

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **WHITEHILL PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Stockport

LEA area: Stockport

Unique reference number: 106084

Headteacher: Miss J Connell

Lead inspector: Mr G Alston

Dates of inspection: 5<sup>th</sup> - 7<sup>th</sup> July 2004

Inspection number: 258411

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Primary with Nursery  
School category: Community  
Age range of pupils: 3 - 11  
Gender of pupils: Mixed  
Number on roll: 171 with an additional 39 part-time children in the Nursery

School address: Whitehill Street West  
Heaton Norris  
Stockport  
Postcode: SK4 1PB

Telephone number: (0161) 4802 142  
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Appropriate authority: The governing body  
Name of chair of governors: Mrs J Kingsford

Date of previous inspection: 8<sup>th</sup> February 1999

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Whitehill Community School is a primary school that caters for pupils between the ages of three and 11. It is situated on the outskirts of Stockport. This is a smaller than average-sized primary school in England with 171 pupils on roll: 91 boys and 80 girls. Pupils are organised into seven classes. The school has a Nursery that caters for 39 children on a part-time basis. The area has significant signs of social deprivation and most housing is either small semi-detached properties or terraced houses. Children arrive at school reflecting the full range of attainment levels but, overall, the attainment on entry is well below average. It is an area of high mobility. For example, in the current Year 6 class only 60 per cent of the pupils started the school in Reception. The majority of pupils are white, although a small number come from mainly African and Caribbean mixed-race backgrounds. One pupil is learning English as an additional language but is not at an early stage of acquiring English. These figures are much lower than most schools'. There are 21 per cent of pupils entitled to free school meals, which is above the average. Fifty-six pupils (30 per cent) are on the list of special educational needs and there is a wide range of learning difficulties. This percentage is above the national average. Five pupils have a statement of special educational needs, which is also above the national average. The school received two Achievement Awards in 2000 and 2001.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
20794	G Alston	Lead inspector	English Art and design Design and technology Special educational needs English as an additional language
19740	A Smith	Lay inspector	
23101	B Tyrer	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Physical education Religious education
23128	E Pickford	Team inspector	Science Geography History Music Areas of learning in the Foundation Stage

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

A bubbly Year 3 pupil with special educational needs smiled proudly as she said ‘all the grown-ups are kind, teachers expect you to work hard but we play hard as well with lots of good friends.’ This was her thoughtful response when asked about her school. She was spot on. This is a **good** school that benefits from very good leadership and good management and the very strong support of parents and pupils. Over time, pupils’ achieve well, many from a low base, because of the good teaching and very good teaching for children in the foundation and infant classes. Pupils’ personal development is strong because provision is good. The school gives good value for money.

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

- Overall, pupils’ achievement is good, including pupils with special educational needs and those have severe learning or emotional difficulties.
- The school is highly successful at identifying and minimising any barriers to learning, particularly for those pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds.
- Effective provision for pupils’ personal development leads to very good attitudes, behaviour and relationships.
- Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is good and very good in the Foundation Stage and infant classes, but this quality is not consistent in all junior classes.
- The school has a good curriculum but opportunities to extend pupils’ writing and speaking and listening skills across all subjects are not sufficiently well planned or focused upon in lessons.
- Links with parents, the community and other establishments are very good.
- The headteacher provides very good leadership and with the strong support of governors, senior colleagues and staff, good management.
- Pupils are very well cared for and this is much appreciated by pupils and their parents.

There has been a good improvement since the last inspection. The school has maintained the strengths identified in the last report and improved the areas identified as weaknesses and now:

- The school has a clearer picture of its strengths and areas for improvement.
- Although the overall quality of teaching has improved and pupils now make good progress, there are still some lessons where the teaching is unsatisfactory in one class.
- The number of opportunities for pupils to write has increased but there still need to be more opportunities for pupils to write across all subjects.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

Overall, pupils’ **achievement is good**. Children enter Nursery with levels of ability that reflect the full range, but are well below average overall. Although the children achieve very well in the Nursery and Reception classes, by the time they enter Year 1 most will not meet the goals they are expected to achieve by this age in communication, language and literacy and mathematics. Most will reach the expected level in their creative and physical development and in their knowledge and understanding of the world. By the end of Year 2, standards seen are average in reading and writing and below in

mathematics. This represents very good achievement for most pupils starting from a low base. The results of the national tests in 2003 were slightly better than this in reading and mathematics, but there are more pupils with special educational needs in the present class. By the end of Year 6, standards are below average in English and mathematics and close to average in science. Overall, pupils achieve well in Years 3 to 6. This is better than the results shown in the table above, mainly due to lower proportions of pupils with special educational needs and to less pupil mobility. Nevertheless, pupils with special educational needs make very good progress towards the targets set for them. In the Year 6 class who took the test in 2003, 12 pupils had entered the class and 17 had left the class since Year 4. Standards in basic reading and mathematical skills are high and good enough by the end of Year 6 but this is not so in writing and speaking. There is little difference in the performance of girls and boys. The targets set by the school are challenging and high enough. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are average. Attainment in religious education is at the expected level of the Locally Agreed Syllabus.

Overall, pupils' personal development is **good**. Provision for pupils' moral and social development is **very good**, good for spiritual and satisfactory for cultural development. The particular strengths are the very good attitudes and behaviour and caring relationships that are fostered. Pupils like school and attendance is similar to that found in most schools.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

Overall, the quality of education is **good**. Overall, the quality of teaching is **good** being very good in the Foundation Stage and in infant classes and good in junior classes. Overall, nearly half of the lessons were very good or better, a further third were good and the remainder satisfactory, except one. The satisfactory/unsatisfactory teaching was mainly in a Year 4 class. Where teaching is very good, teachers know their subjects and plan lessons very well. They judge pupils' levels of attainment very accurately and meet the diverse needs in the classes. Provision for pupils with special educational needs and those with severe learning difficulties, especially with the very good support from caring teaching assistants, is very effective. This means that they make very good progress towards meeting the targets set for them.

Overall, the curriculum is good and is enriched by a very wide range of activities. All pupils benefit equally from what the school has to offer. However, there are not enough opportunities for writing and speaking in all subjects. Pupils receive good support and guidance and the steps taken to ensure pupils' care, welfare, health and safety are effective. A particular strength is the development of very good and trusting relationships with adults. Links with parents, the community and with other schools and colleges are very good.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Overall, leadership and management are **good**. The headteacher provides very good leadership and a clearly articulated vision for the school that embraces strong academic and caring values. She has very strong support from key staff who successfully manage subjects and show initiative. The work of the governing body is good. Governors are supportive, inquisitive and check closely on the work of the school. They ensure compliance with all statutory requirements.

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

Parents and pupils have very positive views of the school. Parents are particularly happy about their children's progress, growing maturity, fair treatment and the high expectations of staff. Pupils enjoy their school life, like their teachers and are proud of its achievements. They find lessons to be well prepared, challenging and interesting.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- Continue the hard work it is doing in implementing the action plans it has in place aimed at raising standards in English, mathematics and science by the end of Year 6.
- Ensure the quality of teaching is consistent across the school by improving the quality of teaching in Year 4.
- Improve pupils' speaking and listening skills, particularly in junior classes.
- Provide more opportunities for pupils to write in all subjects.

These matters are to receive attention as identified in the school improvement plan.



## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

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

**Achievement overall is good.** It is very good in the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2 and good from Years 3 to 6. Standards in reading, writing and science are average and in mathematics are below average at the end of Year 2. Standards are below average in English, mathematics and science at the end of Year 6. The standards pupils attain in ICT are at the expected level at the end of Year 2 and Year 6.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children get a very good start in the Foundation Stage and make very good progress in their learning.
- Children enter the Nursery class with skills that are well below the expected level and by the time they enter Year 1 most will reach the levels expected for their age in several areas of learning.
- Throughout their time in Years 1 and 2, pupils continue to achieve very well, at the end of Year 2, standards are average in reading and writing and below average in mathematics.
- Throughout their time in Years 3 to 6, pupils' achievement is good and, at the end of Year 6, standards are average in reading and below average in writing, mathematics and science.
- Limited opportunities for pupils to use their writing and speaking and listening skills in all subjects restrict the standards they achieve, particularly in junior classes.

#### Commentary

1. Generally standards have been above average in national tests at the end of Year 2 and below at the end of Year 6 since the last inspection where the improvement in results has been similar to the national trend. The school did not meet the challenging targets it was set by the local authority in 2003.
2. The table below shows that in 2003 standards at the end of Year 2 were above the national average in reading and average in writing and mathematics. When compared to those in similar schools the results are similar to the national picture. Results fell in 2003 reflecting the larger than normal number of pupils with special educational needs in Year 2. The school did well on pupils reaching the expected level with so many pupils who began school with limited language and number skills. However, these fluctuations are very much related to the cohorts of pupils in Year 2 in terms of the number of lower attaining pupils; as a result, comparing results between years is not a reliable indicator of how well the school is performing. There is every indication that standards will fall again to be average in reading and writing and below in mathematics in the 2004 tests.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	16.5 (16.9)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	14.6 (15.2)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	16.7 (17.8)	16.3 (16.5)

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

3. The table below shows that in 2003, standards in Year 6 tests were well below the national average in English and mathematics and very low in science. In 2003, standards fell from

previous years. This was caused by greater number of pupils with special educational needs in the class is normal. However, the school's own tracking systems show pupils did well on reaching the expected level based on their prior attainment. These fluctuations in results in national tests are very much related to the cohorts of pupils in Year 6. In 2003 there was a high level of pupils with special educational needs in the Year 6 class. There was also a considerable movement of pupils in and out of the class (12 pupils started, 15 pupils left, leaving 34 remaining) between Year 4 and Year 6. This impacted adversely on standards. This high level of mobility makes comparing results at the end of Year 2 and at the end of Year 6 of little value as an indicator of the school's performance. There is every indication that standards are likely to rise again to be average in reading and below in writing, mathematics and science in the 2004 tests. However, writing results are not likely to be as good as reading results. The school is aware of weaker standards in writing as compared to reading. As a result of analysis, several new initiatives have been introduced to raise standards further.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	24.0 (25.0)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	24.2 (27.0)	26.8 (26.7)
science	25.1 (27.6)	28.6 (28.3)

*There were 34 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

4. When children start school in the Nursery class, test data shows that their knowledge, skills and understanding are very variable. For the last few years the overall profile has been that most children enter school with levels of ability that are well below the level expected for their age in all areas of learning. They get a very good start in the Foundation Stage classes that helps them to achieve very well. However, by the time they reach Year 1, the attainment of the vast majority is not likely to reach the national expectation in the language and numeracy areas of their learning. Most will reach the expected level in their creative and physical development and in their knowledge and understanding of the world.
5. In Years 1 and 2, pupils achieve very well because of the very good provision made for all areas of their development. This includes pupils with special educational needs and those with severe learning difficulties, who are especially well supported by teaching assistants. Higher-attaining pupils also do well and respond well to challenges they are set. A knowledgeable co-ordinator monitors the progress of both Years 1 and 2 well, ensuring there is continuity in practice and a high quality is maintained. The very good achievement is also linked to very good teaching. Well-planned lessons with interesting tasks that take account of pupils of all abilities are the secret. The very good relationships between staff and pupils make pupils feel valued and cared for. As a result, they try very hard with all the tasks they are set and show great interest in all activities. This has produced standards at present that are well above the starting point of all pupils in reading, writing, mathematics and science. This is evidenced in the school's tracking system.
6. Overall, pupil achievement is good in Years 3 to 6. However, there is a patchy picture and in Year 4 achievement is not as good as in other classes and, at times, is unsatisfactory. This is reflected in the quality of teaching that is unsatisfactory at times in Year 4. In other classes, achievement is good and is closely linked to the monitoring and evaluation of individual pupils through target-setting and effective teaching that is present in nearly all lessons. Staff support each other in planning well together at times, ensuring that all pupils are suitably challenged, including those with special educational needs, lower and higher attaining pupils. Pupils receive good quality teaching from enthusiastic teachers in Years 3, 5 and 6. Their lessons are made interesting and lively and build well on past learning. The pupils respond with great enthusiasm, concentrate well on tasks and produce lots of work of good quality. Humour is used well to develop warm relationships that create an effective working environment. This has

led to standards that are above pupils' starting points at the beginning of Year 3, as evidenced in the school's own tracking systems, in English, mathematics and science.

7. At the end of Year 2 and Year 6, standards are close to national expectations in ICT and evidence in books and through discussion with pupils indicates that pupils reach the level expected of the Locally Agreed Syllabus in religious education (RE). Pupils are beginning to use their ICT skills well to support learning in other subjects.
8. The rich curriculum has a positive impact on pupils' achievement. The school is beginning to consider and develop ways to link subjects to create interesting topics. Pupils apply their reading and number skills well in other areas of the curriculum. The skills of handwriting, spelling and punctuation are taught appropriately in literacy lessons and pupils apply these skills to their written work. Achievement in writing is affected negatively because there is not a sufficiently strong focus on using and developing these skills further in all subjects, particularly in junior classes. Similarly, in junior classes, there are inconsistencies in the opportunities pupils have for lengthy discussion or debate and this restricts the development of their speaking and listening skills.
9. Pupils who have special educational needs achieve very well. Class teachers assess their needs and progress and after discussion with the co-ordinator for special educational needs, draw up and monitor the individual educational plans. This close co-operation and frequent reviews of their targets contribute significantly to the very good progress made by these pupils. The school's strategies for assessing and identifying targeted support are beginning to have a positive impact on the progress pupils make towards their targets. Overall, the progress of pupils who have severe learning difficulties (autism and dyslexia) is very good throughout the school. This is mainly because teachers are clear about what pupils know and understand and plan their lessons well to consolidate and extend their learning. Teaching assistants provide strong support and other pupils are always happy to help. Gifted and talented pupils' needs are met through the challenging tasks that are provided in lessons and the good opportunities they and other pupils have to take part in out-of-school clubs, particularly in sport and music. Throughout the school, girls and boys perform similarly. Higher-attaining boys and girls do equally well.

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

Pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to school are **very good**. Provision for personal development through the provision offered for social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is **good**. Attendance is **satisfactory**. This reflects the views of many parents and those expressed in the previous inspection report. These qualities make a major contribution to the personal development of all pupils and consequently impact very well on their attainment and achievement overall.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The very good attitudes pupils have.
- The very good relationships between pupils and staff.
- Involvement of pupils in the life of the school, for example, the work of the school council.
- Provision for moral and social development is very good.

### **Commentary**

10. A whole-school policy on behaviour ensures that rules are practicable and fully understood. The school's systems of rewards and sanctions are appropriate. Teaching and support staff have a consistent approach and as a result, pupils respond very well to these routines. The understanding of right and wrong, honesty and fairness are effectively cultivated through direct teaching opportunities in personal, social and health education lessons. These are planned throughout the school. They are further enhanced through the consistently positive personal

example of all staff. Pupils are encouraged to consider the consequences of their actions and all acknowledge their positive behaviour very well. There have been no exclusions in recent years.

11. Relationships in the school are very good and pupils get on very well together in lessons, at breaks and at lunchtimes. They show much consideration for one another and happily share and work sensibly together. Pupils work in an effective learning environment. The school is very vigilant and makes sure that bullying or harassment does not take place. There have been no recent examples of such behaviour. Pupils happily accept responsibility in lessons as monitors and doing jobs around the school.
12. Pupils' personal development is high on the school's list of priorities and as a result provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Teachers make good use of religious discussion to help pupils reflect on how best they can contribute to the community. Issues such as kindness to others or the injustice of bullying and dishonesty feature in class and school discussion. There is a very strong drive by all staff to promote pupils' self-esteem. Pupils are valued as individuals; their achievements are recognised and recorded. They are encouraged by this and strive always to do their best. They recognise and value what others do.
13. Social and moral development is promoted well. There is a clear code of conduct that is understood by all. Pupils have a very clear understanding of what is right and wrong and are encouraged in the principles of teamwork and fair play. Relationships between pupils are very good, reflecting the excellent role models presented by all staff. Provision for cultural development is satisfactory. It is rooted in the school's ethos and sets out clearly the expectation that all people are to be treated with dignity and respect. The school has a clear policy on race equality that challenges racist perspectives and provides opportunities for pupils to learn about and appreciate the cultural values of others.

***Ethnic background of pupils***

***Exclusions in the last school year***

Categories used in the Annual School Census	Number of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	143	0	0
White – any other White background	2	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	2	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	1	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	2	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	3	0	0
Black or Black British – African	1	0	0
Chinese	1	0	0
Any other ethnic group	1	0	0
Parent/Pupil preferred not to say	1	0	0
Total	159	0	0

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

14. All members of staff show considerable respect for pupils and provide very good role models in demonstrating social conventions and how relationships are initiated and sustained. These features and the sensitive use of opportunities for direct teaching make a significant

contribution to the development of social skills and the very good relationships throughout the school.

- The understanding of responsibility is fostered well through helping with class and school routines. Other opportunities are provided through the membership of the school council and involvement in fund-raising projects for local and national charities. Pupils are eager to accept responsibility from tidying their classrooms through to being responsible for care and control of resources. This begins from their initial entry into school where they take responsibility for their own equipment. At break times they maintain a clean and tidy play area using refuse bins sensibly to deposit litter. The school is reviewing opportunities to further involve pupils to take more responsibilities by becoming more aware of their own learning.

## Attendance

The table below shows the attendance figures for the school.

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

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	4.7	School data	0.9
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.*

- Attendance rates have risen recently and are now close to the national rates. The school rigorously monitors attendance and punctuality and attempts in many ways to make parents and pupils fully aware of the importance of full attendance and punctuality. The strong family ethos of the school gives rise to children being very happy to come to school.

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

**The school provides a good quality of education.** Strengths include the very good care shown to pupils and the consistently good teaching in nearly all classes. Lots of interesting visits and visitors enrich class projects, helping to bring the curriculum alive for the pupils and there are very good links with parents, the community and other schools. Overall, staff make best use of the satisfactory accommodation and sound resources to fulfil the requirements of the National Curriculum.

### Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is **good**. The overall quality of teaching is **good** and the needs of all pupils are very well met. In all of the 33 lessons seen, the teaching was almost always at least satisfactory, except in one lesson. It was very good or better in 43 per cent. Indeed, in six per cent of lessons, the teaching was judged to be excellent. The quality of teaching is consistent across the school in nearly all classrooms and seven out of eight lessons are good or better. As a result, pupils achieve well throughout the school, especially in the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2. What they know, understand and can do is checked thoroughly in all subjects.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Although the quality of teaching has improved significantly since the last inspection it is not consistent in all junior classes.
- Teachers do not always extend pupils' speaking and writing skills across all subjects, particularly in junior classes.
- Teaching and learning are very good or better in 43 per cent of the lessons observed.

- Pupils with special educational needs and those with severe learning difficulties are taught very well.

## Commentary

### **Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 33 lessons**

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
3 (9%)	12 (36%)	14 (42%)	3 (10%)	1 (3%)	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. Across the school the standard of teaching has generally been raised since the previous inspection. This is especially true in the Foundation Stage and in infant classes where it has risen from good to very good. The main reasons for this improvement are:

- better understanding of subjects by teachers because of well-focused training opportunities;
- a carefully designed curriculum that enables teachers to make important links between subjects, for instance numeracy, ICT and history;
- very good checking and support by senior management has led to increased confidence and competence; and
- sound procedures and practices in judging pupils' levels of attainment. This has led to more informed teaching that caters for all pupils, including higher attaining pupils, those with special educational needs and those with severe learning difficulties.

As a result, standards have been raised based on pupils' prior attainment and pupils are achieving more.

18. Across the school, most teachers are very strong in terms of:

- their knowledge and understanding of the subjects they teach;
- the planning for lessons, groups of lessons and for the overall programme;
- their enthusiasm and keenness to engage pupils in worthwhile, challenging and well matched activities; and
- expecting a lot of the pupils.

In return, pupils are highly motivated learners, who enjoy their lessons and seek to meet the individual targets that are identified, often with their help. Pupils produce a lot of good work and the picture in their books is one of constant improvement. Both parents and pupils consider that the school stretches the youngsters and they are pleased about this.

19. Across the school but particularly in junior classes, most teachers are not strong in terms of:

- getting pupils to write more in literacy time and using other subjects in the curriculum as a focus for their writing; and
- extending pupils' speaking and listening skills in all subjects.

20. Even though there has been supportive input from a number of sources, on most occasions, the Year 4 class teacher is unable to match the high qualities shown in the teaching by his colleagues. At times, his practice is less than satisfactory although there are examples of satisfactory teaching. Weaknesses are found in planning lessons, particularly in setting clear learning objectives. As a result, the teacher and pupils are unclear what they are learning about

and achieve little. For example, in a science lesson the written objective was 'to identify a question and turn it into a form that can be tested making a prediction'. At the end of the lesson when asked by the teacher 'what does the evidence tell us?' – no pupil could answer. There are also weaknesses in the questioning of pupils. Questioning of pupils is not effective as it fails to build on past learning. Pupils' responses are not used well to develop the lesson or make teaching points, to make the lesson more interesting and meaningful.

21. An area that is quite difficult for all staff is the management and control of pupils, particularly challenging pupils. At times this leads to pupils not making the best use of their time and producing less work than expected. Inspectors saw enough of pupils in a variety of situations to recognise that their behaviour can be challenging. However, it is highly commendable that almost all teachers are experienced and have very effective strategies for managing lessons and this further enables learning to flourish.
22. Pupils with special educational needs learn very well across the stages in the school and their achievement is very good by the end of Year 6. Three factors have a particular impact on their learning:
  - targets on individual plans for their learning are usually very precise;
  - tasks are planned that cover the same type of work as the rest of the class but are tailored to their special needs and specific targets; and
  - teachers and teaching assistants give very good support during lessons. This helps pupils with significant barriers to learning continue with what they need to do, supports their motivation and concentration and ensures that they achieve well. Teachers assess the progress of pupils with special educational needs effectively, through marking their work and through very well targeted questioning during lessons.
23. Assessment procedures are satisfactory and have improved since the last inspection, when they were an area for improvement. In English and mathematics, teachers assess their pupils well in all activities to highlight any areas of strength or difficulty. This information is then used well to plan work to meet the pupils' needs. Pupils are tested frequently in English and mathematics. This information is also used as a means of checking their learning. Tracking systems are in place and show the progress that pupils are making towards the targets they have been set and whether this is good enough. These targets are reviewed to identify pupils who are not doing as well as they should. Reasons why these pupils are underachieving and ways forward for them are then discussed. This ensures that they all do as well as they should. This sound practice is also in evidence in other subjects and helps staff plan lessons that build well on past learning. All staff give pupils good verbal feedback on their work and the marking of work is always helpful. It gives pupils a clear picture of whether they have learnt what was intended.

## The curriculum

The school curriculum is **good** overall, and is enhanced **very well**, especially through sport and the arts. The curriculum is broad and balanced and relevant to pupils' needs. Accommodation and resources are **satisfactory** and are used well to ensure the best possible impact on pupils' learning.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school provides a good, balanced curriculum with adequate coverage of subjects.
- The Foundation Stage curriculum is rich and exciting and very well planned so that children achieve very well.
- The school provides a very good range of additional activities that stimulate pupils' interest and enrich learning.
- Pupils with special educational needs are supported very well and their levels of achievement are very good.

- There are insufficient opportunities for pupils to use and further develop their speaking and listening and writing skills in all subjects, particularly in junior classes.

## Commentary

24. The curriculum the school provides is broad and balanced. It meets the statutory requirements for the National Curriculum subjects and the Locally Agreed Syllabus for religious education. Good account is taken of the National Strategies for Numeracy and Literacy. Children in the Foundation Stage receive a very wide range of interesting and inter-connected experiences that are imaginatively organised to meet their needs and provide a very good start to their education. The curriculum for pupils in Years 1 and 2 is developing and becoming more enjoyable as closer links are made between subjects. In Years 3 to 6 the curriculum is soundly planned to make learning worthwhile but is more subject based at present. There has been a good improvement since the last inspection and the weaknesses in short-term planning have been rectified.
25. A very good range of activities is on offer outside the school day and pupils have access to a range of sports clubs according to the season. There are also opportunities to develop their skills in music, art, drama and cookery. Although the school does not have a pianist at present this does not cause a problem as volunteers are used to play for productions. The school arranges appropriate visits to make the pupils' learning more interesting and exciting, for example, to museums, theatres, libraries and cinemas. The residential weekend for Year 6 enables pupils to develop their personal qualities, physical and social skills well. Expertise from the local college enables pupils to learn French and extend their computer skills. The range of activities on offer continues to expand. Regular homework is set in all classes which ensures learning continues outside the school day. Parents are given regular information about what is being taught. Pupils are very well prepared for the next stages in their education when moving from the Nursery into the Reception class and from class to class throughout the school. Good links with the high school ensure an easy transition from Year 6.
26. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. The school puts a high priority on providing very well for all pupils, including those with special educational needs. Teachers and all support staff are dedicated to the well-being and best interests of the pupils with special educational needs and teaching has improved. Pupils receive a good curriculum, which is skilfully adapted by all staff to meet particular needs. Pupils have relevant individual education plans and, along with the introduction of clear, relevant and achievable targets, they make very good progress towards achieving them. Although their standards are below the national expectation, they achieve very well in relation to their prior attainment, as do the gifted and talented pupils, because of highly effective support.
27. Provision for personal, social and health education is good and well organised. However, the quality and range of such opportunities are variable across junior classes. Pupils have regular 'circle times' when they can talk freely and openly about their ideas and opinions across a range of topics. These sessions are used effectively to address behavioural issues and pupils are encouraged to consider the consequences of their actions and how to be responsible citizens. Teachers encourage pupils to work together in pairs and in small groups, which enables them to develop good social skills. Health education is carefully planned and covers such subjects as healthy eating, road safety, misuse of drugs and sex and relationships. Pupils also have access to water safety and cycling proficiency courses.
28. Resources are satisfactory overall; the school has completed an audit and has a programme for the renewal of equipment as funds allow. Many outdated books and computers have been replaced. The accommodation is satisfactory overall and best use is made of the space available. The displays of pupils' work around the building are outstanding and promote the value the school places on providing quality materials for its pupils. There is no computer suite but all classes have a bank of computers that are very well used to support learning. The entrance hall has been developed as an attractive library and although the location is not ideal



there is no alternative. The grounds are extensive and are being developed now they are secure. Accommodation and resources for the Foundation Stage are good.

29. Overall, there is satisfactory innovation of the curriculum and stronger links between subject areas are developing. In Years 1 to 6 there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to develop their oracy and writing skills across the curriculum. This is more so in Years 3 to 6. This is limiting progress in speaking and listening and writing. In science there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to write about their experiments and for older pupils to devise their own investigations. Innovation in the ICT curriculum is very good across the school. Numeracy is being used increasingly in other subjects, such as design and technology. In the Foundation Stage, innovation is very good and staff are continually involved in projects to improve children's learning. There is an excellent match of teaching staff to the Foundation Stage curriculum and they are supported by a very good nursery nurse and teaching assistants. Elsewhere there is a good match of staff and teaching assistants to the needs of the school which enables all pupils to have very good access to the whole curriculum.

### Care, guidance and support

Provision for pupils' care, welfare and health and safety are **good**. The school provides **good** support and advice based on knowledge of the pupils. The involvement of pupils in the school's work and development is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good relationships exist between pupils and staff.
- Induction arrangements for pupils are very good.
- The school provides a secure, safe place for pupils.
- The school provides good opportunities for pupils' opinions to be reflected in the development of the school.

### Commentary

30. All staff care very well for their pupils and the very good relationships between staff and pupils provide security and a feeling of belonging for the pupils. Pupils' happiness is a high feature in the school's ethos and much is done to ensure the school achieves this. As a result, pupils try to please their teachers and consequently work hard in their lessons.
31. Arrangements for children to enter the Nursery are very well planned and very effective in helping children settle quickly to their new school life. New pupils who enter the school in classes other than the Nursery class are quickly assessed as to their abilities. This information is then used effectively in ensuring their needs are met. For example, concerns are recorded about any learning or behavioural problems. From this information pupils who require support are well targeted for extra adult support in the classroom.
32. The governing body has adopted the local authority's policies on health and safety and carries out regular risk assessment. Child protection is held in high regard, with a suitably trained designated person who is active in ensuring whole-school awareness. Although there are effective systems in place to support and improve pupils' attendance and punctuality, the school still strives to make parents aware of the importance of this aspect.
33. The school has recently introduced a school council, which encourages pupils to become more involved in school life. It has already brought to the school's attention areas it would like to see improved, for example, the provision of playtime equipment.
34. Teachers know their pupils very well in terms of their personal qualities and backgrounds. This good knowledge of pupils is used well in providing pupils with support, advice and guidance

when needed. Pupils feel that they are very well supported and have strong trust in their teachers sufficiently enough to discuss any worries that they may have about anything.

## Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Partnership with parents, the local community and links with other schools are **very good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents have very good views about the school.
- Information to parents is good overall, although termly topic information is not sufficiently well detailed for parents who want to provide support to pupils at home.
- The school seeks parents' views and fully involves parents in pupils' learning.
- There are strong links with other schools and the local community is used well.
- There is an effective friends association which is very active, with funds raised being targeted effectively.

### Commentary

35. Parents' views from the questionnaires and at their meeting expressed great pleasure in what the school provides. They have confidence in the school that it will fully develop their children's learning skills. The school seeks parents' opinions about the school and acts on their views. Parents are very pleased with how speedily and effectively any concerns or complaints are dealt with. The information provided by the school for parents is good. The curriculum information and termly meetings, along with pupils' reports, give parents a clear picture of how their children are progressing. However, there is limited detail in the termly topic information supplied, which restricts the involvement by parents in pupils' learning at home.
36. There have been a number of parents' meetings organised by the school aimed at improving parents' understanding of teaching methods. These assist parents in better supporting their children's learning at home. Most pupils are well supported by their parents at home and receive help in completing homework. This support helps pupils make better progress and extends the learning that has taken place in the classroom for example, in reading, spelling and mathematics.
37. The links with the local community and the wide range of visitors provide very good enrichment for the curriculum. These links also support pupils' personal and social development, widen their experiences and give them opportunities to learn about the needs of others. The school has strong links with the local church through events such as harvest festivals.
38. There are very good links with the local high school as well as other schools in the area. These links enhance the quality of education and the academic and personal development of pupils. For example, pupils regularly visit the high school for science mornings, to see dress rehearsals and for other school events. Teachers from the high school visit pupils in their own school and on occasions teach lessons, such as ICT. This prepares pupils well for their transfer to the next stage of their education.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are **good** overall. The headteacher provides **very good** leadership and a strong sense of direction. She is **well** supported by staff who share her vision for the school. Governors manage their functions well and the governance of the school is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The governing body is making a good contribution to the effective management of the school.
- The headteacher is providing very good leadership.
- Other key staff are providing good support.
- There are weaknesses in the co-ordination of mathematics.

## Particular aids or barriers to raising achievement and their impact

- The above average proportion of pupils with special educational needs is a barrier to learning but the very good provision enables those pupils to achieve very well. The high level of pupils leaving and entering the school in junior classes impacts negatively on standards.

## Commentary

39. The headteacher is providing very good leadership and it is her vision that has shaped the school effectively since her appointment just after the last inspection. Her vision is shared and supported by the governing body. The result is a school with a very good ethos. The staff know what is expected of them. Pupils enjoy school and parents are very supportive and appreciative of the school. The school's improvement planning document covers the necessary areas for development. However, limited detail does not do justice to the effective development work that is actually going on. The headteacher is well supported by the senior managers and they form a good team. A positive atmosphere for learning opens up the school to raising the quality of lessons. As a result, nearly all teachers are successful in the classroom and motivate pupils well in their learning. A committed staff share the headteacher's strong sense of purpose and broad vision for the school. They talk of purposeful teamwork and a high degree of professional dialogue that strives for the continuous development of the good work of the school. The school has a strong commitment to the continuous professional development of its staff and good use is made of the requirement for performance management. This has a strong impact on the development of teaching and strategies for improving learning for most staff. As a result of classroom observations the school is providing varying means of support for one teacher whose quality of teaching is not consistent with that being delivered by colleagues.
40. Those staff with co-ordinator roles are generally making a good contribution to the management of their subjects. In some cases this is at a very good level, for example in ICT where the subject is developing well. However, there are weaknesses, as in the co-ordination of mathematics where the co-ordinator lacks a clear focus for improvement. This has slowed down the development of the subject. The management of the needs of pupils with special learning needs is good. The special educational needs co-ordinator is very experienced and knowledgeable. She understands the requirements of the code of practice for special educational needs and ensures that the school observes requirements in all respects. The school makes good provision for its pupils with identified needs through:
- the work of skilled and experienced teaching assistants;
  - the supportive grouping of pupils; and
  - learning resources specifically purchased for their needs.
41. Appropriately, more money is spent on supporting pupils with special educational needs than is delegated to the school.
42. The school is in a position to know its strengths and weaknesses because of effective monitoring carried out by the senior management team. Performance data is carefully monitored and used effectively to set targets and identify weaknesses. Where weaknesses have been identified, appropriate action has been taken. The school welcomes links with other agencies and some very profitable links - for example the local high school - are having a significant impact in areas such as standards in ICT. Teachers in training are welcome and the school provides a good place within which they can learn.
43. The governing body is an effective unit. Governors are providing good support to the school and act successfully as a critical friend who challenges the senior management team at times. They are well aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and play an active role in determining the direction that the school is taking. They are involved in the process by which

the school's priorities for development are determined. They are capable of taking difficult decisions and are aware of their responsibility to live within their budget. They ensure the school complies with all statutory requirements.

44. The school has good strategies for deciding how to spend its delegated funds and funds are administered efficiently. This has resulted in a good level of skilled and experienced staff who are well deployed. Resources are at least adequate and occasionally very good, as in ICT. Prudent management of finances has given the school the scope to set aside money year by year to keep levels of staffing to avoid classes with two year groups. This has eaten considerably into reserves in the previous financial year to ensure the programme has continued. The school has a very clear statement of who is responsible for the different aspects of its financial management. There is also a very clear statement of the school's approach to ensuring best value for money. Given its standards and provision and the quality of leadership and management, the school provides good value for the money delegated to it.

## Financial information

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

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	514,869
Total expenditure	515,521
Expenditure per pupil	2,699

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	17,908
Balance carried forward to the next year	-652

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

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

Provision for all children, including those with special educational needs, in the Nursery and Reception classes is **very good**. There are 40 part-time places available in the Nursery where children attend either morning or afternoon sessions. Attainment on entry to the Nursery is well below average overall. During their time in the Nursery the children achieve very well although standards remain generally below those expected for their age when they start the Reception class, especially in language and numeracy. The curriculum for the Foundation Stage is very well planned to provide a very wide range of interesting and interconnected experiences that are imaginatively organised to meet the needs of the children. Procedures for checking on what children know, understand or can do are excellent. Information is used very well to plan for the next stages of children's development and to move learning forward quickly. All the staff work well together to provide children with a good deal of individual attention and appropriate support. By the end of the Reception Year most children reach the level expected in their personal, social and emotional development and physical and creative development. Children's knowledge and understanding of the world broadens considerably as a result of the wide variety of exciting activities and visits planned and most reach the expected level by the end of the Reception Year. Significant numbers of children do not fully meet the levels expected for their age in speaking and listening, reading, writing and mathematics.

The experienced and knowledgeable co-ordinator provides very strong leadership and management. There is a well-established partnership between the co-ordinator and the nursery teacher and they have shared vision and ideals. Parents are very involved and encouraged to play an important part in their child's learning. Very good induction arrangements are flexible and adjusted to meet individual needs. Resources are very good and best use is made of the available accommodation. Displays of children's work are inspiring and provide a very stimulating atmosphere for children to work in. The very good standards seen in the last inspection have been maintained, the quality of overall teaching has improved and the Foundation Stage continues to be a strength of the school.

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

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching is very good with some excellent practice in both classes.
- There is a good balance between teacher-directed lessons and the opportunities for children to choose their own activities.

### **Commentary**

45. Children achieve very well and make very good progress in this area of their learning in both classes. This is the result of the very good and often excellent teaching. This is typified by the consistently high expectations and the calm and caring approach shown by both teachers and teaching assistants. Very detailed assessments are made of children's progress. Children are courteous and friendly towards each other and towards adults because of the good examples set by staff. Nursery children are taught to play with others, to share and take turns. They quickly develop a very good understanding of relationships and appropriate behaviour. In both classes, discussions focus effectively on how children can help each other, how they can work hard and rewards are given for kindness and good manners. Children are encouraged to be as independent as possible and respond well, showing a mature approach to any responsibility given, such as clearing away equipment and dressing themselves. When children work on their own they sustain their interest very well. Children are always interested, purposefully

occupied and know what to do when a particular task is finished. When they work with others they co-operate and help each other very well, especially in the Reception class. By the end of the Reception Year most children develop appropriate levels of independence and self-reliance and reach the standards expected for their age and some exceed it.

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

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching is very good and often excellent.
- Very good opportunities are provided for children to develop their speaking and listening skills and extend their vocabulary.
- Children enjoy looking at books and listening to stories.

### **Commentary**

46. Very good teaching ensures nursery children achieve very well in this area of learning. Several pupils are not forming their words correctly nor speaking in sentences when they join the Nursery. Others can use simple sentences but their vocabulary is narrow. They are given a very wide range of varied opportunities and experiences to develop their skills. In all activities, adults purposefully engage children in conversation about their work. Several children have underdeveloped speech when they start the Reception Year. The very good teaching continues in the Reception class. Vocabulary is enriched as children are challenged to find words to describe the activities of the day, for example, 'marvellous maths' and 'wonderful writing'. Children in the Reception class listen very well both to their teacher and each other when working as a class group. Most are confident to contribute their ideas and opinions to class discussion. By the end of the Reception Year many of the pupils are close to the expected standard for their age in listening but less so in speaking. Nursery children love stories and absorb considerable detail. Later they are able to retell stories with enjoyment to their friends by turning pages and looking at the pictures in the book. A few can write their own name and most make some kind of personal mark which they can identify on the musical instruments they have made. In the Reception class, children continue to develop a love of books and interest in reading and the teacher has the skill of providing children with magical experiences. They enjoy the stories the teacher reads and they listen attentively taking in the detail. Most of the children can read the earliest books in the reading scheme and enjoy taking these home regularly to share with parents. Most can write their own name correctly. The most able pupils are developing an awareness of story structure that they are using in their own work. However, although children make very good progress in this area only about half of the pupils fully attain the level expected for their age by the end of the Reception Year.

## **MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching is very good and often excellent in the Reception class and skilfully engages children's curiosity about numbers.
- Children's mathematical vocabulary is carefully developed and children can use it to describe their ideas and ways of working.

## Commentary

47. Children in the Nursery are given a wide range of practical activities to develop their mathematical skills. They can count up to eight when putting legs on a spider. The most able pupil can count to 20. Children can sort objects into big, medium and large. They have a good knowledge of two-dimensional shapes and can choose either a square or triangular sandwich when having a picnic. In the Reception class, excellent teaching develops mathematical skills. Most children can count to 20 and the most able beyond this. Most children can use a number line and say which number comes next and some have an understanding of what comes before. They have good knowledge of the properties and names of two-dimensional shapes and often use these to create patterns. They shop at the fruit stall, consult the price list and see how many different things they can buy for ten pence. Children have an understanding of weight and know that if the scales balance that objects weigh the same. The most able group are able to explain to the rest that the biggest objects are not always the heaviest. Adults give very good individual support to those children who are experiencing difficulties. Although the children achieve very well, by the time they reach the end of the Reception Year most children do not reach the expected level because a significant number still have difficulty recording numbers and remembering number facts.

## KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is very good and a wide range of experiences planned.
- Children are encouraged to use their curiosity and senses to explore their world and gain knowledge.
- Indoor and outdoor spaces are used very well.

## Commentary

48. Children start the Nursery with varying levels of general knowledge. Best use is made of the classroom space and outdoor area to stimulate children's curiosity through motivating activities and interactive displays. They also gain good knowledge of living things and learn to care for them from their study of spiders and looking after a goldfish in their classroom. Children regularly use the computer to draw and play games that develop, for example, their number skills and sense of direction. They confidently control the mouse to move around the computer screen. Children talk about events in their own and other people's lives. In the Reception class their knowledge develops very well as they explore and investigate using their senses. In the water tray, children experiment with objects with great enthusiasm to find out if they float or sink. They look at exotic fruits, learn their names and have the opportunity to taste them. They look closely at different materials using a hand lens and feel the texture of different kinds of feathers. They are able to describe differences, similarities and the patterns they find. The children achieve very well and by the end of the Reception Year most pupils are reaching the level expected for their age in this area of learning.

## PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision for physical development is **very good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children move with confidence and control and show an awareness of space, themselves and others.
- They show good control when handling pencils, tools and the computer mouse.



## Commentary

49. Children are well co-ordinated and reach standards expected for their age by the end of the Reception Year. Teaching is very good and children achieve very well. The nursery children demonstrated good co-ordination and ball skills in a lesson taken by a local school's football coach. In both classrooms they show good awareness of each other when moving from one activity to another, often in a fairly confined space in the Reception class. They know the importance of healthy eating, drinking water and warming up and cooling down at the end of physical activity sessions. Children develop good manipulative skills through construction work, using glue sticks, paintbrushes and cutters when using play dough. Children are able to use scissors safely and most can cut round shapes very well because they are taught very well and given plenty of practice. Regular handwriting activities focus on correct pencil grip and many children already demonstrate this. Most children are showing improved control when painting and colouring by the end of the Reception Year.

## CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

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

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers have considerable expertise in this area and pass on their enthusiasm to the children through their very good teaching.
- Children are confident to use a variety of materials to explore colour and texture to express their ideas.
- Children make good use of resources to develop their imagination.

## Commentary

50. Good teacher subject knowledge helps in the delivery of very good provision and teaching. Children in the Nursery are given a wide variety of creative opportunities. They paint detailed portraits of themselves on the train. They extend their skills as they use paint and collage to show what they would pack in their suitcase and drawings of what they saw on their train journey. They made a collage from collected treasures from their outing. When looking back at their earlier work very good progress is evident. Very good use is made of construction materials to create imaginary trains, lorries and aeroplanes to be part of a transport system they create as a group. They also show good imaginative development when they play with the small figures on a campsite near the beach. In the Reception class these skills are further developed. Children make very good observational drawings of fruit, matching colours and blending the pastel colours carefully. They look at art in different cultures by studying Aboriginal cave paintings and artefacts. They enjoy singing and playing instruments. A small group created some Aboriginal music using a rain stick and wooden blocks and the didgeridoo. Children achieve very well as teachers' expectations are very high, talent is nurtured and most attain the levels expected and a number of children above those expected for their age by the end of Reception.

## SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

### ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Overall, pupils' achievement is good, with many starting from a low base.

- The school compensates well for the limited experiences and vocabulary that pupils bring to the subject.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good.
- There are not enough opportunities for pupils to use and further develop their writing and speaking and listening skills in all subjects, particularly in junior classes.
- Leadership and management are good.

## Commentary

51. Provision, teaching and achievement are improved from the judgements of the last inspection. At the end of Year 2, standards are average in reading and writing and below average in speaking and listening. At the end of Year 6, standards are average in reading and below average in writing and in speaking and listening. National test results in 2003 show a similar picture to the standards seen at the end of Year 2 but not at the end of Year 6. There was a high level of pupils with special educational needs in the Year 6 class and a considerable movement of pupils in and out of the class (12 started, 15 left, leaving 34 remaining in the class). Movement was between Year 4 and Year 6 and had a negative impact on standards. This high level of mobility makes comparing results at the end of Year 2 and at the end of Year 6 of little value as an indicator of the school's performance.
52. By the end of Year 2, pupils read and write competently and confidently. There are no significant variations in the attainment of boys and girls or of pupils from different levels of ability. Given the well below average standards on entry to the school, achievement for all pupils is very good, including those with special educational needs and those who have severe learning difficulties. Pupils listen with growing attention and concentration and higher attaining pupils are beginning to sustain increasingly lengthy conversations. These conversations involve explanations, enquiries, comparisons, the sharing of ideas and the justification of personal views. However, the significant numbers of lower attaining pupils do not express themselves clearly and have limited vocabulary. The teachers are aware of this and are developing ways of improving these skills in lessons. This has yet to impact fully on standards. Pupils read accurately, fluently and with understanding. The majority of pupils are expressive when reading aloud and talk with interest about their favourite book. Writing skills are progressing well and this has much to do with the very good standard of teachers' marking and the use of individual targets. This has been a particularly successful initiative that has improved results in national tests. Lower attaining pupils are improving their basic skills of spelling and punctuation and are increasing the length of their work. However, limited opportunities, particularly for average and higher attaining pupils to write across all subjects, limit the progress they are making.
53. By the end of Year 6, pupils have generally continued to make good progress in all aspects of this subject. However, there are inconsistencies in lessons between classes in encouraging pupils to talk and write about their learning, experiences and work. Consequently, achievement in speaking and writing varies between classes resulting in standards that are below the expected level. For example, in Year 4 there is very little focus on pupils' speaking and pupils' progress is unsatisfactory. In other classes, when given the opportunity, higher attaining pupils talk competently to a group or wider audience and the majority are fluent and confident. However, too often teachers accept short responses and do not ask for further clarification. As a result, the large proportion of lower attaining pupils find difficulty in expressing their ideas clearly. Achievement is also restricted because there are too few planned opportunities in some classes for debate and discussion. Reading is accurate and fluent. Higher attaining pupils show very good understanding of their books. All pupils are expressive when reading aloud and have sound knowledge of how to use the library. Basic writing skills are being developed well. This is due to:
- the good range of writing experiences in literacy lessons that are challenging to all levels of attainment;
  - the good guidance from staff on redrafting of work; and

- the good self-evaluation by pupils of their work that leads to improvements in their planning of work and thoughtful responses to challenging tasks.
54. However, these skills are not being used enough for pupils to write at length in all subjects. For example, very rarely does science report writing become the basis of a literacy lesson. Similarly, instructional writing in design and technology is not the basis of a writing focus in literacy time. Good practice was seen in Year 6 when pupils wrote a diary as part of their literacy lessons expressing their views as an evacuee.
55. Overall, the good quality of teaching and learning owes much to:
- the effective matching of work to pupils' levels of prior attainment;
  - the high expectations of all pupils. This is particularly true of pupils with special educational needs and those with severe learning difficulties, who receive highly appropriate and competent support; and
  - the very good management of challenging pupils that ensures that there are no distractions. Furthermore, it fosters very good attitudes in the pupils to their work. Teachers try hard to make up for lack of experience and richness of vocabulary. Lots of visits and visitors enrich the curriculum and provide experiences that pupils can use to flavour their writing. In nearly all classes displays of vocabulary surround pupils and these are referred to at times to improve pupils' knowledge of words. This is particularly true in infant classes but less so in some junior classes.
56. Pupils are clear about what they know and have a very clear picture of future developments needed because of the very effective marking, target-setting and guidance provided. Where the teaching is satisfactory, the main reason is the lack of vibrance in the teaching. Pupils' ideas are not sufficiently well developed either verbally or written. A lack of knowledge of the subject impacts on the quality teaching and pupils' enthusiasm is not raised. This teacher receives good support but as yet this has not increased his potential to improve and do well.
57. Leadership and management are good. There is a significant amount of work done in the annual written review of the subject and the identified priorities are the right ones. For example, the co-ordinator has rightly identified the need to develop pupils' speaking and listening skills. Good levels of checking provision are present, including teachers' planning, observing teaching and analysing pupils' work. Procedures and practices for the assessment of pupils' levels of attainment are effective; particularly useful is the comprehensive tracking of pupils' learning. A new initiative in Years 3 and 6 of teachers' and pupils' assessment is proving successful. The use of WALT (we are learning to) and WILF (what I'm looking for) indicates clearly to pupils what they are to learn and they need to be aware of in order to meet the objective. ICT is being used well to support the subject.

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

58. Pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding are not consistently developed well in other subjects. However this is developing, for example:
- in a Year 3 geography lesson, research and writing about pollution;
  - in a Year 6 science lesson, writing notes as pupils examined samples they had collected from the river; and
  - in a Year 5 geography lesson, good discussion took place as pupils planned a camping and walking holiday in Snowdonia.

## MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Although standards are below expectations for pupils in Years 2 and 6, they achieve well.
- Teaching and learning are good.
- There are weaknesses in the management of the subject by the co-ordinator.

### Commentary

59. The attainment of pupils in Year 2 in National Curriculum tests in 2003 was average both at national level and when compared with similar schools. Standards have varied over time but have generally been better than average. The attainment of pupils in Year 6 in National Curriculum tests in 2003 was well below average nationally and was also well below when judged against similar schools. The attainment of pupils over time has generally been lower than the national average with the exception of results for 2002 which were average. Inspection shows that standards for pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 are below expectations. Despite this, pupils are making good progress and are achieving well. Standards are affected by several factors. The pupils are entering Year 1 having made very good progress in the Foundation Stage but are still at levels that are lower than expected for their age. They continue through to Year 6 making generally good progress but standards become increasingly affected by pupil mobility and the fact that many pupils entering the school from Year 4 upwards have increasingly demanding special educational needs. However, good assessment of and effective support, helps these pupils do as well as their ability permits.
60. The quality of teaching is good. Lessons are well planned and provision and support is shown for pupils of differing abilities. The skills of numeracy are well taught and teachers show high expectations of pupils by generally pacing their lessons well. Occasionally the demands of individual pupils and the need to manage them effectively lead to a slowing of this pace. Pupils respond well and work hard as a result.
61. Staff know pupils well and monitor and assess their progress on a regular basis. The assessment data shows how pupils are progressing towards their target levels. Lessons are well resourced and teaching assistants make a good contribution to pupils' progress. ICT is being increasingly used to support mathematics and the subject and pupils benefit from the schools' link with its local high school.
62. Pupils do well because they know what the lesson objectives are and in the best lessons these objectives are revisited from time to time. The best lessons also engage pupils in their own self-evaluation and also give them the opportunity to rehearse before others their thinking and ideas. Relationships are good.
63. Pupils generally respond well. They are eager to take part and enjoy demonstrating for others. On occasion the high regard they generally show for listening to and valuing the opinion of others falters as their attention drifts. They know what is expected of them and generally produce work of which they are justly proud.
64. The management and leadership of the subject are unsatisfactory. The co-ordinator does not articulate a clear understanding of how to take the subject forward or what the priorities for doing this should be. There is a lack of clear and specific thinking about what can be done to improve the way the subject is taught and the pace at which pupils make progress. This has limited improvements in the subject since the last inspection. The subject is reasonably well resourced and makes a satisfactory contribution to pupils' personal development.

## **Mathematics across the curriculum**

65. Mathematics is used effectively across the curriculum and can at the same time support the development of other areas of the curriculum such as was seen in a Year 3 lesson where pupils were producing graphs from databases they had constructed. Similar contributions are made in science and through the investigation of pattern in art.

## **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils of all abilities achieve well by the end of Year 2 and Year 6.
- Teaching is good and pupils learn well through a practical approach.
- Leadership and management of the subject are good.
- There are good links with ICT in most classes.
- Insufficient demands are made on pupils to record their own work.

### **Commentary**

66. There has been a good improvement since the last inspection and there is now a stronger focus on practical investigations. By the end of Year 2, teacher assessment in 2003 shows that the majority of pupils reach the nationally expected standards for their age and a few pupils exceed this. Standards attained by pupils by the end of Year 6 in 2003 tests are just below average in comparison with national standards. A small percentage of higher attaining pupils reach above average standards. The inspection found standards in the current Year 6 to be close to the national average and average overall in Year 2. Standards fluctuate considerably due to the varying percentage of pupils with special educational needs and rate of pupil mobility in different year groups. Standards attained in the 2004 tests (unvalidated) show considerable improvement on last year's results. Standards are slightly lower than at the time of the last inspection in Year 6 but similar in Year 2. Pupils with special educational needs achieve very well in relation to their capabilities.
67. The teaching and learning observed during the inspection were good overall. In Years 1 and 2, teachers plan a good variety of interesting practical activities that the pupils enjoy. Pupils are well supported by the available adults, who question pupils well to focus their observations and assess understanding. In both year groups, pupils are encouraged to predict and they gain a developing understanding of a fair test. In Year 2, pupils are able to take accurate measurements and record these on a chart. They show good levels of independence when drawing their graphs on the computer. Year 2 pupils demonstrate that they can draw simple conclusions from their results. Teaching in Years 3 and 5 was good. It was very good in Year 6 and unsatisfactory in Year 4, where the learning objectives were unclear. Learning in these lessons matched the quality of the teaching. In the good and better lessons, pupils' investigative skills and their correct use of vocabulary are developed well. However, at times, older pupils are given insufficient opportunities to devise their own investigations. The importance of checking results several times before drawing a conclusion is not always given sufficient emphasis. ICT is used well in most classes to research topics such as river pollution and to handle data, showing good improvement since the last inspection.
68. From the work seen, pupils have the benefit of a good, broad balanced curriculum for science. The curriculum is enriched through many science-based visits, for example to a farm and science activity centre. Science theatre groups and workshops visit the school. These experiences encourage pupils to show interest in the subject and as a result, they work hard and behave very well during practical sessions.

69. Work samples do not reflect the differences in pupils' attainment because pupils are not required to record enough of their own work. Work is very well presented but there is a lack of variety and opportunity in the methods used for recording, especially in writing. In some year groups too many worksheets are used which only require pupils of all abilities to fill in a missing word. At the end of each unit of work pupils' knowledge and subject vocabulary are tested and they show good gains in their knowledge. Discussion with pupils shows that they have difficulty retaining knowledge and vocabulary once they have moved on to something else. In order to improve this, teachers are spending time at the start of a new unit of work encouraging pupils to revise their previous factual knowledge and subject vocabulary. This is helping pupils retain past learning. There is no indication in the books as to the amount of help lower attaining pupils have been given to complete their work nor their level of understanding. Marking of work in science does not always tell pupils what they need to improve and is at times mainly concerned with how well the work is presented.
70. Leadership and management of the subject are good. The co-ordinator monitors planning and analyses test scripts each year to identify areas requiring development. He provides advice and training for staff where required. There is a clear subject action plan focused on improving standards. Resources are satisfactory and larger items can be borrowed from the local high school. Strong curriculum links are established with the local college and pupils in Year 6 begin work on a pollution project that continues in Year 7. In this work pupils show that they have acquired the skills of investigation and can apply them well when given the opportunity.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The subject is very well led.
- The subject benefits from very good links with the local high school.
- The cross-curricular use of the subject is developing well.

### **Commentary**

71. Since the last inspection provision for the subject has improved significantly. There has been an effective effort to replace and renew computers, to develop the associated skills and to extend the use of ICT to other areas of the curriculum. Achievement of all pupils, including those with special educational needs, is good. By the end of Years 2 and 6, pupils are achieving standards that are in line with national expectations. At the end of Year 2, pupils have a sound understanding of many of the uses of the computer and show a confident use of the keyboard and mouse. They are able to use word-processing programs to type words and sentences. They are beginning to collect data and present the information in charts and understand that a CD-ROM stores information. By the time pupils are nine, many can use a control program to make repeating patterns on the computer screen, are familiar with art packages to make illustrations and have experience of a digital camera. By the end of Year 6, pupils can produce PowerPoint presentations, use a data-handling program to produce graphs and have experienced use of the Internet to search for information. As a result of the present very good provision, standards are rising. The school does not have the space for a computer suite but each classroom is well supplied with computers and associated software.
72. The school has forged a very beneficial link with the local high school. Pupils visit the High school's computer suite and high school staff visits to the school provide pupils with very high quality learning experiences. The teaching provided by this visiting teacher was very good. During the inspection in these sessions seen the teaching was never less than very good and in one case was excellent.

73. Not surprisingly then, pupils are very keen to learn and so make very good progress. They enjoy the challenge and quality that they are presented with. They respond very favourably and work hard. Relationships are very good and teachers show a very good understanding of how their pupils need to learn.
74. The full curriculum is being taught and pupils have safe access to the Internet as part of that curriculum. Very close attention is paid to health and safety aspects. The speed at which progress has been made has outstripped the ability of staff to record and assess that progress as effectively as they would like. The problem is recognised and is a priority for development.
75. The subject is being very well led and managed by the present co-ordinator, whose enthusiasm and drive have had a major impact on the skills and confidence of staff. Her priorities for the continuing development and improvement of standards are appropriate. Wise provision is made concerning the maintenance of equipment and this results in staff being able to make the best use of their time. The subject is very well resourced and interactive whiteboards are to be introduced to further enhance the teaching and learning.

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

76. ICT is being effectively developed and used across the curriculum so that skills can be developed at the same time. Many areas of the curriculum are being used in this way and examples were seen during the inspection of ICT being used and taught in mathematics, science and humanities. This approach is also being effectively employed for pupils of all ages.

### **HUMANITIES**

77. In **religious education**, although no lessons were seen, the subject was sampled through the analysis of pupils' work in books and on display. Discussions also took place with the co-ordinator and a small number of pupils. From this evidence, standards at the end of Year 2 and 6 are at the level of those expected in the Locally Agreed Syllabus and achievement is satisfactory. It is not possible to comment on provision for religious education as no teaching was observed during the inspection. However, pupils are being given their entitlement and the subject is being taught in accordance with the Locally Agreed Syllabus.
78. The subject is closely linked to personal, social and health education and many of the issues in religious education are based on social matters. Much of the work is done on a discussion basis and so there is not a lot of work that is recorded in books or folders. Several classes have displays, as was the case where, for example, pupils were studying Buddhism. Whilst attainment is at an acceptable level there are areas where, such as knowledge of the Bible, pupils find difficulty retaining information.
79. The subject is managed by the headteacher, who has good opportunities to monitor both the teaching and learning of this subject. There is a limited range of artefacts and this is recognised as a priority. The curriculum is further enhanced by the contribution of visitors and there are some opportunities to give pupils first-hand knowledge, through visits, of places of worship used by other faiths.
80. Work was sampled in **geography** and **history**. One lesson of geography was seen but none in history. It is not therefore possible to form an overall judgement about provision in these subjects. There was evidence of geography in the books of younger pupils, with map work of the British Isles and the adventures of Barnaby Bear in London. Pupils in Year 2 had recently made a visit to Macclesfield Forest to study an environment that contrasts with their own. Older pupils had investigated the effect of pollution on their environment, including litter and noise. Year 4 pupils have studied life in a Kenyan village and made comparisons with their own way of life. Pupils in Year 6 had studied some of the world's most important rivers as well as the local ones. In discussion with pupils it was clear that they had retained few facts but knew where to go to find this information. In the very good Year 5 lesson, the pupils were highly

motivated because the lesson captured their imagination. The pupils in the class were planning a camping trip to North Wales. They showed that they could make good use of their knowledge of Snowdonia when planning the type of clothing they would need to take. They showed good understanding of the terrain and weather conditions they might encounter. The exercise brought together pupils' knowledge in a number of areas, for example, mapping skills, using timetables, buying camping equipment and using the Internet to book campsites. The learning was very good.

81. The range of visits and visitors play an important part in making the work interesting and relevant, especially in history. Pupils in Year 6 had visited the Manchester museum when studying Egyptians and their written accounts showed how much they had learnt. Visits are also made in connection with work on Victorians. In discussion, pupils show that they have developed a good understanding of life in Victorian times and how this related to the development of their local area. However, there is considerable variation in the kind and quantity of written work expected. Examples of pupils writing as people living in other times or witnessing important historical events are rare. History was not a curriculum focus at the time of the inspection but planning shows that the requirements of the National Curriculum are met.

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

Two lessons were seen in **art and design**, one in **design and technology**, none in **music** and one in **physical education**. It is not therefore possible to make a firm judgement about provision in these subjects.

82. Through **art and design**, pupils have experienced a wide range of materials and are taught the basic skills well. Pupils in Year 1 study the use of texture to symbolise decorated insects and Year 2 pupils use their visit to a forest to provide a focus for their leaf prints. By the end of Year 3, pupils have learned how to mix colours and use good brush technique to paint their pictures illustrating their prints using polystyrene. Older pupils have developed good observational skills and have produced some good silhouettes of the sky at night and developed 'cubist pattern work' in the style of Mondrian. Good use is made of displays in the school, which are of good quality. A whole school effort focusing on textiles provided a very colourful display in the hall with work from all classes. Discussion with pupils shows that they enjoy their art and design and are proud to show their work.
83. In **design and technology** projects there is a strong focus on the three key areas of design, making and evaluation in the teaching and learning. A strength is the way that pupils are focused on design and technology in the everyday world at the beginning of a topic. By the end of Year 2, they have experienced working with a variety of materials, measuring, marking and cutting paper, card and fabrics. Year 2 pupils after examining commercial shoes can produce and follow simple designs allowing them to make their favourite type of shoe. As pupils progress through the school, they investigate different types of photograph frames, design and make their own frames and have experience of a digital camera to provide the images. At the end of Year 6, pupils work in teams, solving problems concerning structure and the use of cams as they make a moving toy from the World War II era. During one lesson observed, Year 1 pupils worked very well following a design they had drawn and making their favourite piece of playground equipment. Although the teacher provided a range of junk materials, the pupils chose the pieces they needed, worked with good attention to detail and with good measuring and cutting skills. The pupils co-operated very well together, helping each other as required and showing a high degree of pride with their designing and making work.
84. In **music**, pupils sang enthusiastically to a tape in one assembly. Teachers teach music to their own classes but there is no pianist on the staff. Funding will no longer allow the employment of a specialist teacher for part of the week. However, pupils still have a wide range of musical experiences and advisory staff from the local authority train choral groups who join other schools performing in the Town Hall. Some pupils learn to play the keyboard and next term there will be opportunities to learn a brass or stringed instrument. Pupils in Year 3 and 6



are preparing for a production of 'Joseph and his Amazing Technicolour Dreamcoat' at the end of term.

85. In Year 3, standards in **gymnastics** are satisfactory. Pupils make good use of space; they move confidently and do well to incorporate jumps and balances into their movements. They control these movements well. Pupils have very positive attitudes and behave well. Performance improved as they watched the highest attaining pupils. Arrangements for swimming are satisfactory and most pupils achieve the nationally recommended standard by Year 6.
86. The teaching in the lesson in **physical education** was good. In the lesson, the good level of energy and enthusiasm shown by the teacher led to good attitudes and behaviour. A good knowledge and understanding of the subject meant that instructions were understood and followed and good performance by some pupils led to effective exemplars for the rest that raised expectations.
87. In the curricular planning, girls and boys of all abilities are given good opportunities to participate in an extremely wide variety of activities, more varied than is found in most schools. Activities are arranged both during, and outside of the school day. The residential visits for pupils in Year 6 give them very good opportunities for participating in outdoor and energetic pursuits. The subject contributes very well to pupils' personal development, especially their understanding of a healthy lifestyle and all aspects of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

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

88. The school plans for this area of learning to be one of the major building blocks towards the positive outcomes in the life and work of the school. For example, there are lessons that deal with bullying, how to cope with difficulties and the broader issues of citizenship, such as caring for the needy. Great importance is placed on visiting places to broaden social experiences, for instance the annual residential trip. The school makes good use of visitors to school. The community police officer and school nurse have made plans or are planned to visit, for instance, to give safety and health talks and practical advice and guidance on safe cycling. Within the programme there are good and timely references to sex and relationships and drugs education.
89. The school has started pursuing a healthy eating award. It has introduced water and fruit for pupils, including snacks at morning break. The very good conduct of pupils throughout the school day owes much to the impact and worth of personal, social and health education and citizenship on the work of the school. It plays a very beneficial part in the positive attitudes of pupils in lessons and in their developing understanding of the notion of right and wrong. This is a school where 'family care' succeeds, but only as a result of much hard work and effort. The school council is fairly new but is full of enthusiasm and is beginning to have a positive impact on the school as it brings its ideas and views to the notice of the school.
90. All of this is handled with insight and determination by the staff. The primary belief is that personal, social and health education is an area that is and should be at the core of all that goes on in the school. This approach provides a shared and strong focus for all staff members, going beyond class lessons and across the whole school.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

### *Inspection judgement*

### *Grade*

<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>3</b>
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	3

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

<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>	<b>2</b>
Attendance	4
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	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	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	2
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2

<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>3</b>
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	3

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