

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **WOODCHURCH C OF E PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Woodchurch, Ashford

LEA area: Kent

Unique reference number: 118672

Headteacher: Mr A P Williams

Lead inspector: David G Collard

Dates of inspection: 17<sup>th</sup> - 19<sup>th</sup> May 2004

Inspection number: 258473

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Primary  
School category: Voluntary controlled  
Age range of pupils: 4 - 11  
Gender of pupils: Mixed  
Number on roll: 150

School address: Bethersden Road  
Woodchurch  
Ashford, Kent

Postcode: TN26 3QJ

Telephone number: (01233) 860 232

Fax number: (01233) 860 232

Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Stan Kozlowski

Date of previous inspection: 22<sup>nd</sup> June 1998

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Woodchurch Church of England Primary School is in a small village near Ashford in Kent. Pupils come from a variety of mixed social backgrounds. It is smaller than other schools of a similar type, with 150 pupils on roll. Children enter the school before they are five-years-old and initially attend part-time, although at the time of the inspection all children attended for the whole day. There are mixed age classes from the Reception Year to Year 6 and a small number of pupils enter the school during each year. There are no pupils from a minority ethnic background or at an early stage of learning English. The number of pupils entitled to free school meals (4.2 per cent) is below that for other schools. The number of pupils with special educational needs (17.4 per cent) is broadly in line with the national average, as is the number with statements (1.4 per cent). The percentages vary considerably year on year because of the small size of the school. The majority of special educational needs are linked to language and learning difficulties with few behavioural issues.

The school gained an achievement award in both 2000 and 2002 for the improvement shown in national test results. The school is now well regarded locally, although this has not always been the case, and is heavily committed to the local community.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
11122	David Collard	Lead inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Music English as an additional language
8937	Howard Allen	Lay inspector	
27667	Carolyn Renault	Team inspector	Science Design and technology Geography History Foundation Stage
19817	Judith Dowsett	Team inspector	English Art and design Physical education Religious education Special educational needs

The inspection contractor was:

Tribal PPI  
Barley House  
Oakfield Grove  
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BS8 2BN

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**This is an effective school** that provides good value for money. It has moved a long way forward since the last inspection and has the potential to do even better. Standards are above those nationally and pupils achieve and learn well because of the good quality of teaching. The leadership and management of the school are good and the governors provide a strong strategic overview.

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

- The good achievement that pupils make and the above average standards, particularly in English and mathematics.
- The quality of provision in the Foundation Year, which ensures children learn well.
- The good quality of teaching and learning; although still more could be done to improve the achievement of the higher ability pupils through extended writing.
- The good quality of leadership and management that has centred improvements around a clear strategic plan.
- The good progress the school has made since the last inspection in revitalising the environment of the school and making the finances secure.

There has been good improvement since the last inspection. Standards are on a rising trend despite some disappointing results in the Year 6 national tests in 2003. Provision in the Foundation Stage is much improved. Teaching is much less variable, particularly in the infants. Many of the needs of the higher attaining pupils have been addressed, although there is still more to do. The curriculum is now broad, balanced and relevant to individual pupils' need, and the roles of the deputy headteacher and co-ordinators have been refined.

### 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	A*	D	E
mathematics	D	A	A	C
science	E	A	C	D

*Key: A\* in top 5% nationally; 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 through the school is good.** Pupils enter the school in the Reception Year with average standards, make good progress and achieve well in all areas of learning. By Year 1, the majority are working at least in line with the recommendations of the Early Learning Goals and a few are working above this level, particularly in their social and personal development, literacy and numeracy. Those in the present Year 2 have above average standards in reading, writing and mathematics. This is confirmed by the results of the national tests for seven-year-olds. Pupils in the present Year 6 are also achieving above average standards in English and mathematics and average standards in science. This was not reflected in the 2003 national test for 11-year-olds, where standards were lower. This was mainly because the overall ability of this year group was lower although a contributory factor was the fewer numbers who achieved above the average Level 4. A thorough analysis by the school has resulted in new procedures for targeting different ability groups and this is having a very positive effect. More still needs to be done to provide time for pupils to write extended pieces in different styles. Despite this, all indications are that results in this year's tests will be higher. Pupils are achieving satisfactorily in information and communication technology, design and technology, geography, history, physical education and music. This is because all

classes are provided with a much wider and relevant curriculum. In religious education and art and design, pupils achieve well in the infants and satisfactorily in the juniors. This difference comes about because of the lack of challenge provided to meet the needs of the higher attaining pupils, although it is sound for those with special educational needs. The achievement of pupils who show particular talents is good.

**Pupils' attitudes to school are good and personal development is fostered well.** Attendance is very good. The provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They are keen and excited to learn and relish the challenges they are set. There are good relationships across the school. Older and younger pupils mix and play well together. The school council provides an opportunity to share views. Discussion times are timetabled each week and there are regular well-conceived collective acts of worship. The school reflects a good Christian ethos.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The quality of education is good. Teaching and learning are good overall** and very good in the Foundation Stage. The quality of planning has improved and links well to the nationally agreed guidelines for each subject. This enables pupils in the mixed age classes to build on their knowledge and understanding each year in a sequential way. Particularly effective use is made of relevant activities that endeavour to utilise previously acquired knowledge in new situations. This helps build up the confidence of those in the middle and upper ability range. Good use is made of the learning assistants to support both those with special educational needs and other targeted groups in the school. There are few weaknesses in the teaching but where these occur they are to do with the level of challenge provided for higher attaining pupils. The curriculum is now sufficiently balanced. Coverage is guaranteed through regular monitoring of the planning. Resources are sufficient and have been enhanced through a range of extra grants and initiatives. These have been very effective in improving the whole school environment for learning. This does not yet extend to providing a designated outdoor play area for Foundation Stage children and this limits their physical development. Pupils' care, welfare and safety are promoted well. Academic and personal monitoring are much improved and the data that has been collected is being used to ensure that pupils make as much progress as they can. There are effective links with parents, who value the two-way communication. This has been a high priority for the school over the last four years as part of an overall plan to successfully raise the self-esteem and standing of the school within the village. Links with other schools and colleges are generally informal, although there are plans to reintroduce various cluster meetings as part of the local education authority's strategic plan.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**Leadership and management are good** and this has been a major contributory factor in raising the quality of education within the school. The headteacher has a clear vision for improvement, which is conveyed well to governors and other staff. The deputy headteacher provides effective support. Appropriate plans have been put in place, which are evaluated on a regular basis. The enthusiastic governors provide challenge and support and are knowledgeable. In addition, extra funding has been actively sought to improve the environment of the school and the learning opportunities. This has all been achieved while retrieving the finances from a major deficit budget position. The school is well placed to make further improvements in standards through enhanced resources and strategic planning. The role of the co-ordinators has improved, although many inevitably have a considerable responsibility because of the small number of staff.

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

The parents are very supportive of the school and are pleased with the improvements. They see the school returning to its position as the centre of the community and willingly give time at functions and activities. Pupils are also pleased with what the school offers and have few complaints.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- Provide more opportunities for extended writing both in English lessons and through other subjects of the curriculum.
- Improve the challenge provided to higher ability pupils in the juniors.
- Provide an all-weather, secure outdoor play area for children in the Foundation Stage.

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

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

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

Standards are **above average** and pupils achieve **well**, particularly in the Foundation Stage and the infants. Recent improvements in the juniors mean that these pupils are now making increasingly better progress.

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

- A good start is made in the Foundation Stage and children achieve well, although the lack of outside play equipment restricts even better progress in physical development.
- There is now good achievement through both the infants and the juniors, although national test results in the juniors did not reflect this in 2001 and 2003.
- Pupils with special educational needs make particularly good progress in the infants.
- Standards are improving because of the systems for developing teaching and learning.

#### **Commentary**

1. Children enter the school with standards that are in line with those nationally. Most have attended some form of nursery education. During the Foundation Stage, they achieve well because the teaching is very good and the majority have achieved or exceeded the Early Learning Goals (ELGs) by the time they enter Year 1. Particularly good progress is made in their personal, social and emotional development and in their literacy and numeracy skills. Children speak well, are able participants in discussions and can count confidently. They interact well with each other and are becoming increasingly confident about the world around them. The outside area restricts even better learning for physical development, although the teachers cope well with the shortcomings and thus are enabling children to achieve satisfactorily in this area.
2. Achievement through the infants and the juniors is good. Overall standards by the end of Year 2 are above average. Standards are also above average by the end of Year 6 and have steadily improved year on year since the last inspection. This is because the school has worked hard at developing its teaching and learning policies and adopting these in a common format. As a result, teachers have higher expectations about what pupils can achieve and are much better able to gear work towards the needs of individual abilities. National test results for Year 2 have steadily increased in reading, writing and mathematics. They were disappointing in 2001 and 2003 for those in Year 6, although this was partly due to the lower overall abilities of those groups of pupils and in English but also to the smaller number of pupils achieving the higher levels. Overall, the trend in the last five years has been in line with that nationally and in 2000 and 2002 the school received a prestigious national achievement award for the improvement. There are no significant trends in the achievement of boys and girls.
3. Pupils with special educational needs achieve equally with their peers. Those in the infants make particularly good progress and achieve well. Progress of junior pupils with special needs is more variable but satisfactory overall. This is because teaching is slightly more variable in the juniors. Pupils on the gifted and talented register generally achieve well because they have the benefit of some specialist teaching. Although there are no pupils at present who are at an early stage of learning English, there are systems in place to deal with this eventuality when it arises.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	26.2 (30.3)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	28.4 (28.3)	26.8 (26.8)
science	28.9 (30.3)	28.6 (28.3)

*There were 22 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

4. In English, pupils attain above average standards at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. They are slightly higher than this in speaking and listening. National test results in Year 2 confirm this high attainment, although results have been more erratic in the national tests in Year 6, particularly in 2001 and 2003, where there was a sharp downturn. In both cases, this was due to the lower number of pupils who achieved above the national average in writing. The good systems for identifying areas for development have resulted in further support being given to raise standards and the indications are that this is having a positive effect.
5. All pupils speak well, have a good range of vocabulary and discussions are conducted maturely and sensitively. Achievement in reading is equally good. Teachers encourage pupils to read at home as well as at school so that by Years 5 and 6, pupils are fluent. They can talk about different texts, including prose and poetry, and can discuss their own favourite authors, books and styles. Writing skills start well in the infants, where teachers encourage the use of different types of imaginative vocabulary within a variety of contexts. Whilst standard writing techniques are developed in the juniors, not enough attention is given to the use of extended writing and this inhibits the pupils' progress. This area has been significantly highlighted within the school improvement plan, outside consultants have been engaged and the issue is being addressed successfully. In addition, there are too few opportunities to draft and redraft longer pieces of writing and refining the final text. This has been a contributory reason for pupils not attaining such high levels in national tests.
6. Standards have improved consistently in mathematics since the last inspection and are above average for pupils in both Year 2 and Year 6. Achievement is good and is confirmed by the results in national tests. Particularly strong is the way that teachers develop number skills but at the same time make sure that pupils use these new skills in different situations. There are many examples of word and number problems and activities designed to make pupils think. Consequently, junior pupils are using a variety and range of data in conjunction with other subjects such as geography, design and technology and science.
7. Pupils achieve soundly in science and standards are at the national average. Unlike mathematics, there are lower numbers of pupils achieving above the level expected for their age because the tasks they are set do not present enough challenge to their thinking skills. Teachers often expect all pupils to undertake the same exercise with little account taken of the different ability ranges. Pupils use scientific vocabulary well but do not have enough opportunity to design their own experiments and investigations developing on from a simple hypothesis.
8. Standards are at the nationally expected level in information and communication technology, although achievement, whilst satisfactory, has improved with the increase in better hardware, teachers' higher levels of confidence and the use of a small computer suite. Innovative developments have been made linking the work of the school with other local amenities such as the museum.
9. From limited evidence, the standards in religious education are above those expected by the end of Year 2 and in line by the end of Year 6. Pupils have good verbal understanding of their own and other religions but there is a lack of written work in the junior years. This inhibits better understanding in religious education. More use would also help in developing extended writing techniques in English.

10. In all other subjects, standards are at least in line with those expected nationally. In history and geography, teachers use a variety of first hand methods to interest and excite learning. These include visits, practical investigation and role-play. They are developing a good range of subject-specific vocabulary and can use this appropriately in their writing. Achievement in both subjects is satisfactory with a significant number of pupils achieving well.
11. Standards in art and design are above those expected by the end of Year 2 and in line by the end of Year 6. There are many good examples of carefully designed and presented products on display and a range of two and three-dimensional work. Work in design and technology has substantially improved since the last inspection when it was unsatisfactory. Pupils work with different materials and techniques and are able to plan, assemble and evaluate their finished designs. Achievement is now satisfactory. In the few numbers of lessons seen in physical education, achievement was satisfactory. Swimming is undertaken in Years 5 and 6 so that the majority of pupils are able to fulfil the requirement of the programme of study and can swim 25 metres by the time they leave school. A wide range of other activities is enhanced by the numerous out of school clubs, teams and local festivals.

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

Pupils' values and personal development are **good**. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **good**. Pupils' attitudes to learning and behaviour are **good**. Attendance and punctuality are **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Attendance is very good and pupils are very punctual; although the school could refine its procedures.
- Attitudes to learning and behaviour in the reception and infant classes are very good.
- Pupils' relationships with others are very good.
- Pupils' confidence and self-esteem are very high.
- Procedures for dealing with unacceptable behaviour could be more consistently applied.

### **Commentary**

12. Pupils are positive about their school, develop very good relationships and are very confident. Pupils are polite to adults and each other. Overall attitudes and behaviour are good in lessons and outside in the playground. They are very good in the reception and infant classes, where children are on course to achieve the Early Learning Goals for personal and social development. In junior classes, expectations of high standards of behaviour are more inconsistent. The playground is equipped with a range of activities to occupy pupils during play and, together with good supervision, ensures that there are few incidents of unacceptable behaviour.
13. The school fosters good behaviour through its system of team points and rewards, such as the 'Unsung Hero' award each week. Whilst there are relatively few incidents of unacceptable behaviour, the procedures for dealing with them lack clarity. Therefore, pupils and parents are not always aware that issues have been dealt with appropriately and with rigour.
14. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. All pupils have opportunities to take responsibility and contribute to the management of the school. The school council is run well, with pupils from Year 2 to Year 6 being represented. They have made a very good contribution to changes in the school environment, for example, the climbing frame, playground games and seeking solutions to noise problems in the dining hall.
15. The school offers a good range of educational visits, which makes an important contribution to pupils' social development. Themes in citizenship and religious education develop a good

sense of right and wrong, and good understanding of different cultures and beliefs. Pupils are appreciative of each other's efforts and listen to each other carefully and with respect. For example, pupils playing various instruments at assembly were given very warm applause. There is good provision for spiritual and cultural awareness through assemblies, the link with Edmund Waller County Primary School, literature, music, religious education, history and geography. However, spiritual development is not explicitly identified in subject plans and therefore opportunities are missed, for example, in environmental science.

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

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	4.3	School data	0.0
National data	5.4	National data	0.4

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

- Attendance (95.7 per cent) is well above the national average (94.2 per cent), with parents and carers ensuring pupils attend very punctually. However, school procedures to monitor attendance lack rigour. There is no system to follow up non-attendance on the first morning of absence, and communication from the headteacher to encourage even higher levels of attendance is only termly.
- There were no exclusions in the last reporting year.

**QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL**

The quality of education is **good**. Teaching and learning are **good**. The curriculum is **satisfactory** but has strengths. Pupils' care, safety and welfare are promoted **well**. Links with parents are **effective**. Links with the community are **good** and links with other schools and colleges are **sound**.

**Teaching and learning**

The quality of teaching and learning is **good**. The use and quality of assessment is **satisfactory**.

**Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching for children in the Foundation Stage is very good and they make good progress.
- There is much less variability than at the time of the last inspection.
- Good relationships exist between pupils and staff and each values the contribution of the other.
- Behaviour in lessons is good and pupils enjoy the work they are set to do; except on some occasions when the work is not challenging enough for those with higher ability.
- Teaching assistants are used well.
- Assessment data is being used well to identify individual need.

**Commentary**

- There are many strengths in the quality of teaching through the school. This is an improvement from the last inspection as there is much less variability. It has come about because over the last four years the school has concentrated on studying and evaluating the learning styles of the pupils and developing teaching strategies which will provide the maximum degree of challenge. This is proving successful and, as a result, the standards and particularly the achievement of pupils is increasing. The headteacher, along with other members of staff, has a comprehensive monitoring programme that enables best practice to be shared and any teaching difficulties to be overcome.

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 23 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0	6	10	6	1	0	0

*The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons.*

19. Teaching is very good in the Foundation Stage. The teacher has a thorough understanding of balancing both play and learning and provides a relaxed, calm and efficient environment. She has a good understanding of the requirements of the Early Learning Goals and plans work that will cover each of the six areas of learning. The learning assistants ably provide extra support and are briefed well on what is expected of them. The children learn well, they mix sociably and take turns on play equipment. The themes and topics give children great excitement and they are encouraged to use a wide variety of resources. Different methods are used to promote this learning. These include large or small group discussions, individual practical exercises or working with an assistant on a specific task. There is a sense of urgency within the lessons and this ensures that children are prepared well for work in Year 1 on the National Curriculum and religious education.
20. Throughout the rest of the school, teachers plan work carefully, ensuring that the needs of the mixed age classes are all fully catered for. Planning formats differ slightly but all include specific targets for learning, either in a single lesson or throughout the week. This planning is reflected upon and changes made in subsequent lessons. Pupils are encouraged to take an active role in lessons. Discussions will try and involve as many people as possible and questions are aimed at those who might be having difficulty understanding a concept or who are losing concentration. The use of extended forms of writing in lessons other than English is not always planned as well and this restricts the achievement of those with higher ability. In addition, more attention needs to be paid, particularly in the juniors, to ensuring that in subjects such as mathematics and science all pupils have the opportunity to think and experiment for themselves. Resources are readily available. When pupils return to their desks they are able to start work straightaway and thus complete as much as possible.
21. In the infants, there is a very high level of expectation about what pupils can achieve and what should be completed. While this is good in the juniors, it is not so strong, as some teachers do not extend those who have the highest ability. This is noticeable in writing where some opportunities are lost to develop more extended pieces in English, religious education, by using computers or in evaluating practical work in science. The reason for this lack of challenge is because the methods used are not always appropriate, such as in a Year 3/4 design and technology lesson, where the teacher had not allowed enough time for making preliminary drawings prior to the practical activity. This resulted in pupils not understanding what was expected and experiencing difficulties in redesigning their photoframes.
22. Pupils with special educational needs are taught as well as their peers. Teachers and teaching assistants liaise well, planning activities that are related to short-term targets in individual education plans. Teaching assistants know the pupils well and give good personal and academic support during lessons and during the few withdrawal sessions. Teachers, with guidance from the special needs co-ordinator, draw up an appropriate plan for each pupil on the special needs register. Teachers generally make good use of the trained assistants, but their effectiveness, whilst satisfactory in all lessons, is more variable in the juniors.
23. The behaviour of pupils is generally very good. It is at its best when the teacher has planned high levels of stimulating and exciting work. Only when the work is not interesting or too mundane, as in a Year 5/6 English lesson, do a small number of pupils start to lose concentration, talk with their friends or complete less work. During the inspection, there were no instances of poor behaviour, either within the classroom or in the playground.

24. Teaching assistants are used well. They sometimes support small groups, individuals or those with special educational needs. Good use is made of one assistant's expertise for teaching computer skills on a regular basis. This has helped develop the subject considerably. Other adults, particularly parents, are also encouraged and welcomed. Their contributions are valued by class teachers who ensure that their time is used well.
25. Homework provides an extra valuable support to learning in the classroom. Parents are very happy with what is on offer and feel that teachers do not overburden their children. They understand the procedures and what is expected during the week.
26. The increasingly positive use of assessment has helped the school identify its own teaching strengths as well as those areas that need development. It is excellent in the Reception Year and satisfactory through the rest of the school. In lessons, teachers mark work conscientiously, sometimes adding comments or targets where these are appropriate. Reflections on lessons also aid the planning of future lessons and enable those who have not understood a particular element to be given work that will reinforce it. At a whole school level, both internal and external assessments have been collated and analysed to determine the direction of the school improvement plan. These have all helped raise the performance of pupils, both academically and personally. Fluctuations between classes and year groups are slowly being stabilised as teachers and the senior management team become more confident in its use.

## The curriculum

The school's curriculum is **satisfactory** and meets statutory requirements. Opportunities for enrichment are **good**. The quality and quantity of accommodation and resources are **satisfactory**.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- The procedures used to identify pupils with special educational needs are good.
- Provision for personal, social and health education is good.
- A good range of events enhances the curriculum.
- Pupils are very well prepared as they move through the school and when they transfer to secondary school.
- The accommodation for under-fives is unsatisfactory.
- Schemes of work underpin the curriculum securely; the teaching time for junior pupils is in need of review and activities are not consistently matched to the range of pupils' abilities.
- Withdrawal for peripatetic music lessons and choir limits access to the full curriculum for those pupils involved in these activities.

## Commentary

27. The school provides a sound curriculum based on all subjects of the National Curriculum, together with religious education, personal, social and health education and the areas of learning in the Foundation Stage. Children in the reception class have good learning opportunities and are very well prepared before they undertake the infant curriculum. Pupils are very well prepared as they move through the school and transfer to secondary school. Pupils in Year 6, including those with special needs, have the benefit of an induction week before they transfer to the local secondary school.
28. The curriculum has undergone good improvement since the last inspection, underpinned by schemes of work based mainly on national guidelines. Plans throughout the school consistently identify clear learning objectives but activities are not always matched to the full range of pupils' abilities, except in mathematics. This limits the progress of older, more able pupils in writing, who are insufficiently challenged. Opportunities for cross-curricular links have been identified and this is an area for further development. The school is about to undertake a

further review of teaching time in the juniors. The provision for personal, social and health education is good overall. The range of responsibilities for all pupils, the opportunities for social development, and the work of the school council make a very positive contribution. All teachers devote time to personal, social and health education and teach the themes identified in the curriculum matrix, but as yet there is no detailed scheme of work to support teachers in their planning. Sex education and the understanding of drugs misuse are formally planned as part of an ongoing programme.

29. Provision for special educational needs is good overall. This is an improvement since the last inspection. All pupils on the special needs register have full access to the curriculum. The special needs co-ordinator ensures that pupils receive expert advice and support from a range of specialist agencies and that all staff receive appropriate training. Each class has the benefit of a teacher assistant to support groups of pupils. Pupils with a statement of special needs are given the allocated one-to-one support. There is a small, satisfactorily resourced room for group work and effective use is made of the library and ICT suite for teaching pupils with special needs. Pupils identified with concentration and social difficulties have the benefit of small group sessions with trained assistants. An additional teacher is used well for two days in the week to support gifted and talented pupils throughout the school on an individual and group basis, depending upon need.
30. A good range of opportunities enhances the curriculum. The school arranges interesting visits and events such as the Forceworks Science Day, Victorian Day, Music Festivals and the new residential trip for Years 5 and 6, which provide good levels of enrichment. Participation in sport, the arts and other activities are good. There is a good range of extra-curricular clubs, including sport, music, environmental issues and games, for all pupils. However, the balance of withdrawal for peripatetic music lessons and choir limits access to the full curriculum for some pupils and they miss key learning opportunities in some subjects, for example, citizenship, religious education and information and communication technology. Homework throughout the school is good, especially in English and mathematics, and prepares Year 6 pupils well for secondary education.
31. There are sufficient teachers for each class, with a range of experience and qualifications to support the curriculum. Some specialist teaching supports music, physical education and religious education. Two part-time teachers undertake regular supply cover and one of them gives support for gifted and talented pupils and those with special educational needs. Knowledgeable teaching assistants support learning in each class.
32. The accommodation has restrictions in terms of size of classrooms and storage facilities, but the school makes effective use of the space available. The clean buildings are enhanced by attractive displays. The spacious hall, library and the computer suite are used appropriately. The attractive field is within sight of the gate and provides a good area for games, athletics and environmental studies. The playground and surrounding area is well used for recreation and games. The accommodation for under-fives is unsatisfactory. The class area is cramped and there is no dedicated outdoor play area, nor level access to the space that is presently used. In addition, there are some health and safety concerns with respect to the longer term condition of the infant building.
33. Resources for learning are satisfactory overall. Physical education has the benefit of good resources, whilst those for religious education are barely adequate. The small, well organised library is satisfactory in terms of quality and quantity and is administered well.

### Care, guidance and support

Provision for the care, welfare and safety of pupils is **good**. They are supported and guided in academic and personal support **well**. Pupils' views are fully **valued** and they play an active role in how the school develops.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- A much improved working environment; although there needs to be more rigour in risk assessments.
- Much improved academic and personal assessment procedures that direct the work with individual pupils and enable more consistent challenge.
- The school is a harmonious community.
- Very good induction procedures

## Commentary

34. The many renovations and refurbishments that have taken place to the school buildings have helped ensure that pupils work within a safe but not an oppressive environment. Access to the inside of the school is handled well. Outside areas are equally secure and staff have a good working knowledge of safety precautions that need to be taken during visits. Visitors are welcomed to the school as there is now a good focal point developed by the administration and reception entrance.
35. Staff and pupils work in a close harmony. Relationships are very good and teachers know children well. This enables them to act quickly should pupils come to school unhappy about something that has happened outside school. The few incidents that happen during the school day are always dealt with sensitively. More formal systems are being constantly thought through to promote personal development and the school values the comments of pupils and their ideas for improvement. These include the use of class discussions and friendly assemblies. Wellington, the school bear, provides a focus for house points by wearing the correct coloured scarf for the week. The unsung hero award celebrates pupils who might otherwise remain unrecognised. These all encourage all pupils to work in a very close partnership with each other. The systems to ensure academic rigour have been at the core of improving standards. A wealth of data has been collated, analysed and is used to decide where extra support is needed. Teachers are being encouraged to use assessments to help them provide more challenge for all levels of ability. Pupils with special educational needs are monitored very well both academically and for any behavioural issues. This can include very good specific monitoring of their daily performance or discussion with other members of staff.
36. On entry to the school, children in the reception class have already had an opportunity to work with their teacher. There are very close connections with the nursery group, which occupies the same site as the school. This includes joining in with assemblies and working alongside older children. Buddies or mentors support those entering the school part way through the year.
37. Some minor developments are needed to ensure that the care and welfare of pupils is even better. At present, the school's systems for first day absence do not include any parental contact. The governors fulfil their statutory responsibilities regarding annual risk assessments but these need to be more focused, particularly in light of the constant renovations to the buildings.

## Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Links with parents and the local community are **good**. Links with other schools and colleges are **satisfactory**.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good information is provided for parents, which has greatly improved over the last few years.

- A new reception area that provides a friendly first point of call, enabling visitors to be seen quickly and efficiently.
- Good use of parents' skills to improve the environment.
- Good arrangements for transfer to the next school.

## Commentary

38. Parents rightly feel that they are kept well informed about what their children are doing at school and about their progress through the annual reports. These include teacher and parent comments as well as targets for the forthcoming year. These are discussed at parents' evenings, enabling work to be done both at home and at school. The school produces good written information through a range of regular newsletters and the innovative use of a diary board at the front entrance. Parents are able to see at a glance what has been happening, what events are about to take place and any significant notes. These are written to encourage parents to become involved. A substantial number of parents are highly supportive of the work that goes on at school and encourage homework and participation in out of school activities.
39. The school is open to suggestions and the headteacher, in particular, ensures that parents are able to talk through any problems. This open door policy has been helped by the recent refurbishment that has enabled a friendly central reception area to be manned easily, thus acting as a secure entry point as well as ensuring that any visitors can be attended to quickly. At the start and end of the day, teachers and other staff are available for any discussions and parents value the emphasis placed on this partnership. This enables any complaints or concerns to be dealt with quickly.
40. There are a number of formal and informal procedures to seek the views of parents. This is an area that the present headteacher has worked very hard on. The staff have a good awareness of how parents feel and what they think needs to be improved. The large number of working parties encourages further participation and these have helped improve the environment around the school. These, in conjunction with the friends association, have managed to raise notable amounts of funds to provide extra facilities. By the end of Year 6, pupils are very well prepared for their next school. They have an air of self-confidence and a thirst for learning that will enable them to make the most from their future education.
41. Over the last few years, the school has substantially raised its own self-esteem by becoming a central hub of the local area. Links have been established with the local museum, the Parish Council and active participation in local events. Parents feel the school has much better links than in the past and this has been a contributory reason for the rising numbers of children at the school.
42. There are satisfactory links with other schools. Communication consists of a two-way exchange between teachers and help with selecting the correct type of school for each individual at the end of Year 6. The local education authority has recently restructured the support to schools and this is beginning to have some effect. Support is provided with self-evaluation and by visiting other schools to see best practice. This is at an early stage but more has been incorporated within the school improvement plan. A stronger element is the development of the local cluster group, which enables senior managers, in particular, to meet and discuss common problems.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The overall leadership and management are **good**. The leadership of the headteacher is **good**. The headteacher, with key staff, provides **effective** leadership and is focused on improving standards. Management is **good**, as is the governance of the school.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher has a clear vision for the school, which is conveyed well to governors, staff and the school community.
- The headteacher, senior staff and governors have a good grasp of all the major issues affecting school improvement and have created appropriate strategic plans.
- Monitoring and target setting procedures are well established and have helped to raise expectations and standards.
- The leadership of the Foundation Stage is very good.
- Sometimes, data is not used to improve the daily performance of the most able pupils, particularly in writing, in some areas of Key Stage 2.

## Commentary

43. The governors and headteacher form an effective partnership, sharing a clear vision for the school and its importance in the village community. They have a strong focus on raising standards and, whilst proud of what has been achieved in recent years, they have a good understanding of those areas where improvement is still needed. Good management structures and procedures underpin the everyday work of the school and all statutory requirements are met. Application of the principles of best value is good.
44. The headteacher has successfully established a staff team that is committed to raising standards whilst developing the self-esteem and social skills of the pupils. Underpinning school improvement is the creation by the headteacher of systems for regular monitoring of performance and target setting and the building of successful teams, particularly in the Foundation Stage, where leadership is very good.
45. The governors and headteacher have prioritised the appointment of well-qualified staff who share their high expectations that pupils' performance can be improved. There is a growing sense of collaboration and teamwork and the school works hard on being as inclusive as possible. This has extended to ensuring there are secure race equality procedures following the latest national guidelines. The senior teachers appointed since the last inspection are well qualified to lead the school in enriching the curriculum as a means of raising standards further.
46. The priorities for improvement during the years ahead have been clearly identified in the school improvement plan and curriculum co-ordinators have responsibility for preparing an annual plan for their subject. The school improvement plan has clearly identified targets, persons responsible and success criteria and is reviewed regularly. The staff is aware of the priorities for development through a well planned programme of in-service staff meetings. However, whilst teaching is regularly monitored by the headteacher, strategies for sharing best practice across the school have not been as effective as they should have been in some key areas.
47. The headteacher and senior teachers provide good role models for staff and pupils, by listening to people and valuing their views. The staff share a commitment to school improvement and co-operate well in establishing generally consistent expectations for pupils' behaviour and an ethos of pastoral care. The teachers work very hard in preparing lessons and contributing to the work of the school.
48. The headteacher's management skills are good. Rigorous analysis of pupils' performance in statutory tests provides a clear picture of standards and improvement for staff and governors. Assessment procedures for monitoring pupils' progress have been well established throughout the school and record keeping is consistently good, with pupil targets being set from this data. The assessment and targeting of children in the reception class is a particular strength. Procedures are kept under review.
49. The performance management of teaching staff is well established and is being introduced for support staff. Performance targets for staff are clearly linked to the priorities for school improvement and there are good opportunities for attending relevant professional development courses and conferences. There are appropriate procedures for induction of staff.

50. There is an appropriate delegation of responsibilities in light of teachers' length of service and workload. There is good monitoring and subject management in literacy and mathematics. However, expectations of subject co-ordinators regarding the levels at which pupils can achieve vary and the effectiveness of practice is inconsistent in terms of monitoring the quality of teaching and learning.

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

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	379,369
Total expenditure	368,281
Expenditure per pupil	2,557

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	7,384
Balance carried forward to the next year	11,088

51. There are very good financial procedures within the school. This has enabled the governors to turn a major deficit in the budget four years ago into a current surplus. In addition, grants and other external funding have been actively sought and have added substantially to the environment of the school. An additional benefit has been the raising of the self-esteem of the school and its standing within the local community. It has also brought an increase in pupil numbers. The day-to-day administration is efficiently organised and parents rightly feel that the office staff are welcoming and friendly.
52. Resources are deployed effectively. Governors and the headteacher have made good improvements to the accommodation and resources since the last inspection and have plans to further improve the site. They identify the following restrictions imposed by the present accommodation as obstacles to learning, and the inspection team agrees:
- There is no covered outdoor play area for the Foundation Stage children.
  - The temporary classroom housing the Foundation Stage does not provide an outdoor space easily accessible for children of this age because of the different heights/levels.

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

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

53. Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is **very good** and there has been very good improvement since the last inspection. This is largely due to the very good leadership and management skills of the present Foundation Stage co-ordinator, who has introduced a manageable system of assessing each pupil against the national Early Learning Goals. This informs planning and ensures that each individual child is able to progress well.
54. Children enter reception in the September before they are five and at the time of this inspection all were attending full time. They are taught in a class made up of reception and a small group of Year 1 pupils. The majority of children have attended some form of pre-school provision, many having attended the nursery on site. All children, including those with special educational needs, achieve well because the teaching is very good, and the curriculum is appropriately planned to provide a wide range of activities that are well matched to their needs. All adults set excellent role models for the children and manage them well. There is a good ratio of adults to children, ensuring that the needs of all are well met. All staff work very well as a cohesive team, carefully monitoring all children's progress. The accommodation is unsatisfactory because there is no dedicated outdoor play provision. Whilst there is a separate, secure outside area, the access by sloping ramps from the classroom is not easy for children and inhibits their independence. It is very difficult to make full use of this during wet weather.

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

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

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

- Children achieve well because of the very good teaching and the high expectations set by staff.
- Excellent procedures for assessing children's progress against the Early Learning Goals ensure that all children are appropriately challenged in their learning.
- Good teamwork between adults ensures that children feel secure and develop good self-esteem and self-confidence.

#### **Commentary**

55. The personal, social and emotional development is better than that expected for their age and a significant number of children are already achieving the Early Learning Goals for this area. A particular strength is the good link with the on-site nursery, so that most children are familiar with their surroundings and many have already formed friendships before they arrive in the reception class in September. They show good self-confidence by talking readily to visitors and they show good independence, as they are able to organise equipment and sustain attention on an activity with minimal adult help. Most children are able to work and play as part of a group, taking turns and showing consideration for others.
56. The excellent teamwork of the adults gives the children good role models for co-operation, and a calm but rigorous approach to work. The teacher has given good consideration to activities that will ensure that the large group of boys in the cohort will be motivated to learn and those with potential behavioural or social issues are monitored and effectively supported. For example, children enjoyed the humour of the "Monster Café" in the play zone, where they created menus made up of worms, spiders etc; Children are continually encouraged to feel confident about what they achieve, as their efforts are rewarded by generous praise. They are friendly and take a pride in their work. Children are encouraged to share and take turns amicably, and put up their hands when answering a question. When children do not conform,

they are dealt with firmly but fairly, so that they learn how to appreciate the needs of others within the group. Children are expected to clear up after themselves, which they do without much prompting. The very supportive relationships ensure children feel secure and confident to seek help when required and have developed very positive attitudes towards learning, which is enjoyable for them.

## **COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Speaking and listening skills are generally above national average levels.
- Very good teaching ensures that children are able to achieve well.
- Children enjoy literacy lessons because they are fun.

### **Commentary**

57. Most children are in line to attain the Early Learning Goal for Communication, Language and Literacy by the end of the Reception Year and many have already attained it in their use of oral language. Most children are able to speak audibly with confidence and control and demonstrate an increasingly wide vocabulary to clarify their thinking. For example, during a class discussion on letter sounds, one child spontaneously described two letters as a “cluster”, whilst another child could describe how he knew the letter “y” at the end of a word. They could all recognise rhymes such as “mice” and “rice.” Very good relationships mean that children have the confidence to talk, and all adults are genuinely interested in what the children have to say.
58. Children enjoy books and listen attentively when a story is read to them. For example, they showed delight when the teacher read a Big Book, “The Monster Café”, to them and settled happily to look at books when given the opportunity to do so. The strategy of teacher and support staff reading with small groups of similar ability means that children are making good progress with developing reading skills, using their increasing understanding of vocabulary to begin reading similar or rhyming words. Those with special educational needs receive particularly effective support.
59. There are plenty of good opportunities for children to write for a range of purposes. For example, in the “pretend” zone, the teacher had provided paper and pencils so that they could use role-play to write menus and orders for the Monster Café. Many children are able to write their own name and hold a pencil correctly. Most children are forming recognisable letter shapes when writing.

## **MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Very good teaching helps children develop good understanding of mathematical ideas such as capacity.
- Children have good mathematical vocabulary.

### **Commentary**

60. Whilst children’s knowledge and understanding about mathematical concepts such as capacity is at nationally average levels when they enter the school, very good teaching enables them to achieve well. For example, at the beginning of a lesson on capacity, most children had little understanding of comparisons between two different-sized containers. Through skilful

questioning and by providing the opportunity for every child to experiment with sand and containers, the teacher was able to extend their understanding and their vocabulary, becoming familiar with words such as “estimate”, “more than” and “comparison”. The good use of ICT in numeracy lessons enables the teacher to provide motivation, promoting good learning. For example, the use of an animation program on a laptop computer enabled the children to watch a mother bird feed baby birds in a nest and calculate the difference between numbers between 5 and 1. The children are familiar with terms such as “count on” and “difference”. Most children are working at levels expected for their age and the majority are on line to reach the Early Learning Goals in this area, with good provision being made for more able children whose attainment is above national expectations.

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

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children are provided with good opportunities to explore and investigate through lots of interesting first hand experiences.
- Adults provide good support and encouragement for children to develop their skills of observation and critical thinking through the good teaching.

### **Commentary**

61. Children are given good opportunities to develop knowledge and understanding of the world through guided play as well as through more formal sessions where the teacher gives instruction building on the children’s experience. For example, in a whole class session outdoors, the children were invited to choose and draw one of the plants growing around the playground using a range of coloured pencils. The class teacher, teaching assistant and other adults all encouraged the children to notice and comment on patterns, similarities and colour, instructing them to observe closely. During a whole class session the next morning, the teacher took the opportunity to reinforce previous learning by inviting children to talk about the flowers some had brought into school, which had been a homework assignment. The children could recall the correct terms for petal and stalk and locate these parts of the plant on a diagram. Long-term planning and scrutiny of work in children’s books shows that they are given similar opportunities to develop a sense of time. There are examples of considering past and present events in the lives of themselves and their families and a sense of place by, for instance, drawing a line on a large scale map to show the route from home to school. They are also helped to gain an awareness of the cultures and beliefs of other people. They have satisfactory access to ICT to develop skills in using a keyboard and mouse. The achievement of the children and their attainment is in line with national expectations.

## **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in physical development is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children have good opportunities to develop confidence and control in handling tools and equipment in the classroom and across the curriculum.
- Outdoor use of large-scale construction and movement toys is restricted to fine weather because of the lack of a covered outdoor play area.

### **Commentary**

62. Good planning and teaching means that within the classroom and throughout day-to-day learning children have lots of opportunities to handle tools, equipment and toys, developing manipulative skills well. The regular planned use of the hall for PE provides opportunities for the development of skills such as travelling on hands and feet over rung ladders with increasing confidence. Children have unsatisfactory opportunities for outdoor play as children in the reception/Year 1 class have limited continuous access to the outside area. The outside area is at a different level to the classroom, with sloping ramps for access. When it is dry, the staff set up and supervise activities with balls, trikes and other large play equipment, but provision for physical development is restricted during inclement weather. Despite this, and because of the teacher's conscious efforts to make the best of the accommodation, standards in physical development are in line with national expectations and children are on line to achieve the Early Learning Goals in this area. The sound achievement could be even better with improved facilities.

## **CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in creative development is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children are given opportunities to experiment with a range of materials and activities through creative play.

### **Commentary**

63. The very good relationships between adults and children, the good teaching and organisation of the space into zones means that children are able to express themselves freely during creative play sessions. For example, children choosing to paint in the "creative zone" were able to express themselves and demonstrated good use of colour. Other children in the "investigation zone" used a hand lens to carry out close observation of leaves and cones whilst others in the "music zone" had access to percussion instruments to create simple sound patterns. Those in the "play zone" enjoyed playing with sand and water, exploring texture. The adults supervised the pupils in the different zones, prompting through questioning and discussion the children's ability to discuss their ideas and encouraging use of the imagination. The majority of children are in line to attain the Early Learning Goal for creative development by the end of reception and achieve satisfactorily.

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

### **ENGLISH**

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards are above average by the end of Year 2 and Year 6; achievement is good overall in the infants and in speaking, listening and reading in the juniors.
- Teaching is good in the infants.
- Leadership and management are good.
- Lack of opportunities for extended writing across the curriculum.
- Handwriting is inconsistent across the school.

### **Commentary**

64. Standards are above average by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Standards are slightly higher in speaking and listening and reading than in writing. Standards have risen since the last

inspection when they were average overall. However, there are differences in the trend of improvement in national tests between infants and juniors. Since 1999, there has been a steady improvement in reading standards at the end of Year 2. Improvements in Year 2 writing have been more variable but overall there has been an upward trend. Standards at the end of Year 6 have been erratic over the last five years with a sharp decline in 2001 and 2003. In the 2003 Year 6 national tests for English, 77 per cent of pupils achieved the expected level for their age, but only nine per cent achieved the higher Level 5. Analysis by the school of these results indicates that reading standards were as expected but writing was significantly lower than predicted. As a result of this anomaly, the school has identified weaknesses in the teaching of writing and implemented strategies to raise standards. These have yet to have a full impact across the school. Standards in the current Year 6 are higher than those achieved in the 2003 tests and the school appears set to achieve its more challenging targets for the 2004 tests.

65. Achievement in speaking and listening is good through the school and pupils have the opportunity to develop these skills in many lessons throughout the school. Good questioning by teachers and assistants provides opportunities to discuss and explain reasons, opinions and methods. Teachers use various grouping arrangements to stimulate discussion. All pupils express themselves clearly and confidently, with older pupils using an appropriately more diverse range of vocabulary.
66. Achievement in reading is good and pupils make good progress from reception onwards. Pupils achieve well because teachers provide opportunities for reading together and individually. All pupils are encouraged to read at home and a good dialogue on progress is kept between home and school. Year 2 pupils use a good range of strategies to help them know and use key words and to develop methods of tackling unfamiliar words. By Year 6, pupils are confident to read fluently and with expression. They show understanding of a range of different texts, including poetry, by identifying key features and the use of inference and deduction. Older pupils demonstrate good reference skills, using dictionaries and thesauri effectively to support their writing. A librarian runs a popular library club, which further supports the development of reference skills.
67. Achievement in writing is variable, good in the infants but satisfactory overall. This is because the teaching of writing is variable. In Year 2, pupils make good progress in sequencing their sentences, using imaginative vocabulary such as 'abominable' and 'scattered,' and the more able spell words such as 'anxiously' correctly. They use a variety of contexts for writing, including list, menus, poetry and captions. The less able use story openings such as ... *'If I had a magic carpet I would go to France. I would fly up to the top of the tower and look at the beautiful view.'* In the juniors, opportunities for developing higher order writing skills are not sustained. Some more able pupils underachieve when planned activities are insufficiently challenging, for example, the use of worksheets to record basic grammar work and when pupils are not shown how to improve their work. Opportunities for junior pupils to develop extended writing in English lessons and in other subjects require further development. The standard of handwriting is unsatisfactory, with many pupils in Year 6 unable to sustain a joined-up style. The school has recognised this is an area for improvement and intends to pursue the consistent implementation of the new handwriting procedures.
68. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, being consistently good or better in the infants and variable, although sound, in the juniors. Teachers produce weekly plans with clear learning objectives identified. Teachers select good resources to engage pupils and support learning, for example, *George and the Dragon* in Year 2, *Amazing Dad* in Years 4/5 and *Haiku Bestiary* in Years 5/6. Teachers generally make effective use of teaching assistants during the independent activities but their use during teacher-led sessions requires development. Pupils with special educational needs make progress at least in line with their peers because of the effective support of teaching assistants in independent work. Less effective teaching is characterised by some mundane tasks and uninteresting activities which are not consistently planned to meet the needs of the more able pupils in the class, which limits their progress. In

addition, too much time is devoted to the early part of the lesson, which limits the time pupils have to spend on the independent work. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are satisfactory overall. In the better lessons, attitudes and behaviour are good. Marking of work is generally good and pupils are aware of what they have achieved.

69. Planning has improved since the last inspection and is now based on the National Literacy Strategy. However, opportunities for extended writing are limited and teachers do not consistently model how writing can be improved. Few opportunities for editing and redrafting of work exist, thereby limiting pupils' progress. This is particularly true for older, more able pupils, who do not understand how to make their work even better. These factors were an issue at the last inspection. They have been addressed part, but the school recognises the need for additional development.
70. Leadership and management of literacy are good. The co-ordinator has successfully re-launched the National Literacy Strategy and provided the required resources and training. She has identified appropriate action to raise standards and monitors the implementation of the various strategies taken. Assessment systems are now good and outcomes are used to inform future plans. An additional teacher is employed for two days in the week to support more able pupils in literacy and additional teaching assistants provide support for less able pupils. The co-ordinator recognises the need to continue to develop the resources for literacy lessons and the library. Overall, the school has made good progress in English since the last inspection.

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

71. The use of language and literacy across the curriculum requires development. Other subjects make a good contribution to speaking and listening, and research skills. However, there are few planned opportunities for extended writing in most subjects. Computers, including laptops, are used across the school to support literacy.

### **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

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

- Good improvement since the last inspection, standards that are above the national average and test results that are improving at a higher rate than the national trend.
- Teaching is balanced well so pupils can develop both knowledge and understanding.
- Good use of assessment to identify the strengths and weaknesses in the provision across the school.
- All levels of ability are challenged well; although the numeracy targets in the individual education plans for those with special educational needs are not always specific enough.
- Improved co-ordination of the subject providing a good overview for improvement.

#### **Commentary**

72. Standards have improved in mathematics since the last inspection and are now above average for pupils in the present Year 2 and Year 6. Achievement is good. This is because there has been a concentrated effort to identify the individual needs of pupils and to provide challenging activities that will increase the understanding of mathematical concepts.
73. Results in national tests confirm the upward trend in performance by the end of Year 2. In 2003, pupils' results were above those nationally and were at average levels when compared to similar schools. Since 1999, results have shown a sharp improvement, well above the national increase. Teachers' own assessments of this group were more negative and pupils did far better than was expected, particularly at the higher Level 3. The reasons for this were

not clear, although analysis of the results has been comprehensive and suggests that pupils of higher ability were learning better than their work through the year had suggested.

74. In the 2003 national tests in Year 6, results were well above average when compared to all schools and at average levels when compared to similar schools. Comparison between the Year 2 national tests and those in Year 6 for the same pupils shows progress that is well above average, confirming the good provision. This trend is likely to be at least maintained this year. The improvement is the result of good teaching combined with thorough analysis of learning styles, expectations and challenge.
75. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 are beginning to have a good grasp of number facts and by the use of some clever questioning by teachers are also using these facts in different situations. For instance, in one lesson, the teacher was reinforcing number bonds to 20 and asked the question *"I give you three – you give me...?"* Approximately three-quarters of the group quickly replied 17. A strength of this teaching was the way in which work was set to a number of different levels. In this case, the teacher also gave the higher group a task that involved estimating. This was highly challenging and developed understanding as well as knowledge. Equally, those with special needs were also given appropriate work and achieve similarly to other pupils. These characteristics are common throughout all lessons, although the individual education plans for those with special educational needs do not always develop numeracy problems as well as for those in literacy.
76. Through Years 3 to 6, this good level of teaching continues. Again, work is heavily focused on using previously acquired knowledge in practical situations. In a Years 4/5 class, the work centred around division but was aimed at discovering the answers to word problems. This made the pupils think and, combined with a sense of urgency about the lesson, also produced high levels of challenge. In Years 5 and 6, there is a good balance of work across all aspects of the subject. In books, there is evidence of number work, including fractions and percentages, learning about measurements, two and three-dimensional work and using different forms of data.
77. Teaching is good. Teachers throughout the school ensure that work is planned carefully using a long-term plan that translates well to work within the mixed age classes. Different methods are used to ensure that work is set to the correct level, both for ability and for age. Thus, in one infant class, the independent work was set to five different levels. Teachers and support assistants worked with some of the groups and others were left to work independently. In this way, time is used efficiently and pupils respond well. Levels of concentration are high. Pupils are receptive to suggestions and are very willing participants in the discussions that take place.
78. Teachers use a range of marking techniques and this is always completed thoroughly. In the best cases, there is evidence in books of pupils being encouraged to check work and to think how it could be improved, sometimes with the additions of particular targets for improvement.
79. Teachers have adopted the National Numeracy Strategy (NNS) well. They have refined the planning to take more account of the mixed age classes and to ensure that pupils make progress through each year. The use of a numeracy consultant has been helpful in this and the whole staff have been involved in the monitoring of planning. The experienced co-ordinator has been able to provide good resources, has good links with other schools and is able to moderate the work within this school with that of others. She has worked alongside other teachers and this is helping her obtain a better overview about the strengths and weaknesses and so develop a more cogent improvement plan. To help raise the profile of the subject, pupils have taken part in both a local and a national mathematics competition and have met with some success. Overall, pupils do well in mathematics because the subject has been developed following a strategic development based on thorough analysis.

## **Mathematics across the curriculum**

80. Numeracy is now used well across a number of different subjects, including geography, history, information and communication technology and design and technology. Pupils are able to use the knowledge that they have gained in unfamiliar situations with increasing confidence so that by Years 5 and 6 pupils are inquisitive learners.

## **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils' knowledge and understanding about Life Processes and Living Things is very good.
- An increasing emphasis on pupils carrying out investigations and experiments.
- There is inconsistency in the quality of teaching in Key Stage 2 with some lack of challenge for the more able children in some classes.
- There is a lack of rigorous assessment to identify the next step in learning for individuals and groups of different abilities.

### **Commentary**

81. Observation of science lessons across the school and scrutiny of work completed by pupils indicates that standards are satisfactory in Year 2 and Year 6. The results of statutory tests over the past few years shows that the number of pupils attaining the national average Level 4 in Year 6 is good, although the percentage of pupils attaining the higher Level 5 in national tests is lower than similar schools. This reflected the lack of challenge and extension for these pupils but opportunities are now better. Consequently, for pupils now in the school, achievement in relation to their prior attainment is satisfactory.
82. In the lessons seen during the inspection, teaching ranged from satisfactory to very good. ICT is used well to support the learning in science. Scrutiny of pupils' books indicates that teaching is mainly satisfactory, with pupils having opportunities to carry out first hand investigations, such as the current work in Years 1, 2, 4 and 5 on understanding the life-cycle of a plant or in Years 3 and 4 on habitats. Pupils show interest and enthusiasm for learning by observation.
83. In lessons seen where teaching was good or very good, the skilful questioning by the teacher and other adults, balanced with good direct teaching of new knowledge and a brisk pace to the lesson, meant that pupils of all abilities achieved well in the lesson. For example, in a lesson on understanding the life-cycle of a plant, the class teacher used very good strategies to help pupils recall previous learning about seed dispersal and germination and build on this knowledge to learn about pollination. The teaching assistant gave the less able pupils good support so that all pupils achieved well. However, planning in some classes does not include sufficient challenge for the higher-attaining pupils. For example, the teacher's discussion with pupils studying ants, spiders and other mini-beasts in the field missed the opportunity to instruct on the classification of an insect.
84. All pupils do the same tasks, and this sometimes restricts opportunities for more able pupils to achieve even better. Scrutiny of workbooks suggests that there is a heavy reliance on completing work sheets, but pupils are able to use appropriate scientific vocabulary with good understanding, for example, "transparent " and "translucent" in a Year 5 study on light. There is little evidence of pupils designing their own extended investigations and experiments and few cross-curricular links such as using extended writing in science.
85. Assessment strategies in science are variable. In most classes, teachers assess pupils' work against the learning intention of the lesson, although this information is not used to identify the next step in individual pupils' learning and plan different tasks. This means that the most able pupils do not attain as well as they might in some classes. Pupils with special educational

needs achieve well because of good support from teachers and teaching assistants and good targets from individual education plans.

86. There was no discernible difference in the learning of boys and girls within classes in the lessons observed. Teachers' marking affirms good effort from pupils but does not always focus on the scientific learning intention to ensure that all pupils achieve good understanding. Resources for science are sound. Leadership and management of science are unsatisfactory because monitoring is weak. The co-ordinator has insufficient understanding of standards of teaching and learning across the school and is therefore not able to provide appropriate support for improvement.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- ICT work is much improved since the last inspection.
- Good coverage of all strands of the subject.
- There is good use of ICT to support pupils with special educational needs.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge.
- There has been good use made of additional funding and grants to enhance the provision.

### **Commentary**

87. Standards at the end of both Year 2 and Year 6 are in line with those nationally. Achievement through the school is sound. Few lessons were seen during the inspection but from a range of pupils' work and from discussions with teachers it is clear that provision for the subject has improved since the last inspection even though standards have remained similar. This is because the quality of hardware available is much better and teachers are confident in developing the subject. In addition, there is now more work taking place in class lessons and this is a good improvement from the last inspection when progress was far more variable.
88. Younger pupils can program toy robots to move around the floor. They have made graphs and charts using spreadsheet programs and can look up information on the Internet as well as in encyclopaedias on CD-ROM. There is good coverage of all the strands of the subject expected for their age, although more could be done to link control technology through design and technology lessons.
89. Older pupils in the juniors have combined work in art and design to draw pictures in the style of Mondrian and, in English, have combined text and graphics. They can work their way through different programs and from the direct teaching of new skills they are able to build upon the work in the infants. In Year 4, an interesting topic on sea birds has been completed with pupils copying text, and in Years 5 and 6 work on The Victorians has been word-processed. These are all skills that might be expected. There is, however, less evidence of work at a higher level, such as through the use of advanced databases or through drafting and planning using computers and this limits the progress that those with higher ability might make. One exception to this is a very good project undertaken in conjunction with the local museum. A small number of older pupils have produced a computer presentation about their locality after using the archives to research information about the use of local houses. The quality of the finished work is good and it is hoped that it will be used on a local website.
90. Pupils with special educational needs make similar progress to others, they are now challenged more effectively and ICT is used well to develop learning and targets within individual education plans. Again, this was an area of concern at the time of the last report.
91. Although no overall judgement can be made about teaching, there is good evidence that all strands of the subject are planned for in a coherent way. Teachers have had further training

and this has improved their own skills. They are much more aware of how to incorporate ICT within other work and thus develop the use of technology as an intrinsic tool in learning. A dedicated computer area has been built that also houses the library. The computers have been gradually upgraded and provide all the necessary software for teaching both the infants and the juniors.

92. Pupils are keen on the work they have to do and show high levels of concentration. They work well together and, when given the opportunity, can study independently. Older pupils say that they now feel that they are making better progress than when they started school because they have more time working on computers.
93. There has been good co-ordination of the subject. A clear strategy for improvement and sufficient funding, along with the gaining of extra grants, has meant that there is now a good level of computers per pupil, which is in line with the nationally recommended ratio. In addition, extra software has been obtained to support most curriculum areas and other subject co-ordinators are expected to evaluate its effectiveness. More work on this has been targeted in the next school improvement plan.

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

94. ICT is used well throughout the curriculum and has improved greatly since the last inspection. There are examples of work in most subjects. In addition to those mentioned above, work was seen in numeracy and design and technology where pupils have measured the width, height and depth of water on a bridge and graphed their results. In music, pupils have developed their understanding about a different technology by learning about repeated rhythms in Chinese music and in history there are posters about the Evacuation during the Second World War.

### **HUMANITIES**

95. In humanities, it was only possible to observe a very limited number of lessons in history and religious education. No lessons were observed in geography because of the school's planning to cover these subjects in alternate "blocks". However, the evidence from displays of work, discussions and assemblies carried out over the year and the work seen in samples of pupils' books show that standards are broadly average, as they were during the last inspection.
96. Timetable restrictions meant that only one **religious education** lesson could be seen. The curriculum matrix indicates that themes cover the locally agreed syllabus. There is very little work in junior pupils' books; therefore, it is not possible to make a firm judgement on standards and the quality of teaching and learning overall. Year 2 pupils' books show a range of appropriate and stimulating activities to support their study of Judaism and it is clear that pupils are given opportunities to learn from religion as well as about it. Standards in the sample seen are above those expected in the locally agreed syllabus. Indications are that teaching in the infants is at least satisfactory and often good. In the lesson observed, Years 3/4 pupils demonstrated above average standards in their knowledge of Islam through drama activities. Teaching was good, imaginative and met the needs of the pupils well. The quantity of written work in junior pupils' books is below expectations and there are few opportunities for independent or extended writing. In junior classes, there is an over-reliance on photocopied materials, which do not provide pupils with sufficient challenge. Resources, in particular artefacts, are barely adequate to deliver the curriculum.
97. In **history**, teachers encourage pupils to develop historical investigative skills by using evidence such as photos, contemporary writing and artefacts as well as first hand examples. In a Years 5/6 lesson observed during the inspection, the class teacher provided a very good range of toys and games which would have been familiar to Victorian children to enable the pupils to consider similarities and differences between Victorian and modern childhood. Insufficient opportunity was given to the more able pupils to consider reasons for the differences they noted. In a recent World War 2 study, the pupils were given the opportunity to

interview first hand witnesses about the bombing, which enabled the pupils to develop good understanding.

98. Teachers plan well to develop the pupils' interest and enjoyment in history by using role-play. A recent Victorian Day held in school gave pupils the opportunity to learn about similarities and differences. Pupils' history writing in Year 4 shows good achievement as the pupils wrote vivid descriptions of the raiding of monasteries as part of a Vikings study. ICT is often well used in history, for example, in the use of a Victorian style font for letter writing using the computer and in research using the internet.
99. In **geography**, pupils gradually develop their mapping skills so that by the end of Year 2 they are able to identify features of the local area on a large scale map and locate their classroom on a plan of the school. The pupils are also beginning to develop geographical understanding about how, for example, a letter travels between the sender and the person who receives it. They can also handle geographical data, for example, by constructing a block graph from information gathered on a traffic survey. The more able pupils have good knowledge and skills by the end of Year 2.
100. Pupils in Year 6 use appropriate geographical vocabulary such as 'meander' and 'tributary' to describe particular features of a river and pupils of all abilities are able to draw diagrams to explain river deposition and erosion following their own first hand investigations. They also make satisfactory progress in developing analytical skills, such as the use of Venn diagrams to show distances in a towns/village study.
101. Assessment and record keeping in history and geography are inconsistent across the school. Assessment is generally not being used to plan the next stage in learning for groups or individuals who have knowledge and understanding beyond the main learning intention of the lesson. There has been no planned provision for the co-ordinator to monitor the standard of teaching and learning in history and geography across the school, although dissemination of advice from courses attended by her has helped teachers plan well.

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

102. These subjects were not a main focus for the inspection and therefore it is not possible to make a firm judgement on standards and the quality of teaching and learning overall. No art and design lessons and two physical education lessons were observed. A selection of pupils' work was analysed in art and design. Discussion with the physical education co-ordinator was informal.
103. In the work seen, standards in **art and design** are above national expectations in Year 2 and in line with national expectations in Year 6. There are examples of good work throughout the school. In Year 2, for example, pupils explored different fabrics and weaving techniques, and then applied their knowledge to achieve a very attractive number of woven artefacts, and in Years 3/4, pupils used their knowledge of Mondrian and applied it to three-dimensional boxes with very good effect. Achievement is at least satisfactory overall. Drawing and painting skills are generally well developed and sketchbooks are becoming increasingly important. Opportunities for three-dimensional work, although sound, are more limited. The scheme of work for art and design is based on the national guidelines, together with a published scheme, which offers good support for teachers' planning. Resources are satisfactory but not plentiful. Art and design makes a positive contribution to pupils' cultural development. The art co-ordinator is new in post and has yet to implement a detailed action plan to raise standards.
104. It was only possible to observe one lesson in **design and technology** during this inspection, although displays of pupils' work around the school and scrutiny of pupils' workbooks demonstrate that attainment is satisfactory. This represents satisfactory improvement since the last inspection when the curriculum was not being implemented fully and attainment was unsatisfactory.

105. Pupils gain experience of a range of materials and techniques and develop the expected subject skills through designing and making a variety of products. For example, younger pupils have made biscuits as a food technology project and Years 3/4 were able to use glue and tape to join card to make photo frames. By the time they are in Year 5, they can use their skills to strengthen structures, learning appropriate vocabulary such as “strut” and “tie”. In Years 5/6 class, the pupils had designed and made slippers, which were evaluated against criteria such as fit, comfort and consideration for the likes and dislikes of the wearer. There was little evidence of the use of modelling or control technology being used in design and technology. Self-evaluation by pupils is recognised by the school as an area for development.
106. In the very small number of **music** lessons seen, achievement was good. There has been a concerted effort to improve the opportunities in the subject and to provide more chances for pupils to take part in music of different types. This has helped raise the profile of the subject. Pupils are able to experience music making in different forms. In one lesson, the pupils had brought in their own instruments to combine with those of the school. These ranged from keyboards to harmonicas and, along with both tuned and untuned percussion, small groups were directed into composing their own pieces. Pupils in this junior class were able to talk about different time signatures and how they felt about the pieces they were listening to. They concentrated hard, worked well together and the finished products were pleasing and tuneful.
107. There is an active choir that meets regularly. Unfortunately, this is at the same time each week and those taking part sometimes miss out on other subjects, such as information and communication technology. A very comprehensive range of music tuition is also available provided by peripatetic teachers. These are also at the same time each week. The school is to undertake a review to ensure the issue of withdrawal is resolved.
108. The co-ordinator is very enthusiastic about providing the widest possibilities, combining both work within the National Curriculum and by enhancing this through performances and concerts. She is meeting with success and teachers are now more enthusiastic in developing their own subject knowledge through the use of a commercial scheme.
109. In the two **physical education** (PE) lessons seen, pupils demonstrated skills in line with those expected for their age. Younger junior pupils showed appropriate control when striking and bowling during a rounders skills lesson. Older pupils developed their skills in field events, including discus, javelin and shot putt, during a lesson led by a local physical education specialist. Teaching in these two lessons was at least satisfactory. Pupils enjoy their PE lessons. All Year 5 and Year 6 pupils attend swimming lessons at the local leisure centre and the majority can swim the required 25 metres. The school makes good use of the spacious hall, playground and the nearby field. There is a good link to the sports co-ordinator at Angleley School, who provides training and specialist teaching as above. Resources are good and are stored satisfactorily. Assessment is developing. A good range of well-attended seasonal clubs, including football, netball, tag rugby and Kwik cricket, enhance the curriculum and the school enjoys competing in local sports festivals. The co-ordinator has an appropriate action plan for improving standards.

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

110. This area was not a major focus of the inspection; one lesson was observed and it is therefore not possible to make a judgement on the quality of teaching and pupils' learning overall. Nevertheless, it is clear that pupils achieve well overall because their attitudes and behaviour are good. They are respectful of others, enjoy good relationships with each other and adults and have a good understanding of the difference between right and wrong. The school's satisfactory expectations of pupils' conduct and the promotion of racial harmony support these strengths. The school council and day-to-day responsibilities offered to all pupils make a positive contribution. All teachers devote time to personal, social and health education and

teach the themes identified in the curriculum matrix, but as yet there is no detailed scheme of work to support teachers in their planning.

## 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	3
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>3</b>
Attendance	2
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

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

<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>3</b>
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	3
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).*