

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **WILLOWBROOK PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Leicester

LEA area: Leicester City

Unique reference number: 120056

Headteacher: Mr Kirk Hayles

Lead inspector: Ms Margot D'Arcy

Dates of inspection: 14<sup>th</sup> - 16<sup>th</sup> June 2004

Inspection number: 258440

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



© Crown copyright 2004

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3-11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	347
School address:	Roborough Green Leicester
Postcode:	LE5 2NA
Telephone number:	(0116) 2413 756
Fax number:	(0116) 2419 669
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr R N Renner
Date of previous inspection:	May 1998

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The school is larger than most primaries, with fairly equal numbers of boys and girls. All pupils except the 37 Nursery-aged children<sup>1</sup> attend full time. These children and the two classes of Reception children<sup>2</sup>, make up the school's Foundation Stage<sup>3</sup>. The number of pupils in Years 1 and 2 necessitates some mixed age classes. In Years 3 to 6, pupils are taught in sets<sup>4</sup> for English and mathematics; these mostly contain pupils of the same age. In other subjects, pupils are taught in mixed age classes spanning two years. The school has a nurture group where some pupils from Years 1 and 2 are taught each morning, returning to work with their classmates in the afternoons. Most pupils are of white British heritage. There are minorities from other ethnic groups but, while some speak English as an additional language, none are at an early stage of learning English so do not require any additional support to help them understand the curriculum. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs (33 per cent) is well above the national average. The range of needs includes pupils with specific, moderate and general learning difficulties; social, emotional and behavioural difficulties; speech and communication difficulties; physical difficulties; and visual and hearing impairments. There are five pupils with severe learning difficulties who have a legal statement about the provision that must be made for them. Twenty-seven per cent of pupils are entitled to free school meals, which is above average. The area in which the school is situated suffers from some social and economic disadvantage. The number of pupils leaving and joining the school other than at the usual times of admission and transfer<sup>5</sup> is particularly high in the

---

<sup>1</sup> In this school termed Foundation 1.

<sup>2</sup> In this school termed Foundation 2.

<sup>3</sup> Nationally, the Foundation Stage includes nursery and Reception children.

<sup>4</sup> Grouped on the basis of their prior attainment or 'ability'.

<sup>5</sup> Termed 'mobility'.

infants<sup>6</sup>. Children's overall attainment when they begin school is well below what is normally expected for their age, particularly in communication, language and literacy. The school has gained a number of awards, including the Basic Skills Quality Mark, National Healthy Schools' Standard; a School Achievement Award from the DfSS; an FA Charter Mark for football coaching and an Eco Award.

---

<sup>6</sup> For instance, of the Year 2 pupils who took the national tests in 2003, 58 per cent joined after the Reception Year.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
23158	Ms Margot D'Arcy	Lead inspector	Art and design
11104	Mr Michael Fleming	Lay inspector	
10053	Ms J Simms	Team inspector	Geography History Religious education
14732	Mrs Enid Korn	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology
15011	Mrs Marion Wallace	Team inspector	The Foundation Stage Special educational needs Science Physical education
20614	Mr Don Kimber	Team inspector	English Design and technology Music

The inspection contractor was:

Tribal PPI  
Barley House  
Oakfield Grove  
Clifton  
Bristol  
BS8 2BN

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be made initially to the inspection contractor. The procedures are set out in the leaflet '*Complaining about Ofsted Inspections*', which is available from Ofsted Publications Centre (telephone 07002 637 833) or Ofsted's website ([www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

## **REPORT CONTENTS**

	Page
<b>PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT</b>	<b>4 - 5</b>
<b>PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS</b>	
<b>STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS</b>	<b>6 - 9</b>
Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
<b>QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL</b>	<b>10 - 14</b>
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
<b>LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT</b>	<b>14</b>
- 15	
<b>PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECTS</b>	<b>16 - 27</b>
<b>AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE</b>	
<b>SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2</b>	
<b>PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS</b>	<b>28</b>

## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**This is a good school.** While standards are below and sometimes well below average, most pupils are achieving well. This is due to good, and often very good, teaching. However, standards in English and mathematics are not as high as they could be. Pupils' personal standards, such as behaviour and attitudes to work, are particularly good because the school promotes these very well. Strong leadership and very effective management from the headteacher, key staff and governors are supporting improvement and underpin the many, very good, qualities of this school. Both pupils and parents are very happy with the school, which provides good value for money.

### THE SCHOOL'S MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES ARE:

- Very good leadership from the headteacher is backed up by very good management strategies.
- Governors make a very good contribution to the way the school is run.
- The quality of teaching and learning in Years 3 to 6 is very good, but in Years 1 and 2 it is inconsistent.
- Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is very good, with strengths in many areas but shortcomings in promoting some early literacy skills.
- Standards in English and mathematics are not high enough, particularly at the end of Year 2.
- While pupils make overall satisfactory progress in information and communication technology (ICT) standards and achievement in some elements are unsatisfactory.
- Standards exceed expectations in art and design and religious education (RE).
- Pupils with special educational needs are very well provided for.
- Good learning experiences are enriched by a wide range of additional opportunities.
- Homework and the strategies to inform pupils about how well they are learning are very good.
- The school is successful in ensuring that all pupils are valued and fully included.
- The school provides a very good standard of care for pupils and is very effective in promoting their personal qualities.
- There are very good systems to promote attendance but, while improving, standards are still well below the national average.

Currently, the areas to improve are very much the same as those identified by the last inspection. Standards in English are still not high enough and there are still some issues about standards in ICT, infant pupils' achievement in mathematics, and inconsistencies in teaching. Since it was established a year ago, the current management team have made good progress in addressing these issues, and improvement is satisfactory.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

science	D	E	C	A
---------	---	---	---	---

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

**Achievement is good overall.** Boys and girls do equally well. Children in the Foundation Stage make good or better progress in most aspects. They do particularly well in the area of personal, social and emotional development but progress in some areas of reading and writing is not as good as it could be. Progress in Years 3 to 6 is very good, as can be seen in the similar schools' results above. In Years 1 and 2, progress is satisfactory overall. While the high turnover of infant pupils and above average proportion with learning difficulties has some adverse effect on standards, inconsistencies in teaching, which range from very good to unsatisfactory, are also a significant factor. Consequently, standards in reading, writing and mathematics are well below average when pupils begin Year 3. Very good teaching in the juniors compensates but there is a knock-on effect, so standards by the end of Year 6 are not as high as they could be. Throughout the school, pupils make good progress in science and attain broadly average standards. In ICT, standards are below expectations; weaknesses in past provision and some current organisational issues account for this. However, given that pupils reach the expected standards in some aspects of the subject, achievement is satisfactory overall. Pupils achieve well in art and design and RE. In design and technology and physical education (PE) they achieve satisfactorily. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress and those who speak English as an additional language do as well as their classmates.

Pupils' attitudes to school and their behaviour are **very good**. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **very good**. The school has very good procedures to check on and promote attendance but, despite improvements, levels are well below national figures.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

The school provides pupils with a **good** education. The overall quality of teaching is good, with significant strengths in the juniors. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is good and often better. In Years 1 and 2 it is satisfactory overall. Support staff make a very good contribution. The school provides a good curriculum with lots of opportunities for pupils to benefit from visits, visitors and extra curricular clubs. Homework provision is innovative and motivates pupils very well. Pupils with learning difficulties are very well catered for, with the nurture group making an excellent contribution. Good provision is made for pupils with particular gifts and talents. There is a high level of care. Pupils are given very good advice and support and their views are actively sought and acted upon. Relationships with parents and the community are very good. Accommodation and resources are good.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

The overall quality of leadership and management is **very good**. The headteacher is a dynamic force clearly focused on raising standards and pupils' all round development. He receives very good support from the deputy and other senior managers. Governance is very good. Governors are committed and work hard to support the school. They meet all of their legal obligations.

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

Parents have a very good opinion of the school are happy with what it provides. Pupils like their school very much. They say that that they enjoy lessons and get on well with teachers and other staff.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

### **THE MOST IMPORTANT THINGS THE SCHOOL SHOULD DO TO IMPROVE ARE:**

- Raise standards in English and mathematics.
- Raise standards in and improve provision for, ICT.
- Address inconsistencies in teaching, eliminating unsatisfactory teaching.
- Improve provision for teaching some early reading and writing skills in the Foundation Stage.
- Improve attendance.

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

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

#### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED IN AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECTS**

Although standards at the end of Year 6 are below and sometimes well below average, junior pupils achieve very well. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 achieve satisfactorily overall, but in Year 1, some underachieve. Children in the Foundation Stage make at least good progress in most of their work. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress. Overall, boys and girls do equally well. Pupils who speak English as an additional language do as well as others in their year groups.

#### **MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES**

- Children in the Foundation Stage achieve well overall.
- The rate of achievement for pupils in Years 1 and 2 is inconsistent, varying in response to the quality of teaching, but by the end of Year 2, standards are not high enough.
- Achievement in Years 3 to 6 is very good.
- While achievement in ICT is satisfactory, standards are not high enough by the end of Years 2 and 6.
- Pupils with special educational needs achieve very well.

#### **COMMENTARY**

1. Children generally begin school with standards that are well below those expected for their age. Standards are particularly low in the area of communication, language and literacy. The overall rate of progress is good but varies between different areas of learning, ranging from excellent in personal, social and emotional development to satisfactory in communication, language and literacy. By the end of the Reception Year, children's standards in communication, language and literacy have improved but are still well below those expected. In the area of personal, social and emotional development children's excellent progress results in them exceeding the goals expected by the end of the Reception Year. Very good progress occurs in the areas of mathematical and physical development, resulting in children reaching the expected goals in these areas. Attainment is also in line with expectations in creative development where progress is good. Although children's knowledge and understanding of the world is below the levels expected at the end of the Reception Year, they make good progress in this area.
2. While the provision for Nursery aged children is consistent, that for Reception children differs between the two classes. This has a number of repercussions, but in terms of standards and achievement, it is most marked in relation to children's progress in reading and writing. Here younger Reception children are taught to develop good attitudes to books and acquire some good early reading skills, such as using the illustrations to understand characters' actions and feelings. However, they are not given enough support in developing some of the technical skills needed, such as the use of letter sounds, which also impacts on writing skills. In contrast, older Reception children have quite well developed reading and writing skills. The very significant differences between these two groups of children in the same year group are not accounted for wholly by the differences in their age. Younger Reception children could achieve better standards in this area than they are doing presently.

3. When compared to schools nationally and those in similar contexts, Year 2 pupils' national test results in 2003 were very low (in the bottom five per cent nationally) in reading and well below average in writing and mathematics. While performance data shows that over the past few years test results have risen at around the same rate as those nationally the school's trend was favourably influenced by the sharp rise that occurred in all subjects in 2002. The most recent (2004) results, as yet unpublished, indicate a fall in writing standards and no improvement in either reading or mathematics.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	12.2 (14.8)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	11.6 (14.0)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	13.9 (16.6)	16.3 (16.5)

*There were 38 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

4. There are a number of factors that have a negative impact on the standards attained by pupils in the tests. These include a very high proportion with learning difficulties (identified as having special educational needs) and a high rate of mobility within the infant years. Another important factor is the significant variation in teaching quality in Years 1 and 2, ranging from very good to unsatisfactory. This was evident both in lessons and in samples of pupils' work over the past year. While, overall, pupils in Years 1 and 2 make satisfactory progress, it is clear that progress and standards could be better and that unsatisfactory teaching contributes to some pupils not achieving as well as they should. The school has already identified this weakness and taken steps to address it.
5. In 2003, teachers assessed Year 2 pupils' standards in science, speaking and listening as well below average. Inspection evidence shows that most pupils are achieving well in these subjects in response to good teaching and learning experiences. The result is that while speaking and listening skills are weak, they are improving; standards in science are also improving and are now broadly in line with what is expected for pupils' ages.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	26.5 (23.7)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	26.0 (24.7)	26.8 (26.7)
science	28.7 (26.6)	28.6 (28.3)

*There were 49 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

6. In 2003, Year 6 pupils' test results were below the national average in English and mathematics and broadly average in science. However, when compared to similar schools, the results are well above average in English and science and above in mathematics, reflecting very good achievement during Years 3 to 6. Inspection evidence shows that the current group of Year 6 pupils have also achieved very well. This is due to very good teaching and the impact of new initiatives to raise standards, particularly in English and mathematics. Although Year 6 test results over the last few years have not risen at as good a rate as those nationally, the 2003 results reflected a significant improvement on those achieved in 2002 and this upward trend looks set to continue.

7. Whilst there have been some marked differences in boys' and girls' achievement in specific years, over time, their performance is similar. The school does, however, monitor very closely performance in tests by gender and responds to what is found. A good example is the action that has been taken to promote boys' attitudes and enjoyment of literacy.
8. Standards in ICT are below expectations by the end of Years 2 and 6. However, in some aspects of the subject junior pupils reach the levels expected. Achievement is satisfactory overall, but is hampered by too few opportunities for pupils in Years 1 and 2 to use ICT and some weaknesses in curriculum planning for junior pupils. In RE, pupils achieve well. They reach the standards expected by the end of Year 2 and exceed expectations by the end of Year 6. Pupils progress satisfactorily in design and technology and PE and reach the expected standards. Work was sampled in geography, history and music so there is insufficient evidence to make secure judgements on standards and achievement. While work was also sampled in art and design, there was sufficient evidence to show that pupils achieve well and reach standards that exceed expectations.
9. While the standards of pupils with special educational needs are often below those of their classmates, they achieve very well in relation to their prior attainment. This is because learning experiences are tailored very well to their needs and they receive high quality teaching and support. The school also identifies pupils with particular gifts or talents and makes good provision to develop these. These pupils are provided with many additional opportunities and, as a result, make good progress.

## **PUPILS' ATTITUDES, VALUES AND OTHER PERSONAL QUALITIES**

Pupils have very good attitudes to school. Their behaviour and personal development are very good. The level of attendance is unsatisfactory, but punctuality is satisfactory.

## **MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES**

- Pupils' very good attitudes to school support their good achievement.
- Relationships among pupils and between pupils and adults are very good.
- All aspects of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are very good.
- Pupils' respect and care for others is very well developed.
- There is a very good range of strategies for improving attendance.

## **COMMENTARY**

10. Any visitor to the school soon becomes aware of the calm but productive atmosphere that pervades it. In no small part this is due to the consistently open and friendly demeanour of the pupils. They are polite, considerate and unaffectedly helpful to their teachers, concentrating well on their work and making the most of the time available. Opportunities for activities outside lessons, including residential visits, are taken with enthusiasm. From the earliest days in the Nursery, both at work and at play, pupils show wholehearted enjoyment of their time at school, which contributes very well to their good achievement.
11. Relationships are very good among pupils of all ages and backgrounds. Pupils show respect for one another's differences and are tolerant of beliefs that may be different to their own. They demonstrate empathy and care for others and work very effectively when

asked to collaborate, for example by discussing a point with a partner before considering it as a class. Mutual support is very highly developed. For instance, there is no shortage of volunteers to act as playground helpers or for the anti-bullying club. Pupils' applications for these positions show a mature and responsible involvement with their community and demonstrate their very good moral and social development. It is no surprise that the new school council is rapidly finding its feet and enabling pupils to play an important role in the development of their school.

12. Pupils value each other and have confidence that, for example, when they offer opinions or suggest answers to questions teachers and their classmates will respect these. Their ability to think deeply about difficult issues and to discuss them demonstrates their very good spiritual development. They are very open to the broad range of ideas, opinions and experiences the school provides, for example Year 3 pupils were intrigued by a discussion about arranged marriages.
13. From the Nursery upwards, behaviour is of a very good standard and reflects the school's high expectations in this area. The sanction of exclusion is only used as a last resort.
14. Pupils with special educational needs are very happy and secure within their class groups and relate very well to their classmates and adults. These very good relationships give pupils confidence to join in with all activities. They try hard and show good levels of concentration. The good climate for learning within the school contributes very well to pupils' academic and personal achievement and is particularly beneficial for those who have a behavioural component to their needs.

#### ***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	240	2	1
White – any other White background	7	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	8	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	3	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	4	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	6	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	4	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	1	0	0
Black or Black British – African	2	0	0
Chinese	1	0	0
Any other ethnic group	2	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	2	0	0

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

## **ATTENDANCE**

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

Authorised absence	
School data	6.5
National data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	
School data	0.2
National data	0.5

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

15. Pupils enjoy school and are increasingly keen to attend. An improvement in the rate of pupils' attendance as they reach the higher years shows the cumulative effectiveness of the school's very good strategies to minimise absences. Recent data show that while the rate of attendance for the whole school is well below that of comparable schools, this is largely due to the persistent absence of a few pupils with particular problems; the overall picture is constantly improving. Punctuality is satisfactory.

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides pupils with a good quality of education.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

The overall quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good.

## MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- Teaching for pupils in Years 3 to 6 is particularly effective in promoting very good learning.
- The approach to teaching Reception children differs significantly in different classes.
- Teaching in Years 1 and 2 is inconsistent, ranging from very good to unsatisfactory.
- Teaching and learning for pupils in the nurture group is excellent.

## COMMENTARY

### *Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 52 lessons*

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
3 (6%)	12 (23%)	23 (44%)	12 (23%)	2 (4%)	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.*

16. While the overall quality of teaching is good, it varies in different key stages<sup>7</sup>. Teaching is good overall for Nursery and Reception children, satisfactory overall in Years 1 and 2, and very good in Years 3 to 6. Over and above these variations, there are some strengths that permeate throughout the whole school. These include, good use of and input from support staff; high expectations of pupils' behaviour; very good relationships between pupils and adults; and effective use of homework.
17. In Years 3 to 6, the standard of teaching is a strength of the school and makes a very good impact on pupils' learning and achievement. During the inspection, almost 40 per cent was very good or excellent, with most of the remainder being good; no unsatisfactory teaching was seen. In these year groups the rate of learning is very good and pupils make up earlier lost ground. All elements of teaching are strong. In particular, teachers' very secure subject knowledge and their knowledge of pupils is used well to plan challenging lessons that stimulate pupils and address their different learning styles. A wide range of methods is used to maintain pupils' interest and concentration. Teachers target and modify their questions well ensuring that all pupils are involved and can achieve success. This raises their self-confidence and ensures good participation throughout. Time is used well, which maintains the momentum of learning and keeps pupils 'on their toes', eager to take part. In many lessons, pupils quickly settled to the tasks that they were given and completed a good amount of work in the time provided. Many opportunities were provided for them to work in groups and to discuss aspects of their work with a partner. These features promoted pupils' language and social skills and their confidence very well. For instance, pupils have regular opportunities to discuss new

---

<sup>7</sup> There are three key stages in a primary school: the Foundation Stage (Nursery and Reception); Key Stage 1 (Years 1 and 2); and Key Stage 2 (Years 3 to 6).

ideas, mathematics problems or word meanings with a partner before offering views or answering questions. Setting arrangements are working well enabling teachers to focus their planning and teaching more closely to pupils' needs.

18. There are two, very distinct, teaching approaches used to teach Reception children. In one class the younger Reception children learn very much through play and practical activities. In the other, older Reception children, while experiencing practical work and play, are taught through a much more formal approach. None of the teaching here is unsatisfactory; indeed, in both classes, there are numerous instances of effective teaching. However, the impact of the different philosophies is felt once children begin Year 1. At this point, when children from both classes come together there is quite a disparity between their learning experiences. Some have found the adjustment to a more formal approach difficult. The school has recognised the need to implement a single approach and has taken steps to ensure this from the beginning of the new academic year. Strengths in teaching within the Foundation Stage include the extensive opportunities provided for children to learn personal and social skills, resulting in excellent progress in this area. Speaking skills are also promoted very well, with staff setting good role models. There is good and better teaching in all areas of learning, but some early reading skills are not promoted well enough.
19. In Years 1 and 2, teaching is inconsistent. In Year 2, teaching is almost always good or better and is never less than satisfactory. All of the strengths mentioned above, in relation to successful teaching in Years 3 to 6, are also evident in this class. Elsewhere, much of the teaching is satisfactory, but some is not. Where teaching falls below the minimum standard learning suffers. Weaknesses hinge on slow pace, unclear explanations, inappropriate expectations (work being either too difficult or too easy) and over reliance on support staff or helpers.
20. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is very good, with instances of excellent teaching for pupils in the nurture group. Learning moves along at a very good pace because work is planned to allow pupils to work towards their targets, both in class and in smaller withdrawal groups. Teachers and support staff provide lots of opportunities for pupils to respond to questions and share their work and ideas. This supports both academic development and pupils' confidence and self-esteem. Support staff make a valuable contribution. For example, in a science lesson in Years 3 and 4 a pupil managed to identify ten organisms and habitats because the support assistant used questions very well to guide thinking and to encourage the pupil to remain focused on the activity. Some excellent teaching was seen in the nurture group and in a withdrawal session where pupils were learning 'tricky' words. The vibrant and enthusiastic approach of the teacher and learning support assistant underpinned the excellent progress pupils made. The adults seized every opportunity to reinforce pupils' social skills and their ability to communicate to others.
21. There are effective systems to assess pupils' attainment and monitor their progress. In English and mathematics, systems are especially good, with very good use being made of the information. For instance, the progress of individuals and groups, such as girls and boys, is tracked closely so that intervention can be provided if weaknesses in performance are noted. Pupils are very much included in the process. Through marking, verbal feedback and the sharing of the results and meanings of assessments, pupils gain very good awareness of how well they are doing and the areas in which they need to improve. Day-to-day assessments often result in teachers modifying their plans to

address, more closely, pupils' needs. At whole-school level, assessment information guides the setting targets, such as for individuals and year groups. It is also used to identify possible weaknesses in provision, which are then acted upon and rigorously evaluated.

## THE CURRICULUM

The quality of learning opportunities is good and is enriched by very good provision of activities outside lessons. The standard of accommodation and resources is good.

## MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- The school constantly strives to review and improve its curriculum to promote better learning and promote pupils' personal development.
- Pupils with special educational needs are very well provided for.
- Lots of interesting extra-curricular activities are offered to pupils.
- The good quality of the accommodation and resources provide effective support for learning.

## COMMENTARY

22. A good quality curriculum, including some thoughtful innovations, is having a positive impact on pupils' achievement in many subjects. For instance, the school strives to understand pupils' different learning styles and takes this into account by adapting content and teaching methods, making these more relevant to pupils' needs and experiences. The learning logs for homework are another very successful innovation. Pupils are highly motivated to complete work in these, relishing the freedom to show how they can achieve the learning objectives set. Pupils treat these logs as prized possessions and show real excitement as homework is given out. Throughout the school, there is also a good focus on promoting language and literacy skills, both in English and other subjects and this is beginning to have a positive impact on standards. Significant thought has been given to providing a 'connected curriculum'<sup>8</sup> for pupils in Years 1 and 2. This has been implemented relatively recently, however, so while the school is already seeing the positive impact on pupils' motivation, it has not been in place long enough to evaluate its impact on standards and achievement. The idea is well founded, but inspectors noted some weaknesses in organisation linked to the carousel system<sup>9</sup> that impacted negatively on learning experiences. Learning experiences for children in the Foundation Stage are planned well in relation to national requirements.
23. The curriculum provides very well for pupils' personal development. This includes provision for sex and relationships education and raising pupils' awareness of the dangers of drugs. The PSHCE programme has improved significantly since the last inspection and now contributes very well to pupils' personal development. The school is also quick to ensure prompt assessment of the needs of pupils for whom English is an additional language who receive a balanced and supportive curriculum.
24. Pupils identified with special educational needs have complete access to the full range of learning opportunities in and outside school hours. For example, a Reception child took

---

<sup>8</sup> Where learning in different subjects is planned for and taught through a theme of linked content, with the aim of making learning more meaningful.

<sup>9</sup> This involves teachers teaching the same lesson three times to three different groups of pupils in the subjects of ICT, science and PE.

part in an extra-curricular football activity and glowed with pride when asked to join the more advanced group. The individual education plans (IEPs) that are constructed for these pupils have clear and explicit targets that are achievable. They are used well by teachers and other staff to plan and support pupils' learning. Resources to support teaching and learning for these pupils are very good.

25. A very good range of extra-curricular activities enthuses pupils and enriches learning experiences. The breakfast club and 'early bird reading club' are very popular. Lunchtime clubs, such as that for recorders and a club involving reading comics to motivate boys' interest in reading are well attended. After school clubs cater for the full range of interests and include art, computers, netball and athletics. Sport is well represented with the school achieving a Football Association Centre of Excellence Award that incorporates daily after school coaching. The many and varied visitors and visits, including residential visits for all juniors, provide very valuable support for pupils' learning and personal development.
26. Accommodation is good. Two halls give ample opportunities for the full range of the PE curriculum to be taught. Bays and small rooms provide well for teaching groups. The outdoor area for Nursery and Reception children has been much improved and is used very well to support learning across the curriculum. Throughout the school, ample, good quality, resources support teaching and learning.

## **CARE, GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT**

The school takes very good care of pupils and provides them with very good guidance and support. Systems for ensuring pupils' health and safety are very good. Very good account is taken of their views.

### **MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES**

- Staff know pupils very well and monitor their progress effectively.
- The promotion of healthy living is very effective.
- The school takes care to respect pupils and their ideas.
- There are very effective systems to promote pupils' safety.

### **COMMENTARY**

27. This is a very friendly community in which pupils feel secure and thrive. Arrangements to help new pupils settle are good; any who join after the start of the school year are supported by a pupil 'buddy'. Their settling is also helped by the very good relationships between staff and pupils. These are based on mutual respect and genuine care, so pupils are confident that their views are valued and their interests take priority. These relationships provide a solid foundation for a community with an atmosphere in which teachers can teach, pupils can achieve well and any behaviour that requires intervention can be managed effectively without disruption to other pupils' learning.
28. Through observations and discussions, teachers develop a comprehensive understanding of their pupils' personal development. The monitoring of academic progress is very effective, which enables teachers to provide suitable work and underpins their approach to guidance. Pupils are given a good understanding of what they should aim for to improve. Their targets are frequently revised and discussed. The very good records and systems to support pupils with special educational needs ensure that teachers are knowledgeable about individual pupils' difficulties. This then guides them in providing the right support and guidance. Pupils have their own individual targets that are reviewed regularly, along with reviews to examine the appropriateness of the current support. These features, together with the very good links with support services, contribute extremely well to the very good care these pupils receive.
29. The welfare of pupils is a high priority. Suitable attention is paid to all aspects of health and safety, including a number of trained staff to administer first-aid; good maintenance of equipment; and careful consideration of arrangements for visits.

## **PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS, OTHER SCHOOLS AND THE COMMUNITY**

The school maintains a very effective partnership with parents. Pupils benefit from the school's very good relationships with the wider community and other schools.

### **MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES**

- Good account is taken of parents' views.
- The school is successful in forging effective relationships with parents.
- Information to parents, including reports on their children's progress, is regular and informative.

- There are very good links with other schools and the community.

## **COMMENTARY**

30. The school recognises the importance of parental support and acts determinedly to ensure they are fully involved in activities to support their children's education. Care is taken to understand parents' views and to respond to them, so practically all parents feel that the school is open to their views. The school's survey of parents elicited strongly favourable responses. Parents have confidence in all aspects of the school, including its management, the teaching and the standards achieved. Overall, inspection evidence supports these opinions.
31. An effective 'open-door' policy is in operation, so parents feel confident they have good access if they have a question or wish to make a point. They appreciate the fair and caring treatment of their children and the steps taken to help them mature. Parents of Nursery and Reception children say that they are made to feel very welcome and receive good information and support. The school uses its weekly newsletters very well to encourage parents of all pupils to support its policies; parents appreciate the information that these provide. Reports on pupils' progress give parents a good guide to what their children can do and set targets for improvement. Useful meetings and courses also help parents to understand the work that their children undertake and this helps them to support them at home.
32. The school has very good links with parents of pupils with special educational needs. Parental support is valued and promoted. All parents are invited to attend meetings to discuss the achievement and progress of their children and are often involved in the process of setting targets for their children to achieve.
33. Very good and mutually supportive relationships are maintained with local schools, colleges and other institutions and agencies. The school takes good account of the needs of the community, for example it was proactive in establishing a health centre on the site. Pupils benefit directly from the work and advice of staff from the secondary school to which most of them transfer. Pupils also enjoy extending their experiences through contact with visitors, such as a local author and through visiting museums or attending residential courses.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

The quality of leadership, management and governance is very good.

## **MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES**

- The headteacher sets a clear direction for raising standards and promoting pupils' all round development.
- There are very good systems to check on standards, achievement and the quality of provision.
- The deputy, senior management team and co-ordinators make a very valuable contribution to school improvement.
- Governors are a strong and supportive team and play a major role in the school's work.

## COMMENTARY

34. The headteacher's very good leadership is evident in the clear, dynamic and innovative direction he sets for school improvement. This is underpinned by very good management systems which ensure that the aims of raising pupils' academic and personal standards are always at the forefront of the school's work. The headteacher clearly inspires both staff and pupils. The philosophy that children come first is evident everywhere. Great value is put on promoting pupils' all-round development and inspection evidence shows that this pays off, with many strengths in the areas of personal, social and emotional development. Running parallel, however, is the firm belief that pupils can and will achieve highly. The school's whole ethos is uplifting. Any visitor is immediately struck by the friendly and caring atmosphere, which is also fused with a sense of anticipation of exciting learning experiences to come. It is easy to understand why pupils and parents rate the school so highly.
35. There are very good systems to check on the quality of teaching and learning. The headteacher and deputy regularly monitor teaching and learning and have a sharp and perceptive insight of the quality of both. Together with the detailed analyses of performance data, this supports the school in identifying and prioritising areas for improvement. These are clearly set out in the school's improvement plan, with very good detail about how they will be achieved and how success will be measured. This is a school that knows its strengths and weaknesses and is clear about how it will go about improving its standards and provision. The priorities that have been identified are the correct ones for the school at this time.
36. The emphasis that the headteacher gives to valuing and empowering staff results in very good teamwork and dedication from them. He is supported very well by his deputy, a very effective senior management team and enthusiastic co-ordinators. Governors are well informed and are also key players in the school's development.
37. The governing body is a committed and effective team. They are well informed and have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Many are regular visitors to the school and play an active part in its strategic development. Their effectiveness in this stems from the very good information that they receive from the headteacher and co-ordinators. Governors are linked to specific subjects and discuss the associated action plans with co-ordinators before sanctioning these. Regular reviews of the plans and end of year evaluations then take place to assess the extent of success. While governors understand their role of giving the school very good support, they are also very aware of their role as a critical friend. In this capacity they are vigilant in questioning the school to account for its performance.
38. Co-ordinators are successful managers, knowledgeable about their subjects, standards and the quality of teaching and learning in the areas for which they are responsible. They all make a valuable contribution to support the raising of standards and improving pupils' achievement, for example, by analysing and acting upon test results and the monitoring of teaching and learning. The action plans that they produce in response to monitoring are clear and detailed and provide a very good basis for improvement. Leadership and management of special educational needs are very good. There are clear systems and a focused improvement plan. The special educational needs co-ordinator is dynamic and communicates enthusiasm entwined with rigorous ability to improve provision. The link governor who is a regular visitor also provides very good support.

## FINANCIAL INFORMATION

### *Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004*

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	778,386	Balance from previous year	17,643
Total expenditure	751,027	Balance carried forward to the next	45,002
Expenditure per pupil	2,075		

39. Financial management is very good, with governors playing a substantial part in financial decision-making. Budgeting relates directly to the priorities set in the school's improvement plan. The school is making very good use of all the financial resources available to it. Everything possible is done to ensure that the school gets the best value from the spending and other decisions made. Good use is made of new technology, for example, to record and analyse assessment and attendance data to support the raising of standards.

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

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

There has been an improvement in the quality of provision since the last inspection. The quality of teaching is now consistently good with instances of excellent teaching. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen. Systems to assess children and to use the information from assessment to plan work that matches their needs are very good.

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

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

### **MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES**

- All children make great strides in their learning in this area in response to excellent teaching.
- Children form secure and trusting relationships with adults.
- There are excellent opportunities for children to develop independence and awareness of the needs of others.

### **COMMENTARY**

40. Children begin school with immature personal, social and emotional development. All make rapid progress so by the end of the Reception Year they exceed the expected goals. This is in response to an extremely high standard of teaching. All children learn how to behave appropriately and develop a very positive attitude to school. The excellent relationships that are formed with adults help them to feel secure and raise their confidence to try new things. Each day teachers ensure that there is a good balance of teacher directed and child initiated activities and this supports children's independence and concentration skills very well. Some excellent teaching helps children to show sensitivity to the views and feelings of others. For example, using a variety of dolls with different characteristics, teachers skilfully promote children's skills of empathy beyond what is normally seen for their ages. For instance, children suggest a range of solutions as to how two friends (one white the other black) can make up again after a disagreement. The well-considered pretend play activities contribute very effectively to children's growing ability to play with and alongside, others.

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

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

### **MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES**

- The extensive opportunities for children to engage in pretend play promote speaking and listening skills very effectively.
- While children are helped to develop very good attitudes to reading, some reading and writing skills are not promoted well enough.

## COMMENTARY

41. Children begin school with poor language and communication skills. While they make, overall, satisfactory progress during the Nursery and Reception Years, standards are still well below those expected. A minority of the more able children will achieve the expected goals at the end of the Reception Year, but the majority of children will not. A significant number are unable to communicate clearly and have limited vocabulary. There are, however, very good opportunities for children to develop speaking and listening skills in many situations, with pretend play areas making a particularly good contribution. For instance, younger Reception children enjoy dressing up as spiders and 'busy bees' and discuss how to make a boat from milk crates. More able children allocate roles, such as "This is my baby, this is yours".
42. Children make satisfactory progress learning to read. They all know that books communicate meaning. All enjoy listening to stories and commenting on the pictures. Younger Reception children act out the story and suggest what the characters might be saying or thinking. These positive aspects of early reading development are promoted well. However, too many Reception children do not have the necessary technical skills to support them further. For instance, their recognition of letters, sounds and common words is very limited and few have any understanding of the difference between words and letters. Without significant help, even the more able children in the class containing the younger children lack the confidence and skills to attempt reading. While these children trace over adult writing and gain confidence in marking paper, most are unable to write recognisable letters and words. Older Reception children's reading skills are well developed. They use their knowledge of letter sounds to help them read and recognise a satisfactory number of common words. They make good progress writing simple sentences, with some appropriate use of capital letters and full stops.

## MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

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

## MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- Children achieve very well and reach the expected standards.
- There are high expectations of what Nursery children can do.
- Teaching and learning are good.

## COMMENTARY

43. A very good range of carefully planned activities and effective teaching contribute to children's growing mathematical development. In response, all children make very good progress and reach the expected goals by the end of the Reception Year. Children quickly learn to identify and count numbers because there is a strong emphasis on this aspect. For instance, some Nursery children recognise numbers and count to 14. The children are well challenged so that, for example, more able children state that, "five and six makes 11", while another volunteers "if I add all my toes and all my fingers together there will be 20". This challenge continues for Reception children. They make good progress in their ability to recognise the correct number order because the teacher uses quick fire questions effectively.

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

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

### **MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES**

- Teachers communicate enthusiasm for the world around and plan a stimulating learning environment.
- There are particularly good opportunities for children to gain early ICT skills.

### **COMMENTARY**

44. By the end of the Reception Year a few of the more able children will achieve the expected goals, but other children will not. However, all achieve well and gain much from the stimulating experiences and good teaching provided. Teachers' and other adults' enthusiasm for the world around is infectious and motivates children well. The well-stocked garden ensures all children observe plants growing and learn to look after them. There are good opportunities for children to dig and hunt under logs for bugs and mini-beasts. Children enjoy observing the real snails in the classroom and learn how to look after them. They make particularly good progress in learning to use computers. For example, Nursery children are quite competent in moving pictures around the screen. Computers are easily accessible and consequently younger Reception children use the mouse confidently to match shapes and words.

## **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

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

### **MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES**

- Teachers use language well to extend children's movement.
- All children are confident and develop a wide range of physical skills.

### **COMMENTARY**

45. Children begin school with a limited range of skills in this area. They make very good progress, however and by the end of Reception most will achieve the expected goals. Much of this is due to good quality teaching and learning experiences. There are good opportunities for children to develop physical skills in the outdoor play area and in specific PE lessons in the hall. Lessons contain a good level of activity and language is used well to extend children's awareness of different movements. They gain confidence in climbing ropes and poles and the more able show appropriate skill and confidence in rolling over the bars. Children share apparatus well. Opportunities to develop physical skills in the outdoor play area are well thought through. Children develop coordination and strength by peddling bikes and riding scooters around the playground. There are also a good many opportunities for them to practise skills in balancing, aiming and climbing. In class, all children engage in a wide range of activities that help them to develop dexterity, for example, in gripping pencils and paintbrushes effectively and using scissors. It was not possible to observe swimming during the inspection, but all Reception children swim once a week, which is a significant enhancement to provision in this area.

## **CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in creative development is **good**.

### **MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES**

- Children achieve well.
- There are many opportunities for children to use their imagination.
- Teaching and learning are good.

### **COMMENTARY**

46. When children begin school their creative skills are underdeveloped. However, all make good progress and by the end of the Reception Year, most will achieve the expected goals because the quality of teaching and learning is good. Children experience a wide range of stimulating creative activities, both indoors and outside, including pretend play, art and music. Children enjoy using paint and collage materials. Children's paintings become more detailed as they get older and clearly communicate meaning. They are attractively displayed and accompanied by simple sentences that describe the scene, such as 'I ride my bike in the park'. Children make good progress in music, developing early skills in composing. They learn different ways to control sounds, using their voices and instruments. They are encouraged to make sounds creatively. Early evaluation skills are promoted very effectively as children are encouraged to identify a favourite sound from a range produced by their friends. Good teaching ensures they stop and start on a signal. Children show excitement as their work is played back on the tape recorder.

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

### **ENGLISH**

Provision in English is **good**.

### **MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES**

- Very good teaching in the juniors enables pupils to achieve very well.
- The quality of teaching in Years 1 and 2 is inconsistent, which limits pupils' achievement and the standards attained.
- Very good assessment procedures are used effectively to support pupils' progress.
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good.
- The subject is being led and managed well.

### **COMMENTARY**

47. Standards by the end of Year 2 are well below average and by the end of Year 6 they are below. Overall, this is a similar situation to that found by the last inspection. However, the criticisms made then about pupils having too few opportunities for talk or to write independently and for different purposes have been successfully addressed by a variety of initiatives. While the full impact of these is not yet being seen in test results, because they are relatively new, inspection evidence shows that they are having a positive impact on standards and achievement. However, although standards are well below average by the end of both Years 2 and 6, there is a significant difference in the rate of achievement

of infant and junior pupils. During Years 1 and 2, pupils achieve satisfactorily while during Years 3 to 6 achievement is very good. Although good learning experiences are planned for all pupils, the quality of teaching is the significant factor that influences the rate at which pupils achieve and this is much better in Years 3 to 6 than in Years 1 and 2.

48. Throughout the school, the very few pupils who speak English as an additional language achieve at the same rate as their classmates. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress, responding well to high quality teaching and additional support.
49. The school places a good emphasis on promoting the speaking and listening skills of all pupils and provision for this aspect is a positive feature of lessons. Most pupils are now also being provided with good opportunities to write, at length, both in English lessons and other subjects. While standards are not as high as they were at the time of the last inspection, provision is better and weaknesses that limit pupils' achievement are being dealt with.
50. Many Year 2 pupils enjoy books and make good use of the public library on the same site. Stronger readers make good use of their knowledge of letter sounds to read unfamiliar words. A small group of Year 6 pupils, when asked what the school does to encourage reading, enthusiastically rattled off a dozen or so items, including going to the public library; providing new books in school; teachers reading with expression, helping them to understand; providing the 'Comic Club' (for reluctant boy readers); and the 'Early Bird' reading club (with breakfast) for infants.
51. While writing standards are well below average, there is evidence of good writing by many Year 6 pupils. They have learned strategies to engage a reader's interest with well-chosen words and produce different types of writing for different purposes. A good example was the very impressive collection of writings on the Holocaust which were sent to the Prime Minister and which received a highly complimentary reply. Handwriting is developing satisfactorily. Most pupils in Years 1 to 6 learn to use a cursive style so that by Year 6, most write in a legible and well-formed hand that is in line with expected standards for their age.
52. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall in Years 1 and 2 but inconsistent. Where teaching was not effective, the pace set by the teacher was too slow and too few pupils were given sufficient opportunity to contribute in discussions or to answer questions. Work and questioning was not matched well enough to the range of needs within the class and too much responsibility for teaching was given to support staff and helpers.
53. Teaching in Years 3 to 6 is very good. In all junior lessons and in one infant class, lively pace and interesting work that was skilfully modified to pupils' different needs challenged them all. As a result, pupils showed good concentration and interest in learning and achieved well. Throughout the school, there is mostly effective teaching of speaking and listening skills, which are promoted in a wide range of subjects. Pupils are often asked to discuss ideas or answers with a partner and to speak and listen carefully to each other. Some teachers are particularly good at extending pupils' use of language and vocabulary, for instance, by providing good examples for pupils to copy and repeating and extending short, sometimes one-word answers, as a complete sentence. While there

are some weaknesses, the teaching of reading and writing is mostly good and frequently better in the junior year groups.

54. There are very good assessment procedures. The school uses the information from assessments well, for example, to set targets and to identify priorities for improvement, such as speaking and listening skills and boys' writing. Targets are widely publicised and are very powerful tools in supporting learning, helping pupils to focus on weaker areas and understand how they can improve. Marking, in most cases, is used well to provide pupils with helpful feedback. Homework also makes a particularly good contribution to learning.
55. The subject is being led and managed well. Initiatives introduced within the last year, for example to promote attitudes to reading, improve writing skills and those in speaking, are having a beneficial effect.

## **LANGUAGE AND LITERACY ACROSS THE CURRICULUM**

56. Literacy is promoted well throughout the school through a range of subjects and activities; for example: writing notes on observations in science; explanatory texts to accompany diagrams in physical geography; and imaginative writing in history topics, such as about the Blitz and Victorian school life. Many good opportunities for discussion in lessons enhance speaking and listening skills.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

## **MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES**

- The quality of teaching in Years 1 and 2 is inconsistent, which limits pupils' achievement and the standards attained.
- Pupils achieve very well in Years 3 to 6 due to very good teaching.
- Assessment procedures are very good and are used well.
- The subject is led and managed very well.

## **COMMENTARY**

57. Standards are well below average by the end of Year 2. By the end of Year 6, standards are below average, but are approaching what is expected for pupils' ages. Given the standards of attainment on entry to the school, the overall level of achievement is good, but variable. The overall rate of progress in Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory, but unsatisfactory teaching causes some pupils in Year 1 to underachieve. In Years 3 to 6, achievement is very good in response to high quality teaching. The last inspection's recommendation to improve standards in Years 1 and 2 has not been adequately addressed. While there is some good teaching of pupils in Year 2, the overall quality in Years 1 and 2 has declined, with some being unsatisfactory. The school's management has a clear insight into these weaknesses and has already put plans in place to improve things. In contrast, provision in Years 3 to 6 has shown good improvement since the last inspection and is now very good. In these year groups, pupils achieve very well. Throughout the school, pupils with special educational needs make very good progress in response to the very effective, additional, provision that is made for them.

58. Pupils begin Year 1 with very wide ranging abilities. Some are working at the level expected while others are barely able to record numerals. Variation in teaching quality in Years 1 and 2 affects the overall level of achievement. Where teaching is weak, pupils are given work that is too difficult because teacher explanations and demonstrations do not help them to understand new ideas. The pace of learning is slow and too much responsibility is given to support staff or helpers, who do, in fact, make a good contribution. The impact of these teaching weaknesses is that many pupils' knowledge of numbers and basic skills of addition and subtraction are not sufficiently well established. The good teaching in Year 2 gives learning a boost, but is not able to compensate enough for lost ground. Consequently, pupils are beginning Year 3 at a lower starting point than they should be.
59. In Years 2 to 6, teachers encourage pupils to be reflective learners, which promotes their self-confidence and willingness to learn. Teachers' clear explanations, good range of methods and carefully modified tasks promote effective learning. In a Year 2 lesson, pupils were constantly asked to explain how they arrived at answers and were given good strategies to tackle problems linked to learning about multiples of ten. Work in books shows a good level of learning about angles, fractions and shapes. Pupils also learn how to represent data in charts and graphs, including making effective use of ICT. In a Year 3 lesson, pupils used and built upon the previous day's learning when using a number line to solve simple division problems. The teacher gradually extended this skill to introduce the idea of a 'remainder' so that by the end of the lesson, pupils were able to sort simple division calculations into those with and without a remainder.
60. The school's system of organising pupils in Years 3 to 6 into sets is working well. Some excellent teaching of lower attaining pupils in Years 3 and 4 substantially increased their self-esteem and confidence alongside mathematical skills. Well thought through practical tasks and a close match of work to pupils' needs enabled them to use different criteria to sort and communicate information in diagram form. In Years 5 and 6, teachers used ICT effectively to develop pupils' skills in mental calculation. Similarly, effective use of ICT helped older juniors to understand number patterns, in preparation for an activity in which they solved codes that related the factors of a number to the numerical value of a letter. Pupils were very challenged by this activity and the constant input of the teacher as they worked, helped them to achieve very well.
61. Homework is used successfully in these years and provides very effective support for learning and the development of good attitudes. In particular, the attitudes of older pupils are extremely positive and reflect the excitement that teachers infuse into lessons. Pupils who are learning English as an additional language are supported well. For instance teachers and other staff ensure that they understand the meaning of mathematical vocabulary, enabling them to participate fully and achieve as well as others.
62. The subject is well planned. Appropriate emphasis is given to all aspects of mathematics, with many good opportunities for pupils to apply what they have learned to problem solving and identifying numerical rules and patterns. The school's analysis of test results, to identify areas that need additional focus, is very good. The subject is led and managed very well by an enthusiastic and well-informed co-ordinator. The priority to raise standards is clearly reflected in the detailed action plan that shows a very good awareness of strengths and weaknesses.

## **MATHEMATICS ACROSS THE CURRICULUM**

63. Overall, mathematics is promoted satisfactorily across the curriculum. Some particularly good use of data handling was seen in Years 3 to 6 in science and geography.

## **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **good**.

## **MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES**

- Throughout the school pupils achieve well.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good.

## **COMMENTARY**

64. By the end of Years 2 and 6, standards are broadly average and reflect pupils' good achievement. This is a similar picture to that found by the last inspection. Year 1 pupils learn to predict and record what living creatures they might find under concrete slabs and in the flower garden on a walk around the school. Very good teaching in Year 2 challenges pupils well so that good learning occurs about the range of living creatures in the environment and their habitats. Pupils learn to predict and record scientific observations.
65. Teaching is good overall. It is consistently good in Years 3 and 4 with instances of very good teaching. No teaching was seen in Years 5 and 6 but pupils' work indicates that it is effective. Pupils in Year 3 and 4 are able to identify different organisms and link them to their local habitat. Investigative work is well developed and good use is made of the school site to support learning. Some useful links are made with mathematics, as pupils record a tally of different organisms found. Discussion with Year 6 pupils shows they have a satisfactory understanding of the process of fair testing and can explain how they used this idea to investigate materials. Findings are represented in various charts and graphs, such as those to show the changing pulse rate during exercise. Throughout the school, pupils with special educational needs are well supported and achieve as well as others.
66. There is little evidence of ICT being used to support learning but language, literacy and numeracy skills are promoted satisfactorily. For instance, Year 6 pupils use scientific words such as 'chlorophyll' and 'carbon-dioxide' knowledgeably and higher attainers give clear explanations of how a plant uses light to instigate the process of photosynthesis.
67. Leadership and management are very good, with the co-ordinator making effective use of assessments to identify areas for improvement and plan provision to raise standards. A science fair helps in supporting the subject's good profile within the curriculum. Resources are good.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

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

## **MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES**

- Standards are below expectations by the end of Years 2 and 6.
- Pupils in Years 1 and 2 do not have enough opportunities to use ICT.
- Classroom computers are not used sufficiently to support learning across the curriculum.
- The organisation of learning experiences for control technology does not promote the effective development of skills.

## COMMENTARY

68. Standards at the end of Years 2 and 6 are below those expected. While at Year 2, this is a similar picture to that found by the last inspection, it represents a decline in relation to Year 6 standards. However, national expectations of what pupils should attain have increased since then. Standards in some aspects of the subject are in line with what is expected while others, such as those relating to control technology and monitoring are below. While part of the last inspection's recommendation (to raise standards at the end of Year 2) has not been realised, resources and training to raise teachers' knowledge and confidence have improved. Given their low starting point, pupils' achievement, overall, is satisfactory.
69. More able Year 2 pupils have sound knowledge of many word processing skills, such as changing the font, colour and size of the print. However, skill development is weak so they need considerable support from teachers to complete tasks. They are, however, quite competent in inserting graphics into their work. Pupils are not required to save their work so retrieval skills to modify it are not promoted. Over the year, Year 2 pupils have used computers to handle data, inputting information and producing graphs to communicate this. Drawing programs are used fairly regularly and experience of controlling a moving robot is planned into the curriculum.
70. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 have created visual presentations incorporating graphics, but not animations or sound. In the one lesson seen, the teaching was very good and pupils successfully learned how to create hyperlinks within a presentation. These pupils are familiar with a word processing program, but keyboard skills are underdeveloped and impede the speed at which they work. All pupils have used the Internet as a research tool, framing suitable questions, which supports language and literacy skills. Planned work for Year 6 pupils to monitor data and control devices has not taken place. While the school's organisation of this work into one block allows pupils to cover the required content, it is not helpful in supporting the secure development of skills over an extended period. While some Years 6 pupils have experienced sending electronic mail, others have not.
71. Teaching in Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory. Pupils are taught to use a CD-Rom and to compare researching information from this source with that from books. Overall, however, pupils do not have enough time to use ICT and practise necessary skills. While pupils have opportunities to use the ICT suite, there are some weaknesses in how lesson time is organised. For instance, by the time pupils walk to the suite they barely have 15 minutes to use the computers, which is insufficient. While theoretically they also have access to classroom computers, these machines are rarely used.
72. The subject co-ordinator has identified appropriate priorities for development. A new curriculum, with linked assessment opportunities is currently being worked upon. The

school is experiencing some problems with equipment; in a number of lessons in the ICT suite, computers did not load or function, which disrupted learning.

### **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY ACROSS THE CURRICULUM**

73. Some good examples were seen. These included Year 5 and 6 pupils using the Internet to conduct research for history projects. Effective use of ICT was also seen in mathematics lessons and to support the teaching of spelling rules to Year 2 pupils. Teachers make good use of the digital camera as an aid for learning.

## HUMANITIES

### Religious education (RE)

Provision in RE is **good**.

### MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- Pupils' understanding of spiritual matters is well reinforced through RE.
- Some elements of the planning are not well suited to pupils' levels of maturity.
- Good teaching enables pupils to achieve well.
- Very good cross-curricular links embed pupils' religious studies into their wider experience.

### COMMENTARY

74. Pupils achieve well. By the end of Year 2 they reach the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus and by the end of Year 6 they exceed them. Pupils make good progress understanding somewhat abstract elements of the subject because of good teaching, which effectively promotes the spiritual and empathetic aspects of their experience.
75. The school provides many opportunities for pupils to relate abstract ideas to their life experiences and other areas of learning. In Years 5 and 6, for example, most could identify and explain descriptions in a book that they were reading in literacy (The Amber Spyglass), which evoked images of heaven and hell. Many older pupils talked sensibly about death and the afterlife because this was sensitively handled. While recording skills are, at best average, pupils' understanding is high. Pupils of all capabilities contribute meaningfully to discussion.
76. Teaching is good overall, with some particularly effective teaching in Years 5 and 6. Here, sensitive planning gave pupils confidence to talk about memories of people, or pets they knew who had died. Opportunities for pupils to understand other people's feelings and perceptions pervade the school. Where teachers use dolls with younger pupils, for example, the experiences help to promote their understanding of the major religions studied. The subject has a high profile in the school. For instance the 'think-about' places marked around the school, contain a wide array of interesting stimuli to provoke pupils' reflections. Occasionally lessons are not always planned to suit pupils' level of maturity. For instance, a teacher tried hard to make a lesson about choosing a life partner suitable for pupils in Years 3 and 4. While pupils were very interested, the idea was too advanced for their ages. However, new planning is underway so such curriculum mismatches should soon cease.
77. The coordinator leads and manages the subject very well. Resources are good and are utilised widely across the school to link RE to other subjects. Since the last inspection, provision has improved.

### HISTORY AND GEOGRAPHY

**History** and **geography** were sampled. Only one lesson was seen, so there is not enough evidence to judge provision, standards or achievement in either subject.

78. In Years 1 and 2, learning links between both subjects are planned for, with similar links where possible to other subjects. For example, the theme of 'environment' runs through many topics, as a Year 2 science lesson showed. Here, pupils improved their understanding about geographical aspects of the outside environment of the school, while exploring scientific ideas about plants and animals. Comparisons between life in the past and life today underpin many of pupils' studies in history. Discussions suggest that they develop an appropriate sense of time past and how things were different, for example about types of transport or activities at the seaside.
79. By Year 6, pupils have developed appropriate skills pertinent to each subject. Secure mapping skills in geography for example, together with labelled illustrations, show pupils' satisfactory understanding of a project about water. A lesson seen in Years 3 and 4 exemplified well the good cross-curricular links made between history and geography. Here, good teaching enabled pupils to learn about the differences between aspects of Leicester in the wartime period and Leicester today. The teacher used good resources and explained ideas well.
80. A good range of visits, such as to Beaumanor Hall and the Museum of Childhood helps pupils to understand better what they learn in class.

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

### **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY (DT)**

Provision in design and technology is **satisfactory**.

### **MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES**

- The quality of teaching and learning is enhanced by links with the secondary school.
- Pupils really enjoy the subject.

### **COMMENTARY**

81. Three lessons were seen in junior classes. From these and from looking at teachers' planning and pupils' work it is evident that achievement is good and standards at the end of Year 6 are in line with expectations. The last inspection was not able to make a judgement on standards so it is not possible to judge improvement since then.
82. Teaching is good. The school benefits well from its links with the local secondary school. These include the provision of regular visits from a specialist design and technology teacher who works alongside staff, leading lessons in Years 5 and 6. As well as enhancing pupils' learning experiences, this link promotes staff development, as teachers build up and enrich their own knowledge and skills.
83. In the lessons seen, pupils were industrious. They concentrated well, as they developed design and making skills. Younger juniors constructed nets before making three-dimensional shapes, such as boxes and triangular prisms, with the work providing good support for numeracy skills. Upper juniors, working on a theme about making toys, showed great interest in developing procedure plans (planning steps) to make a vehicle. In discussion, pupils spoke enthusiastically about the subject recounting many of the

things that they had made in the past, such as slippers, photograph frames and model fairground rides.

84. Work in **art and design** and **music** was sampled. Only one lesson was seen in music so there is not enough evidence to make firm judgements about provision, standards or achievement. In art and design, two lessons were seen in Years 5 and 6 but there was insufficient evidence to make a secure judgement about provision. However, work on display and in the school's portfolio provided enough evidence to judge standards and achievement.
85. In **music**, teachers' planning indicates that all areas of the curriculum are covered. In assemblies, pupils sing well modifying their voices to show expression and to demonstrate musical ideas, such as pitch and dynamics. In the lesson seen, pupils in Years 3 and 4 showed their enjoyment of the subject and demonstrated a good ability to use different instruments to beat the rhythm of 'Springtime' – a song with which they were very familiar. Each week a piece of music is picked as a focus for listening in assemblies. The composer is identified and pupils' attention is drawn to different features of the music.
86. In **art and design**, pupils achieve well and attain standards that exceed expectations. Teaching in both lessons was of a good standard and promoted pupils' skills well. Of note in both lessons was the good emphasis given to promoting technical vocabulary. As a result, pupils were then able to use words such as 'foreground', 'light', 'shade' and 'tone' when discussing their work. Teachers gave good explanations, demonstrated techniques and weaved in knowledge about how the work pupils were undertaking was evident in the work of known artists.
87. Around the school, very good quality artwork reflects a good balance of two and three-dimensional work from different cultures, including using textiles, photography and ICT. Examples include the display of collage and paintings depicting work in the style of Lowry by pupils in Years 3 and 4. These pupils also used fruit to construct face images in the style of Archimboldo, which were then photographed and displayed. In Years 5 and 6, pupils have used colour well in their ICT-generated pictures in the style of Andy Warhol. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 sketched features of the local environment and then incorporated these onto clay tiles. Learning experiences are enriched by opportunities to take part in an after school art club.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION (PE)**

Provision in PE is **good**.

## **MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES**

- Junior pupils achieve well and standards in some classes are above average.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good.
- There are very good links with local sporting bodies and extra-curricular activities are well attended.

## **COMMENTARY**

88. During the inspection four lessons were seen comprising three athletics activities and a dance lesson. No lessons were observed in gymnastics or swimming, but planning shows that these areas are taught. Standards observed during the inspection were generally typical for pupils' ages, with some above average attainment in athletics. Records show that the majority of pupils achieve the expected standard in swimming by the end of Year 6. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection.
89. Overall, achievement in Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory but the newness of implementing the 'connected curriculum' has not allowed fine-tuning to ensure that work is matched to pupils' needs. Consequently, there are occasions when pupils do not achieve as well as they could. However, in a Year 1 lesson, the teacher's use of language helped pupils to make satisfactory progress in producing different twisted, rounded and spiky shapes. In Years 3 to 6, pupils achieve well in their ability to perform and evaluate their own and others' work in athletics. Good teaching also promotes numeracy and language skills alongside physical skills. For instance, pupils time, measure and record their performances. They are often required to evaluate their own and others' work to explain, for example, how the performance of running, throwing or jumping events can be improved. In the lessons seen, teachers were organised and made good points to help pupils improve. This was seen in a Years 3 and 4 lesson where pupils' understanding of how to perform the triple jump improved because the teacher clarified and explained the technique very clearly. Pupils have a sound understanding of the effect of exercise on the body. All teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge and are appropriately dressed, which sets a good example to pupils.
90. The school competes in sporting and athletic events with other schools and achieves well. There are very good links with sporting bodies and pupils regularly receive football coaching after school. This is well organised and attended. Resources are good. The wide range of playground equipment used during the lunchtime and other breaks provides further support for promoting basic skills and confidence.

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

Work in personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE) was sampled.

91. This area of provision has a high profile in the school and pupils' development is promoted very effectively both informally and formally. In addition to the continuing support for pupils through their very good relationships with adults, every teacher has a timetabled session each week. The emphasis throughout the school is on helping pupils feel able to handle situations that will arise as they grow up. The use of 'persona dolls'<sup>10</sup> plays a significant part in the provision, for example to help pupils understand unfairness, bias and discrimination in themselves and others. Teaching using these dolls is exceptionally good. Sex and drugs education are appropriately catered for. Initiatives, such as those involving pupils in dealing with playground relationships and bullying and the active school council all contribute very well to pupils' development in this area. With the full support of pupils, the school has maintained its status as a 'healthy school'. Healthy living ideas are embedded in school life. For instance, they are incorporated in policies, manifested in wall displays and in the food provided at lunchtimes.

---

<sup>10</sup> Dolls that have been given different personas, such as a character, family, lifestyle, likes and dislikes and characteristics, such as skin colour, culture and body shape/size.

## 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	4
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	5
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>	<b>3</b>
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2
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	3

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

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

