

# INSPECTION REPORT

**WATERHOUSES CHURCH OF ENGLAND**

**PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Waterhouses, Stoke-on-Trent

LEA area: Staffordshire

Unique reference number: 124306

Headteacher: Geoff Beckett

Lead inspector: Fred Ward

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

Inspection number: 258316

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

|                              |   |
|------------------------------|---|
| Type of school:              | Primary   |
| School category:             | Voluntary controlled                            |
| Age range of pupils:         | 3 – 11 years                                    |
| Gender of pupils:            | Mixed   |
| Number on roll:              | 77  |
| School address:              | Waterfall Lane<br>Waterhouses<br>Stoke-on-Trent |
| Postcode:                    | ST10 3HY  |
| Telephone number:            | (01538) 308 356                                 |
| Fax number:                  | (01538) 308 356                                 |
| Appropriate authority:       | The governing body                              |
| Name of chair of governors:  | Rev. Andrew Burton                              |
| Date of previous inspection: | 1 <sup>st</sup> June 1998                       |

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Waterhouses is smaller than most primary schools with pupils aged three to 11. The number on roll has fallen steadily since the last inspection, from 113 to 77, as nearly all parents choose to send their children to a middle school at the end of Year 4 rather than completing their primary education at Waterhouses. Currently, there are only seven pupils in Years 5 and 6 and other year groups are small. Almost all pupils are of white British background and come from homes with incomes around the national average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs varies between year groups but is generally below average, and the majority of them have moderate learning difficulties. Nearly all children start school in the Nursery class aged three-and-a-half with a wide range of attainment but most are achieving as expected for their age. Some transfer to other local schools nearer their home when they start in Reception. As a result of the falling roll, staffing levels have been cut recently and classes reorganised. The buildings and grounds are extensive as they served first as a secondary and then a middle school. The School Achievement award was gained in 2002 and the Youth Sports Trust gave the school its acknowledgement this year.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

| Members of the inspection team |                 |                | Subject responsibilities  |
|--------------------------------|-----------------|----------------|---|
| 18605                          | Fred Ward       | Lead inspector | Foundation Stage, Mathematics, Science, Information and communication technology, Physical education, Religious education, Personal, social and health education. |
| 19716                          | Katy Blake      | Lay inspector  |   |
| 18322                          | Sue Smith Airey | Team inspector | English, Art and design, Design and technology, French, Geography, History, Music, Special educational needs.   |

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**This is an underachieving school** with many strengths. Good teaching ensures pupils achieve well, apart from in Years 3 and 4, where many do not make sufficient progress in English and mathematics. The school is unsatisfactorily led and managed. Staff salaries and building maintenance are costly. The school gives unsatisfactory value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Pupils attain above nationally expected standards in mathematics, science and reading in Years 2 and 6 and in speaking and listening and writing in Year 2.
- Governors and the headteacher have worked hard to keep the full range of primary education at Waterhouses but have paid insufficient attention to tackling underachievement.
- Checking and developing teaching and learning are unsatisfactory in mathematics and there is currently no co-ordinator for English.
- Pupils attain better than expected nationally in art and physical education but Year 3 and 4 pupils have considerable difficulties with mathematical problem-solving and using writing.
- Children make a good start in the Nursery and their personal, social and language skills continue to be well developed through the Infants.
- The teaching is good or better in eight out of ten lessons.
- Learning opportunities in the Nursery and Infants are rich and varied while the Juniors enjoy many challenging opportunities outside the classroom.

Since the school was inspected in 1998, improvement has been satisfactory, with some of the key issues tackled successfully. However, checking and developing teaching and learning are still not effective in English and mathematics, reports to parents are not clear enough and the governors' annual report and school prospectus do not meet statutory requirements. Staffing levels have been reduced as pupil numbers have fallen. The national Schools Achievement award was gained in 2002 and the Youth Sports Trust gave the school an award in 2003.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

*Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average.*

*Similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 2.*

**Pupils achieve well, overall.** There are so few pupils in Years 2 and 6 that comparison with national test results gives no indication of standards achieved overall. Children join the Nursery aged three-and-a-half and make good progress as they settle quickly. They continue to achieve well in Reception and nearly all are likely to reach the Early Learning Goals set for them by the time they start Year 1. They achieve well in the mixed age Infant class, most attaining better than expected in national tests for seven-year-olds in 2003 for writing and mathematics, satisfactorily in reading and, according to the teacher's assessment, not so well in science. Currently, Year 2 pupils are attaining better than expected nationally in English, mathematics and science. In Years 3 and 4, pupils make steady progress overall but underachieve in mathematics because of poor problem-solving skills and, in writing, for lack of practice. The handful remaining in Years 5 and 6 work hard, benefiting from the very small class and catch up in English and mathematics, overall attaining better than expected nationally in mathematics, science and reading. From the work sampled in other subjects, pupils

attain better than expected in art and physical education and as expected in information and communication technology, religious education and all other subjects. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress overall but receive insufficient support in Years 3 and 4.

**Pupils' personal education, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is well developed.** Pupils get on very well together and their behaviour is good. Attendance was below average last year but is now above average.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**Overall, the school provides a good quality of education, as teaching is generally good.**

Arrangements for pupils starting school are very good and the youngest quickly settle because of the good teaching in the Nursery and Reception. In Years 1 and 2, teachers provide plenty of practical activities that help pupils really understand what they are learning. In Years 3 and 4, teaching enables most pupils to acquire a sound foundation of knowledge and understanding but does not sufficiently help them apply new skills to develop their learning, especially in writing and mathematics. In Years 5 and 6, the teachers give plenty of individual help in the very small class and pupils make rapid gains but sometimes they are not given enough independence.

The curriculum is generally well planned and it is good in the Nursery and Infants' classes. Additional activities outside of the classroom, including visits, residential trips and school clubs, are very good, particularly for Juniors. The school works well with parents, listening and taking account of their views. Pupils are well looked after.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**Leadership and management are unsatisfactory** as is governance. Whilst improvement plans are appropriate, governors and the headteacher have not helped staff to develop their management skills or provided them with sufficient time to improve teaching and learning effectively in their areas of responsibility. This is most apparent in English and mathematics.

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

Parents are appreciative of the school but most prefer to transfer their children to the middle school system at the end of Year 4. A few were concerned that there was insufficient information in school reports on what their children need to do to improve; inspection findings agree with this view. Pupils like school.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- tackle underachievement in mathematics and writing in Years 3 and 4 by developing more effective teaching and learning;
- help staff develop and use management skills effectively, especially in English and mathematics;
- give older pupils more opportunities to work independently;
- provide parents with more helpful information in reports on their children's progress in all subjects, explaining what pupils need to do to improve;

and, to meet statutory requirements:

- include all the required information in the school prospectus and governors' annual report to parents and use the locally agreed syllabus for religious education.

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

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

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

Overall, pupils achieve well. Pupils attain above nationally expected standards in mathematics, science and reading in Years 2 and 6 and in speaking and listening and writing in Year 2. There is underachievement in Years 3 and 4.

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

- Children make a good start in the Nursery and achieve very well in their personal and language development.
- Pupils achieve well in literacy and numeracy in the Infants.
- Throughout the school, attainment in art and physical education is better than nationally expected but Year 3 and 4 pupils have considerable difficulties with mathematical problem solving and writing.
- Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in the Infants but not in the lower Juniors.

#### **Commentary**

1. Children in the Nursery class make good progress, especially in their personal, social and emotional development and in their communication, language and literacy skills. For the majority transferring to Reception, this progress continues. In the autumn term, there was some disruption caused by absence due to staff sickness but this had minimal effect on children's achievement. Inspection findings indicate that nearly all children will reach, and a few will exceed, the Early Learning Goals set for them by the time they start Year 1, as they did at the last inspection.
2. National test results for seven and 11-year-olds need to be interpreted with caution as there are usually ten or fewer pupils in these year groups and comparisons with other schools are not reliable. These small numbers also mean comparisons between the attainment of different year groups are not valid.
3. In 2003 tests, nearly all pupils reached or exceeded the standard expected for their age in reading, writing and mathematics, with around half gaining a higher level. Their performance was slightly better in writing and mathematics than in reading. According to the teacher's assessment, whilst nearly all reached the standard expected in science, none did better.
4. The inspection found that pupils in Years 1 and 2 benefit from the many interesting and first-hand learning experiences offered and are achieving well. Currently, nearly all Year 2 pupils are attaining standards in English, mathematics and science above those expected for their age. This is an improvement since the previous inspection, when standards were as nationally expected. In addition, pupils in the Infants are developing their literacy and numeracy skills well, as they are given many opportunities to practise these during cross-curricular topics.
5. Pupils generally underachieve in Years 3 and 4, as many, particularly those who learn at a slower rate and the few who have special educational needs, find the work too hard and unsuitable for their stage and style of learning. This is particularly evident in the difficulties they encounter when trying to solve problems in mathematics and in using their writing to support their learning across different subjects. In more practical and creative subjects such as art, music and physical education, they attain better levels than expected for their age.



6. The few pupils who remain in Waterhouses in Years 5 and 6 benefit from the very small class. They are given a great deal of individual support and make rapid gains in mathematics and writing. However, sometimes this progress is not sufficient for them to catch up all round if they are slower learners. This happened in Year 6 national tests in 2003 when two pupils did not reach the standard expected in mathematics and no pupils reached the higher level. However, in English and science, all pupils reached the expected level. Currently, Year 6 pupils are attaining levels higher than expected for their age in mathematics, science and reading and performing satisfactorily in writing. This is an improvement since the previous inspection when standards were as expected nationally.
7. On the evidence available during the inspection, pupils throughout the school attain better than expected in art and physical education as the school has built up an expertise in teaching specialist skills over the years. Pupils' successes are widely celebrated and this achievement spurs on others to want to do the same. On the work sampled, pupils' attainment in Years 2 and 6 in information and communication technology, religious education and other subjects is as expected.
8. The school is good at identifying pupils with special educational needs at an early age and, in the Nursery and Infants' classes, they are given carefully matched individual help and so make good progress. However, in Years 3 and 4, they are often unsupported in lessons making little gains in learning. In Years 5 and 6, they again receive individual help and make good progress.

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

Pupils get on very well with each other and their behaviour is good. Older pupils take on responsibility willingly but do not readily put forward their views. Younger pupils enjoy learning. Pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development is good. Attendance is above average.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils in the Nursery and Infants have very positive attitudes to learning but younger Juniors are often not very interested in lessons.
- Pupils generally play and work very well together.
- Whilst younger pupils happily talk about their experiences, this is less so with the lower Juniors.
- Pupils have a good awareness of other cultures.
- Pupils are generally punctual and attendance is now above average.

### **Commentary**

9. Nearly all pupils report that they like school, feel safe and secure and know whom they can turn to for support; they are not keen on the few older pupils who sometimes behave inappropriately at lunchtimes. The school has been dealing effectively with this problem and no incidents were observed during the inspection.
10. Severe weather conditions, such as those that occurred during the inspection, can result in some pupils arriving late. Whilst good attendance is actively encouraged, this is not always achieved. Attendance was well below average last year and a few families did not explain reasons for their children's absence. This has improved and attendance has since risen to above average.

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

| Authorised absence |     |
|--------------------|-----|
| School data        | 8.0 |
| National data      | 5.4 |

| Unauthorised absence |     |
|----------------------|-----|
| School data          | 0.0 |
| National data        | 0.4 |

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

11. Relationships between pupils are generally very good and the youngest quickly settle and make good progress in their personal, social and emotional development. Behaviour in class and around the school is generally good and the younger pupils, in particular, are keen to do their best.
12. In recent years, no pupils have been excluded.

**Ethnic background of pupils****Exclusions in the last school year**

| Categories used in the Annual School Census |
|---|
| White – British                             |
| Any other ethnic group                      |

| No. of pupils on roll |
|-----------------------|
| 76                    |
| 1                     |

| Number of fixed period exclusions | Number of permanent exclusions |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 0                                 | 0                              |
| 0                                 | 0                              |

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

13. Pupils in the Nursery and Infants have a very good attitude to work and join in enthusiastically in lessons. Nearly all reach, and many exceed, the Early Learning Goals set for them in their personal, social and emotional development before they start Year 1. They willingly talk about their experiences and want to know what they can do to improve their learning. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 say they find some lessons boring as they have to listen for long periods and have few interesting things to do. Older pupils are very adaptable and willingly do what they are told but do not confidently express their views or opinions.
14. Pupils' spiritual development is good, as pupils gain much from the prevailing Christian ethos that values each individual and helps them to appreciate others. Good moral values are encouraged and pupils can distinguish between right and wrong. They have a strong sense of fairness. They work and play well together in small and large groups, and particularly enjoy contributing to school activities, such as performing in shows and concerts and playing in sports. Pupils are aware of their local and national cultures and are well aware of how other people live in the world and the contribution of different ethnic groups to British society, despite limited first-hand experiences.
15. Overall, these findings are similar to those of the previous inspection, except for the decline in the attitudes of younger Juniors.

**QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL**

Except for the lower juniors, the quality of education is good, as teaching and learning are mostly good, the curriculum suitable and pupils are well looked after.

**Teaching and learning**

Teaching and learning are good overall.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning in the Nursery and Infants are nearly always good and often better, with a particular emphasis on personal development and skills in literacy and numeracy.
- Nursery and Infant staff are very good at making sure all pupils, regardless of their capabilities, are fully involved in lessons.
- There is unsatisfactory teaching and learning in Years 3 and 4, especially for pupils who learn at a slower rate.
- Older pupils benefit from individual teaching in the small Years 5 and 6 class but do not confidently work on their own.
- Pupils' progress is thoroughly checked and the information is generally used effectively to help plan appropriate work. However, it is not yet widely to set targets for individuals to improve.

## Commentary

16. Teaching and learning in the Nursery and Reception classes are good overall and sometimes very good. In Years 1 and 2, the teaching and learning are also generally good and often very good. In the Juniors, teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. This is an overall improvement in the Nursery and Infants since the previous inspection but a decline in quality in the Juniors.

### *Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 37 lessons*

| Excellent | Very good | Good     | Satisfactory | Unsatisfactory | Poor   | Very poor |
|-----------|-----------|----------|--------------|----------------|--------|-----------|
| 0 (0 %)   | 11 (30%)  | 18 (48%) | 5 (14%)      | 3 (8%)         | 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.*

17. The consistently good or very good teaching in the Nursery and Reception classes occurs because staff work very closely together and use their detailed knowledge of individuals to plan very well matched activities. They are ready to provide support and encouragement when needed so that all children confidently involve themselves in their learning. They also make very good use of the two linked classrooms and shared resources. Staff in the Nursery and Infants are very good at making sure all pupils are able to take a full part in lessons and achieve as well as they can. Pupils with special educational needs are given individual attention from an early age and the more able are challenged to do their best.
18. In the mixed-aged Years 1 and 2 class, the part-time teachers complement each other's skills and expertise well. They are very good at providing just the right mix of challenge and support so that pupils want to try their best. They are adaptable in their teaching methods and work very well with other staff and voluntary helpers. In this way, they make sure that pupils with similar capabilities are taught in small groups wherever possible, so they can cope with the work set. There is plenty of practical work and very good use is made of the wide range of good resources. Pupils are enthusiastic and their curiosity is very well fostered.
19. In Years 3 and 4, too much teaching and learning is attempted with the whole class. The group contains a wide range of capabilities and too often, pupils who learn at a slow rate, including those with special educational needs, are not able to follow lessons, particularly in English and mathematics. Consequently, there is a considerable amount of underachievement.
20. In Years 5 and 6, the headteacher and part-time teacher work well together and the quality of teaching is good. With such a small class, they are able to give a great deal of individual attention to pupils and help them identify and tackle any shortcomings. This works particularly well in helping pupils catch up in their writing and mathematics. However, sometimes there is a

tendency not to encourage pupils to express their own views or to try out ideas independently as they rely too much on worksheets and directed tasks.

21. Most teachers have gained from the nationally-initiated training for literacy and numeracy and have combined the best features of their previous practice with the new ideas. As a result, achievement in English and mathematics has risen since the previous inspection. Effective use is made of teachers' expertise. Staff teach specialist lessons for science, art, French, geography, history, music, physical education and religious education. This has been especially successful in art and physical education, where pupils attain better than nationally expected.
22. Homework is well used to reinforce basic skills in reading, spelling and learning number facts. Pupils' reading skills particularly benefit from this support at home.
23. Teachers are beginning to make more use of new technologies to support teaching and learning and the Juniors are benefiting from timetabled sessions in the community computer suite. However, this is a fairly recent development and staff are more confident in word-processing and data-handling than they are in other areas of information and communication technology.
24. The school has thorough ways of checking and recording pupils' progress, using staff observations and national tests. Except in Years 3 and 4, teachers use this information well to plan and adapt learning activities, focusing on common problems in lessons and identifying individuals for additional support. However, pupils are not yet fully involved in agreeing personal targets to improve their learning although the school has plans to introduce such arrangements in the near future.

## **The curriculum**

The curriculum meets statutory requirements, except in religious education, but has some shortcomings. Learning opportunities in the Nursery and Infants are rich and varied whilst the Juniors enjoy many challenging opportunities outside the classroom.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- A good curriculum is provided in the Nursery and Infants, closely linked to pupils' personal experiences.
- Provision for English, mathematics and special educational needs in Years 3 and 4 does not always match the rate, stage and style of pupils' learning.
- Pupils' experiences are considerably enriched by additional activities.
- The art and physical education programmes throughout the school are good.
- The school does not follow the locally agreed syllabus for religious education.

## **Commentary**

25. The school provides a broad and relevant curriculum which meets the needs of most pupils. These are similar to the findings to the previous inspection. In particular, there are rich and varied learning opportunities in the Nursery and Reception classes. Pupils are well prepared to begin the National Curriculum when they join the Infant class because the effective planning ensures progression in pupils' learning. A further strength is the provision of French for pupils from Years 2 to 6. Pupils learn conversational French, which has built their confidence in speaking a foreign language in addition to enhancing their speaking and listening skills and knowledge about language.
26. The curriculum in Years 3 and 4 is unsatisfactory in English and mathematics. The programmes of study are not used adequately to plan teaching and learning activities that all pupils can follow. Many pupils, particularly those that learn at a slower rate, find the work too

difficult. Pupils with special educational needs are especially affected, as very little is done to break their learning down into meaningful steps. As a result, many pupils in Years 3 and 4 make unsatisfactory progress and there is considerable underachievement.

27. Elsewhere in the school, the curriculum is well matched to the needs of all pupils, including those with special educational needs. Teachers adjust the activities they plan to suit the rate and style of pupils' learning and individual education plans are well used by teachers and assistants. These plans are reviewed regularly and updated to reflect pupils' progress, wherever possible in partnership with parents and pupils. The more able also make good progress as they are given harder work when they complete their initial tasks.
28. The provision for physical education is good. The very good facilities, including a large hall, heated swimming pool and extensive grounds, mean that a full and varied programme of activities can be run. These experiences are further extended in the Junior classes by residential visits with exciting outdoor pursuits. The art programme is also good, involving the study of a range of artists' styles and the use of different media.
29. There is a very good range of after-school clubs, which includes sports, dance, gardening and chess. All pupils learn the ocarina and the recorder and many go on to take up another musical instrument in Years 5 and 6. These activities help pupils to achieve well and to develop their skills and interests further.
30. Sex and relationships and drug education are covered partly through the whole curriculum, where appropriate, but mainly through science and religious education. Human development is taught separately to pupils in Years 5 and 6. Whilst religious education covers an appropriate range of topics, the programme is not based on the locally agreed syllabus and therefore does not meet statutory requirements. Whilst the school is good at dealing with pupils' personal, social, emotional and health development informally, teachers devise their own lessons as there is no formal programme to cover these topics or citizenship. The school has plans to introduce a scheme of work that makes sure all recommended areas are covered in sufficient depth to match pupils' age and maturity.
31. Resources and equipment are good in both quality and range. These help staff to teach well and pupils to enjoy their learning. Resources for the library have recently been reviewed and renewed but, at the moment, there are insufficient planned opportunities for pupils to carry out research.
32. The school has very good accommodation and grounds, which are used very well. The recently opened community computer suite is proving a very useful facility for lessons as all pupils can access a workstation.

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

Overall, the school takes good care of pupils and helps them to achieve well but does not seek and act on pupils' views sufficiently.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The school has created a caring, friendly ethos in a well-ordered community where pupils feel safe and secure.
- Induction arrangements for pupils in the Nursery are very good.
- In the Nursery and Infants, pupils with special educational needs are well supported and included fully in the life of the school.
- There are good and trusting relationships between pupils and adults.
- Pupils have little involvement in shaping school life and few opportunities to be involved in checking their own work.
- Support for pupils in Years 3 and 4 is unsatisfactory.

## **Commentary**

33. The school is good at ensuring the health, safety, care and protection of all pupils so they feel safe and secure. These are similar findings to those of the previous inspection. Staff know pupils very well and generally respond to their needs in a positive and supportive way. Pupils feel that they are cared for and have confidence in approaching staff for advice and support. The guidance they receive is helpful in their learning.
34. There is a climate of good behaviour in this well-ordered community. Staff use a system of team points to encourage good behaviour and good effort in work which encourages pupils to do well. Regular reviews of health and safety procedures and inspections of the buildings and grounds are carried out, which ensures everyone works in a safe environment.
35. Induction arrangements for children starting school in the Nursery and at other times are very good and very much appreciated by parents and pupils. New pupils quickly adapt to school routines and achieve as well as others.
36. Overall, the school supports pupils with special educational needs well. Their progress is effectively tracked by the experienced co-ordinator in the Infants' class and she makes sure they are able to achieve well. However, the lack of progress by many pupils in Years 3 and 4, including those with special educational needs, has not been dealt with satisfactorily and many are unsupported in their learning.
37. Pupils' views are not formally sought. In the Nursery, Reception and Infant classes, pupils are encouraged to express their ideas and opinions in lessons, but there are not many opportunities for pupils to contribute to school development. There are plans to introduce a school council to remedy this.
38. Although the school sets targets for pupils to improve their performance, individuals are not sure what they are. The school is currently reviewing how to involve pupils more in checking their work and learning from their mistakes.

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

The school works closely with parents, has very good links with local schools and contributes well to community life. Transfer arrangements are often stressful for parents and their children.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Parents are appreciative of the school but nearly all choose to transfer their children to other schools by the end of Year 4.
- Although parents are well informed about most of school life, information on their children's progress in annual reports does not show clearly what they need to do to improve.
- Links with other schools and colleges in the area are very good.
- The governors' annual report and school prospectus have minor omissions.

## **Commentary**

39. In their response to the questionnaires and at the meeting prior to the inspection, parents stated that they were overwhelmingly appreciative of the school. However, nearly all felt that their children would benefit from completing their primary education at other schools by the end of Year 4. Most children are transferred to the local middle school and some to other primary schools in a neighbouring local education authority. Parents say they are aware of the uncertainty this creates for the school's future and are looking forward to the forthcoming local education authority review of education in the area to establish a more stable situation.

40. Parents are well informed about school life through regular newsletters, meetings and the good informal contact with class teachers. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. Parents are particularly appreciative of how approachable staff and the head teacher are. They find meetings with teachers helpful in telling how their children are doing but some feel that the annual school reports do not say what their children needed to do to improve. Inspection findings confirm that reports give considerable detail about what pupils can do but give little indication of individuals' strengths and weaknesses. This was a shortcoming at the last inspection.
41. Most parents take an active interest in their children's education and encourage them to complete homework. Some assist in school, for example working with small groups in class or providing transport for games and other events away from school. There is a very active parents' support group that raises considerable funds. This help is very much appreciated.
42. The school prospectus does not inform parents that they can withdraw their children from the act of worship and from religious education and it does not report the latest national results of tests at the end of Years 2 and 6. The governors' annual report also fails to provide several items of information that are required by law.
43. The school involves pupils in many local events in the community, particularly in the sports and arts. This broadening of pupils' experiences is a strength of the school and also increases their sense of belonging and responsibility towards their locality.
44. Parents are very pleased with the help and advice they are given when their children start school in the Nursery and find the visits and information booklets most useful. As a result, the children look forward to coming to school and quickly settle.
45. Leaving Waterhouses for the next stage of education is somewhat traumatic for families as this can occur at different times. There is peer pressure when parents of friends make different choices, and mixed feelings about the value of staying or leaving. Consequently, younger Junior pupils in particular are apprehensive about leaving but excited about the prospect of going to a larger school with older friends. However, administrative arrangements with other schools are efficient and procedures go smoothly.
46. The very good facilities, including a large hall, heated indoor swimming pool, recently refurbished computer suite and extensive grounds, make Waterhouses a very useful resource for the community and for other small schools in the area. These facilities are very well used. In addition, staff benefit from contact with colleagues from other schools and colleges, particularly for sharing ideas and undertaking training. The local group of headteachers is very successful in planning and organising events and activities that individual schools would find too expensive or time-consuming to undertake. These initiatives provide many very beneficial learning opportunities for pupils.
47. Links with local industry, the parish church and the village are good. Teachers make sure that wherever possible, visits and visitors from the local community are planned into lessons. These experiences give pupils a better understanding of how their learning can be applied and raise their awareness of the value and contribution different human activities make to their lives.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Leadership and management by the governing body and head teacher are unsatisfactory as not enough attention has been given to tackling underachievement.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Governors have coped well with the consequences of pupils leaving at the end of Year 4 but are not as well informed about the school's shortcomings as they should be.
- The headteacher has worked very hard to maintain a viable number of pupils on roll but has not checked and developed teaching and learning sufficiently.
- Whilst development priorities to raise achievement are well chosen, action plans are not being successfully managed in English and mathematics.
- New staff are made very welcome and all staff benefit from a good programme of professional training.
- Financial management is efficient but plans do not sufficiently target underachievement.

## Commentary

48. The governors and headteacher have worked hard to maintain the full range of primary education at Waterhouses, coping well with the uncertainty caused by parents transferring their children to other schools after Year 4. The chair of the governing body has been particularly active in trying to make sure that governors are well informed about the school's strengths and weaknesses. He is in frequent contact with the headteacher and is diligent in examining information about the school's performance and asking questions for further clarification. As a result, governors were made aware that pupils were having difficulties with mathematics and writing last term but they have not checked sufficiently to see if the remedial measures being taken were effective. Whilst governors carry out nearly all of their duties and responsibilities satisfactorily, they have not been sufficiently rigorous in tackling underachievement in Years 3 and 4. Consequently, their governance is unsatisfactory.
49. Governors keep a careful check on finances, but each year, they are faced with difficult decisions resulting from a shrinking budget allocation. They have managed staffing reductions well and have efficiently used funds to maintain the large site and extensive facilities. They have successfully supported and developed an effective Nursery and Infants department where pupils achieve well. However, funds have not been well used in the Junior classes where pupils' numbers in Years 5 and 6 are low and there is considerable underachievement in Years 3 and 4.

## Financial information for the year April 02 to March 03

| Income and expenditure (£) |         |
|----------------------------|---------|
| Total income               | 299,910 |
| Total expenditure          | 248,593 |
| Expenditure per pupil      | 3,405   |

| Balances (£)                        |        |
|-------------------------------------|--------|
| Balance from previous year          | 26,520 |
| Balance carried forward to the next | 52,317 |

50. The headteacher teaches the small mixed-age Years 5 and 6 class and has non-contact time to carry out his leadership and management responsibilities. He also teaches science to other classes in the school and this gives him the opportunity to have an overview of pupils' performance. Although he was aware of Years 3 and 4 pupils' unsatisfactory progress in mathematics and in use of writing, he relied too heavily on the co-ordinator's judgements about reasons for underachievement and the effectiveness of actions to tackle shortcomings in teaching and learning. As a result, no additional checks were carried out and pupils continued to underachieve.
51. The school development plan correctly identifies writing and mathematics as priorities for raising achievement, as well as improving the use of new technologies and developing the role of co-ordinators. However, staffing cuts, long-term sickness and the appointment of a newly-qualified teacher have significantly affected managers in carrying out these plans. All



experienced teachers have had to take on additional new roles and currently, English has no co-ordinator. Nearly all teachers have responded very well to this challenge and have made a good start to identifying what needs to be done to bring about improvements. However, they do not have the time or expertise to check and develop teaching and learning as well as they would like. Whilst the local education authority has provided valuable support and advice on how to improve writing, the lack of an English co-ordinator is holding back further developments in the subject. Co-ordination in mathematics is unsatisfactory, as readily available information on the considerable underachievement in Years 3 and 4 has not been acted on. Despite having no one person as co-ordinator, the Nursery and Reception team work very effectively together and have a clear shared purpose. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is well managed as the teacher is experienced and well trained. She has been most effective in the Nursery and Infants but has not been allocated sufficient time to tackle identified shortcomings in the Juniors.

52. Staff are given every encouragement to develop professionally and they all take advantage of the opportunities provided. These include training initiatives organised by a planning group from local primary and first schools, of which the headteacher is a prominent member. Performance management procedures are used effectively to identify individual training needs. Nursery and Infants staff have benefited from this training, and teaching and learning have improved as a result. This is particularly the case in literacy, numeracy and in the development of pupils' personal skills. New staff, including the newly-qualified teacher, report they have been made very welcome and given all the support they needed.
53. The school has very good links with further and higher education and students are frequent visitors. They are fully involved in the life of the school and given good support, making a valuable contribution to pupils' education.
54. The school is very aware of the principles of best value and, in managing the falling number of pupils on roll, has been very careful in its spending decisions. Governors and the headteacher have looked at ways of making the best use of individual teachers' expertise. Specialist teaching has been introduced, ensuring better progression in pupils' learning. However, not enough funds have been allocated to checking and developing teaching and learning or to looking at ways of making the best use of teachers in the Juniors, where there is considerable underachievement. Financial budgets are stretched by the need to service and maintain the extensive buildings and grounds. As a result, the cost per pupil is high and this, combined with the level of underachievement; means the school gives unsatisfactory value for money.

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

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

55. In the Nursery and Reception classes, the inspection focused on children's personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy skills and their mathematical development. In other areas of learning, there was insufficient evidence to form an overall judgement on provision.
56. The school has three significant strengths that are producing happy and enthusiastic learners and children who generally achieve well. These are the rich and varied curriculum, the consistently good, and often better, teaching and the very effective teamwork. Considering that the newly-qualified teacher had only been in post two weeks before the inspection, much has been achieved. Existing staff quickly helped her become familiar with routines and practices and she has very effectively taken on the role of class teacher in Reception. Consequently, there has been very little disruption to children's learning caused by the change of teacher. There is every indication that nearly all children will reach, and a few will exceed, the Early Learning Goals set for them in all areas of learning by the time they start in Year 1 next September. This is an improvement since the previous inspection, especially in the Reception class. Despite having no overall manager, the Nursery and Reception team work well together, knowing what needs to be done to make further improvements.

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

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

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

- Teaching is good and often very good, helping children make very good gains in their learning.
- Children work and play happily together as they find work interesting and exciting.
- Children are learning to be independent and confident learners.

#### **Commentary**

57. Staff in the Nursery and Reception classes constantly give praise and encouragement and as a result, children feel good about themselves and want to work and play happily together. Staff know individual children very well and do all they can to help them deal with any problems. In the Nursery, a new boy having difficulty settling received particular attention, being gently reminded about inappropriate behaviour and was sensitively helped to mix with others. In the Reception class, the teacher has concentrated on helping pupils adjust to new class routines. She has quickly gained their trust and they act sensibly, without needing many reminders. Children are expected to look after themselves and to become increasingly independent in daily routines, such as going to the toilet, getting changed and putting things away.
58. Children's curiosity is captivated through a wide variety of very well planned interesting activities that are directly linked to their own experiences. The classrooms are lively and exciting places to be in, with attractive displays of children's and adults' work, currently on the topic 'winter'. Staff are careful to make sure that quieter and less mature children are encouraged to join in by offering reassurance and sensitive questioning. As a result, all pupils make very good gains in their personal development.
59. Generally children take turns and share well, although some of the youngest in the Nursery are inclined to be more self-centred. However, the Nursery staff are very good at intervening to avoid potential confrontation between children and encouraging individuals to resolve their own differences. As a result, in both the Nursery and the Reception classes, children are very

aware of right and wrong and staff have been most effective in helping individuals understand the consequences of their actions. Staff focus pupils on good examples of children co-operating and working well; this brings out the best in the rest. The atmosphere in both classes is warm and welcoming so that children feel secure and quickly settle. Nearly all children will reach, and most will exceed, the learning goals set for them in personal, social and emotional development by the time they leave Reception.

## COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is consistently good and pupils achieve very well.
- There is a strong emphasis on speaking and listening skills.
- Interesting opportunities are provided for developing writing and reading skills.

### Commentary

60. Children have a wide range of speaking and listening skills when they enter the Nursery. Some have immature speech whilst others are more articulate and confidently talk about their experiences. At every opportunity, staff create opportunities for discussion, in groups and with individuals. When children first arrive, they eagerly engage in very well planned free-play activities. Staff circulate, talking to individuals and asking appropriate questions to stimulate conversation. Nearly all children learn to become confident speakers and listeners for their age and willingly talk to visitors. As one girl said while threading coloured beads on a lace, *"I'm making this for my mummy; it's her birthday"*.
61. This approach is continued in the Reception class, where children are encouraged to develop their speaking and to listen attentively to others. Short discussion times at the start and close of sessions provide children with an obvious focus for their speaking and listening. By careful questioning and encouragement, staff are able to help individuals to think more carefully so that they have something constructive to say. The topic on winter is providing many such opportunities and is also developed in follow-up activities, such as when children role-play in the igloo. As a result of this emphasis on speaking and listening, pupils achieve very well.
62. The classrooms richly promote the importance of words. Displays are well labelled and often, staff draw children's attention to what is written, especially when the first letter of their name is involved. In the Nursery, very effective use is made of 'Floppy Bear's Diary'. Children take home the toy bear and their parents write an account of his adventures in an exercise book. This is read aloud to the class on return to school and the chosen child elaborates on some of the experiences described. In this way, children are learning the value of the written word and also understanding the basic principles of reading. In both classrooms, there are well-used, comfortable book areas. In the Reception class, individuals will often choose to spend their 'choice' time looking at books on their own or with a friend. Here, reading is thoroughly taught through staff sharing 'big' books with the class and children learn to predict what might happen next in a story and to identify some words. There is a strong emphasis on teaching children to learn to hear, say and recognise sounds. They make very good gains in recognising words as a result.
63. Children are also developing very good understanding of the purpose of writing and by the time they reach the Reception class, children are given many opportunities to use writing and develop a clear and readable style. After watching a video-taped version of 'The Snowman', they had great enjoyment writing some key words from the film in flour, saying, *"This was snow"*. All can write their names and many can put together short sentences where most words are spelt correctly. This is because staff provide a very well planned range of structured situations where children learn that writing is useful and relevant. Nearly all pupils will reach,

and most will exceed, the learning goals set for them in communication, language and literacy by the time they start Year 1.

## **MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The teaching is good and pupils achieve well.
- Generally mathematics is made meaningful but not enough opportunities are taken in the Nursery to develop children's numeracy in everyday activities.
- Children enjoy mathematical activities, particularly singing favourite counting songs.

### **Commentary**

64. Teaching and learning in mathematics are very much based on practical and interesting activities, helping children to have a firmer understanding, particularly in the use of number. In the Nursery, children greatly enjoyed singing 'Five Little Ducks', as they acted out the story using five plastic toys. Staff carefully structured the activity and asked appropriate questions to stimulate individuals to think about how many ducks were left and how many had gone at different points in the song. However, opportunities are sometimes missed to develop children's use of mathematical language. Not enough attention is given to exploring alternatives when describing size or quantity and there is over use of the term 'big'. In contrast, Reception staff are constantly drawing children's attention to different uses, particularly with words that describe position. For instance, when children line up or when they sort toys, staff ask individuals to describe what they are doing and make sure they use the most accurate words.
65. Children's mathematical development is well-planned and set times and activities are given to introducing learning and consolidating new skills. These are usually linked to topics being studied in other areas of learning. As a result, children in Reception have a good knowledge and understanding of numbers up to 20. They recognise different quantities and some can compare two sets of objects by counting. They use words to describe position well and can recognise and describe two-dimensional shapes, such as squares, triangles and circles. Nearly all are on course to reach the Early Learning Goals in mathematics by the end of Reception and a few are likely to exceed them.

## **KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD, PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT, CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

66. Children's **knowledge and understanding of the world** are well developed as staff plan interesting and relevant topics. The Nursery and Reception classes are both studying 'winter'. They have been on a winter walk, discussed how different the countryside is in winter compared to summer and carried out experiments freezing water in balloons and seeing them melt at different rates, depending on where they were placed. Children are interested in these topics and learn well. Good use is made of new technologies and children confidently use the computer.
67. Children are given many structured and free-play activities focused on their **physical development**. They confidently use large apparatus and small equipment both in the hall and outside, where wheeled toys and climbing frames are available in good weather. Children in the Nursery and Reception classes move around in an orderly way and handle objects carefully. They competently use small tools and equipment, such as pencils, crayons, paint and paste brushes and scissors.

68. Children are constantly encouraged to think imaginatively and try out new ideas. There are many exciting opportunities for **creative development**. For instance, in the Nursery, pupils explore painting with their feet and produce colourful footprints. They make bird cake, mixing and moulding different seeds with lard. In the Reception class, a range of media, such as chalk drawings, 'spatter' paintings and cornflower dough, was used most effectively to create different winter effects. The classrooms are rich with colourful displays, showing that pupils' creative work is valued and appreciated.

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

### **ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGE**

69. Only one lesson was observed in French. This was insufficient to make an overall judgement about the quality of provision.

### **ENGLISH**

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

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

- From the work seen, Year 2 pupils attain better standards than expected nationally in speaking and listening, reading and writing and Year 6 pupils attain better than expected in reading.
- Overall, teaching is good but pupils do not make sufficient progress in Years 3 and 4, particularly in their use of writing.
- Basic reading skills are taught well but pupils are not confident in finding information from the library.
- While information on pupils' performance is collected regularly, this is not always used well to identify and tackle shortcomings in teaching and learning.
- There is currently no English co-ordinator.

#### **Commentary**

70. Infants achieve well because they find lessons enjoyable and learning activities are well matched to their individual needs. This helps younger pupils acquire a firm foundation in the basic skills of reading and writing. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Pupils' achievement in Years 3 and 4 is unsatisfactory because many find the work too hard and the lessons uninteresting. Not enough has been done in Years 3 and 4 to tackle the shortcoming in the way pupils use writing. Pupils catch up in Years 5 and 6, making good gains, and their attainment in English reaches the nationally expected standard. These are similar findings to the previous inspection.
71. Pupils' attainment in speaking and listening in Year 2 is better than expected for their age. They join in confidently in shared reading, adopting characters' voices and empathising with them. They can recall and explain the plots of stories and put a wide vocabulary to good use. By Year 6, pupils are confident speakers and respond in a thoughtful way to questions. However, the Juniors do not have enough opportunities to develop their speaking skills by listening and responding to each other. This limits their achievement and their attainment is as expected and not better.
72. Pupils' attainment in reading in Years 2 and 6 is better than expected for their age. Year 2 pupils tackle new books confidently, and are able to retell stories or predict events. Pupils in Year 6 are competent fluent readers who perceive meaning beyond the literal and can evaluate ideas and themes in stories. The school gives pupils frequent opportunities to read aloud individually, in groups and as a class, which not only gives them plenty of practice in the basic skills but also encourages them to develop a love of books. This focus on reading enables

pupils to achieve well. However, because of the reorganisation of the library, pupils do not have opportunities to find texts and information and their research skills are undeveloped.

73. Year 2 pupils' attainment in writing is better than expected for their age. They use adventurous and wide-ranging vocabulary to enliven their stories and to draw the reader in. They write in well-punctuated sentences and are confident spellers, achieving well. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 underachieve because they have few opportunities to develop their writing skills either in literacy lessons or in other areas of the curriculum. They practise grammar and punctuation, but their work shows that they do not write for a variety of purposes or audiences. By the time pupils reach Year 6, they have made sufficient gains to reach nationally expected standards in writing. They know how to make their writing interesting to the reader, can spell most words that they need and punctuate successfully. However, they do not often consider how to improve their work and not all pupils use joined-up writing. Their achievement is satisfactory overall.
74. Teaching and learning are good overall and consistently very good in the Infants. Teaching and learning in the Juniors is generally sound, but unsatisfactory in Years 3 and 4. Infant teachers have high expectations of what children can do and activities are very well-planned so that all children are challenged and motivated to learn. Skilful questioning enables pupils to think around a subject under discussion. Independent activities are exciting and require children to apply the skills they have just been learning. Where teaching is unsatisfactory, it is because pupils are not given enough to do, with the result that they became bored and restless. The activities planned do not cater for the range of capabilities in the class and the organisation of time does not allow for pupils to work independently for longer than a few minutes.
75. Homework is well used to help pupils learn to read and to reinforce their spelling. Pupils' work is regularly marked and they are given helpful guidance on how to learn from their mistakes. The school is aware that more needs to be done to involve pupils in discussing and agreeing individual targets that identify what they need to work at to improve.
76. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in the Infants because they are given a great deal of individual help and they find the work interesting and appropriate. In Years 3 and 4, they find work too hard but they do better in Years 5 and 6 and, overall, achieve satisfactorily in the juniors. More able pupils are generally challenged well and make good progress.
77. Pupils' work in English is enriched further by a comprehensive programme of school plays, concerts, class presentations and visits to the theatre. There is also increasing use of word processing by pupils, for example in the production of a school magazine.
78. Leadership and management are unsatisfactory as there is currently no co-ordinator and planned developments to improve teaching and learning are being delayed.

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

79. There are plenty of opportunities in the Infants for pupils to apply their skills in literacy in all lessons. As much of the teaching and learning is based on first-hand activities, pupils want to write about their experiences. Pupils are less actively involved in lessons in Years 3 and 4, so have less practice but in Years 5 and 6, discussion and writing are a feature of teaching and learning in most subjects.

## **FRENCH**

80. Pupils joined enthusiastically in the Year 5 and 6 French lesson about shopping. They were able to recall words and phrases learnt previously and, with sensitive help, to apply these in new situations. Their interest was well maintained by the specialist teacher, using a variety of activities and approaches.
81. Junior classes have had a weekly session of French for the past two years. This has proved so successful that the school extended French lessons to the Infants this year. As a result, there are colourful displays in all classrooms, showing examples of pupils' and teachers' work and helping reinforce the current aspects of the language being learnt.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Leadership and management are unsatisfactory.
- From the work seen, Years 2 and 6 pupils generally attain better standards than expected nationally.
- Pupils in Years 3 and 4 have difficulties solving problems and significantly underachieve.
- Teaching and learning are very good in the Infants as activities are interesting, engaging and well matched to pupils' capabilities.
- Infant pupils are helped very effectively to learn from their mistakes but Years 3 and 4 pupils, especially slower learners, are often left to struggle.

### **Commentary**

82. Information on pupils' slow progress through the lower Juniors has been available for some time but the co-ordinator has done little to improve teaching and learning; his leadership and management are therefore unsatisfactory. However, pupils achieve well in the Infants and are able to catch up in the small Years 5 and 6 class so, overall, they make satisfactory progress despite considerable underachievement in Years 3 and 4. There has been a decline in the quality of provision since the previous inspection.
83. In the Infants, the teaching and learning are generally very good. Teachers plan very well and use a range of effective ways of encouraging pupils and keeping them interested. They make very good use of resources, especially in giving pupils hands-on experiences to practise and develop new skills. Teachers, assistants and voluntary helpers also work very well together to make sure that pupils with such a wide spread of capabilities in the mixed-age Years 1 and 2 class are able to cope with their learning. In a lesson on coin recognition and use, activities ranged in difficulty and staff concentrated on individuals and groups of slower learners, whilst making sure more able pupils were suitably challenged. This practical approach enables pupils to achieve well and by the time they are in Year 2, they attain better standards than expected nationally.
84. In the Years 3 and 4 mixed-age class, less attention is paid to making sure that lessons are suitable for pupils who are at different stages and learn at slower rates. Work is often pitched at more able pupils and long class sessions are given over to developing quite challenging ideas, requiring well-developed mathematical thinking to solve problems. As a result, many pupils, including those with special educational needs, are unable to follow the lesson and do very little. Even when set individual work at a more appropriate level, the classroom is so organised as to make it difficult for the teacher to move from one pupil to the next and some have to wait for long periods to be helped.

85. The Years 5 and 6 class is very small and pupils receive a great deal of individual help. They generally are diligent and complete a great deal of work. Whilst no lessons could be observed during the inspection, the quality and range of their recorded work and pupils' responses during discussions show that teaching and learning are generally good. As a result, pupils catch up, achieve well and generally attain better than expected in Year 6.
86. In the Infants and upper Juniors, pupils of different capabilities are fully included in lessons because staff plan a good range of appropriate activities and pay individuals and groups close attention to make sure they are coping with their learning. This is particularly beneficial for pupils with special educational needs who are given much individual attention. This helps them make good progress in the Infants but their experiences in Years 3 and 4 turn some of them off learning. However, they are able to catch up in Years 5 and 6 and, overall, make good progress.
87. Pupils' progress is carefully checked through marking of work and an analysis of the school's and national tests. The information is used effectively in the Infants and upper Juniors to help teachers plan appropriate work to tackle identified shortcomings. However in Years 3 and 4, although information that pupils are considerably underachieving and having difficulties with problem solving has been available, few changes to teaching and learning have taken place. However, the school is looking at ways of involving pupils more in discussing what they find difficult and agreeing individual targets for them to improve. Teachers and pupils are making increasing use of new technologies in lessons.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

88. Generally, pupils' mathematical skills are well used to support their learning in other subjects. In science, pupils measure and record accurately when making observations; in design and technology, products on display show how well pupils cut and join materials to fit together accurately and in geography, pupils calculate distances on maps.

### **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils achieve well, benefiting from specialist teaching, and standards of attainment in Years 2 and 6 are better than expected nationally.
- Infant pupils enjoy practical investigations and observe carefully.
- Juniors are systematic in their enquiries but are not very adventurous in putting forward their own ideas.
- Leadership of science is good.

### **Commentary**

89. Year 2 pupils generally attain better than expected as they are acquiring a good foundation of knowledge and understanding and are careful in their observations. For example, in a lesson on materials, they quickly spotted the differences within a range of common everyday materials and were able to give appropriate descriptions of what they saw.
90. Year 6 pupils are making good progress as a result of specialist teaching that has ensured that gaps in their learning have been filled. They carry out scientific investigations systematically, being very careful to set up experiments correctly and control variables. In a lesson on light, they used their knowledge and understanding of previous lessons on the solar system well to work out the effects of a beam of light hitting an object and being reflected off a mirror. Overall, they attain better standards than expected nationally.



91. Teachers, assistants and voluntary helpers work very well together to support pupils who learn at a slower rate, especially those with special educational needs. Consequently, these pupils take part fully in lessons and make good progress. More able pupils are encouraged to develop their thinking through answering teachers' increasingly demanding questions. This is more apparent in the Juniors, where the specialist knowledge of the teacher is well used to set particularly challenging tasks that are often followed up at home.
92. All the teaching and learning observed is good. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Teaching is generally challenging and very good use is made of everyday materials and specialist equipment where appropriate. In the Infants, additional help is very useful in supporting practical work with small groups. Whilst younger pupils' curiosity is well used to encourage exploration, this is less so in the Juniors, where more use is made of worksheets and prescribed tasks. As a result, older pupils are less adventurous in putting forward and testing their own ideas.
93. Leadership is good as the co-ordinator, who has only had the role since the beginning of the school year, has a clear view of how the subject can develop through specialist teaching. She has made a good start but has not had the time or training to check and develop teaching and learning to any degree. She is working to make sure sufficient resources are available to support whole-class lessons and to improve ways of checking pupils' progress. The accommodation and grounds are very good and well used for practical work.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

Provision in information and communication technology is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Significant improvements in facilities, resources and staff confidence have taken place since the previous inspection.
- Pupils achieve well but have gaps in their knowledge and understanding.
- Pupils enjoy using new technologies, particularly during timetabled lessons in the community computer suite.
- New technologies are increasingly being used to support pupils' learning in all subjects.

### **Commentary**

94. The headteacher had to take on responsibility for information and communication technology following the redundancy of the co-ordinator through staffing cuts. He has ensured that staff have continued to receive training and has negotiated valuable support from a specialist technician, formerly employed by the local cluster of schools. In addition, he has taken advantage of a community initiative that has equipped a computer suite with modern equipment and resources. This is an improvement since the last inspection. As a result, the use of information and communication technology is now planned into lessons and teachers are more confident in using new technologies. However, these are recent developments and older pupils in particular have not had sufficient opportunities in the past to learn and practise skills in all required areas.
95. Generally, pupils are skilled at word-processing and obtaining information from appropriate programs and, as they get older, using the Internet, but are not as confident in other required areas. However, pupils in Years 2 and 6 attain standards as expected nationally.
96. The teaching and learning in the two sessions observed in the community room were good. However, the full range of evidence indicates that teaching is satisfactory overall. The small numbers of pupils and the availability of adults have a beneficial effect on pupils' learning. They are confident and not afraid of making mistakes, often working out solutions for themselves.

Many also have a great deal of practice at home, using new technologies in their everyday life. As a result, their learning is good and they achieve well.

97. In the Year 5 and 6 sessions, a good link was made with a forthcoming theatre trip to give pupils the opportunity to use a spreadsheet to calculate the total cost, with varying numbers attending. Pupils followed instructions well and quickly learnt how to enter information and construct the appropriate formula. The headteacher and other helpers worked well together and all pupils were fully engaged and completed the task successfully, despite the rather short session.

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

98. Pupils are beginning to have more opportunities to use new technologies in other subjects. Great use is made of photographs to record work pupils undertake and to support their learning in all subjects. There are many such displays around the school celebrating and valuing pupils' efforts. Video and sound recordings are also used in this way to share with parents what their children have achieved. This is particularly apparent in the creative arts. Increasingly, word-processing and data-handling are being used in English, mathematics, science, geography and history to record, analyse and communicate findings.

### **HUMANITIES**

99. Only three lessons were seen in history and none in geography or religious education and so it is not possible to form an overall judgement about provision. In addition to observing lessons, inspectors talked to pupils and staff and looked at recorded work and curriculum plans.
100. In **geography**, pupils in the Infants have studied the environment, discussing and identifying places they like and saying what is good about them. They can name both physical and human features in their locality, such as ponds and car parks, and record this evidence successfully. In the Juniors, pupils have investigated the physical features of rivers and are able to describe how they are formed. They can also name the major towns and rivers in England on a map and understand geographical terms such as 'tributary'.
101. In the Infants, pupils are developing a sense of sequence and chronology in their **history** lessons through a time line of their own lives and through plotting the events of the Great Fire of London. Overall, the teaching and learning seen were good. In a Year 2 lesson, pupils carefully recorded their descriptions of their favourite toys and then compared them to toys of another era. This first-hand experience gave them a real feel for changes over time. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 enjoyed the topic on the Ancient Greeks and already have good knowledge of certain legends. Older Juniors are studying how they can discover information about the past. They can distinguish between primary and secondary sources and are enthusiastic about trying out the methods of archaeologists. History is effectively brought to life through the introduction of artefacts, such as locally discovered Roman and Samian pottery, and good use of appropriate video programmes.
102. While the curriculum for **religious education** covers an appropriate range of topics, it does not follow the locally agreed syllabus and therefore does not meet statutory requirements. The school chose to adapt the syllabus of another local authority as this was found to be of more help to non-specialist staff. Displays of pupils' work show that world religions are given an appropriate prominence along with Christianity. The work for younger pupils covers themes that, wherever possible, are linked to topics being covered in other subjects, such as looking at homes as special places, and following Jesus' example in finding ways to help others. In the Juniors, pupils study a number of units that look in more depth at world religions with a particular emphasis on how people's beliefs, including their own, affect the way they live.

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

103. One lesson each of music and physical education and none of art and design and technology were observed. This is not sufficient to form an overall judgement about provision. Inspectors also talked to pupils and staff and looked at recorded work and curriculum plans.
104. Pupils generally achieve well in **art** and much of the work seen, particularly in the Juniors, was better than expected. In the Infants, pupils enjoy making creative records of their ideas about the cross-curricular topics studied. These are attractively displayed and make classrooms colourful and exciting places for teaching and learning. Junior pupils are skilful in their use of a wide range of different media. They collect visual and other information and try out their ideas in sketchbooks. They have explored the work of a range of artists, such as Hockney, and made imaginative pictures representing the play of light on water. In exploring pattern in black and white, teaching and learning have been linked very effectively to work in personal and social development, so that pupils reflected in a meaningful way on how personal appearance affects people's view of others.
105. Pupils attain as expected in **design and technology**. In the Infants, pupils have made figures with moving parts and arranged them in a picture to show an action, such as swimming. The Juniors have completed a wide range of appropriate activities, including a class project to design and make a large cardboard car. Pupils selected materials, planned and constructed the car, modifying the design as necessary as the model took shape. They clearly enjoyed this project and collaborated well to produce the final product. They have developed their measuring, shaping, assembling and joining skills well in making wooden games, papier-maché and wooden puppets, and metal Christmas decorations.
106. Pupils enjoy **music**. The Infants sing enthusiastically and learn simple songs off by heart. In a Year 2 lesson, pupils successfully counted beats and recognised patterns and rhythm. They were able to vary the volume of their performance of a song and perform different patterns of sound in three groups with the help of the teacher. Pupils in the Juniors sing tunefully and with enjoyment.
107. All the pupils are introduced to playing an instrument. The Infants practise the ocarina and the Juniors learn to read music and play the recorder. Many go on to learn an additional instrument in Years 5 and 6. In addition, specialist teaching by the co-ordinator and visiting musicians ensures that pupils make good gains in skills and knowledge. The school organises a termly event in which music performance plays an important part. These are much appreciated by pupils and parents.
108. Pupils report that they enjoy **physical education** very much, especially swimming and competitive sports. The school has a good programme to promote all aspects of pupils' physical development. Very good use is made of the large well-equipped hall, extensive grounds and covered heated swimming pool. In addition, pupils in Year 4, 5 and 6 take part in residential trips where they engage in a wide range of outdoor pursuits. All pupils benefit greatly from these opportunities. They are particularly successful in sports, athletics, outdoor pursuit and, especially, in swimming, where all can swim 25 metres and are aware of the principles of water safety.

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

109. No lessons were observed and so no overall judgement about provision can be made. Inspectors talked to pupils and staff and looked at teachers' plans.
110. All classes have a weekly lesson on personal, social and health education and the topics chosen are appropriate for the age and maturity of pupils. There are opportunities for pupils to discuss personal concerns and consider how to deal with problems they encounter, such as bullying. These lessons are planned by individual teachers, without reference to an agreed programme of study.

111. The school is aware that there needs to be more discussion about the content of the personal, social and health education programme to make sure that all recommended areas of learning are covered consistently across classes. Staff training is planned and the establishment of a school council is being considered to give pupils more opportunities to express their views and gain some understanding of citizenship.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

### *Inspection judgement*

### *Grade*

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

|                                   |          |
|-----------------------------------|----------|
| <b>Overall standards achieved</b> | <b>3</b> |
| Pupils' achievement               | 3        |

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

|  |          |
|--|----------|
| <b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>           | <b>3</b> |
| The quality of teaching  | 3        |
| How well pupils learn  | 3        |
| The quality of assessment  | 4        |
| How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs                      | 4        |
| Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities | 2        |
| Accommodation and resources                                      | 3        |
| Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety                         | 3        |
| Support, advice and guidance for pupils                          | 3        |
| How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views              | 4        |
| The effectiveness of the school's links with parents             | 3        |
| The quality of the school's links with the community             | 3        |
| The school's links with other schools and colleges               | 2        |

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

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