had a good impact on learning, with support given, helping to raise test scores in 2003. However, the impact of this support is lessened by the high turnover of staff, which means that there is a continual need to support and train new staff.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Leadership and management by the headteacher and key staff are unsatisfactory. The headteacher's leadership has not helped to raise standards significantly and other key members of staff have only a limited involvement in monitoring the work of the school, so that strengths and weaknesses can be identified and improvements made, where necessary. A supportive governing body ensures that statutory requirements are met, with governance being satisfactory overall.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The school has not successfully managed the retention and recruitment of staff.
- The leadership of the headteacher lacks clarity of vision and is not based on sufficiently rigorous and systematic monitoring of the school's work.
- The headteacher has taken a good lead in improving standards of behaviour and the ethos of the school.
- A new and strong chair of governors has quickly established a sense of purpose to the governing body, with monitoring beginning to be developed effectively.
- Effective management systems are not in place. Performance-management procedures do not set a clear climate for improvement and communication is weak.

## **Commentary**

49. There are some important strengths in the leadership and management of the school. The headteacher is well organised and has been very effective in improving the culture of the school, working hard with members of staff and parents to set clear expectations for pupils' behaviour and attitudes. The new deputy headteacher is supportive and, through informal

monitoring, has quickly identified some key areas for improvement. He is beginning to work effectively with the headteacher. However, the high turnover of staff has had a significant impact on the overall work of the school and the effectiveness of leadership and management is not as good as at the time of the last inspection.

50. The headteacher is full of good intentions and the school has been given extensive support by the local education authority. However, initiatives have only a limited impact on attainment and the headteacher has become over-reliant on outside support to help the school, rather than looking for ways to manage and ensure improvement internally. Where support and training have been given to teachers, the impact has been lessened because the members of staff who benefit from this then leave the school.
51. The headteacher has not established a clear strategy for how the school is to improve. Too often the turnover of staff is used as an excuse for slow progress and the school has not addressed how it is to manage the recruitment and retention of staff. The headteacher does not always communicate effectively with members of staff and there is a lack of 'team spirit'. Although there have been some recent improvements, thanks largely to the work of the new deputy headteacher, some long-standing members of staff feel that they are not kept sufficiently informed and are not valued by the headteacher. This has led to low morale amongst some staff and is a factor in the high turnover of teachers.
52. The school does not yet have effective management procedures and self-evaluation is not rigorous enough. This is a particularly important weakness in this school because of the staff turnover, which means that, despite generally sound induction procedures, new members of staff take more time than is necessary in '*finding their feet*'. The school has access to a wide range of data, which shows very clearly how well pupils in differing year groups are achieving. This data is collected carefully and is well organised so that it is easily accessible. However, although data has been used to draw up action plans for numeracy and literacy, it is not analysed with sufficient thoroughness to enable effective action to be taken to address weaknesses. For example, although there is an appropriate policy for promoting racial equality in the everyday life of school, test results are not yet analysed to see whether there are any significant differences between the learning of pupils from different backgrounds.
53. There are many new teachers and roles and responsibilities of staff have only recently been defined. Key members of staff have not yet had an opportunity to monitor standards so that they can identify what is going well and where improvement is needed. The headteacher has carried out some helpful monitoring of work, but this is not shared quickly enough with staff, lessening its impact. As a result, there is only a limited understanding amongst staff of the school's most significant weaknesses. This restricts its capacity to improve.
54. Performance management is not used effectively to secure improvement and the school does not follow best practice in the way that targets for teachers are set. They are not based on an initial discussion with staff, leading to teachers feeling devalued and disenchanted with the system. In contrast, teaching assistants value having their work appraised and this is a good feature of performance-management strategies.
55. The governing body has gone through significant changes since the last inspection, with many new governors appointed over the last few months. Under the leadership of a committed and knowledgeable chair of governors, the governing body has begun to give effective support to the school. There is a strong commitment to improving the school and making difficult decisions where needed. The governors' monitoring of the school's work is improving, but as yet, there is limited involvement in development planning.

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

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	493,483
Total expenditure	489,584
Expenditure per pupil	2,967

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	34,176
Balance carried forward to the next	38,075

56. The quality of financial planning is satisfactory, but the school provides unsatisfactory value for money because of the low levels of attainment and achievement and the unsatisfactory quality of education. Spending is targeted on raising standards and governors work hard to ensure that the principles of best value are achieved in all of their spending. Funding for pupils with special educational needs is spent appropriately for their benefit. The school has been supported financially in numerous ways since the last inspection. As well as extensive support from the local authority, extra funding from the education action zone has been in place. This has helped to improve resources in ICT.

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

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

Children in the Foundation Stage are taught in either the nursery or reception class. In the nursery they attend part-time for either a morning or afternoon session, with lessons taken by a nursery instructor because the school has been unable to appoint a qualified teacher. This does not have a negative impact on learning, due to the quality of the instructor. At the time of the inspection there were only five reception-age children in the reception class.

The school has improved provision since the last inspection, when there were important weaknesses in the reception class. This is no longer the case and provision in both the nursery and reception class is now satisfactory overall, with some important strengths.

Teaching is good, with the needs of children met effectively, meaning that they learn well, especially in the areas of personal, social and emotional development, mathematical development and the reading aspect of communication, language and literacy.

Arrangements for the leadership and management of Foundation Stage provision are satisfactory, with the reception class teacher effectively supporting the nursery instructor. Leadership and management have improved since the last inspection, when the two classes were not working together closely enough.

Curriculum planning is thorough and good care is taken to ensure that children's needs are met. There are sound assessment procedures, based on regular observations by various members of staff. This is better than at the time of the last inspection, when assessment in the reception class was found to be unsatisfactory. Assessment information is now fed carefully into planning, which is based on the nationally recognised Early Learning Goals.

Accommodation is good overall. The environment in the nursery is well organised, helping children to make sensible choices about where they are going to work. There is a spacious outdoor area, which is used effectively to support physical development and for work in the other areas of learning. However, there is less free flow between the two indoor and outdoor areas in the reception class because of the lower staffing levels.

Children with special educational needs are well integrated. They are given good support by members of staff who carefully plan work and give individual help when it is required.

Members of staff work hard to involve parents in their children's education. Parents are encouraged to come into the nursery at the start of a session. Good induction procedures help to ensure that they are well informed when their children start school. Children are given good opportunities to settle into nursery life, and before they move into the reception they join the class for some lessons to help them to get to know the teacher. In the reception class the teacher invites parents into class to share books with their children. The take-up for this is low, despite the teacher's best efforts.

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

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

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

- Children achieve well. They are successfully encouraged to work and play together and they develop good levels of concentration for their age.
- Children quickly learn to trust members of staff and respond well to the responsibilities that they are given.

- Children make sensible choices about where they are going to work but often find it hard to work independently.
- Members of staff are good role models and make good use of praise to develop children's self esteem.

### **Commentary**

57. Assessment data shows that when children start school they have weak personal and social skills. However, the very strong emphasis on developing personal and social skills that is evident in all aspects of the school day has a good impact on learning. Achievement has improved since the last inspection and is now good. Most children are on target to achieve the expectations for their age by the end of the reception year. Children are keen to learn and there is a buzz of excitement at the start of each session in the nursery, as they explore the activities that have been provided for them.
58. Children show good levels of care for each other and play together sensibly. They are keen to learn, are happy about sharing their experiences with each other and take a good part in role play, where they happily explore their own ideas. They enjoy working with adults, but find it hard to work independently. On some occasions, especially in the reception class, they show an over-reliance on adult help, slowing the pace of learning.
59. The quality of teaching is good, with children's differing needs met well so that all are able to make good overall progress. Members of staff are caring and supportive and have a good understanding of how to nurture confidence and self-esteem in young children, with good account taken of children's differing backgrounds. Members of staff have good expectations and plan an exciting environment each day, where children are encouraged to make choices but also have to work under adult direction. Expectations of behaviour are good and children respond well to this by showing good attitudes and working hard. Minor disagreements are quickly sorted out, either by the children themselves or through the sensitive and fair intervention of adults.

## **COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- A carefully structured reading and spelling programme helps children in the reception class to develop a secure knowledge of initial letter sounds.
- Members of staff in both the nursery and reception class make learning interesting by making good use of resources
- Children develop positive attitudes to reading and writing. They handle books carefully. In the nursery a writing area is used well by children to write for a range of purposes.
- Children have very weak speaking skills, which improve only slowly.

### **Commentary**

60. Children's attainment is below average, with few on target to achieve the expected levels for their age by the end of the reception year. However, in both the nursery and reception class, children are making appropriate gains in knowledge and, in relation to their prior attainment, achievement is satisfactory overall.
61. Children make the best progress in reading, where achievement is good. By the end of the reception year, many are beginning to read very simple texts and can talk accurately about what they can see in the pictures in a story. Although children have positive attitudes towards

writing, their skills are still in the early stages of development. Many children who are now in Year 1 have still not reached the level expected by the end of the reception year.

62. Speaking skills are weak. Many children join the nursery with immature speech, and this improves only slowly, even though they get many opportunities to speak in large and small groups. In contrast, listening skills develop quickly, and in the reception class most children listen happily to a story being read or to one of their classmates.
63. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. In both classes, teaching builds carefully on what children already know, with adults intervening appropriately to support individuals when they are working. There is good teaching of reading skills in the reception class, with a 'reading recovery' programme providing a very structured approach to the teaching of basic skills. This is effective in teaching children letter sounds and in developing their levels of confidence.
64. In both the nursery and reception an interesting range of literacy activities is planned. These motivate children well, ensuring that they are engaged in their work. Adults have good expectations of behaviour and successfully encourage children to work hard and try their best. The nursery classroom is well organised, with pencils and paper readily available so that children can write whenever they want to; for example, when writing birthday messages to their family. Members of staff read stories well and children are attentive when this happens.

## **MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision for mathematical development is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children achieve well, making good progress in developing number skills.
- The good range of practical activities means that children are interested in their work.
- Questioning is used well to ensure that there is good challenge for more-capable children.

### **Commentary**

65. Children start school with weak number skills, but good teaching means that they make good progress in both the nursery and reception class. Attainment remains below average, with few children in the reception class on target to achieve the expectations for their age by the end of the year. However, children are achieving well. Number awareness is the strongest element of attainment, because of the many opportunities that children have to learn about numbers through practical activities. Most children in the reception class recognise numbers to at least ten and join in enthusiastically with various number rhymes. They enjoy playing simple number games on the computer and are beginning to use appropriate mathematical language to compare objects by size.
66. Members of staff have a good knowledge of the subject and target learning well. Work is carefully prepared and resources are used imaginatively to sustain interest. Teaching is most effective when members of staff are working with groups of children on specific activities. At these times questioning is used effectively to differentiate challenge. For example, in the nursery a group of children worked in the 'shop', buying different objects, with the teacher asking them to buy different numbers of items according to their capability. This was effective in challenging children and, because learning was made fun, they joined in very enthusiastically.
67. Members of staff have good expectations of work and behaviour and are very careful about using numbers in practical situations; for example, counting how many children are in the class. This encourages the children to become curious about numbers and helps them to understand why it is important to learn how to count.

## KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

68. Only a small sample of work was seen in this area of learning. This means that there is insufficient evidence to make an overall judgement on provision. In the one lesson seen during the inspection teaching was satisfactory, with children making appropriate gains in knowledge. The lesson was well planned, with good relationships evident between the reception class teacher and the children. A discussion on what is meant by 'light' and 'dark' was well handled, with children keen to contribute. They showed a reasonable understanding of the differences between day and night. More-capable children successfully named some animals that only come out at night.
69. In the nursery a 'dark room' was used to good effect to help children to see, at first-hand, torches and reflective materials at work. Sessions in the dark room were well managed by members of staff, with questioning used effectively to assess children's learning and to extend knowledge. Questioning was varied according to the capability of the child, meaning that differing needs were met well.

## PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision for physical development is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children learn well in physical-education lessons in the reception class, with good teaching challenging them to improve quickly.
- Good use of outdoor provision in the nursery means that children get good opportunities to practise and consolidate skills, especially in developing body control and movement.
- There is only limited use of outdoor facilities in the reception class because there is only one adult there. This restricts opportunities for children to extend physical skills developed in the nursery.

### Commentary

70. Children's attainment is below average, with many not on target to achieve expectations for their age by the end of the reception year. Their achievement is satisfactory overall, with appropriate gains in knowledge and skills being made from week to week. Achievement is better in the nursery than in the reception class because more use is made of the outdoor area. Nevertheless, provision in the reception year has improved significantly since the last inspection.
71. In the nursery, children ride tricycles with good control. They climb and balance confidently, but their hand control and general manipulation of small objects such as pencils and small equipment are weak for their age. In the reception class, children show good ball skills when playing football and happily participate in dance lessons.
72. Teaching is satisfactory overall. In the nursery, children are given good opportunities to try out ideas for themselves and to develop skills in a secure environment. Members of staff give good support, challenging children where necessary, but also helping those who are less confident to 'have a go' at new skills.
73. In the reception class the quality of teaching is significantly better than at the time of the last inspection, with children's learning effectively enhanced by regularly timetabled physical-education lessons. The quality of teaching in the lesson seen was good. There was a good pace to learning, with children listening carefully to instructions. The lesson was well resourced, with a parachute used effectively to introduce a range of skills. Children were given good opportunities to review what they had learnt, with the teacher successfully building up the

complexity of the task as the lesson developed. There was good challenge for more-capable children, whilst those who were less capable were supported well.

## **CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

74. There is insufficient evidence to make an overall judgement on the quality of provision. A scrutiny of displays and lesson planning shows that there is an appropriate curriculum in both the nursery and reception class. Children are taught a range of skills, using various techniques and materials. They have good attitudes towards learning and talk happily about the pictures that are on display in their classrooms. They sing confidently when gathered together as a group.

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

### **ENGLISH**

Provision is **unsatisfactory**.

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

- Standards are too low, particularly in writing.
- Standards in reading are improving in Years 1 and 2.
- Marking is not followed up rigorously enough.
- Pupils are interested in reading and show good attitudes in lessons.
- Teaching assistants give good support.

#### **Commentary**

75. Not enough progress has been made since the previous inspection and standards remain too low compared with those in similar schools. Writing is a significant weakness that affects pupils' performance in other subjects. The school has noted that boys do not perform as well as girls. Action taken to improve behaviour has been successful and boys are generally as attentive as girls in lessons. However, boys in Year 6 write much more slowly than girls, achieving much less in the time available.
76. Standards in reading are improving in Years 1 and 2 following the adoption of a recommended scheme that focuses on basic skills. There was a substantial improvement in the Year 2 national tests in 2003 because of intensive preparation, with pupils supported by an expert teacher from another school. This had a good short-term effect and test results were well above the average of similar schools in reading and writing. However, standards have not been sustained at such levels and these pupils, now in Year 3, are underachieving. Standards in the present Year 2 are below average in listening and reading and well below average in speaking and writing.
77. Test results in Year 6 have been well below the average of similar schools, as they have been for several years. Standards in the present Year 6 are below average in listening and reading and well below average in speaking and writing. There are signs of improvement in that pupils in the Years 5 and 6 classes have produced better-written work when given time to plan, develop and correct it for display.
78. Many pupils enter school with poor speech, limited vocabulary and sentence patterns. This continues through the school, with pupils finding difficulty in formal speaking and writing. Topics discussed in most lessons catch pupils' interest and many offer answers willingly. However, they give brief answers and need more prompting to speak more clearly and at greater length. Individuals respond well to coaching and a good example of this was seen in



the Year 2/3 class. The subject policy stresses the importance of training speaking skills, but this was not a priority evident in most lessons observed.

79. Pupils across the school are interested in reading. Homework reading is soundly established and pupils borrow regularly from the school library. Pupils in Year 2 are able to sound out unfamiliar words and so read aloud accurately when texts match their level of achievement. Progress through the school is sustained because books are graded for difficulty, though the overall reading level in Year 6 is below that expected. Pupils have much less experience of non-fiction than generally found.
80. The range of writing taught is not as wide as noted in the previous report. A significant amount is not interesting enough to hold pupils' interest, particularly in Years 3 and 4, where comprehension exercises form a major part of the writing programme. Pupils are not given enough opportunities to write at length about their own ideas, or to plan and rewrite. Stories are rare and the focus on any one kind of writing is not sustained for long enough to develop secure skills. There has been some improvement in handwriting and presentation since the last report, but joined handwriting is not established early enough and pupils write slowly as a result. Spelling and punctuation are very weak. Pupils learn spellings for homework but do not regularly use a dictionary or thesaurus to check accuracy and extend vocabulary.
81. Teaching was satisfactory in the lessons seen across the school, but it is unsatisfactory overall because weaknesses hinder pupils' progress over time. In part this is due to staff change, but it is a continuing weakness that:
- teaching, tasks and expectations are not sufficiently adjusted to meet the needs of different ability groups, and pupils underachieve as a result;
  - expectations of presentation and accuracy are not high enough, so pupils do not learn to be self-critical; and
  - pupils are not expected to do corrections or follow-up work after marking, in English or in other subjects, and so their mistakes are repeated and reinforced.
82. Nevertheless there are strengths in the teaching seen. There is a positive atmosphere in most lessons, and pupils generally want to succeed. Some teachers read aloud dramatically and use the board effectively to note key points. Occasionally, pupils are asked to use writing tablets to make notes, and they enjoy doing this, though the practice is infrequent. Teachers and teaching assistants work well together, helping groups with set tasks. The best marking gives strong encouragement and identifies areas for development.
83. Leadership and management are unsatisfactory, lacking the determination and clear focus needed to raise standards. Members of staff have been given a great deal of guidance and training since the previous inspection, but much of the impact has been lost. This is not only because teachers have left but also because the advice has not been developed into specific strategies for new teachers to follow. Teaching and learning are not monitored effectively enough. Assessment information is recorded systematically but not used with enough rigour to tackle pupils' weaknesses, either within the Literacy Hour or through other subjects. Assessment procedures do not cover all aspects of writing or identify weaknesses in speaking, so teachers do not have all the information needed to plan appropriate work.
84. There are successful features in provision. There has been some improvement in providing books to interest boys. The teaching assistants are well trained, involved in lesson planning and managed as a team, giving them a strong sense of purpose. They take the lead in teaching recommended booster programmes at specific times. There has been a substantial improvement in the quality of displays, which now show pupils' best work to advantage, encouraging them to take pride in their achievements.

85. ICT is beginning to be used effectively to extend learning. For example, pupils in Years 2 and 3 developed ICT skills and literacy skills at the same time, by editing a piece of writing on a computer.

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

86. Pupils are not given enough opportunities to read and write in all subjects. Their weak literacy skills limit their ability to explore and express ideas. Year 6 pupils have weak independent study skills. Much written work in other subjects is brief, poorly presented and uncorrected. Better writing has resulted where pupils have planned, developed and corrected work for display, such as the accounts by Year 6 of the history of bread making.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **unsatisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils' attainment is well below average and they do not achieve well enough.
- Teaching is unsatisfactory and work is not matched closely to pupils' needs.
- Some interesting practical tasks are planned.

### **Commentary**

87. Pupils' attainment is on target to be well below average by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. In 2003, National Curriculum tests showed that attainment was well below average by the end of Year 2 and average at the end of Year 6. This year group received intensive support from an 'advanced skills teacher' and support staff, enabling targets to be exceeded. However, other year groups continue to underachieve and show weak knowledge and skills. Overall pupils' attitudes and behaviour are satisfactory, though they do not always listen carefully.
88. Pupils' achievement is unsatisfactory in many lessons and over time. Work provided does not build on what they already know and they often complete work without understanding the concepts involved. As a result they do not gain knowledge, skills and understanding consistently or quickly enough. There is no evidence of differences in achievement between girls and boys in lessons, though in tests boys tend to perform better than girls. Pupils' attainment and achievement have not improved since the time of the last inspection.
89. Teaching and learning are unsatisfactory overall. Teachers do not plan work that meets the wide range of needs within each class. This is especially noticeable in Years 3 to 6, where the range of needs is at its widest. Pupils of differing abilities over two year groups often complete the same or very similar tasks, so that more-able pupils are not challenged enough and lower-attaining pupils do not understand what is expected of them, disadvantaging one group of pupils or another. Teachers miss opportunities to focus on a specific group of pupils and spread their support too thinly around the class. In Years 1 and 2, when work set for younger pupils is too difficult, they are sometimes allowed to leave their work and carry out unrelated low-level tasks, slowing progress. Overall, teaching remains weak since the time of the last inspection.
90. Teaching is most successful at the start of lessons when teachers provide some fun activities to help extend pupils' mental skills and when pupils take part in practical activities that engage their interest. In Years 1 and 2, pupils enjoyed playing number lotto and the activity was successful in increasing their recognition of numbers. Throughout the school a good number of well-trained teaching assistants provide effective support, especially when the work provided by the teacher matches the pupils' needs. For example, during mental mathematics in Years 2 and 3 they used miniature versions of the teacher's counting stick to provide first-hand

support for pupils who were unable to count in tens on their own. In most lessons teachers manage pupils' behaviour well. However, in an unsatisfactory lesson, pupils were inattentive and the teacher was unable to hold their interest. Valuable time was wasted dealing with several badly behaved pupils. In satisfactory lessons, tasks were explained clearly, effective use was made of questioning, and teachers had a better awareness of what pupils had not understood.

91. Whilst the school tests pupils at the end of each year, assessment information is not analysed to help identify strengths and weaknesses in provision and to support teachers when they plan for a new class. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly and targets are set for each pupil. As at the time of the last inspection these procedures are not used effectively to share with the pupils what they need to learn next or to plan suitable work.
92. Leadership and management of the subject are unsatisfactory and weaknesses identified at the time of the last inspection remain. A new co-ordinator is keen to develop provision and understands that attainment is weak throughout the school. However, a lack of opportunity for monitoring teaching and learning means that the action plans are general rather than focusing on areas of greatest need. The school has received a large amount of support from the local educational authority and from teachers with advanced skills from another school who worked with pupils and trained a teaching assistant so that she could continue the teaching programme this year. However, taken together, this support has not had a lasting impact on the school because, as at the time of the last inspection, members of staff are constantly leaving and whole-school procedures are not in place to support long-term improvement. Shortages of educational resources mean that teachers often need to make their own.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

93. As at the time of the last inspection, there are few opportunities for pupils to develop their skills during other subjects and weaknesses in their attainment limit effectiveness when they do. A new ICT programme that gives pupils opportunities to practise basic skills is used extensively in some classes. This is helping to reinforce learning.

### **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **unsatisfactory**.

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

- Pupils' attainment is poor and they are not achieving as well as they should.
- Teaching is unsatisfactory because it does not meet the needs of all pupils; work is sometimes too hard or too easy for different groups of pupils.
- There are no effective assessment procedures to help teachers match work to pupils' differing needs.
- Science has not been an area of focus for the school; there has been little monitoring of pupils' work or the quality of teaching. This means that weaknesses have not been identified or addressed.
- Pupils are keen to learn and they enjoy work when it is challenging and especially when it has a practical focus.

#### **Commentary**

94. Pupils' attainment is well below average by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Progress since the last inspection has been unsatisfactory because standards of attainment remain too low. There continue to be significant weaknesses in pupils' scientific knowledge and in their ability to apply their knowledge in practical situations. Pupils have a weak scientific vocabulary and

only a limited understanding of basic skills such as fair testing and the need to measure data accurately.

95. National test data at the end of Year 6 confirms inspection findings, with pupils' attainment well below both the national average and that of similar schools. In 2003 no pupils had achieved the higher Level 5 by the end of Year 6. Teacher assessments at the end of Year 2 in 2003 show that attainment was broadly in line with the average for all schools and above the average for similar schools. However, these levels of attainment are not reflected in current work in either Year 2 or Year 3, suggesting that, as in some other subjects, teacher assessments have been inaccurate and have overestimated levels of attainment. Test results, teacher assessments and observations of pupils at work confirm that there is no significant difference between the attainment of boys or girls or pupils from different backgrounds.
96. Test data in 2003 shows that pupils in Year 6 had made less progress over time in science than was made in similar schools. The high turnover of staff and the unsatisfactory behaviour of pupils that were found at the time of the last inspection were significant factors in these low levels of achievement. Pupils' achievement has improved in the current year, due to a generally more knowledgeable staff and improved attitudes towards learning. Nevertheless, achievement remains unsatisfactory, with pupils not progressing quickly enough because work does not always meet their needs.
97. Teaching continues to be a significant weakness in provision. The quality of teaching and learning is unsatisfactory; two out of four lessons seen during the inspection were unsatisfactory, with one example of good teaching. The high level of unsatisfactory teaching is confirmed by a scrutiny of pupils' previous work, which shows that they often complete the same piece of work whatever their capability. Teachers' planning is too generalised, takes insufficient account of the needs of pupils with differing prior attainment and does not clearly identify what pupils of differing ability will learn in a particular lesson. Less-capable pupils and those with special educational needs are often given work that is too hard for them, which they cannot complete and do not understand. This limits their progress. There are also missed opportunities for challenging more-capable pupils. In many lessons pupils record their findings by copying out work or by adding missing words to a worksheet. This means that there are missed opportunities for them to write purposefully. There is little evidence of ICT being used to support or extend learning.
98. Teaching is most effective when learning is built around a practical activity. For example, in the good lesson in Years 3 and 4 the teacher had planned an interesting practical activity that involved identifying whether different materials were solids or liquids. The work was very 'hands-on', with a good range of resources meaning that pupils were encouraged to find out for themselves. This teaching method was effective, with pupils making good gains in knowledge and learning well.
99. Throughout the school, pupils' behaviour has improved significantly since the last inspection due to the now good expectations of teachers. This means that pupils now show good attitudes towards learning and are more responsive to the work they are given.
100. There is a good number of teaching assistants to support pupils and they make a good contribution to learning. Pupils make better progress when they are supported by a teaching assistant because of this good individual support.
101. Assessment procedures are unsatisfactory. Teachers' marking rarely helps pupils to identify what has gone well or where there are weaknesses. There is no group or individual target setting in science, meaning that pupils have only a limited understanding of how they could improve. There are no long-term assessment procedures to help new teachers quickly find a starting point for the pupils in their class. This is an important weakness because of the exceptionally high turnover of staff.

102. Leadership and management are unsatisfactory, although the recently appointed co-ordinator has a realistic understanding of some of the key areas for development, such as improving assessment procedures. This is reflected in the recently devised action plan. Self-evaluation is not firmly established, as the subject has not been an area of focus, meaning that there has been no recent monitoring of teaching and learning. As a result there is not yet a clear picture of current weaknesses and therefore only a limited capacity to effect immediate improvement.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching is good in the Year 2/3 class, with differing needs met well. As a result younger pupils are beginning to develop good word-processing skills.
- Teaching assistants and other adult helpers are used effectively to support learning in the ICT suite.
- Not enough use is made of resources; the ICT suite is not fully used and there are missed opportunities to use computers in classrooms.
- There are no assessment procedures in place to ensure that learning is effectively monitored and that work builds on previous learning.

### **Commentary**

103. There has been good improvement since the last inspection. Funding from the education action zone has helped to improve resources and teachers are more confident about teaching basic skills. Pupils' achievement has improved, though attainment is still below expectations overall by the end of Year 2 and Year 6.
104. Pupils in the current Year 2 have sound basic skills and are becoming competent at using a range of word-processing techniques. They are beginning to show the benefits of having prolonged access to regular ICT teaching since they started school. In contrast, older pupils still lack basic skills. They still find it hard to find their way around a keyboard and have an insecure understanding of the many applications of ICT. Nevertheless, they show a greater range of basic skills than were found at the time of the last inspection. They are now confident about loading, saving and printing work. They successfully produce simple graphs and spreadsheets and use word processing and clip-art to make their writing more accessible and attractive to an audience.
105. Pupils' achievement in lessons is now consistently satisfactory and is sometimes good. Pupils are still working at a low level of attainment in many lessons. This is appropriate given previous weaknesses in provision, which means that many older pupils, in particular, are still 'catching up'. Less capable pupils and those identified as having special educational needs are often supported by teaching assistants in ICT lessons. This good support is effective in ensuring that they make at least satisfactory progress. However, in some lessons there is scope for providing greater challenge for the small number of more-capable pupils – largely those who have computers at home. Their learning is slowed when all pupils work on the same task whatever their previous experiences. At the moment teachers' planning does not always identify clearly how differing needs are to be met in lessons.
106. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall, with an example of good teaching in Years 2 and 3. There was good learning in this lesson, because the teacher provided good opportunities for more-capable pupils to extend their learning once they had completed the initial task. This meant that they made good progress. Teachers manage behaviour effectively in lessons, although the ICT suite is small and older pupils find it hard to concentrate in the relatively confined space. When this happens, the pace of learning slows.

107. An important weakness in current provision is the fact that there are no assessment arrangements to support teachers' planning. At the moment, teachers rely on their own knowledge of the pupils rather than any objective measure of attainment. The co-ordinator has identified the need to develop assessment and a new procedure is to be implemented shortly.
108. There is a satisfactory curriculum. It is more carefully planned than at the time of the last inspection, showing coverage of all aspects of the National Curriculum. Most teaching takes place in the ICT suite. This is effective in ensuring that all pupils have regular opportunities to improve ICT skills. However, there are missed opportunities to extend learning. The ICT suite is not in use for much of each school day and insufficient use is made of the computers that are in classes to support learning across the curriculum.
109. Leadership and management are satisfactory. There is a newly appointed co-ordinator who has a clear understanding of priorities. There has been a useful audit of resources, but attainment has not yet been formally monitored. A thorough action plan shows clearly how provision is to be further improved and the co-ordinator is a good role model in his own use of ICT across the curriculum.

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

110. The use of ICT across the curriculum has improved since the last inspection and is now satisfactory, although there are still some weaknesses. There are some good cross-curricular links, especially in mathematics, where pupils use numeracy programmes to practise basic skills. In literacy, pupils word-process writing, using a range of ICT techniques. However, not enough use is made of ICT in subjects such as science, history and geography because teachers' planning does not identify clearly possible links.

### **HUMANITIES**

Provision in geography, history and religious education is **satisfactory** overall.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching is well resourced to catch and hold pupils' interest but weak literacy skills are a barrier to learning.
- Pupils show sound understanding in discussions.
- Tasks do not match the needs of different ability groups closely enough.
- The quality and quantity of recorded work are too low.
- There is only limited use of ICT to support learning.

### **Commentary**

111. There is insufficient evidence to make a secure judgement on standards in geography and history by the end of Year 2. Evidence from completed work and lesson observations indicates that overall standards are below expectations in geography, history and religious education in the present Year 6 and in religious education at the end of Year 2. However, pupils' achievement is broadly satisfactory in relation to their below average attainment on entry to the school. There is no significant difference between the attainment of boys or girls or pupils from different backgrounds. Pupils with special educational needs are given some support, although their pace of learning is slow when work is not matched closely enough to need.
112. In discussion the pupils show wider and more secure understanding than is apparent in recorded work. There has been a decline in standards since the last inspection when

standards at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 met national expectations for geography and history and the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus for religious education.

## **Geography**

113. Three lessons were seen, as were samples of work in Years 3 to 6. In a good lesson in Years 1 and 2, the teacher made good use of a well-told story to illustrate features of life in Egypt. A list of key words helped pupils to record their learning and higher-attaining pupils were given the additional challenge of finding information in a reference book. In an unsatisfactory lesson, pupils were left too little time to complete the written task, resulting in some underachievement across the range of ability. Previously, pupils in Years 3 and 4 have achieved well in neatly presented block graphs showing their preferences for holiday destinations, and in clear accounts of rice growing. The work of Years 5 and 6 shows a very thorough study of maps of Europe to identify countries and their capitals.

## **History**

114. Teaching was satisfactory in the one lesson seen in the Year 2 and 3 class. In this lesson, pupils' understanding of the meaning of Armistice Day was sensitively explored and extended, making a good contribution to their spiritual and cultural development. The work of pupils in Years 5 and 6 shows a sound understanding of aspects of World War II, with correctly recorded facts. Higher-attaining pupils achieve well in writing letters home, imagining they are evacuees, though lower-attaining pupils have difficulty in completing such extended writing tasks.

## **Religious education**

115. Three lessons were seen, as were samples of pupils' work in Years 3 to 6. Teaching was satisfactory in the two lessons seen in Years 1 and 2, where pupils are making sound progress in understanding contrasts between Christianity and Sikhism. Prayers written by higher-attaining pupils show a strong personal response, but other pupils write little.

116. The good lesson in the Year 5 and 6 class was well structured and very well resourced to illustrate key features of Islam. Pupils' attention was held effectively by thoughtfully contrasted resources and experiences that included tasting fresh dates. The teacher showed good subject knowledge and gave a clear lead in instruction and discussion. Questioning at a brisk pace was used well to probe earlier learning. All pupils showed positive attitudes, respect and sound understanding in discussing the significance of what they had experienced. Written work in Years 3 to 6 shows overall sound coverage of several major world religions and facts are accurately recorded. However, some work by pupils with average or lower attainment is incomplete and carelessly presented.

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

This aspect of the curriculum was not an area of focus for the inspection and there is insufficient evidence to form judgements on overall provision in these subjects. Provision was **satisfactory** overall at the time of the last inspection, with unsatisfactory assessment procedures.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There are no whole-school procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress.
- A good number of teaching assistants ensure effective support for individual pupils.
- Pupils enjoy taking part in lessons.

### **Art and design**

117. Examples of work on display and in sketchbooks indicate that pupils' attainment is broadly **satisfactory**. In Year 2 pupils make careful pastel drawings of shells and fun collages of animals from a range of reclaimed materials. However, they have only limited knowledge of how to mix paint to make different colours. In Year 6 there are some good observational drawings of containers, with shading being used effectively and pupils made some bright and lively paintings of fireworks. They carry out appropriate evaluations of their work and this is an improvement since the last inspection. In Years 2 and 3 pupils have good attitudes towards the subject and most share resources such as mixing palettes sensibly.
118. Teaching was good in the one lesson observed in Years 2 and 3. Techniques were discussed before pupils started work on their still-life paintings and a good number of teaching assistants provided effective support, enabling pupils to concentrate well and paint what they could see. Sensitive encouragement helped pupils to gain confidence and persevere, and good work was shared with the class. There is no evidence of three-dimensional artwork.
119. Some use is made of ICT to support learning. For example, pupils use art programs to recreate pictures in the style of different artists.

### **Design and technology**

120. No lessons were observed during the inspection and a very small amount of work was available.
121. Examples of work on display indicate that pupils' attainment is **satisfactory**. In Year 2, pupils made satisfactory vehicles using wheels and axles and joined card by making hinges. In Year 6, pupils evaluated breads from around the world before designing and making their own sandwiches as part of a topic on the history of bread making.

### **Music**

122. In Year 6, pupils' singing is satisfactory but they have only a limited knowledge of musical terms and find it difficult to maintain a steady beat.
123. Teaching was satisfactory in the one lesson observed in Years 5 and 6. The teacher had a good relationship with the pupils and managed behaviour effectively. Helpful advice on how to play the recorder enabled pupils to improve the accuracy of their playing during the lesson.

### **Physical education**

124. A dance lesson in Years 5 and 6 and a games lesson in Years 1 and 2 were on the timetable. Pupils' attainment in these lessons was **satisfactory** and pupils in Years 5 and 6 made good progress in using their own ideas to make a sequence of movements. They worked sensibly in pairs devising a wide range of interesting balancing shapes. However, when travelling around the hall they tended to bunch together rather than making full use of the available space.
125. Teaching was good in one lesson and satisfactory in the other. In the good lesson in Years 5 and 6 the teacher provided clear instructions and led by example, encouraging pupils to take part enthusiastically. The lesson included good opportunities for them to evaluate each other's work. In the satisfactory lesson in Years 1 and 2 there was a good emphasis on rigorous exercise and its benefits. However, the pace of the lesson slowed between activities and this reduced the pupils' attentiveness.
126. The acoustics in the hall make it difficult to hear voices clearly and small sounds are magnified, making it difficult for pupils to concentrate.



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

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teachers plan good opportunities for pupils to learn to develop personal and social skills through a range of activities, including circle time, religious education and listening to visitors.
- The school council helps pupils to learn how to take responsibility.

### **Commentary**

127. Few lessons were timetabled during the inspection. The ethos of the school places a strong emphasis on developing personal skills throughout the school day, rather than only in specific lessons. This means that there is insufficient evidence to make an overall judgement on the quality of teaching and standards of attainment.
128. The curriculum for PSHE and citizenship is good. In circle time, pupils report that they are able to discuss issues like bullying. In lessons, they show good attitudes and topics such as Armistice Day help them to appreciate how society has been shaped by historical events. In science lessons there is good coverage of sex education and issues relating to substance abuse.
129. This is reflected in teachers' good expectations of behaviour and the good opportunities given to pupils to learn about some of the responsibilities and duties of citizenship. There is a school council that meets regularly. This is a very recent development that is effective in teaching pupils that their views and opinions are important. Pupils report that the school council is very valuable and councillors take their responsibilities very seriously. In addition, older pupils are able to become play leaders. This worthwhile project is well organised. Pupils have to apply for the role by writing a letter of application. This helps them to develop an understanding of some of the responsibilities and tasks they will experience in later life.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

### *Inspection judgement*

### *Grade*

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

<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>6</b>
Pupils' achievement	5

<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>	<b>3</b>
Attendance	7
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	4
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>	<b>5</b>
The quality of teaching	5
How well pupils learn	5
The quality of assessment	5
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	4
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	4
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	4
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	4
The quality of the school's links with the community	4
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3

<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>5</b>
The governance of the school	4
The leadership of the headteacher	5
The leadership of other key staff	5
The effectiveness of management	5

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