

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **ASCOT HEATH INFANT SCHOOL**

Ascot

LEA area: Bracknell Forest

Unique reference number: 109867

Headteacher: Mrs W. Whitmarsh

Lead inspector: Mrs F. D. Gander

Dates of inspection: 10<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> November 2003

Inspection number: 259842

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
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 to 7
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	132
School address:	Rhododendron Walk New Road Ascot
Postcode:	SL5 8PN
Telephone number:	01344 882631
Fax number:	01344 890932
Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr G. Leedham
Date of previous inspection:	16 <sup>th</sup> November 1998

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Ascot Heath School is an average size infant school with places for 200 pupils ranging from four to seven years in age. In keeping with the policy of the Local Education Authority, children are admitted into the school when they are of statutory school age, apart from the summer term, and therefore the school does not have a reception class for the whole of the academic year. Over the spring and summer terms there are a total of 72 places for the youngest children, with almost all of these places being filled by the summer term. At the time of the inspection there were 132 pupils in Years 1 and 2, with a higher percentage of boys in the school than girls.

The attainment levels of pupils when they enter the school are average overall, with some children attaining above the expected levels and some below. The majority of children have experienced some pre-school or child-care provision before they are admitted to the school. Because the school receives children from very many different pre-school providers, they come into the school with a wide range of attitudes, behaviour and maturity. Many children enter school with difficulties in personal and social development. The percentage of pupils identified as having special educational needs is, at 11 per cent, lower than the national average, and a very small number of these pupils have statements of special education need.

The school serves the area of north Ascot, which is close to the town of Bracknell. It is a mixed socio-economic area, with the catchment area of the school drawing from private and rented accommodation. Although the number of pupils taking free school meals is very low, the socio-economic background of pupils is average overall. There are very few pupils from other cultural backgrounds and only two pupils have English as an additional language. The school has a School's Achievement Award, a Healthy School's Award, the Basic Skills Award, and a Syngenta Young Scientist Award.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
21265	Mrs F. D. Gander	Lead inspector	Mathematics, science, information and communication technology, art and design, design and technology, physical education, special educational needs.
11041	Mr M. Moore	Lay inspector	
32220	Mrs A Waterhouse	Team inspector	English, history, geography, music, religious education, and English as an additional language.

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**This is a very effective school.** This is because there is careful planning for future developments and the evaluation of its work is purposeful and ensures that high standards are maintained and improved upon. As a result, pupils achieve very well in their end of key stage tests. The school has a number of teachers who are new to teaching, and due to the very good support and mentoring they have received this term the quality of teaching is good overall. The school is excellently led and managed by the headteacher with the very strong support of the deputy, a hard-working staff, and a very knowledgeable governing body. The school provides very good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Pupils achieve very well in English, mathematics, and science.
- The leadership and management of the school are excellent.
- The governors are fully committed to running the school and successfully plan and evaluate developments and improvements.
- The school successfully provides a totally inclusive, happy, caring environment where pupils form sincere relationships and accept responsibility.
- There is very good provision made to help all pupils develop socially and morally, and as a result they behave very well and become mature and independent learners.
- There is a very good partnership with parents.
- There are no major weaknesses in the school.

Since its last inspection in 1998 the school has continued to improve **very well**. The issue of assessing pupils' attainment in subjects other than the core subjects has been dealt with, and those concerning resources in religious education, art and music have been addressed. The main area of concern was the unsatisfactory behaviour of a small group of boys and this has been eliminated. Other improvements have included the provision for reception children by offering all children two terms instead of one, the tracking of the progress of individual pupils and providing appropriate intervention, and the monitoring of standards through the observation of teaching and scrutiny of pupils' work. The school has introduced more efficient administration systems and additional personnel have been employed. Building improvements have continued over the last four years with the enclosing of some open plan areas, and an improved and enlarged office and entrance hall.

### 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	A*	A
writing	B	A	A	A
mathematics	B	A	A	A

*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*

**Pupils achieve very well.** The results in reading, writing and mathematics are well above the national average, and in reading the school is in the top five percent of the national results. Compared to schools that have pupils from a similar background, results are much higher than usual. Trends over time show results have been consistently well above the national average. At this point in the school year many Year 1 pupils are already attaining the nationally expected level and analysis of pupils' work and their performance in lessons indicate similar high standards in the Year 2 classes. There is no significant difference between the standards that boys achieve in comparison with girls, and the school meets the targets it sets. Pupils have very good attitudes to school,

learning and to one another. They behave very well and there are no exclusions. Pupils' personal and social development, and their moral awareness are very good. Spiritual and cultural awareness are good. Pupils' attendance and punctuality are very good.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The overall educational provision of the school is very good.** The curriculum is overall very good and consists of experiences that cater for the interests, aptitudes and particular needs of pupils, and ensures progression in pupils' learning. There a good range of additional curriculum enriching opportunities. Teaching and learning is good overall and reflects the high percentage of teachers who are new to teaching and have yet to gain experience in teaching the full range of the curriculum. There are examples of very good teaching by more experienced teachers. The school provides very good care, support, advice, and guidance. The quantity of accommodation to meet the needs of the curriculum and the pupils is satisfactory. It is extremely well used but when there are two reception classes in school, the space becomes cramped and small group work is difficult to accommodate.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**Leadership and management are excellent.** Governance of the school is excellent. The leadership by the headteacher is excellent and as result the school has continued to develop and improve. There is excellent support and management by the senior management team and from the very professional body of governors.

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

Links with parents, the community and other schools and colleges are **very good**. Children like coming to school. They felt that they were treated fairly and lessons were exciting. Parents have very great confidence in the school, and an overwhelming majority of them thought that they were kept well informed about how their children were getting on, and were confident about approaching the school. Some parents thought that they were not receiving enough information about their children's progress. However, the inspection team feels that the parents are very well supported and receive ample information.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

The school has no major areas that it needs to improve.

## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

#### Standards achieved in subjects

Pupils achieve **very well**. The results in reading, writing and mathematics are well above the national average, and compared to schools that have pupils from a similar background, results are much higher than usually found.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school works hard to ensure that the youngest children, some of whom are immature when they enter the school, make good progress.
- The school's results in the end of year tests are consistently above the national average.
- Pupils' levels of attainment in English, mathematics, science, and art and design are above that expected for pupils of a similar age.
- Pupils with special educational needs achieve very well and reach the nationally expected levels.

#### Commentary

1. When children enter the reception class the majority have attended a variety of pre – school provision and although they are attaining levels expected for children of a similar age, some do enter the school with areas of development that are below. For example, some children come in from pre-school provision or childcare unable to sit, listen, or take note of what is being asked of them. They enter the school with low levels of social and personal skills. In addition the school has some pupils who come into the school without any literacy or numeracy skills, or an awareness of safety. Although all children have the opportunity for at least one term in a reception class, some due to parental preference come into the school without experiencing this Foundation Stage and the gradual transition into Year 1. For some of these children, the experience of being required to be a 'pupil' is difficult. The school, however, provides very well for their personal needs and development, as well as ensuring they attain the national expected levels by the time they enter Year 2. Emphasis is placed on listening skills, and building in times when the youngest children have opportunities for constructive play.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	100 (100 )	85 (85 )
writing	100 (100 )	89 (89)
mathematics	100 (100 )	89 (89)

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

2. In the year 2002, the overall performance of pupils in Year 2 in the national assessment tests was well above the national average in English, mathematics, and science. In reading the results were in the top five per cent of the schools nationally. Results have been consistently high for the last 3 years, although they will be slightly lower in 2003. This is because there were a few pupils, mainly boys, who did not reach the expected levels in writing. Since this occurred the school has put into place an action plan which addresses the problem. When compared with similar schools, the school's performance was also well above average in all three subjects. This was because the number of pupils reaching the higher levels was much greater than the national average. Pupils achieve very well due to a consistent approach to teaching and assessment across the school, including the keeping of very good records and the monitoring of information by teachers throughout the school so they can chart progress. In other subjects, such as science, art and design, and



history, there is a high emphasis on developing and using specialist vocabulary. Emphasis is placed on writing, recording and presenting work in a variety of ways.

3. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress and achieve very well in relation to their previous learning. The pupils are meeting the targets set in their individual education plans (IEPs) well due to the support provided by teaching assistants, and to small groups of pupils who are withdrawn from class. This has a positive effect on their learning. While the timetable for withdrawing pupils for specific teaching ensures that it is for small amounts of time, and that they do not miss the same lesson each time, sometimes pupils find it difficult to move back into the activities that have been progressing in the classroom.

4. Overall, standards have been maintained since the last inspection.

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

5. Pupils display **very good** attitudes and behaviour and there have been no exclusions. Pupils’ personal development, and social and moral awareness are very good. Spiritual and cultural awareness are good. Pupils’ attendance and punctuality are very good

**Main strengths and weaknesses**

- All teachers and staff use very well considered, consistent behaviour management strategies.
- Pupils are enthusiastic and independent learners with very positive attitudes who confidently take responsibility for routine activities and their own personal care.
- Very good social development for pupils is promoted, which enables very good relationships between all members of the school community.
- Teachers ensure that a wide range of planned and unplanned opportunities are taken to support pupils’ spiritual and cultural development.

**Commentary**

6. Pupils in the school are enthusiastic and lively. A focus on enabling them to become effective communicators ensures that they are able to use their developing speaking and listening skills well. They are polite but inquisitive and are able to ask and answer questions with confidence in a range of different contexts. For example, in the playground, pupils described the rules for using playtime equipment, and they explained how they like things in school, such as the new interactive whiteboard, and include others, such as a new pupil, in the conversation. In the special Armistice Day assembly pupils shared their information and were confident enough to describe how they felt about people they know who are currently on active service in conflict zones. There are very good and consistent behaviour management strategies used in the school and all staff have very high expectations. Staff use prompts for good behaviour, such as raising their hands to gain attention, rather than raising their voices to emphasise unacceptable behaviour. At the beginning of the term pupils identify class rules that are displayed in their rooms. Attendance has improved and parents generally support the attendance and punctuality of their children well.

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

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	3.8	School data	0
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.*

7. Pupils’ moral development is very good and because of the ethos of the school pupils are taught to recognise the difference between right and wrong. For example, in an assembly story about Daniel and the Lion’s den, the decisions Daniel had to make to be brave and do the right thing were referred to in religious education lessons. Pupils can describe “good” and “evil”, and refer to the

story of Daniel because of careful questioning by teachers. A well-structured activity for Year 2 pupils, completed at home, enable them to discuss appropriate behaviour with their parents who in turn endorsed the expectations of the school. There are effective classroom routines, which means that pupils know what to do, and how to use resources. This enables them to concentrate on their learning and reduces the number of distractions. They move round the school quietly and with care and consideration for others. Due to the good relationships with, and the consistent expectations by welfare staff, teachers do not need to supervise at lunchtimes in the school hall, which for these very young children is commendable.

8. Pupils willingly take responsibility for activities, such as taking the registers to the office, taking out and collecting in the playground equipment, giving out and collecting books and wipe boards. In classrooms, particularly where lessons are carefully structured to meet their developmental needs, they display an unusually high level of ability to work independently. For example, Year 1 pupils in an English lesson are able to make appropriate decisions about where to sit and how to organise themselves to do their work, maintain their concentration, and work collaboratively. Because of the effective way they have been taught the spelling rules for “oi” and “oy” they were able to support each other in the spelling activity while their teacher and the teaching assistant undertook guided work with other groups. In an art lesson, Year 2 pupils were able to discuss how they felt when looking at a range of pictures by different artists. They make choices about appropriate paper on which to make their own “mood” pictures, and then work and tidy up co-operatively with the minimum of fuss even when one of the sinks overflows. Some of the youngest and most immature pupils demonstrate some difficulties when faced with more formally structured lessons. However, when given opportunities to make practical comparisons between Victorian toys and those currently in their classroom, they maintained concentration and enthusiasm.

9. The school places a very high priority on developing pupils’ personal and social skills. Staff and pupils have very good relationships and there are consistently high expectations. In the playground, pupils play extremely well together; taking turns using the basketball and being considerate of others when playing football and using skipping ropes. Pupils with developmental and physical difficulties are fully included in play activities with their peers. If someone falls over, pupils respond with concern and consideration, making sure that the adult supervising knows there is a problem. In a Year 2 classroom when a pupil was upset the others offer support and try to help.

10. Pupils are developing their cultural awareness well. They talk about other countries and cultures, but because of their young age do not yet appreciate spiritual and religious similarities and differences. The school makes good use of visitors from a range of backgrounds, and take opportunities presented through the presence of a number of pupils who are from bi-lingual families to develop cultural awareness. Care is taken to enable pupils to reflect on their actions and to express their feelings about their work, and about external events. Assembly was re-arranged to enable pupils to share in the National Remembrance silence on Armistice Day. Prior to the silence, teachers and pupils shared stories about loved ones who are serving, or who have served, in the armed forces. Pupils were told about the poppy fields in France and the symbolic use of poppies. For a brief time all were able to engage in the silence which was a powerful act of reflection. In lessons, where the plenary session is used imaginatively, pupils are able to reflect on their feelings and responses to their work. Some opportunities are missed to provoke the same response in RE lessons where teachers’ subject knowledge is less confident, but in English lessons this is consistently good.

### ***Ethnic background of pupils***

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

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	120	0	0
White – any other White background	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	3	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	2	0	0
Any other ethnic group	1	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	7	0	0

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

11. Pupils' behaviour is very good. Standards of behaviour have improved since the last inspection and no examples of inappropriate behaviour were seen.

### **QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL**

12. **The overall educational provision of the school is good.** There are very good curricular opportunities and experiences and it meets all statutory requirements. The opportunities for curriculum enrichment are good. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall and there are examples of very good teaching by more experienced teachers. The school provides very good care, support, advice, and guidance. The quantity of accommodation, to meet the needs of the pupils and the curriculum, is satisfactory.

### **Teaching and learning**

13. The quality of teaching and learning in the week of the inspection was **good** overall. There were many examples of very good teaching and learning in lessons taught by more experienced and long-standing members of staff.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teachers have high expectations of attainment and achievement for all pupils.
- The planning of the activities and tasks is firmly based on very good assessment.
- Pupils are expected to engage in independent or collaborative learning.
- There is an insistence on high standards of behaviour and the encouragement of positive attitudes to learning.
- Teachers use teaching assistants very well to support pupils' learning.
- The teachers who are new to teaching have less expertise in teaching the foundation subjects than the longer serving members of staff.

### **Commentary**

14. The quality of teaching in the school is of a high standard and helps all pupils, including those with special educational needs, make very good progress and achieve very well in English, mathematics and science. This is evident from the school's results over the last few years. At the beginning of this term, the school recruited teachers who are new to the profession and therefore less experienced in teaching the full range of subjects, promoting independent learning, and management of the behaviour of pupils. However, due to good recruitment procedures, and the very good support provided by both the headteacher and the deputy headteacher for these new staff, they

are teaching well. This is especially so in the core subjects of English, mathematics, and science. In some subjects, such as physical education, their lack of experience has been quickly identified, and in these lessons they are very well supported. Because there are no reception children in the school this term, it has allowed the deputy headteacher to be very effectively used as a mentor for new teachers and has contributed to the overall quality of the teaching and learning seen on the week of the inspection.

**Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 22 lessons**

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1	6	7	8	0	0	0

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

15. A strength of the teaching is the ability of teachers to build on pupils' past learning, and with the improvements which were made to the assessment of the foundation subjects following the last inspection, teachers now have detailed information on which to base their planning. Overall, the assessment and recording procedures are very good and provide teachers with a clear picture of what pupils know, understand and can do. This enables the work to be set at different levels and linked to pupils' attainment levels. Pupils therefore achieve well, and are eager to engage in learning. All teachers share the learning objectives for the lesson with pupils, even in the classes for the youngest pupils. These are written on the board and help pupils know what is expected of them. Work is marked consistently and praise given. For some of the youngest pupils who have either not had any preschool experiences or who have only been school a short time, and who are finding it difficult to sit, listen and understand what is required of them, the consistent expectations by the school and the positive reinforcement by praise is very effective. This can be seen by the amount of progress pupils make in just one term.

16. Teachers' short term planning is good. There is joint planning between teachers who teach similar year groups and this helps to ensure that there is continuity between classes. The school pays particular attention to this so that when they have to regroup pupils during the year as the younger pupils are admitted into the school, pupils are not at any disadvantage in their learning. The headteacher regularly evaluates the performance of all the teachers in the classroom and a professional dialogue follows on the strengths of the teaching and areas for improvement.

17. All teachers use very good strategies to make the lessons exciting and pupils are eager to learn. The philosophy of the school centres on ensuring that pupils become mature and independent learners, which it achieves very well. Teachers use discussion and questioning which would normally be seen with older pupils. This is used to challenge pupils, check understanding and draw on their experiences, which in turn helps them understand more easily and makes their learning more meaningful. A strength of the teaching is the great value teachers place on pupils' contributions. Teachers skillfully used pupils' responses, whether they were correct or not, to help them develop their ideas further and to see alternative possibilities. Pupils are expected to work and discuss with a partner an aspect of the task, and to share ideas. They do this very well, and although it leads to some noisy sessions – the chatter is all about the work. Relationships between teachers and pupils are very good and there is mutual respect, so that any immature behaviour or silliness when pointed out to pupils quickly disappears. This is more difficult to achieve with the youngest pupils as some have not experienced routines or had opportunities to form good social skills.

18. The quality of support that the teaching assistants provide for all pupils, and especially for pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language is good. This ensures they are fully included in all aspects of school life. Teachers consider, and use, the targets identified in the Individual Education Plans (IEPs) of the special educational needs pupils well in their planning. The teaching assistants are well aware of pupils' difficulties and work well with small groups of pupils in classes, and in small groups outside the classroom. The ability to do this diminishes as the year proceeds and the space available is taken over by the reception children.

This is managed and organised very well by teachers and ensures that pupils continue with the support they require.

## **The curriculum**

19. The curriculum is very good overall. It consists of very good curricular opportunities that cater for the interests, aptitudes and particular needs of pupils, and ensure progression in pupils' learning. There is a good range of additional opportunities for enriching the curriculum. The quantity of accommodation to meet the needs of the curriculum and the pupils is satisfactory. It is extremely well used but when there are two reception classes in school, the space becomes reduced and small group work is difficult to accommodate.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There are very good arrangements in place to ensure equality of access and opportunity for all pupils in this highly inclusive school.
- The priority given to staff professional development and the curriculum support provided for teachers new to the school and those who are newly qualified mean that there are consistent approaches to the curriculum across the school and that staff are very well matched to the requirements of the curriculum.
- Although the accommodation is satisfactory for the pupils who are currently in the school, and all available space is used well, the school has to continually reassess how it uses the space to meet the needs of the youngest children.
- There are very good arrangements in place for pupils' transition into Key Stage 2 when they transfer to new schools.

## **Commentary**

20. This is a highly inclusive school as reflected in the school development plan as a priority area. A systematic assessment tracking process, which supports the identification of individual learning needs, has been introduced and refined. Individual Education Plans (IEPs) and Group Education Plans (GEPs) identify targets to be achieved, clear achievement criteria, and class and support strategies. They also indicate how parents and carers can support their child at home. The same approach is adopted for pupils who are in the early stages of learning English and those who have physical difficulties. Pupils who may be gifted or talented are identified and the same good support is offered for pupils and parents. Staff ensure that the receiving junior school is fully informed. The SEN action plan includes staff development targets, as well as targets for named pupils. The governors of the school have carried out their responsibilities well and compiled a Disabled Access Plan to ensure that any barriers for pupils accessing the whole curriculum and all learning opportunities offered by the school are resolved. The school provides additional teaching, when necessary, for intervention support on a withdrawal basis. This is in addition to the teaching assistants who work with pupils in their classes in all subjects and curriculum areas. The school is aware of the importance of ensuring that there is an appropriate balance between withdrawal and support and that this is structured to ensure being taken out of their classrooms does not disadvantage any pupil.

21. Consistent planning for lessons identifies the different learning needs of pupils and they are provided with aids, such as a sloping writing board, or pencil grips to enable those who have physical difficulties to work independently. Very effective assessment and feedback takes place when teachers make very good use of pupils' individual wipe boards to watch what pupils are doing and to give immediate guidance on how they can improve.

22. The pupils in the school are very young but the inclusive nature of the school ensures that all are able to experience and benefit from a range of curriculum enrichment opportunities. Very good use is made of the local environment, including, excellent playground equipment. At playtimes pupils can choose whether to sit in one of the quiet areas, engage in role play, for example, 'travelling in the car', or engage in more active physical activities, such as basketball, football or using the balance

and climbing frames. The resources provided for physical activities enable pupils to have additional opportunities for developing their physical skills and for engaging in healthy activities. This is very good practice. All pupils are included in visits to the Victorian Classroom, the local shops and have the opportunity to learn the recorder. The school maximises opportunities for visitors to the school to enrich the curriculum. For example, a parent visited Year 1 pupils to talk to them about how she celebrates Divali. This provided the stimulus for pupils to discuss and draw their ideas about Mendhi patterns. There are a number of pupils in the school who are bilingual, and they and their parents, are invited to contribute to a curriculum enrichment week in the summer term where the focus is on non-core subjects. Parents are also provided with support and ideas for extending pupils' learning outside the school day.

23. The internal accommodation in the school has been improved since the last inspection and there is now a well organised library, resources for religious education and history artefacts have been extended, and classrooms have been modified satisfactorily to ensure pupils are not distracted by passers-by. The central area of the school, used by reception children in the Foundation Stage later in the year, provides accommodation for individual and withdrawal group teaching and learning. Overall the internal accommodation is satisfactory for Year 1 and 2 pupils in the school in the Autumn Term. However, the school encounters difficulties during the spring and summer terms when they increase the number of reception aged children in the school and all the space used for small group work, or some ICT work, is allocated to them for learning.

24. This very effective school places a strong emphasis on enabling pupils to become independent learners. This is supported through the arrangements for them to move to their junior schools at the end of Year 2. For example, pupils are given good opportunities through the LEA Music Festival to work with the junior school next door. Their teachers share information with the receiving schools whose teachers visit the pupils and begin to establish positive relationships.

25. The school has continued to develop its curricular opportunities **very well** since the last inspection and very good improvements have been made.

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

26. The overall quality of the care and support provided for pupils is very good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Procedures to ensure pupils' work in a healthy and safe environment are very good.
- Pupils' access to well-informed support, advice, and guidance is very good.
- Involvement of pupils through seeking, valuing and acting on their views is very good.
- The provision for child protection is good.
- Induction arrangements for pupils are very good.
- Arrangements for the administration of first aid require further development.

### **Commentary**

27. Both teaching and non-teaching staff display a very high level of concern for all pupils and, as a result, they thrive in the strong learning climate. The school has established very good procedures to ensure that pupils work in a healthy and safe environment. The governing body regularly arranges health and safety inspections and rectifies any items identified as potential health hazards. Although the school has many of its staff who carry out first aid procedures and accidents are appropriately recorded, only one member of staff has been trained as a First Aider and this is insufficient. The school has good child protection procedures, with the named Child Protection Officer being very well aware of her role and having received appropriate training. This training is cascaded to all other members of teaching and non-teaching staff. The small number of pupils on the 'At Risk Register' are carefully monitored by the school and records of their progress are very well maintained.

28. All pupils have a trusting and good relationship with adults in the school. Pupils interviewed during the inspection week confirm that they feel free to go to them for help, support, and advice. Staff carefully monitor and track pupils' personal and social development, and as a result, they make very good progress. The school listens to pupils' views and their opinions are valued. Pupils' views are sought at playtimes in the playground, and during 'Circle Time'. Pupils are given very good opportunities to take responsibility; for example, showing visitors around the school, escorting parents on family Open Evenings, and Year 2 pupils also act as lunchtime 'Buddies' for reception children.

29. Induction arrangements for new children are very good. An informative information brochure is given to prospective parents and after their places have been confirmed, they visit the school together with their child to meet the headteacher and staff. Pupils come to school part-time for the first week and playtimes are arranged at differing times from the other pupils. Parents are able to stay with their children for the first few days of school life if it is necessary, and pupils very quickly settle into routine because of the help and support they receive.

30. There have been good improvements made since the last inspection when most of the provision was satisfactory. With the increase in assessment and tracking of progress, this area has improved and is now very good.

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

31. Links with parents, the community and other schools and colleges are very good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Parents have very positive attitudes towards the school.
- The school provides very good information about its procedures, and pupils' standards and progress.
- Parents are fully involved in the life of the school, which actively seeks and values their views.
- Links with the community are very good.

### **Commentary**

32. Parents have very great confidence in the school and this is demonstrated by the fact that the school is over subscribed. Forty two per cent of parents responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire. The overwhelming majority of parents thought that they were kept well informed about how their children were getting on (83 per cent), they would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem (94 per cent), their children liked school (100 per cent) and staff treat children fairly (98 per cent). A significant minority thought that they were not well informed about how their children were getting on (15 per cent). The inspection team agrees with the positive views expressed but does not confirm the negative views expressed as inspection evidence supported the majority of parents' views concerning the good quality of information provided on pupils' progress.

33. Information provided by the school is very good. The school prospectus is well written, parent friendly and gives full details about school policies, curriculum information, and teaching staff, which parents need to know. In addition, the school has provided a further information booklet to parents prior to admission to school which gives very helpful information on how to prepare children for school life. Regular newsletters are produced giving details about activities, future events and the ways in which parents can help. The Governors' Annual Report to parents is clear, concise and gives parents all statutory required information. Annual reports are very good and give clear information about what pupils have studied, progress they have made and targets for future improvement. The school holds two formal 'Parent Evenings' per year, and in addition, holds a family 'Open Evening' in July for pupils to show parents around their school. After reports are issued, a letter is sent to parents inviting them to attend school if they have any concerns to discuss. Parents

have open access to the school at any time and can see the Headteacher or staff if they have any concerns.

34. The school regularly consults parents on a variety of issues and holds regular 'Curriculum Evenings' for parents to help with their children's learning. Parents are actively encouraged to help in school and many do so; for example' helping with guided reading, help with games, school trips and in the library. Parents offering particular expertise are regularly invited to talk to children. The headteacher regularly produces a newsletter and at the beginning of the new term a school newspaper "Infant Express" is distributed to all parents giving up-to-date information about the school. The school has produced a useful website giving full information to prospective and current parents about school policies, practices and developments. The school supports very well, parents of pupils with special educational needs. Parents are always invited to reviews of statements and individual education plans and the overwhelming majority of parents now accept these invitations.

35. Procedures for the transfer of pupils to other schools are very good. The school liaises very well with the junior school on the same site and junior school 'Buddies' greet new pupils and mentor them during their first few weeks at junior school. Transferring pupils are sorted out into 'Friendship Groups' by the Infant School and because of the sensible and caring arrangements, pupils start their new junior school with confidence.

36. The school has established very good links with the local community and other educational establishments; for example' pupils sing at the local community centre, and visit the local library and local shops. The pupils also take part in the 'Science Circus' event that is organised by the Bracknell Forest Business Partnership. Local and national charities, such as the local Baby Unit, the 'Children in Need' Appeal, and the Heart Foundation are well supported, with children and parents raising money for these causes. The school has developed very good links with other educational establishments and other community groups. This results in secondary aged pupils receiving their work experience and community service in the school, students from the two local colleges completing their placement pre-Post Graduate Certificate of Education training, and the hall being used in the evening.

37. Good improvements have been made since the last inspection as the school has acted on the continuing information that it receives from parents. It has already addressed the issue concerning the amount of information provided on pupils' progress, following the last inspection and its own survey of the provision suggests this is now much improved.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

38. The headteacher provides **excellent** leadership and a very clear educational direction. The senior management team, who enable all staff to be partners in an excellently managed school supports her. The governors make an excellent contribution to the successes of the school.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The headteacher has ensured that the senior management team are very effective partners in raising standards.
- The management of the school is excellent, with very effective monitoring and mentoring of new staff.
- There is very effective practice for the co-ordination and development of subjects.
- The governors are a very dedicated body of people acting as good critical friends and there is a sense of the school being 'their school'.
- The school is a self-evaluating school and the views of all people connected are taken into consideration.



## Commentary

39. The headteacher provides excellent leadership for the school. She has ensured that the senior management team are very effective partners in raising standards, in the overall development of initiatives, and in the day-to-day running of the school. There is a very strong belief that the school should provide the best quality education and that it should be a pleasant, exciting and safe place for all to work and learn in. There is also a unified philosophy from the governors and the senior managers that pupils should achieve the highest standards, and even the very young pupil can increasingly become independent learners at an early age. There is a very caring and happy atmosphere and pupils are confident that their efforts are valued and their views respected. This is much appreciated by parents. All staff, including those who are new to the school, uphold this ethos for learning and expectations of high standards.

40. The overall management of the school is excellent, both on a day-to-day basis and for achieving its goals. For example, through prudent financial planning of the budget, the senior management and governors have improved the building both for administration, and for teaching and learning. This they have managed without the additional funding of grants from the LEA. Very good monitoring and evaluation strategies ensure that the governing body not only receive regular reports about the curriculum, but have a first hand knowledge of the standards and the overall provision. The arrangements for the mentoring of teachers new to the school or new to teaching are very well thought through. This is currently being carried out by the deputy headteacher, who because this term has no class commitment, is very effective. It is enabling the newly qualified teachers to be supported in the lessons where they lack expertise and adds to the overall monitoring of teaching.

41. All staff who lead subjects, do so at a professionally high level. Following staffing changes at the end of the previous school year, when experienced staff left and were replaced by newly qualified teachers, a review of curriculum co-ordination was undertaken and a new structure introduced after consultation. The previous arrangements remain in place for those subjects with co-ordinators, but a team approach has been adopted for science, religious education and music, with a teacher from each year group. This very effective practice enables newly qualified teachers to benefit from this opportunity for professional development and ensures the best possible application of curriculum expertise and experience to benefit the pupils.

42. The school has become a self-evaluating school, where the views of all people connected with the school community are gathered and reflected on. Questionnaires are sent to parents to obtain opinions of the educational provision, which the school sees as important 'stake holders'. The process of self-evaluation, includes conjunction with performance management, is very effectively used to inform school development and improvement, both in the long and short term. For example, it has been used effectively to raise standards in boys' writing, and has clearly identified the weaknesses in the accommodation. However, without great expenditure the school has no means of providing additional space. The staff and governors are committed to providing excellent educational experiences for all pupils. The result of this can be seen in the way in which the school has embraced its role of providing totally inclusive education for all pupils. This has resulted in the raising of standards over the last three years and all pupils attaining at least the nationally expected levels. The progress the school has made in raising standards has been recognised nationally through the awards it receives.

43. The governance of the school makes a significant contribution to its successes. There is a good balance of professional backgrounds, which the school draws upon for advice, and as a critical friend. Governors are dedicated, and there is a sense of the school being their school and not just a series of meetings they attend. Some are very involved on a daily basis, and as a group are totally involved in all decisions about the financial planning, analysis of results, and in strategic planning. Due to this the governors are very aware of the implications of major spending and the losses or gains in the number of pupils on the total budget. There is very good day-to-day support from the administration manager and the bursar, who work closely with the headteacher and the governors.

44. This is an area that has improved **well**.

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

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	438577
Total expenditure	434668
Expenditure per pupil	2173

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	57972
Balance carried forward to the next	52170

45. The income and expenditure is based on the total amount received for the whole year and for the full number of pupils on the roll of the school. Due to the staggered intake of children, this pattern of numbers and income is not consistent across the year. The amount carried forward is calculated in April. However, in the school's financial year, this is the time when the school has to ensure it has enough money in its budget to employ a temporary, full time teacher for the incoming reception children. The carry forward which is in excess of five per cent, is maintained by the governors to offset any uncertainties in pupil numbers and the cost of temporary staff.

## **PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS**

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

46. There were no children in the Foundation Stage at the time of the inspection as they are admitted to the school in stages, starting in the spring term. Discussions with staff and scrutiny of the school's assessment and recording system established that children receive learning experiences based upon ability, interest, and motivation that support the progress they make in achieving the Early Learning Goals and National Curriculum levels. These experiences address the six areas of learning and especially concentrates on personal, social and emotional development as children come into the school with a great variety of experiences, and hence standards, from their pre-school provision. This is an area of learning which for many children is a priority need in their first year in school.

### **SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGE 1**

#### **ENGLISH**

47. Provision in English is **very good**.

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

- The standard of reading is well above national expectations and pupils make good progress in their speaking and listening and writing skills.
- The use teachers make of ongoing feedback to pupils during lessons is exemplary.
- Very effective use is made of the National Literacy Strategy guidance, which is carefully adapted to meet the needs of all the pupils in the school.
- Pupils have positive attitudes towards their learning, and demonstrate that they can work collaboratively.

#### **Commentary**

48. Standards in English have improved since the last inspection. This is because the school sets and meets the challenging targets it sets, based on accurate information from assessment. Many pupils are reading at levels well above the national expectations and in the development of their early writing skills are working generally above national expectations. There are no significant differences in the test results for girls and boys. However, following a detailed analysis of the latest National Curriculum test results a detailed action plan has been compiled to further support the development of boys' writing. All pupils, including those who are lower attaining, are given opportunities to choose their reading materials. The school has already identified the needs for pupils to make further use of ICT throughout the subject.

49. A high priority is placed on supporting pupils' speaking and listening skills to enable them to become effective communicators. They are taught how to listen and respond and to ask and answer questions. Because pupils have such positive attitudes and enthusiasm, and are developing the appropriate vocabulary, they become effective independent learners very quickly. All teachers and teaching assistants have consistent, positive expectations about pupils' good behaviour. This means that, although pupils are lively, there is no longer any inappropriate behaviour. In all lessons observed pupils listen carefully to the instructions for their independent activities and use a range of strategies to enable them to complete their tasks. The improved strategies for teaching phonics, spelling rules and dictionary skills enables pupils confidently to attempt to spell unfamiliar words. All lessons end with a session where the teacher builds on pupils' responses, and they are particularly effective where ICT is used, either on class computers or, as in one class, with the interactive whiteboard.

50. The quality of teachers' marking in workbooks and topic books has improved and is particularly effective when praise comments are extended to include the 'next steps' for pupils. Moreover, the quality of feedback given to pupils during lessons is exemplary. Pupils use individual wipe boards to practise their skills. Teachers model letter formation or spellings and the pupils copy. Pupils then clean their boards and attempt the same work independently. Teachers monitor what they are doing and provide instant praise and feedback commenting on how individuals are joining their letters or prompting them to remember, for example the spelling rules about 'oi' and 'oy'. However, inconsistencies in the standards of presentation in books and in displays reflects the relative extent of individual teacher's inexperience.

51. The school uses the National Literacy Strategy framework very well to inform detailed, differentiated, and consistent year group planning. Planning and standards of work are monitored and evaluated by the experienced and skilful co-ordinator who manages the subject very well. Planning is adapted to meet the needs of the pupils. Pupils who are in the early stages of acquiring English are appropriately supported and make confident progress. Individual Learning Plans are well constructed and informed by careful assessment. An additional teacher is employed to provide intervention support for lower attaining pupils and the school is aware of the importance of ensuring an appropriate balance between withdrawal and in-class support. Additional activities to support spelling and reading take place out of lesson time. Pupils in Year 2 are taught in ability sets for two lessons a week.

52. The National Literacy Strategy guidance is carefully adapted to meet the needs of all the pupils in the school, especially the youngest pupils. There are a number of pupils in Year 1 who have been in the school for a very short time, who find it difficult to maintain their concentration throughout an entire lesson. They benefit from a flexible approach, replicating the Foundation Stage curriculum, adopted by their teacher. This enables them to record in pictures their favourite toys seen on the visit to the Victorian classroom and then use modern day equivalents in a range of indoor and outdoor activities. Because of the focus on providing them with the appropriate vocabulary and first hand experiences, even those who have not developed the appropriate social behaviour or an understanding of expectations for learning, remain focused and talk about their likes and dislikes. They explain the reasons for some of the differences between their toys and toys in Victorian times. Older pupils, or those who have been in school longer, maintain concentration and even though they are only of an infant age, they work very well together on shared reading and writing activities. They also work independently on specific tasks.

#### **Example of outstanding practice**

**At the end of a carefully structured literacy lesson Year 1 pupils use 'Callum the Cat' to reflect on their learning and explain to each other what they have been able to do.**

These enthusiastic and lively pupils are only half way through their third term since starting school. Their teacher uses all sorts of positive strategies and visual prompts to help them maintain their concentration. Shared reading of speech bubbles on a poster of familiar characters ensures that pupils know that the focus of the lesson is about using capital letters and full stops and remembering to join their letters when writing. During their independent work one group has a toy black cat sitting on their table. As they make their sentences they are chatty and handle the toy. A teaching assistant monitors and supports them. Towards the end of the lesson when their teacher makes the visual signals, which are part of her consistent behaviour management strategies, pupils tidy up their tables quickly and return to sitting on the carpet. Instead of the routine practice often observed in plenary sessions where pupils "show and tell" what they have been doing, the little boy holding 'Callum the Cat' is asked to tell the rest of the class what Callum has been learning this morning. He explains confidently that the cat has been using capital letters and trying to use full stops properly. This prompts others to want to talk about their work. This demonstrated an excellent way of enabling such young pupils to reflect, and begin to develop early self-evaluation strategies, which are such an important element in the development of self assessment and the use of independent learning strategies.

53. Very good improvements have been made since the last inspection and have resulted in higher standards, better attitudes to learning, and increased opportunities for the pupils to choose their own reading material and become independent readers.

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

54. With support, pupils produce word-processed captions for displays. Pupils learn how to ask questions and make suggestions. They are encouraged to listen and respond in all subjects and all teachers use consistent strategies. Lists of questions generated for Florence Nightingale, for example, and work in their books and topic folders illustrate how they are beginning to use writing to record and extend their learning. Many are enthusiastic readers and because they are able to distinguish between story and information books and use the colour coded classification of books they enjoy using the library. The way in which a Year 2 pupil found information about a Victorian School and shared it with the teacher and the class, illustrates the confidence pupils display in finding information in class-based book-browsing collections, as well as the library, related to their lessons. Consistent planning for year groups and highly effective subject leadership ensures that language and literacy learning are supported across the curriculum. As a result, pupils are enabled to access knowledge and understanding specific to all the different subjects of the curriculum, which greatly aids achievement.

### **MATHEMATICS**

55. Provision in mathematics is **very good**.

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

- Standards in mathematics are high and pupils achieve very well.
- The co-ordinator provides very strong leadership.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good, and there are examples of very good and excellent teaching.
- Mathematics is used well in other subjects and reinforces pupils' learning,

#### **Commentary**

56. Standards in mathematics are high and an analysis of work indicates that the current Year 2 pupils have made good progress in Year 1 and are on course to attain levels equivalent or above those expected nationally at the end of the year. For example, Year 2 pupils name, classify, and describe the properties of 3 dimensional shapes, using such terminology as "faces", and "edges". They know whether the shape is regular or irregular. Pupils with special educational needs are making very good progress due to the very good assessment and additional small group support they receive. As a result the majority achieve the level expected for pupils of the same age.

57. Teaching and learning in mathematics on the week of the inspection ranged from excellent to satisfactory. Overall it is currently good, and this reflects the number of teachers in the school who are very new to teaching, and who are adjusting to the demands of teaching the whole of the curriculum. Teaching and learning are currently better in the classes where the teachers are most experienced, but the high standards achieved by the school reflects the quality of the teaching in the past. Where teaching is very good or excellent, pupils are very enthusiastic, are very eager to complete tasks and do not want lessons to finish. They enjoy the challenges set at end of lessons and ask - "Can we do it again?" Planning for all lessons is consistent across the school and is based on the numeracy strategy. The detail in the planning is very good and the tasks and outcomes are well matched to the different attainment levels in the class. Particular attention is paid to the learning targets set in the IEPs of pupils with special educational needs. In the best lessons, teachers ensure all pupils are paying appropriate attention, use correct mathematical vocabulary and terminology and provide good opportunities for pupils to explain their methods and to practise what they know.

58. The subject is very well led by a co-ordinator who is also a leading mathematics teacher. The quality of teaching of this teacher is excellent, and her lessons are very effectively supported by the use of the interactive whiteboard. Samples of pupils' work show that pupils cover the areas of the National Curriculum and tackle a range of problems involving handling data, investigation, and solving mathematical word problems. Assessment is used very well to support teaching and learning. Test results are analysed and pupils' progress term by term is tracked, from their attainment on entry to the school to their departure. Information and communication technology is used well to support teaching and learning, for example to consolidate learning of concepts, but less use is made of it for pupils to display the results of their data analysis.

59. There has been good improvement since the last inspection and as a result standards have risen and the school now achieves better than similar schools.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

60. Numeracy skills are reinforced well in other subject areas. For example, during a design and technology lesson pupils' numeracy skills were reinforced through the measurement of parts for the car they were making, and skills were evident in the collection of data in science lessons.

### **SCIENCE**

61. The provision for science is **very good**

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

- Standards in science are well above the national average.
- The teaching and learning are very good.
- The science curriculum is very well planned
- The introduction of group co-ordination provides new staff with good support.

#### **Commentary**

62. The school successfully provides opportunities for pupils to develop their scientific skills, understanding and knowledge. The results of the tests at the end of Year 2 consistently show that standards in science are well above the national average. In the last two years all pupils have attained at least the nationally expected level and at least half of them reach the higher level. This has put the school in the top five percent of schools nationally. Pupils achieve very well overall and there are no differences in the standards achieved in the different aspects within science. When analysing the results for the higher levels, pupils achieve particularly well in the aspects of : *Life Processes and Living Things*, and *Material and their Properties*. The pupils with special educational needs also make very good progress, and are supported effectively by class teachers and teaching assistants so that they attain the nationally expected level. In all classes there is no significant difference in the performance of boys and girls, and they work very well together in small groups.

63. The high standards have been achieved because the teaching and learning has been very good overall, and teacher expectations are high. Until this term experienced teachers have taught pupils and this has had a significant effect on pupils' achievements. In each class, the teachers promote good observational skills and investigational skills, a high emphasis on the learning and understanding of the key words associated with the learning, and the development of different ways of recording their observations. Teachers empathise the importance of pupils developing the ability to draw conclusions from their activities. A careful check is kept by teachers on the pupils' understanding and knowledge, so that they are aware of the progress pupils are making throughout the year. Because of this, teachers are able to identify and challenge the learning of the higher attaining pupils. For example, in a very good lesson in a Year 1 class on 'Movement', the pupils were given a range of toys, which were grouped according to the motion needed to move them. Pupils

were given good opportunities to investigate the type of movement, and because of the high expectations for learning the pupils did not at any time resort to playing with their toys. They were very serious in their investigation work – most of which they completed and recorded independently. Throughout the school the pupils' learning is rooted in clear understanding and first hand experiences. For example, in data collection pupils work with teaching assistants conducting surveys around the school, independently recording their results, and reporting back to the class at the end of the lesson.

64. The science curriculum is very well planned to ensure that the pupils have many opportunities to plan, predict, observe, and consider what has happened during their investigations. All areas of science are given appropriate coverage and teachers build on this knowledge and understanding in other subjects, such as in design and technology and art and design. This provides pupils with good opportunities to consolidate and extend their learning. Staff are very aware that because of the size of the school it is necessary to teach Year 1 and Year 2 pupils together. This they do very well as the tasks and activities planned for pupils are matched well to their attainment levels and therefore they achieve at the most appropriate level. The staff are developing this further so that they have clear expected learning outcomes for pupils in Year 1 as well as for those in Year 2. There is a good range of resources in the school and the school has many opportunities available in the school grounds for investigation and enquiry.

65. Until this year the subject had been led by a very experienced co-ordinator. The school now has a number of teachers who are new to teaching, and who are at the early stages of understanding the complexities of co-ordinating subjects. The managers of the school have therefore introduced a new initiative to managing the subject by taking a group approach and combining the new teachers with more experienced ones. This is providing newly qualified teachers with very valuable experience, training and encouragement, whilst maintaining the high quality co-ordination.

66. There has been good improvement since the last inspection because the standards have risen and the school now achieves at better levels than similar schools.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- All pupils achieve well and become competent users.
- The teaching and learning are good.
- The school is making effective use of the interactive whiteboard in teaching and learning.
- More use could be made of pupils' skills in presenting their work in mathematics and literacy.

### **Commentary**

68. The school has kept abreast of new developments and the co-ordinator has had a vision of what was needed in the school. As a result, pupils are competent users. By the end of Year 2 standards of attainment are in line with the national expectation. Pupils' attitudes to the subject are very good; they handle the resources carefully, and are enthusiastic. Many pupils are at an advantage as they have access to computers at home and the youngest pupils show that they are familiar with the layout of the keyboard and are able to control a mouse. Pupils, therefore by the time they leave the school are able to load programs, save, print and retrieve their work. Using a mouse they, 'drag and drop' an icon in a specific place, produce art work to enhance their work. There is good emphasis on key words associated with ICT, such as 'font', and 'fill'. When using art programs to draw pictures, they use the 'tools' in the program to change the colour of details, and apply different thickness of lines. Pupils understand how the Internet can help them find out information and can be used to communicate with others.

69. The subject is taught in a variety of settings, and the school once again has high expectations for these young pupils. Hence all pupils have access to discrete lessons of ICT, where the skills needed are taught to small groups at various times during the week. This allows pupils to consolidate their learning during the week in other lessons and outside the classroom with teaching assistants. The quality of teaching is good and has a positive impact on the quality of pupils' learning. Teachers have developed a good level of skills and understanding in the last few years, and this is consistent across the school. Teachers explain simply and precisely, introducing new vocabulary and consistently use the correct terminology. The school has recently installed an interactive whiteboard and there is great enthusiasm amongst the staff to use this in lessons. It is currently used in one classroom with Year 2 children and is being used as a resource in all lessons in this class, and very effectively in literacy and numeracy.

70. There have been good improvements made in this subject since the last inspection and especially in the last two years. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment are now in place and are linked well with the learning activities

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

71. Lesson planning for most subjects refers to ICT, and is part of most lessons, for example, it is used in both art and design, and in design and technology to support pupils' learning. Although, more use could be made of the pupils' skills to present specific aspects of their work, such as to display the data they have collected, or to word process their stories. The school has not yet identified where ICT is used in different subjects and how the opportunities contribute to the overall coverage of skills and knowledge, and the progress pupils make in the subject.

## **HUMANITIES**

72. Three lessons were observed in this area of learning. There were two in religious education and one in history. In geography, because there were no lessons seen the subject was sampled, and any judgements are based on analysis of work and discussion with pupils and staff.

## **HISTORY**

73. Provision in history is **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Well managed subject leadership and effective planning for each year group in history ensure consistent learning opportunities and high expectations across all classes.
- The use of first hand experiences, such as visits, visitors, handling and comparing artefacts, photographs and appropriate practical activities in lessons, enable pupils generally to make good progress in their learning.
- Pupils have very positive attitudes to their learning in history and are confident in using speaking and listening skills to ask and answer appropriate questions.

### **Commentary**

74. Pupils are at the early stages of developing their historical skills, and because there is effective planning for each year group, they attain at the expected levels for their age making very good progress. This planning includes clear and manageable arrangements for assessments made at the end of each unit of study, illustrating improvement from the previous inspection. Pupils in each year group but different classes receive similar learning experiences, which are appropriately differentiated according to ability, and learning needs. Planning and assessment arrangements emphasise the high expectations teachers have. Although the previous subject co-ordinator left the school at the end of the last year, the very good leadership of the headteacher and deputy



headteacher has ensured that history has been monitored and evaluated and is consistent across the school.

75. During the inspection the curriculum focus was on history and all pupils were visiting a Victorian School. Year 1 pupils learnt about Victorian toys and because of the way teachers presented them with opportunities to identify similar types of toys in their classrooms and to handle artefacts they were able to identify and discuss similarities and differences. This experiential learning was particularly relevant for the youngest and most socially immature pupils who displayed some difficulties in formal lessons but responded well through learning activities building from the Foundation Stage curriculum. Photographs taken during their visit enabled Year 2 pupils to recall their reactions to a lesson in the Victorian classroom. They were able to hypothesise about why some things were different and explain, for example, that because there were so many children in one classroom with one teacher everyone had to be silent. The opportunities presented to the pupils in history support their developing personal, social and cultural awareness.

## Geography

76. Pupils are at the early stages of developing their geographical skills. They enjoy the opportunities presented to them to explore the well organised school environment, are helped to develop their awareness of places and mapping skills. The opportunities support and develop pupils' personal, social and cultural awareness, and further opportunities are planned to enable pupils to use their developing ICT skills to support their learning. Pupils, in discussion can describe what they liked and disliked about places they have visited but are not as confident as they are about their understanding of other subjects. There is well managed subject leadership, and effective planning for each year group, has ensured that the policy has been reviewed and updated and that there are consistent learning opportunities and high expectations across all classes.

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

77. Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school has an innovative approach to the co-ordination of the subject.
- The planning of the subject is well structured and ensures a consistent approach across the school.
- There is effective teaching by, and high expectations from, experienced teachers.
- The teachers who are new to teaching are not as secure in their subject knowledge.
- The quality and quantity of resources and artefacts have been improved.

### Commentary

78. The school's new approach to subject co-ordination by a group of teachers, instead of by one teacher, means that those who are new to teaching are being provided with support and advice from more experienced staff. This has particularly helped them to understand the LEA Agreed Syllabus for this subject, ensures that work is matched to differing levels of ability for all pupils, and develops their skills in subject co-ordination. Planning and assessment is therefore consistent across the school. There are effective links made with assembly using themes that reinforce the importance of moral development. For example, in a Year 1 lesson pupils listened to the story of '*Rama and Sita*', and through skilful questioning, the teacher drew their attention to the morning assembly story of '*Daniel and the Lion's Den*' and how both related to good triumphing over evil.

79. The quality of teaching, and therefore learning, varies with the experience of the staff. Where teachers have been teaching for longer and are more experienced, it is good and pupils achieve well. These teachers are sufficiently confident to enable pupils to engage in practical activities, such as drama and role-play where pupils make good progress and are able to talk about how they feel

and what they like and dislike. For example, Year 1 pupils were able to remember many of the features of Divali celebrations because they had acted the story of ' *Rama and Sita*' the previous week. Other Year 1 pupils, after a visit from a parent talking about Divali could recall features of Hindu celebrations. However, in the same lesson some opportunities were missed to enable pupils reflect on their feelings and assess their own understanding.

80. The subject has improved since the last inspection as it now has a range of appropriate resources. This is an improvement from the last inspection and religious education now makes a good contribution to pupils' personal, social, and spiritual development. Recent work on display, including the Festivals of Light of Divali, Hannukah and Christmas and the five features of Sikhism, illustrates the range of pupils' experiences and growing understanding about celebrations and traditions.

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

82. Seven lessons were observed in this area of learning. There were two in art, one in design and technology, two in music and two in physical education.

### **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

82. There was insufficient evidence on which to base a firm judgement concerning the quality of the overall provision. Only one lesson was observed but information was gathered from talking to pupils and staff, and looking at planning and examples of pupils' work on display. The subject is co-ordinated, alongside the art and design, and by the same member of staff, which results in good links between the subjects.

83. In the one lesson seen, the teacher reinforced the vocabulary associated with the construction of a vehicle, for example, 'axle'. There were very good links with other subjects and pupils were expected to use their measuring skills, and folding techniques to ensure circles were symmetrical and axles the same length. Both the teacher and teaching assistant had a very good knowledge of any special educational needs that pupils may have, and they use this knowledge effectively during lessons to support basic numeracy and literacy skills of these pupils.

### **MUSIC**

84. Provision in music is **satisfactory** with some **good** features.

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

- The organisation and management of subject leadership by a group of teachers ensures consistent learning opportunities and expectations for all pupils.
- Pupils have great enthusiasm for, and anticipation about, musical activities.
- There are insufficient planned opportunities for pupils, particularly at the beginning of Year 2, to listen to music to help them develop their appraising skills.
- There are planned opportunities for curriculum enrichment.

#### **Commentary**

85. The newly organised arrangements for the co-ordination of the subject have ensured that planning has improved. Rather than individual plans for each class, there is now year group planning based on LEA advice and national non-statutory guidance. This ensures that non-specialist teachers, and those who are inexperienced, are able to provide consistent and challenging learning experiences for all pupils. As a result, pupils attain at the expected levels in music, are enthusiastic, and have good attitudes to learning. The teaching observed at this early stage in the school year was satisfactory. Learning was closely directed, with little opportunity for pupils to experiment in lessons. Opportunities overall, for pupils to listen and learn to appraise a wide range of music and sounds are

presently insufficient. However, there are imaginative related activities for Year 1 pupils to carry out at home, such as finding long and short sounds.

86. There is now a wide range of well-organised resources, including instruments from different countries and cultures, and an increased number of easy accessible. The use of Indian music in a recent assembly about Divali is an example of how opportunities are taken for developing pupils' cultural awareness and music used to support other aspects of the curriculum. Extra-curricular activities, including a Year 2 choir, are provided during the spring and summer terms, and pupils are given opportunities to work with professional musicians during the school year. Pupils who show a particular talent or aptitude for music are identified through the good assessment arrangements. The school explores ways of supporting these pupils with their parents and with their next school. Musical activities make a strong contribution to the annual Christmas performance, and the Year 2 leaving performance. In addition, pupils take part in the LEA music festival working with the neighbouring junior school.

87. The subject has improved well since the last inspection with the purchase of more resources and an improved curriculum.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

88. The provision for art and design is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards in art and design are above national expectations and pupils achieve well.
- The teaching of art and design is very good.

### **Commentary**

89. Wall and classroom displays show pupils' skills and understanding are very good in art and design. By Year 2 the pupils explore ideas, using a range of media and resources to communicate their ideas and meanings. The expectations by teachers is high for the age of the pupils, as they plan lessons in which pupils are expected to discuss the effect of using different colours, for example when looking at the work of three artists. These types of activities are routinely set as pupils show they are confident in sharing their ideas and responses with the rest of the class. They make good use of a range of different media including pastels, pencils and textiles, and are confident users of art programmes on the computer, which they use to create pictures and repeating designs.

90. In the lessons seen the teaching and learning were very good overall. Teachers have a high level of expertise and are confident in teaching the subject. Teachers place a great emphasis on developing the language associated with art and design, such as 'image' and 'observation' and as a result pupils confidently use this vocabulary when describing their work. There is very good encouragement and advice on how to improve the quality of their work and for the development of specific sketching techniques, such as in a lesson on developing observational techniques. In this lesson there is also very good links with other subjects. For example, the teacher when examining the camera (which is one of the objects the pupils will sketch) time is taken to reinforce the names and functions of the different parts of it. The interactive whiteboard, which has been recently introduced into the school, is being used very effectively within some art lessons and is having a significant impact on the quality of the learning. For example, it is skilfully used by the teacher to display the work of three artists (Hockney, Picasso and El Greco) and allows the pupils to see and discuss how the colours vary in each piece of work and how it might look with different colours.

91. There have been good improvements made to the subject since the last inspection when lesson planning did not take account of what pupils already knew or could do.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

92. The provision in physical education is **satisfactory**.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum is enriched by very good playground games and experiences.
- The quality of teaching and learning varies and reflects the number of teachers new to teaching in the school.

## Commentary

93. The school provides a good range of experiences in physical education to develop co-ordination and skills. The curriculum meets all the requirements of the National Curriculum for pupils of this age and it is particularly well enhanced by additional playground activities, both at lunchtime, and as part of other lessons. The school has invested, with the assistance of the Parents' Association, in providing a wide range of playground activities for pupils to take part in. There is a very good range of resources, such as bikes and scooters, as well as a well marked out playground for group games, and tabletop games. This enables pupils to build on and improve the physical and social skills, which many of the younger pupils are at an early stage of developing. For example, many pupils come to the school with a variety of social skills, especially in their ability to play with other children in teams, and to take turns. This is reinforced in the physical education lessons and in the playground. The teachers also make good use of the equipment in other lessons, such as in science, when looking at motion, and in history when taking part in 'Victorian games'. The school also uses the expertise of coaches and specialists to enhance specific areas of its curriculum, such as for dance.

94. The quality of teaching and learning observed on the week of the inspection was satisfactory overall. Staff who are new to teaching have limited experience in teaching the subject but are being very well supported in lessons by both head and deputy headteacher. The school has found this particularly important as some of the younger children or those with special educational needs have not yet learnt or understood the need to stop their activity and listen to the instructions. However the majority of pupils, because of the emphasis placed on this area, show enthusiasm for the activities, and develop a good understanding of working both independently, and in teams, and are developing an understanding of safety. For example in a dance lesson in Year 2, the teacher ensured that pupils understood what they were going to learn and through demonstration helped them to learn new skills.

95. **Satisfactory** improvements have been made to the provision since the last inspection.

## PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

96. No specific lessons were seen in this area during the week of the inspection and so in judgements are made about the overall provision. However, the school sees personal development as being very important part of its work. This it rightly identifies because of its belief and expectations that very young children can develop into independent learners and develop an ability to work in teams. The school appropriately includes in its curriculum areas of healthy eating, personal safety, consideration for others less fortunate than themselves, and taking care of their environment. In order to promote this the school makes good use of its grounds, including a wild life area, the use of Year 2 pupils to provide 'Buddies' for the youngest children when they come into school, and inclusion of very successful sponsored events to raise money for charities connected with health issues.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>2</b>
How inclusive the school is	1
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	2
Value for money provided by the school	2
<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>3</b>
Pupils' achievement	2
<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>	<b>2</b>
Attendance	2
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>	<b>3</b>
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	2
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	2
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	2
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2
<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>1</b>
The governance of the school	1
The leadership of the headteacher	1
The leadership of other key staff	1
The effectiveness of management	1

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