

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **ECCLESALL INFANT SCHOOL**

Sheffield

LEA area: Sheffield

Unique reference number: 107025

Headteacher: Miss Margaret Darling

Lead inspector: Mr Geoff Cooper

Dates of inspection: 20<sup>th</sup> - 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2003

Inspection number: 259786

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	5 - 7
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	150
School address:	High Storrs Road Sheffield
Postcode:	S11 7LG
Telephone number:	(0114) 266 3137
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Sheila Tidy
Date of previous inspection:	5 <sup>th</sup> November 1998

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Ecclesall Infant School is a two-form entry school admitting boys and girls aged five to seven from a relatively affluent suburb of Sheffield in Yorkshire. It benefits from Small Schools funding. There is a strong link with a local school with 'Beacon' status. There are also close links with pre-school settings providing education before the statutory age of schooling and with the main junior school to which most pupils transfer when they are seven. Very few pupils are entitled to a free school meal. The school assesses the attainment of pupils on entry to full-time schooling as being above the expected level. Distinctive features of the school are its large classrooms and extensive outdoor facilities. Most pupils come from a white British background. A few have origins in a wide range of backgrounds including black, Asian and Oriental family origins but most of these pupils are British-born. A few pupils learn English as a new language. A relatively low proportion of pupils is identified as having learning difficulties. Most of these needs are in the area of moderate learning difficulties. However, the school is able to support the admission of a very small number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs who have profound physical and learning needs. Very few pupils arrive at the school or leave the school at times other than the usual time.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
23647	Mr Geoff Cooper	Registered inspector	English and English as an additional language, geography, history, information and communication technology, physical education, special educational needs
9511	Mrs Ann Longfield	Lay inspector	
21910	Mr Gordon Longton	Team inspector	Science, art and design, design and technology
11419	Mrs Jeanie Underwood	Team inspector	Children in the Foundation Stage; mathematics, music, religious education

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**Ecclesall Infant School is very effective, providing good value for money.** Standards of attainment are above the level expected for pupils of similar age. Pupils achieve well. Teaching is good, leading to good learning. Leadership and management are very good. Governors play a full part in the work and life of the school. The curriculum is very good. Very good care is provided for pupils. It is an aid to pupils' progress that they come from backgrounds where parents are interested and enthusiastic about their child's learning. The school seeks to involve parents well. The school does well to engage and involve all its pupils in achieving their potential.

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

- when pupils are seven, standards of attainment are good;
- children get off to a very good start in the Reception classes;
- the teaching is good overall and very good in the Reception classes;
- the leadership and management of the headteacher and key staff are very good;
- a close home and school relationship has a strong impact on achievement;
- pupils' very positive attitudes give good support to achievement;
- the curriculum is very full and well enriched by activities in and out of school hours;
- more could be done to enhance pupils' understanding of life in a culturally diverse society;
- the school cares a great deal about the progress of pupils;
- very detailed assessments promote this well but place a heavy administrative burden on all staff; and
- the new locally-agreed syllabus for religious education is not yet established securely into the curriculum provided for pupils.

**The school has made good improvement since the previous inspection.** Good information is provided for parents about their child's progress and achievements. The school has a good long-term view of its strategic development. Financial management and control are efficient. Among other improvements, standards of attainment have risen since the previous inspection, despite a dip in 2002. Leadership and management and overall school provision are stronger and more secure than previously.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
reading	A	A	B	C
writing	C	A	A	B
mathematics	A	A	C	D

*Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average.  
Similar schools are those with similar percentages of pupils eligible for free school meals.*

**Achievement is good overall.** Children in the Foundation Stage are well on course to achieve or exceed the goals they are expected to reach by the end of Reception. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 exceed the standards expected of those of similar age. Attainment is above average in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology (ICT). Pupils make very good use of their literacy, numeracy and ICT skills and this supports their good achievement across all subjects. The school makes very good provision for its pupils with learning difficulties and for those with the potential to attain more highly. This ensures successful learning for all pupils. The few pupils learning English as an additional language achieve well because they get good support. The unpublished test results for 2003 show that standards have risen since the previous year, and this is confirmed by the work the Year 2 pupils currently do, which is consistently above average.

**The school makes good provision for the personal development of pupils.** This results in good behaviour and very positive attitudes to school work. Very good opportunities are provided for pupils to grow in self-knowledge, work harmoniously with others, behave well and understand and appreciate cultures both at home and abroad. Not enough is done to promote pupils' understanding of life in a multi-cultural society. **Attendance is well above average.** Pupils arrive in good time for the start of school.

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION

**The quality of education is very good. Teaching and learning are good throughout the school but very good in the Reception classes. The curriculum is very good with a great deal of enrichment to stimulate learning. Pupils' progress is tracked very well and the information from this used efficiently to promote further progress.**

Lessons are well planned and go confidently and smoothly. Teachers have good pupil management skills and this ensures that little time is wasted. Relationships between adults and pupils and among pupils are very good. Activities are interesting and this engages pupils well in their learning. They get through a good volume of quality work. Learning objectives are effectively shared with pupils, keeping them in touch with what they should be learning. Teachers are at pains to include all pupils in the learning opportunities and this means that both those who find learning easier and those who find learning difficult make equally good progress and achieve well.

**The curriculum is very good.** It addresses the needs of different pupils very effectively. Visits out of school, visitors and other activities enrich the curriculum. Because it knows its pupils very well, **the school is well placed to give them very good care, guidance and support. The partnership with parents is very strong.** The school does a great deal to encourage the active participation of parents in their child's education. Taken together, all these features have a strong impact on pupils' achievements.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

**Leadership and management are very good. Governors play a full and important role in the life of the school. The headteacher and other staff lead the school very well. Efficient management ensures the school runs calmly and smoothly.** These features blend well together to ensure that pupils enjoy a stimulating and purposeful environment for learning.

## PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

**Parents show a great deal of confidence in the life and work of the school.** Particularly, parents know that their child likes school, is well taught, makes good progress and has a good range of learning opportunities. A very small number of parents would like the school to introduce a formal reading scheme. Inspectors find that the teaching of reading is well organised and rigorous. Parents get a very good range of information about their child's steps in acquiring reading skills and the progress they are making. **Pupils enjoy their school life.** They know that they are well taught and appreciate the extensive range of activities available to them.

## IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

In this very effective school, there are no major weaknesses to attend to. Already identified by the school, the most helpful things it should do to improve are:

- reduce the bureaucratic burden that the school's detailed assessments create;
- clarify the school's response to the most recent locally-agreed syllabus for religious education through policy, scheme of work and time allocations for the subject; and
- further enrich the very good curriculum provided for pupils by extending their learning opportunities for education and life in a modern multi-cultural society.





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

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

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

**Pupils achieve well** because they benefit from a broad and rich curriculum, developing a good range of skills that are used efficiently across all areas of the curriculum. Standards of attainment are above average, especially in reading, writing and mathematics. In the Reception classes, pupils are well on target to match or exceed the goals expected by the end of Reception in all areas except communication, language and literacy, where most are on target to match the expected goals.

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

- Children in the Reception classes get off to a good start because the provision for them is very good.
- Standards of attainment are good in all the subjects that were inspected in depth.
- Pupils develop a very broad range of skills and expertise across the curriculum and they use their skills well to promote their achievement.

#### **Commentary**

1. Children in the Reception classes are well on course to achieve and, in many cases, exceed the goals set for them by the end of the Reception year, except in communication, language and literacy. They are well settled and show maturity in their personal and social development. Their early mathematical skills are well established. Children already know a great deal about the world around them and have a strong interest in computers. They have good motor control when painting and cutting. They use their physical attributes of strength and agility well. However, their communication, language and literacy skills are less well developed. They are good speakers and listeners. They are less adept at the early skills in reading and few are beginning to establish skills beyond mark-making in early writing. Despite this, they are making very good overall progress towards achieving the Early Learning Goals<sup>1</sup>. Their achievements, especially in speaking and listening and in painting, are much better than those typically seen.
2. Pupils in Year 1 and 2 continue to make good progress and achieve well. By the time they are seven, their attainment is better than expected of pupils nationally in reading, writing, mathematics, science, art and design, geography, history, information and communication technology (ICT) and physical education. Attainment in design and technology is about average. No judgement can be made in music and religious education because there is insufficient evidence at this early stage in the school year. Pupils achieve well because they are acquiring not only a good knowledge of the areas of the curriculum but they are also establishing a broad range of skills in reading, writing, mathematics and ICT that they use well in their studies across the curriculum. Their skills are very well used to support their learning in all other areas. They also achieve well because their learning benefits from their very wide curriculum, through activities out of normal school hours, visits off the school site and visitors into the school. They also achieve well because their attendance is good and they show a great interest in their school tasks and activities.
3. Part of pupils' successful achievement can be attributed to the arrangements the school makes for the support of pupils who find learning difficult and for those who have the potential for higher achievement. Although there is not always the service of a learning support assistant, where this support is available, it is strong and skilled, keeping pupils involved in their learning. It is especially strong for those with more profound learning difficulties. The very small number of pupils learning English as a new language get good support to help their

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<sup>1</sup> Early Learning Goals are the goals set out in the national guidance for children's learning by the end of the Reception year.

achievement. At the same time, teachers are very well aware of the needs of their higher-attaining pupils. The preparation of different tasks for pupils of different experience and ability is a strength of the school. This ensures that pupils capable of higher attainment get the support, direction, tasks and activities they need to keep them challenged in their learning. This has paid dividends in the most recent National Curriculum standard tests for 2003. Although these are not yet published, school information shows that many more pupils than usual have achieved the higher levels possible at this age in all areas tested. Thus the table below (for the last published results at the end of Year 2 in 2002) does not fully reflect the current standards of the school. These are the result of some very sharply focused use of assessment that has identified and rectified areas of previous weakness. School standards have improved steadily since the previous inspection. The small proportion of pupils from different ethnic backgrounds performs equally well as their peers.

**Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 – average point scores in 2002**

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	16.7 (17.7)	15.8(15.7)
writing	15.6 (15.8)	14.4 (14.3)
mathematics	16.9 (18.0)	16.5 (16.2)

*There were 60 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

4. Among the particular current **strengths of pupils’ achievements** are:

- Well developed **skills in reading and writing** that pupils use very well in activities across the curriculum but especially in history, geography and science.
- Very good **speaking and listening** that enables pupils to learn effectively by listening and to explain, discuss and interpret their understanding and ideas.
- Very well developed **skills in art and design** that help them to reflect their knowledge and understanding of the world around them and the fruits of their learning.
- Well-used **skills in ICT** that are used to support learning in many areas of the curriculum but are particularly well used to complement learning in English, mathematics, history, geography and art and design.

**Pupils’ attitudes, values and other personal qualities**

**Attendance is very good.** The school attendance record is well above the figures for similar schools nationally. Pupils’ punctuality is very good. **Pupils’ attitudes are very good and their behaviour is good.** This is the cumulative result of the attitudes and values they bring from their home background, allied to the **good provision the school makes for pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.**

**Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Very good attendance and punctuality have a strong impact on standards attained and on pupils’ achievements.
- Very good attitudes to work and good behaviour show that pupils value their educational opportunities.
- There are particular strengths in the way the school promotes very good relationships, self-confidence and self-esteem, an undercurrent of respect and a knowledge of what is right and acceptable and what is wrong and unacceptable.
- Pupils have a very mature attitude towards staff of the school, visitors and each other.
- Within its very rich curriculum and in its provision for pupils’ personal development, the school is aware that the development of education in a culturally diverse society is an area for development.

## Commentary

5. The table below shows pupils' attendance in the most recent published year. Attendance is well above the figure for similar schools nationally. It is a reflection on parents' determination that their child gets the most out of their educational opportunities. But it also reflects on pupils' eagerness and willingness to come to school. It is rare that pupils come to school late. Regular attendance and good punctuality are hallmarks of Ecclesall Infant School and significant factors in pupils' achievements.

### Attendance

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

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	3.8	School data	0.1
National data	5.4	National data	0.5

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

6. Pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to schoolwork also contribute a great deal to their achievements. Both behaviour and attitudes are strongly positive and judged to be very good overall. Pupils' good behaviour is reflected in the fact that it has not been necessary to exclude any pupil from school. This has been the case for many years. Behaviour and attitudes were identified as strengths of the school at the previous inspection and these strengths have been maintained. Because pupils relate well to each other, the skills of co-operative working and of discussion and debate are well established, enhancing achievement across the school. In their response to the pre-inspection questionnaire and in their comments about behaviour at their pre-inspection meeting, parents identified good behaviour and positive attitudes as strengths of their child's learning. The inspection team agrees with them. Similarly, pupils believe that they learn effectively and are sensibly behaved, although a small number think 'other children' are less well behaved at times. The strengths identified in this area during the inspection confirm parental views about behaviour, attitudes and the development of pupils' values. There are no signs of bullying, harassment or racist attitudes in the school.
7. Pupils bring to school a good range of well-established personal and social skills acquired through their home life. The school has good arrangements to capitalise on this and makes good provision to enhance pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils get good opportunities for reflection and for the appreciation of art, poetry and music. There is a very well established code of conduct that gives them insight into what is right and wrong and how to be good members of the school community. The curriculum provides them with good opportunities to work together in pairs and teams, enhancing their insight into social interaction. It also provides many opportunities to listen with interest to visitors to school and appreciate the rich culture around them through visits to local places of interest to enhance learning in art and design, technology, history, geography and science. The one area that is underdeveloped by comparison is the school's provision for learning about current British society in its richness of culture and ethnic diversity. However, there are good opportunities for learning to respect the ethnic beliefs and culture of those in countries overseas. For example, during the days of inspection, pupils were learning to work in the style of Aboriginal artists and listened to music from the rain forest. The maturity of pupils' attitudes towards their school life is apparent in those with the potential for higher attainment and in those who find learning difficult. Good strategies for supporting all pupils keep them motivated and positive about their life and work in school.

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

**The quality of education provided is very good.** It is very well supported by a full and enriched curriculum. The school ensures that it keeps a caring and watchful eye on pupils' social and academic development. Very good relationships are established with parents and with other educational institutions. With good teaching well established in Years 1 and 2 and very good teaching in the Reception classes, pupils learn and achieve well.

### Teaching and learning

**Teaching and learning are good overall.** They are very good in the Reception classes. Examples of very good teaching are also to be found in Years 1 and 2. No lessons were judged to be less than satisfactory and the vast majority were good or better. The quality of teaching has been maintained since the previous inspection with a greater proportion of very good lessons.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

**The specific strengths of teaching in the Reception classes are:**

- Very good knowledge of how children of this age learn and of the nationally-recommended Early Learning Goals;
- Very effective planning and high expectations of what children can learn and achieve;
- Very good management of behaviour and relationships, resulting in effort and application on the part of children; and
- The way assessment is managed to deal with the individual needs of children and to identify what needs to be learned next.

**Strengths and areas for development throughout the school are:**

- Assessment and its use are very strong; however, the quality of assessment brings about a heavy work load for all staff;
- High expectations and the challenge to all pupils, whatever their ability;
- The way support is used very well in the classroom when it is available; and
- The promotion of equality of opportunity and insistence that all pupils are fully included in the opportunities available.

### Commentary

8. There are many positive qualities to teaching throughout the school. These culminate in a good quality of teaching overall. The quality of lessons seen is tabulated below.

#### **Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 24 lessons**

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0	8 (33%)	13 (54%)	3 (13%)	0	0	0

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

9. Teachers in the Reception classes have a very good understanding of what they need to do to motivate children in their learning. Teachers are very clear about providing a very good range of learning opportunities across the Early Learning Goals. They do this very effectively, ensuring that the two classes have equal opportunities through the very good support the teachers give to each other in their common planning. The teachers have very high expectations of the children. To support these expectations they establish very good relationships that support the children's good behaviour and their acceptance of the routines and disciplines of life in the Reception classes. The good foundations laid down during this year prepare the children well for the demands of learning in Years 1 and 2. A rich range of learning opportunities is prepared, with very good use of resources. This stimulates children in their learning and gives them the

opportunity to acquire a wide range of learning skills. Because they have a rich learning environment that stimulates them, but which they can approach calmly, children try hard and become keen learners. This is marked in all areas of learning but is perhaps most marked in the skilful, imaginative and creative way in which they use paint and brush to reflect their knowledge and understanding of the world. Assessment is rigorous and appropriate in the information that results from it. The information is very well used, both to inform what needs to be planned next for children's learning and to identify the learning needs of individuals. It also provides a good range of information for the next teacher when the children move up into Year 1. However, the school identifies this stage of transfer from the Reception Year to Year 1 as an area for further development. This high quality of assessment demands many hours of teachers' time.

10. There are significant strengths in the quality of teaching throughout the school. Assessment continues to be a strength in Years 1 and 2. The approach is many-layered. There are very good strategies for analysing the results of National Curriculum standard tests. This has resulted in the identification of areas on which the school has needed to concentrate. Writing was identified as a weaker area some years ago and writing has improved significantly since then. Analysis of the data is now resulting in the identification of finer details. The cumulative power of detailed analysis has brought about a recent surge in the results of National Curriculum tests. In 2003, many more pupils achieved the Level 3 of the National Curriculum in reading, writing and mathematics than in most schools. The analysis is also having an impact in the quality of learning throughout the school and throughout the curriculum. Teachers have very good strategies for 'on the spot' assessment during lessons, through skilful questioning, through observations and interventions as pupils are working on their activities and through good quality marking. There are additional strategies for recording pupils' progress in a wide range of subjects and areas. This is most noted in the quality of information provided for parents in reading, an area of criticism at the previous inspection. Parents are given copious information about where their child is up to in the acquisition of reading skills in the 'high frequency' common words in English, about what their next steps are in the acquisition of phonic awareness and how progress in reading is coming on overall and how parents can help their child. All this information is critical in supporting pupils' achievements. However, it places high demands on staff time. The school has identified this as a priority area, to refine its approach to assessment and to endeavour to give a more precise focus to what needs to be done. The inspection team agrees with the school in this.
11. All staff have high expectations of their pupils. This applies not only to teachers but also to support staff working in the classroom. Teachers and support staff work very closely together. This ensures that there are no gaps in their approach to the management of pupils, their expectations of the quality of work and the quality of the pupils' behaviour. As a result of this close working relationship, teachers and support staff have a very good understanding of what is to be learned. This adds a great deal to the overall quality of learning. There is challenge built into the way staff prepare for the learning of higher-attaining pupils, for those who find learning difficult and for the small number for whom learning in English is a new experience. This approach ensures that all pupils achieve well and that the school provides very good opportunities for learning. A hallmark of the work of the school is the very good quality of support to those whose learning difficulties are more profound. There are very good opportunities through the curriculum so that there is a high level of interest and motivation in what is planned. The school is determined that all should be included and that all should have equal opportunity to learning and achievement. One minor caveat is that where pupils are able to choose their own partners and teams, almost inevitably they choose partners and teams of the same sex. This is not always successful in promoting equality of opportunity. In their pre-inspection meeting and in responses to the inspection questionnaire, parents showed great confidence in the quality of teaching in the school. They are right to have confidence.

## **The curriculum**

**The curriculum is very good.** It is well enriched through activities out of school hours, through visitors into school and through visits out of school. The curriculum makes very good use of a good range of resources, teachers and support staff. The accommodation is very good and gives very good support to the school's high expectations of the work pupils do.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Very good arrangements are made for all pupils to have rich learning opportunities.
- The activities planned for pupils are thoughtful, interesting and highly challenging.
- Pupils benefit and standards are enhanced through a wide range of visitors to school and visits out of school.
- More opportunities are given to pupils for activities out of school hours than is usual in other infant schools.
- Very good use is made of the accommodation to enhance the quality of learning.
- There is a lack of clarity at present about the school's approach to the new agreed syllabus for religious education, a priority area identified in the school improvement plan.

### **Commentary**

12. At their pre-inspection meeting with the inspection team, parents were clear in their view that the pupils enjoyed a rich curriculum with many opportunities for learning both within and beyond the National Curriculum. Inspectors agree wholeheartedly with this view. School self-evaluation comes to the same conclusions as the inspectors. The school does very well to give comprehensive coverage to all aspects of the National Curriculum. All legal requirements are fully met. The school manages the time available very well by ensuring that the daily hourly lesson for literacy is designed to make challenging demands of pupils for their development of study skills. Clever use is made of this lesson for work in other subjects such as science, history and geography. The school is very good at ensuring all pupils are included in learning opportunities. Good arrangements are in hand for the strong development of learning skills for higher-attaining pupils. Good targeting of the learning needs of those who find their school work difficult and good provision for the support of these pupils ensure that they make progress that is at least as good as expected. Some of these pupils make very good progress.
13. A particular strength in the curriculum is the range of opportunities for pupils to take part in school visits and to have visitors into the classroom. This gives the curriculum a rich and vibrant texture and the effect of this is seen in much of the work produced by pupils. These visits and visitors also have a profound effect on the quality of display around the school and on the range of resources used to support the work in the classroom. There is also a number of activities that happen out of normal class time, for example at lunchtime or after school. These activities are organised by members of staff or other organisations. These activities work well together to enhance pupils' learning opportunities. There is a richer choice of additional activities than is found in most schools of this type. In particular, pupils have opportunities in sporting and musical activities.
14. The school is very fortunate in the amount of space available – for classrooms, for the school hall and in the school grounds. Recognising this asset, the governing body and staff of the school have capitalised on the space and facilities available, devising a comprehensive development strategy. For example, considerable developments have taken place in the school grounds with the provision of an adventure playground, pond and orchard. Internally, not only have spacious classrooms been well maintained but also a separate dining area has been created, ensuring that the large hall can be used for assembly and physical education only and that there is a separate space for a library. The school knows that its accommodation is a prime asset and uses this resource very effectively to improve pupils' learning opportunities. All those working in the classroom are skilled and very clear about their responsibilities. They are carried out very well. The school has spent wisely on resources for learning and staff are ingenious in devising ways in which resources can be used to best effect in lessons.

15. A new locally-agreed syllabus for religious education has recently been received by the school. It is an established school priority to ensure that this is put into operation along with a revised programme of study. At present there is some lack of clarity about what should be taught and how much time should be available to the area of study. It is a matter of some urgency that this should be resolved to ensure that the school continues to observe its statutory requirements.

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

**The school ensures that pupils get good care.** Very good support, advice and guidance are available because the school knows pupils' academic and social progress so well. Pupils know that their opinion is listened to and valued and that where necessary, something will be done about their views.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children are very well prepared for introduction to school in the Reception classes and there are good arrangements for transfer of pupils from one year to another within the school.
- Teachers know their pupils very well, assessing their progress through programmes of study and listening to them and thus they are in a strong position to guide and support them through their school life.
- Good interaction between adults and pupils foster good and trusting relationships.
- Although the school has appropriate mechanisms for child protection, there has been no recent training for members of staff.

### **Commentary**

16. The school's systems for caring for pupils are well established and work efficiently. Pupils are safe and secure. Arrangements for admission to the Reception classes are very good, ensuring that children get off to a good start in their learning. The arrangements include home visits and opportunities for parents to work alongside their child at the beginning of the day. Younger brothers and sisters are also made welcome and an important factor in growing confidence, independence and maturity is that children in the Reception classes can explain to toddler siblings about the resources available. There is good tracking of children's progress and this ensures that good information is available when they transfer into Year 1. The school's strategies for measuring progress and for listening to pupils are very good. There are, for example, formal strategies for listening to pupils' views in personal, social and health education sessions, although teachers are very good at making informal occasions available to listen to pupils' interests, successes and concerns. This puts them in a very good position to make effective use of their accumulated information about individual pupils.
17. There are good and trusting relationships between adults and pupils in the classroom and beyond it. This is equally true of relationships with lunchtime staff. As a result, pupils know that they will be listened to, that what they have to say is important and that they can rely on and trust the adults in the school. Good arrangements for the care and support of pupils with learning difficulties include effective strategies for identification of specific needs and the careful tracking of their progress.
18. There is an appropriately trained and qualified named person for child protection. There are good arrangements for ensuring the school is an appropriately safe place for the pupils and adults working in it. However, although adults know what to do and there is sufficient written guidance, there has been no recent whole-school opportunity for training in child protection issues.

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

**The school's links with parents are very strong.** This is also the case for links with other schools and colleges. Satisfactory and appropriate links are made with the community.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Parents get very good information about what is happening in school and about the progress being made by their child.
- Home and school links have a strong effect on standards achieved, in the pupils' progress in learning, and progress in their social skills.
- Links with pre-school settings and the school to which most pupils transfer are strong and helpful.
- Good relationships are maintained with other educational establishments, including good support for teacher training.

### **Commentary**

19. A strong feature of the pre-inspection questionnaire and meeting for parents with the inspection team was the confidence and trust placed in the school by the vast majority of parents. A measure of parental confidence is the number who help in the classroom. They strongly believe that their child likes school, makes good progress and that teaching and leadership and management are good. A very small number of parents disagree with the school's strategy for teaching reading. This was made a special focus for the inspection and is reported upon in "Part C: English", later in the report. Some parents feel that they lack sufficient information about their child's progress. In fact, the amount of information is more than that given in most schools and is good in quality. Parents have regular opportunities to visit school formally to discuss their child's progress, written reports are full and informative and there is a regular flow of information about what is coming up in the curriculum. Very full home and school diaries give copious information about pupils' targets and successes for learning high frequency words in reading, progress in acquiring phonic strategies in working out unfamiliar words and listing the books children have read. As a result, parents should have a very good understanding of the progress their child is making. Additionally, the school has a strategy for welcoming parents to classrooms at the beginning of the day, when they can discuss tasks with their child and talk about concerns to teachers. This is a very good and successful strategy. It is acknowledged that this does not help families where both parents work. However, the school does all within its power to ensure strong and helpful relationships with parents. Because there is a strong and positive home and school link, pupils benefit a great deal. The school is quick to support family values; the home gives strong support to learning through taking a keen interest in it. The impact is strong on both academic progress and on the development of social and personal skills. Children come to school ready to learn and the school capitalises well on this. There are good relationships with parents of pupils who have learning difficulties. This ensures that these pupils are kept in touch with their learning and that parents have good information about their child's progress.
20. Good arrangements are in place to work hand-in-hand with other schools and with pre-school settings in the best interests of the progress of pupils. Most children have had some pre-school experience before entering the Reception classes. The Reception staff have good relationships with these pre-school settings, so that they already know a great deal about children before they enter school. There are also opportunities for children to visit the Reception class before they are enrolled. Good relationships also exist with the school to which most pupils transfer, to ensure that new teachers have full access to the detailed knowledge the school holds. The school has a strong relationship with Sheffield Hallam University, providing opportunities for teachers in training. Given the notable strengths of the school, this is an appropriate place for intending teachers to develop their skills. There are other strong links with educational establishments, for professional development and for other work placements. All these relationships and links make for a healthy and outward-looking working environment that brings great benefit to pupils.



## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

**Leadership and management are very good.** The very good leadership of the headteacher is very well supported by the effective leadership of other members of staff. The governance of the school is very good and all statutory requirements are fully met. Very good management and efficient organisation ensures that the school runs smoothly and calmly.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The leadership of the headteacher and other members of staff is very good.
- Teamwork is very good.
- There is an effective and inclusive school improvement planning process and the plan provides the school with clear priorities for the future.
- The role of subject co-ordinators is well defined and they have a positive impact on ensuring high standards are maintained, particularly in mathematics, English and science.
- Governors bring much expertise and knowledge to their role and have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses.

### Commentary

21. The governing body is influential in helping to shape the vision and direction of the school. The body is well organised and manages it works efficiently through relevant committees and delegated responsibilities. All statutory requirements are met. Governors understand the main strengths and weaknesses of the school and are fully involved in its development through their planning and strategic thinking. They monitor test results annually, requiring the headteacher to keep them informed of all developments. Subject co-ordinators are invited to committee meetings to present new policies and discuss their action planning for the year. The governing body's visits to the school tend to be informal with no particular pattern. A more formal timetable of visits with a specific focus would be beneficial. All governors would have an equal opportunity to be well-focused visitors to the school and be given an even greater insight into its life and work.
22. The headteacher is providing teachers, governors and the school community with a comprehensive vision of high standards and good practice in teaching and curriculum. This clear leadership has resulted in the careful analysis of the relevant assessment information and the setting up of appropriate priorities, with good action plans, that are ensuring standards continue to remain above average.
23. The headteacher has created a team of teachers who are performing very well. They are fully committed to evaluating and improving their work. The leadership of others with management responsibility is very good. This is particularly true of the mathematics, English, science and Foundation Stage leaders. All understand their roles and, through analysis of results, have highlighted priorities to help raise standards even further. All year groups plan together, thus ensuring similar curriculum coverage. There is very good management of special educational needs that ensures the progress of pupils and a continuing home and school dialogue about how pupils are getting on.
24. Parents believe that the school is well led and managed. Inspectors agree with them. Pupils are happy and confident and the school shows them a great deal of respect. School arrangements for self-evaluation are very good. The headteacher regularly observes teachers working with pupils, as do the subject co-ordinators. This information is then used to share good practice and set targets for the improvements necessary. Performance management is appropriately linked to a programme for observing teachers and is very effective. Staff development is organised well so that the focus relates closely to the school improvement plan. The positive ethos and constructive involvement of all the staff have ensured stability of staffing change over the years as teachers feel confident about the work of the school.

25. Financial management is good. In the previous inspection, this was a key issue and has been fully addressed. Good care and thought goes into planning expenditure and ensuring that good value for money is achieved. Although the amount of money carried over from the previous financial year to this was larger than is recommended, much of this sum was earmarked for building developments and has already been committed.

### **Financial information**

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

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	420,814
Total expenditure	414,948
Expenditure per pupil	2,305

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	25,783
Balance carried forward to the next	31,649

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

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

Provision in the Reception classes is **very good** and is a **strength of the school**.

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

- Both Reception classrooms provide a stimulating and welcoming environment.
- The quality of teaching is very good overall.
- Reception staff plan all the activities as a team.
- A very good range of activities encourage role play, language and mathematical development and also aim at developing children's personal and social skills.
- Very good relationships exist between staff and children.
- The outdoor play area is used effectively as an extension of classroom learning.
- Children are happy, motivated and enjoy attending school.

#### **Commentary**

26. The provision for children in the Reception classes is very good and is a strength of the school. This is similar to judgements made at the previous inspection. Children are admitted twice a year, depending on their birth date. There are currently 30 children shared equally between two parallel Reception classes. This number will rise to 60 after Christmas. The teachers have made a real effort to ensure the environment is stimulating and exciting for the youngsters. Children are happy, well adjusted to the demands of school and enjoy being at school. The outdoor area is well used with a range of effectively-planned activities. Parents believe that this stage of education is a strength of the school and that provision for outdoor education is a strength in itself. A good range of resources support all the activities planned.
27. Attainment is above the expected level on entry to the school, except in reading, which is nearer the expected level. In all areas of learning, the majority of children are on target to attain, and many will exceed, the expected levels before they leave the Reception classes.
28. The quality of teaching is very good in all areas of learning, an improvement since the previous inspection, when it was judged to be consistently good. The teachers plan as a team and because of this, progression and continuity between the classes is ensured. Planning is closely linked to the Early Learning Goals. The activities are changed daily and provide children with experiences in all areas of learning. All adults supporting the learning in the Reception classes know exactly what to do because they liaise closely with the class teachers. Every opportunity is used to develop language and role-play skills. Teachers' knowledge and enthusiasm motivate the children to succeed and ensure tasks build on previous experience and skill. Questioning is used effectively to extend or reinforce children's knowledge. Relationships are very good between staff and children, giving them confidence to respond to questions. The use of day-to-day assessment ensures all children are appropriately challenged. This includes appropriate challenge for higher and lower attainers.

#### **Personal, social and emotional development**

Provision for personal, social and emotional development is **very good**. This is reflected in the way children are learning to respect each other, share resources, take turns and play together.

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

- A good range of activities is provided to encourage children to relate to each other.

- Well-calculated adult intervention to help develop children’s role-play skills.

### Commentary

29. In all activities, adults encourage children to explore and develop their vocabulary. Often they provide a role model to help children learn the social skills of relating to each other and playing together. This has a positive effect on learning, as the children are confident and articulate. The children are beginning to play together as observed when a small group was in the “*animal hospital*”, bandaging animals with broken legs, giving injections and using a stethoscope. In all group sessions, children are expected to wait patiently for their turn; they are good at this. Teachers encourage children to listen to each other and share their thoughts. The children enjoy coming to school and are aware of teachers’ expectations. They are taught to clear away and to look after resources. In both classes, there is a relaxed atmosphere where children are confident to explore for themselves and are encouraged to share and help each other. Children settle quickly to the demands of the Reception class, helped by parents sharing early morning activities with them before school begins. This has a beneficial effect on the children, particularly those who are less confident.

### Communication, language and literacy

Provision in communication, literacy and language is **very good** because it encourages children to become articulate confident speakers, to enjoy sharing and reading books and to be able to write their thoughts and tell stories.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- A good range of activities that help to stimulate the children.
- Every opportunity is utilised by adults to develop and extend children’s vocabulary.
- Books play an important part in the classrooms.

### Commentary

30. In a literacy session in one Reception class, children explored rhyming words and showed how well they could listen. A few were able to make nonsense words that also rhymed. They all enjoyed the challenge. Children in another literacy-based lesson shared a big book about “*Day and Night Animals*”. Many recognise the title, know it is an information book that is “non-fiction” and what the contents page is for. They enjoy trying to read the words and some are successful, especially as many of the phrases are repetitive: “*When can you see a butterfly?*” and “*When can you see a moth?*”. They respond to questions confidently and with a good command of the language. Children are encouraged to share books and all those observed with a book treated it with respect and “read” it correctly. Many children recognise letter sounds and can find the letters in their names from words in a book, whilst some recognise a few familiar words. Children are excited and enthusiastic about books and enjoy the follow-up activities. Most children can write their name and match their name to a photograph for registration in the mornings. Children are aware that marks communicate meaning. Many are still at this stage but a few write words or initial letters of words. They happily experiment with writing, making cards for the family or retelling favourite stories. Teachers are knowledgeable and interesting in their presentation of lessons, thus motivating the children to learn. Children respond positively and remain well focused on their tasks. Most children have already achieved the expected levels in speaking and listening. Many are on course to achieve the expected levels in reading and writing by the end of the Reception year.

### Mathematical development

Provision for mathematical development is **very good**. Every opportunity is used to encourage children to count.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The very broad range of opportunities offered to the children to develop mathematical understanding.

### **Commentary**

31. Every opportunity is used to develop both mathematical understanding and appropriate vocabulary. Games are used at the beginning of lessons to capture the children's attention. For example, one child wears a hat with a number on it and the class has to indicate, using their fingers, the number so the child can guess it. Teachers use a variety of puppets effectively to sustain children's interest. Children are competent with numbers to ten. A range of mathematical activities such as threading patterns, measuring the patio, number games and matching tasks are set up each day. Rhymes and number songs are used to add to the children's enjoyment. The majority of children are already well on the way to achieving the expected levels. Some have already achieved the level.

### **Knowledge and understanding of the world**

Provision in this area is **very good**. A wide range of topics is covered over the year, including religious education.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The range of topics covered is well complemented by visits out of school or visitors into school to enhance learning.

### **Commentary**

32. Children enjoy a range of topics, which forge links with other curriculum areas. For example, the present topic about nighttime life has links with literacy and science. Children are knowledgeable about nocturnal animals and explain why they come out at night. They know owls and bats feed at night. The home corner is presently an animal hospital, which links to an earlier topic about pets. A RSPCA worker visited the classes. Other visitors include the school nurse for healthy eating and a mum and new baby. Children learn about celebrations, in particular Christmas. Themes for religious education are often based on the personal experiences of the children and developing relationships. Occasionally, a story such as Noah is linked to a topic, eg. water! All these topics and visitors help to enhance the children's understanding and knowledge. Children enjoy the use of computers and are expected to tick their name when they have had a turn. A variety of programs are available to extend children's understanding and knowledge. Children are well on course to achieve the expected goals and many will exceed them.

### **Creative development**

Provision for creative development is **very good**, as children are encouraged to explore different media, role-play and singing familiar rhymes.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The range of media available for the children to explore, including paint, clay and collage.
- The many opportunities to sing action songs and rhymes.

## Commentary

33. Children achieve well in this area and many have already achieved the expected levels for their age. They have painted portraits of themselves. Most portraits have a head, body and arms and legs. Often children of this age draw arms and legs coming out of the head! They explore colour-mixing using red, blue and yellow. Clay is used imaginatively to make hedgehogs, and art straws or pieces of bark represent the spines. Collages of animals are displayed on the wall, showing the effective use of other materials. Children enjoy singing and participate with enthusiasm, knowing the words to many songs and rhymes. Opportunities are provided for role-play in the "animal hospital" or the puppet theatre. Children were observed acting out stories using the puppet theatre and demanding others came to watch.

## Physical development

Provision for physical development is **good**. Children enjoy activities in the hall and like using the large wheeled toys.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good use is made of the outdoor patio area.

## Commentary

34. Children are given many opportunities to develop physically. They enjoy sessions in the large playground riding tricycles or sharing wheeled toys with a friend. Good spatial awareness is developing, as they run, hop, skip and jump round the hall with confidence. Activities in all areas of learning are planned for the outdoor patio and changed daily, thus extending children's experiences. Other skills are developed through colouring, cutting activities and sticking. Tools are used with play-dough, rolling-pins and shape-cutters. All children hold a pencil correctly but a few are still finding it difficult to form letters correctly. All children are on course to achieve the expected levels, with many already achieving the expected levels.

## SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

### ENGLISH

Provision in English is **very good**.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards of attainment are above those expected nationally when pupils are seven, thus they achieve well.
- Teaching is consistently good.
- Pupils are ready to learn and apply themselves well to their tasks.
- Very good use is made of time during literacy to promote learning in other subjects.
- The teaching of reading is done with conviction, rigour and thoroughness.
- The subject area is very well managed.

## Commentary

35. The results of standard national tests for 2002 indicate that standards of attainment are well above average in writing when pupils are seven and they compare well with those of similar schools. In reading, standards are above average nationally and average compared with similar schools. However, the results of tests for 2003, available to the school but still

unpublished, show considerable increases in attainment, including many more higher levels attained in both writing and reading. There are no significant differences in the attainment of boys and girls. Higher-attaining pupils make the progress expected of them because they get very stimulating and challenging tasks to complete. Lower-attaining pupils, including the small number identified as having learning difficulties, make good progress because their needs are very well identified and they get good support. A very small number of pupils come from a range of different ethnic minority backgrounds. School tracking of progress shows that these pupils achieve as well as all others. Overall, pupils sustain good achievement over their time in the school. The evidence of the work seen during inspection shows similar standards to the test results. There are particular strengths in speaking and listening. Pupils listen acutely and intently. They concentrate on getting accurate messages. They respond well to questions, giving sensible answers, frequently with well-developed sentence structure and extensive vocabulary.

36. Teachers are very skilled. They know the subject well and lessons go briskly and confidently. They have a good understanding of what pupils need to achieve. Planning is very thorough and because teachers plan together, pupils get equal opportunities. Planning benefits from the sharing of good ideas. There is very good management of pupils in lessons. Because pupils come to school ready to learn, there are few occasions when teachers need to resort to control strategies. This makes for very good use of time. Pupils are quick to settle to the activities planned for them and they get through a good volume of work. Good support during tasks by teachers and learning support assistants means that all pupils make progress. A particular strength of the way time is planned is the clever way in which learning for other subjects is woven into time for the development of literacy skills. This is seen particularly strongly in science, history and geography, but is apparent in other subjects, too. Teachers make very good links with other subjects and, for example, big book focus time in literacy is used well to develop study reading skills in history and geography and to cover some of the study content of topics in other subjects. When teaching pupils how to use note form, tasks are designed to make use of bullet points in history or geography. Pupils are encouraged to use a wide range of styles for reporting back from their visits out of school. Good use is being made of pupils' skills in ICT and to support learning literacy skills at a range of different levels.
37. A small number of parents expressed concern about the way in which reading is taught, without a reading scheme and from 'real' books. In fact, reading is very well taught. It is done systematically and with rigour. Pupils make good progress, find their reading interesting and develop a good appetite for books. Although the school allows pupils to make free choice of a wide range of books for the reading they take home, there is a rigorous structure to the school's phonics skills work and to the work on enabling pupils to access the most frequently used irregular words in reading texts. The progress of pupils is carefully recorded and parents get good advice, both about where their child is in terms of reading development and about how they can help at home. As well as having a free choice of some reading material, pupils have the content of their reading well managed by the teacher in guided reading sessions. Because pupils make free choice of books, there are occasions when a particular book is too easy or too difficult at that moment in time and at the pupil's stage in development. However, because there is a rigorous structure elsewhere, this does not hold up the development of reading skills. Indeed, in their free reading, pupils are encouraged to read a wide range of fiction, information and poetry books and they can also choose reference books such as encyclopaedia, dictionaries and the thesaurus to browse. Home and school reading records show that there is a very wide range of books read and that most pupils get through many books in the course of a school year. The pupils heard to read were impressive in their knowledge of book features and in the early development of their reading skills. Even at age six, many are very familiar with the use of book features such as contents and index pages and some know how to use a glossary. All pupils heard reading in Years 1 and 2 were able to explain how they choose a book with the aid of the publisher's 'blurb'. These are mature skills for this age, indicating a good level of achievement.

38. Very good leadership has ensured that the subject has continued to make progress since the introduction of the national strategy for teaching literacy. The strategy has been embraced well and developed to reflect the school's most pressing priorities. There are very good strategies for analysing the results of National Curriculum tests to note school strengths and weaknesses and to take rigorous action to put weaknesses right. The subject leader plays a very full and enthusiastic part in whole school strategies for development and improvement. She has a full part to play in auditing the provision of her area of responsibility, through checking on pupils' work, seeing planning and how well lessons are taught. She has responsibility for a budget and this has been spent wisely so that the subject is now well resourced. Overall, the subject area is well organised and well placed to make further improvement. Standards have been maintained at a level above those expected nationally and the trend is one of sustained improvement.

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

39. The school makes very good use of pupils' emerging literacy skills to enhance learning across the curriculum. There are very good opportunities for pupils to practise their listening and spoken language skills in brisk and relevant question and answer sessions in science, history, geography and religious education, and to join in meaningful discussions about the topic areas they are studying. Very good use is made of literacy lesson time to support the development of information retrieval skills through the efficient use of 'big books' to support whole class learning in a range of subjects. Pupils learn mature skills to reflect their learning in other subjects, for example, by making notes and through writing accounts of visits that relate very closely to the specific learning objectives and are non-descriptive. Teachers are very skilled at developing learning tasks that enable pupils to make mature use of the skills they acquire.

## **MATHEMATICS**

The provision for mathematics is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The standards pupils achieve are above average.
- The quality of teaching is good.
- The match of work to the needs of pupils is very good, providing appropriate challenge for all abilities.
- Lesson objectives are shared with the pupils so they know what they are expected to learn.
- There are very good relationships, so pupils are confident to respond.
- Questioning is used effectively to extend or reinforce pupils' learning.
- Very good use of learning support staff benefits different groups of children.
- All pupils are included and the needs of those with learning difficulties are well catered for.
- Good use is made of ICT to support learning.
- The subject is very well led, with good analysis of data to highlight weaker areas.

### **Commentary**

40. Standards in mathematics across the school and by the end of Year 2 are above average. The pupils, including those with special educational needs, are making good progress and achieving well. In the Year 2 National Curriculum tests for 2002, standards were average in comparison to all schools and below average compared to similar schools. In 2002, the boys achieved better than the girls did although the difference between them was very narrow. Standards in national tests since the previous inspection have remained consistently above average or well above average; 2002 is the only obvious dip. This was due to the increase in the number of pupils with special educational needs. However, the percentage of pupils achieving Level 3 (higher than the expected level) in the unpublished tests for 2003 has greatly increased to well above the percentage achieving Level 3 nationally in 2002.



41. The school is on course to achieve its targets. In lessons observed, attainment was above average. The higher-attaining pupils make two or three digit numbers and recognise the biggest and smallest numbers they can make. About half the pupils are already confident using place value: hundreds, tens and units. A small number work with thousands as well. This is exceptional for their age. Other pupils explore shape and make a range of different shapes from a rectangle cut in half or in three. The higher-attaining pupils have no difficulty identifying the new shapes. Pupils are taught the appropriate vocabulary and confidently use the correct language to describe properties of shape.
42. The quality of teaching across the school is good. Lessons are well planned and based on the numeracy strategy, but amended to meet the needs of the pupils, especially the higher attainers. Teachers plan in pairs, ensuring continuity and progression and equality of opportunity. Lesson objectives are shared so pupils know what they will be learning. This helps them focus on the task and has a positive effect on their learning. Sessions begin with quick-fire mental activities, often using whiteboards. Pupils enjoy this and respond with enthusiasm. It also provides teachers with instant assessment of any pupils with problems. The brisk pace of most of the introductions helps to motivate pupils. Questioning is used effectively and usually offers an opportunity for all pupils, higher and lower attainers alike, to respond. Teachers are very good at ensuring all pupils are fully included in the lessons, either by them asking specific questions or by providing them with specifically prepared task. Tasks are carefully matched to pupils' needs, providing appropriate challenge whatever the ability. Because of very good relationships, pupils are confident about explaining their methods and writing their answers on the board, even when they do not feel secure. Teachers offer frequent praise and encouragement, even when the answer is incorrect.
43. Support staff are used very effectively, working with lower-attaining pupils or those with special needs. Class teachers liaise daily with support staff so they are well briefed and understand the tasks. This has a positive effect on the pupils' learning.
44. Assessment data is analysed and used to highlight areas where pupils are not achieving as well as they should. These areas become the focus for additional planning. Pupils are tracked throughout the school and this helps to focus support where it is needed most. Marking is comprehensive and helpful but sometimes pupils do not understand what the teacher has written.
45. There is evidence of ICT being used to support learning. The programs used are carefully chosen to link to the learning objects in the planning. Pupils enjoy using computers and find it fun. They work together and take turns. Some of the programs are challenging as pupils occasionally struggle to find the right numbers on the 'snake' curled around the '100' square.
46. The subject is very well led by an enthusiastic and knowledgeable subject leader. The role is fully developed and includes looking at pupils' work, checking planning, observing lessons and analysing data. A yearly action plan highlights areas for specific focus and is evaluated regularly throughout the year.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

47. There is evidence of mathematics being used in other areas of the curriculum such as data handling in geography and science when pupils used "sets" to sort how seeds are dispersed. Measuring is used in design and technology. ICT provides opportunities for further exploration of data handling, including bar and pie charts.

## SCIENCE

Provision in science **is good**.

### Strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average at the end of Year 2.
- Achievement is good across the school, reflecting good progress from year to year.
- The school very effectively develops pupils' skills of scientific investigation and an understanding of scientific methods.
- Leadership and management are very good.
- ICT is not yet used to its full potential to support pupils' learning.

### Commentary

48. The 2003 teacher assessments showed a significant improvement compared with those of 2002. Many more pupils reached the higher Level 3. The higher-attaining pupils are constantly challenged by the high expectations of their teachers. Achievement and progress are good because the school is very effective in building systematically on pupils' prior knowledge and understanding. This is particularly evident in the confidence with which pupils undertake an investigation and test assumptions and predictions. For example, before visiting the woods, they decide what they think they will find and test this against their findings. Pupils think for themselves, discuss ideas seriously and record their findings and interpretations at some length. This is good science.
49. Although it was only possible to observe one science lesson, from an analysis of work throughout the year it is clear that teaching is consistently good or better. The common approach to planning across the school is a significant factor in ensuring that pupils learn effectively and make good progress in each unit of work. The common characteristics of the effective teaching and learning in the school are:
- Pupils work in pairs and groups, sharing and debating ideas, thus developing a reflective approach to their science learning;
  - Pupils undertake all investigations for themselves;
  - Pupils record and interpret their data;
  - Work is carefully structured to meet the needs of different levels of ability within a class;
  - Contexts for investigations relevant to the pupils are used wherever possible; and
  - For example, teachers often make very good use of the school's extensive grounds.

In the Year 1 lesson observed, taught well by the subject leader, pupils carried out a series of experiments to discover how seeds are dispersed in different ways. Using a variety of seeds, from coconuts to honesty seeds, the pupils enjoyed experimenting with water, wind and fur materials, which provided a realistic context in which to test the seeds. Pupils had to think about constructing a fair test and demonstrated that they already had a sound grasp of how this needed to be done. All pupils worked extremely well together in groups, receiving good support from support staff and a parent governor. They set about the challenge with enthusiasm and all were totally involved.

50. The leadership and management are very good. The subject leader monitors the impact of teaching across the school. Assessment is used well to track pupils' progress though it could usefully be simplified. Resources are good and carefully used by staff and pupils. The subject leader is already aware of the need to use ICT more to support pupils' learning.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Attainment is better than that expected when pupils are seven.
- Good use is made of ICT skills in other subjects of the curriculum; but less effectively used in science.
- The subject is led well.

### **Commentary**

51. Pupils' skills in ICT are better developed than is usual for others of similar age. Pupils have confident word-processing skills. They know how to save their work and to print it out. Changing font, print style and size are familiar features of their work. Most change colour to suit the context of their work and sometimes to the mood they are in as they work! They begin to use computers for collecting data and making graphs. A great deal of work is seen in art. Much of the artwork is done using the program 'Fresco'. Pupils produce colourful and tasteful computer-generated paintings. There are numerous examples of pupils using art programs to reflect mood and texture and to make paintings in the style of famous artists. At the same time, teachers are skilled at choosing programs that support the specific learning objectives of whole-class lessons, so that individual pupils can follow up the skills they are learning in, for example, literacy and mathematics. Pupils are very confident about computers and their work.
52. Good use is made of computers to support research, especially in history and geography. Year 2 pupils made very good use of an appropriate Internet site for further research into their work on types of rock. However, the school has not yet developed strategies for similar good use of ICT in science. Computers are well used to support the learning of those pupils who find learning difficult and to extend the learning and skills of higher-attaining pupils.
53. The subject is well led. Good progress has been made in provision and standards since the previous inspection. The subject leader has a good grasp of what pupils need to learn and know. Other members of staff are encouraged to make extensive use of ICT in a range of contexts and subjects. Although no direct teaching of ICT was observed and ICT was used only as a support for learning in other subjects, the achievements of pupils and the volume of work seen indicates that teaching in ICT is consistently good. Pupils learn well. The school knows how well pupils are progressing because there are efficient strategies for tracking achievement, including a very full portfolio of samples of pupils' work. However, although pupils are achieving well, samples of work are not levelled to guide setting them challenging next targets. Good use is being made of interactive whiteboards both for teachers to make presentations to pupils and also for pupils to use at times. A well-calculated action plan is designed to take the subject forward and to secure further improvements. The school is very well placed to make those improvements.

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

54. There is growing effective and meaningful use of ICT in a wide range of contexts across the curriculum. Computers are well used to support learning in English, mathematics, history, and geography with a particular strength in the use of computers in art and design. The use of computers to support learning in science is less well developed.

## HUMANITIES

### Geography and history

Provision in geography and history is **very good**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The range of visits out of school and visitors into school that sustain achievement and the development of study skills.
- Very effective planning of relevant activities to confirm pupils' learning.
- The subject is well taught.
- Subject leadership is effective in providing direction and suitable resources.

#### Commentary

55. The standards achieved by pupils are above those expected for pupils of similar age. This is because they enjoy a rich and extensive curriculum that demands a great deal of their intellect. Much of the work done in preparation for learning is done outside the classroom or through visitors into the classroom. For example, pupils studying the formation of rocks have visited Castleton and made maps of the area. They have written bullet-pointed brochures to explain to a visitor what they might find interesting in the area. They have visited caves and looked at rock formations. To supplement this, they have enjoyed learning from the skills and interests of a parent visitor who has helped to develop a classroom museum of rocks and fossils. The quality of first-hand learning is very good. Pupils learn what it means to be a geographer and make maps, they know how to communicate effectively to an audience through writing and illustrations and they develop very good investigative skills as they study the formation of rocks and fossils. A particular feature of pupils' work is the confidence with which they use geological terms such as 'metamorphic', 'igneous' and 'sedimentary'. Their exemplary use of a museum's children's web-site moved their understanding further forward and they were able to identify sandstone and limestone as examples of sedimentary rocks.
56. The quality of teachers' planning and preparation is very good. This is a strong support to the quality of pupils' learning. Teachers in parallel classes plan together. This means that ingenious ideas are shared. The preparation of resources is more efficient and their use more effective. Classroom displays throughout the school give very good support to pupils' interest and learning. A particular feature of the activities planned for pupils is that there is very high expectation of the content of their work. For example, much thinking goes into the follow-up to visits. Pupils are expected to be highly intellectually involved because the follow-up tasks are closely designed to focus on the learning objectives identified for the visit. Pupils are expected to do much more than describe visits. Rather, they are expected to rise to the challenge of writing and illustrating meaningfully and incisively. This approach makes very good use of their burgeoning study skills as geographers and historians. The sample of work available to inspect in history covering the history of cycles and the work and times of Florence Nightingale is as rich in examples of good use and application of skills as is the work on rocks and fossils. The quality of achievement is a tribute to the quality of subject leadership and its inspiration of good teaching. The subject manager is very clear about the content of the curriculum provided but also about the types of experiences she wants pupils to enjoy. There is very strong guidance and school practice in the development of study skills, for example, the use of oral skills in discussion and investigation; the use of reading skills and how this can be complemented by the use of reading time in literacy sessions; the way visits and visitors work well together to challenge pupils' interests and motivation; and in the way ICT is increasingly a vessel to support learning. Many strengths are drawn together in these subjects to have a strong impact on the quality of achievement in the school.

## Religious education

57. There were few opportunities to observe religious education lessons during the inspection so it was not possible to make any judgements about standards at the end of Year 2. There was limited written information available. However, teachers' planning showed an appropriate range of topics covered. But talking to Year 2 pupils highlighted the fact that although they are knowledgeable about Christianity, they are not secure about other religions. For example they mentioned a plate and candles, but did not know they were part of the Jewish faith.
58. Standards at the time of the previous inspection were judged to be above the expectations of the agreed syllabus. There was insufficient evidence collected to judge whether or not these standards have been maintained.
59. At present insufficient time is allocated to religious education, particularly in Year 2. Consequently, pupils are not secure in their facts about other religions. The school is aware of this and is planning to review provision for the subject. The co-ordinator is newly appointed and has had no opportunity to address the issue. However, this is a priority, as is the development of a scheme of work that is more closely matched to the new agreed syllabus.

## CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

### Art and design

Provision in art and design is **very good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average at the end of Year 2.
- Pupils' achievement across the school is good.
- Teaching is good overall.
- Links between art and other subjects are a particular strength.
- The leadership and management of the subject are very good.
- This is an improvement since the previous inspection.

### Commentary

60. Standards are above average because the skills, techniques and opportunities to appreciate the work of a range of artists are carefully built into a systematic programme. These elements are explored across a range of media. Achievement is good.

Pupils in Year 2 produced a high quality exploration of colour, contrasting African heat in warm colours with the cold colours of the Arctic. This illustrated the pupils' own increasing competence in applying paint in different ways. The whole was very attractively mounted and displayed in the corridor. This was a very good example of the part played by art in support of pupils' spiritual development and the very good ethos of the school.

61. From an analysis of work over the past year and an observation of the one lesson timetabled during the inspection, the good teaching results in good learning. The qualities that epitomise good teaching and learning are:
  - the emphasis on skills and techniques which are introduced and practised systematically; and which are evident in the work of all classes;
  - the exploration of colour through different media-pastels, water-colour, textiles, collage materials and the use of ICT, which is a particular strength;

- the exploration of both ancient and modern artists' work, used as jumping-off points for individual work;
  - the links between subjects which are developed so that art both enhances and is enhanced through the connection;
  - in the development of 3D work, pupils are exploring what can be done with clay to create sculptures; and
  - group work to encourage high quality imaginative and original work, very well illustrated in a Year 2 class making a study of aboriginal art.
62. Leadership and management are very good. The co-ordinator's clear vision of how the subject needed to develop has borne fruit. She is enthusiastic and shares her ideas with the rest of the staff, ensuring a consistent and high quality approach to the subject across the whole school.

## Physical education

Provision in physical education is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement is good in the areas of the curriculum observed during inspection.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge.
- Accommodation and resources are well used to support the quality of pupils' learning.

### Commentary

63. In the lessons seen during inspection, all pupils achieved the standards expected nationally for their age and a significant proportion of pupils exceed expectations. Although not all areas of the curriculum were observed, all are securely planned for. In a dance lesson, the grace and agility of some pupils were particular features as they used their interpretation of music to create skilful sequences of movements with expressive limb extensions. Similarly in a games lesson outdoors, pupils were not inhibited by a chilly day or a blustery wind but showed very good control during catching and throwing activities. These pupils had a good understanding of the use of space and how to work closely with a partner. All pupils in the lessons seen understand the purpose of warming up before vigorous exercise and recognise the effect of exercise on their heart and lung function. A good feature of the gymnastics lesson seen, apart from the good quality of work produced by pupils, is the careful and safe way pupils put out and returned the apparatus they were using.
64. Pupils achieve standards above those expected because teachers are very knowledgeable. There is a common understanding across the school of the importance of health and safety issues. This was clear in all the lessons seen in the way pupils and teachers dressed, in the way warm-ups were conducted and in the way equipment was used. Teachers have good skills in explaining how to achieve a good standard and they are very skilled at intervening to support pupils as they practise and refine their skills. Teachers use pupils well to demonstrate good practice. Self-evaluation and peer-evaluation were important elements in all the lessons seen in encouraging pupils to think about their achievement and how to improve performance. The accommodation for physical education and the resources available are good. The school hall is spacious and very well maintained. There is good space outdoors for games and athletics. Large and moveable apparatus is of suitable range and size for pupils of this age. A good collection of small apparatus is conveniently available. All these resources were seen in use during the inspection. All were well used, considerably enhancing pupils' opportunities and giving good enhancement to the development and refining of skills. There is good evidence the leadership in physical education is enhancing provision and pupils' achievements.

## OTHER CREATIVE, AESTHETIC AND PRACTICAL SUBJECTS

### Design and technology and music

65. Only one lesson of music and one lesson of design and technology were seen. Discussions were held with subject leaders and with Year 2 pupils to explore their knowledge and understanding. Additionally, pupils' design and technology portfolios were seen. Overall, there was insufficient evidence to make secure judgements about overall provision in the subjects, or on standards and teaching and learning.
66. From the observation of a lesson, an analysis of work on display around the school, many photographs of completed work and discussions with pupils, the implications are that standards in **design and technology** are similar to those expected nationally and pupils achieve satisfactorily. However, on the school's annual design and technology 'Fun Day' when all Year 2 pupils enjoy the services of a visiting specialist in the subject and many parents provide additional help, Year 2 pupils reach a very high standard, making models of moving vehicles with electric motors. In the Year 1 lesson observed, pupils made bags using designs they had prepared earlier. They added patterns to enhance their bags' appearance. At the end of the lesson they looked at the bags and evaluated their work, suggesting possible improvements they would like to make. The teacher planned the lesson well for these pupils and consequently they were able to achieve satisfactorily. Design and technology has not been a high priority recently but is due to be a focus of attention this academic year. The headteacher has taken charge of the subject and is providing satisfactory leadership on a temporary basis.
67. Opportunities during inspection to observe **music** being taught were very limited. A discussion with Year 2 pupils demonstrated that all aspects of the music curriculum are covered. Singing was heard in one assembly that was tuneful and enthusiastic. In the one lesson seen pupils could recognise high, low and medium pitch and respond using a range of percussion instruments. They began to investigate non-standard notation, using three lines to represent the different pitch. Pupils were encouraged to explore their own ideas. However, opportunities were missed to develop an understanding of rhythm and beats. Pupils enjoy music, particularly singing and make satisfactory progress. A range of extra-curricular activities is provided, including recorders and a choir for special occasions. Pupils regularly take part in school productions, thus enhancing their musical experiences.

## PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

### Personal, social and health education and citizenship

Provision for personal, social and health education and citizenship is **good**.

68. Only one lesson of personal, social and health education was observed, preparing pupils for the idea of having a school council where their views about the life and work of the school would be formally canvassed. This was a very good lesson with a very positive and mature response from the pupils. However, there is insufficient evidence to make any secure judgements about the quality of teaching and learning overall. It is possible to say that the outcomes of the school's provision for personal, social and health education and citizenship are good. This is because the school has many strategies, both formally in lessons and informally, incidentally throughout the school day, to encourage pupils to be positive about themselves, about each other and about their school life. This is underpinned both by the school's range of policies that are put successfully into practice and by the scheme of work in personal, social and health education and citizenship. The area has a vigorous and active leader who is determined to take the school's provision further. There is sufficient provision for the necessary guidance on drugs and relationships education and for other aspects of healthy living. There is also provision for an understanding of citizenship through playing a responsible part in school society. This provision will soon be further strengthened by the formation of a

school council. Pupils already have a mature understanding of how this can affect the way the school hears and responds to their views.



## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

### *Inspection judgement*

### *Grade*

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

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

<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>	<b>2</b>
Attendance	2
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

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

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

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