

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **FEATHERBY INFANT AND NURSERY SCHOOL**

Gillingham

LEA area: The Medway Towns

Unique reference number: 118421

Headteacher: Mrs J Honey

Lead inspector: Graham Bate

Dates of inspection: 29<sup>th</sup> September – 1<sup>st</sup> October 2003

Inspection number: 260562

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:	3 – 7 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	308
School address:	Allington Road Gillingham Kent
Postcode:	ME8 6PD
Telephone number:	01634 231072
Fax number:	01634 263283
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr S Fautley
Date of previous inspection:	September 1999

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The school, which was built in the 1950s is situated in North Gillingham. The pupils come from a variety of backgrounds, but over half live in an area of significant social deprivation. In 2000, the school became part of the local Education Action Zone. The school is bigger than average nationally having 212 full-time pupils on roll in the age range five to seven years, of whom 41 are in the reception classes. There are 98 part-time pupils in the nursery, who are admitted in the September or January before their fourth birthday. About six per cent of the pupils are of ethnic minority heritage. Three pupils' home language is not English, none of whom is at the early stage of its acquisition. There are slightly more boys on roll than girls. The standard of pupils' attainment on entry covers a wide range, but is at least below average, for example in the current Year 2, nearly 50 per cent have special educational needs, which is well above the national average. Currently, no pupils have a statement of special educational needs. The current level of pupils eligible for free school meals, at about seven per cent, differs very significantly from other socio-economic indicators in that the figure is much lower than might be expected. The school roll has remained steady over recent years but there is an increasing incidence of pupil mobility with the equivalent of about one class leaving and joining in the last year. Attendance is below the national average. There have been no exclusions.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
20926	Mr G Bate	Lead inspector	Science Art and design Music Physical education Special educational needs
09779	Ms S Smith	Lay inspector	
32651	Mrs L Meadows	Team inspector	English History Religious education Foundation Stage
20832	Dr M Galowalia	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Design and technology Geography English as an additional language

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

Featherby is a **good** school and provides **good** value for money. Under the effective leadership of the headteacher, a staff team has been established that is committed to the raising of standards. A positive climate for learning has been created in which all pupils are valued and supported, resulting in good achievement. Despite a well above average proportion of the pupils having special educational needs, by the end of Year 2 standards in all subjects, except one, are at least in line with national expectations.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses:

- the school is well led, managed and governed;
- pupils achieve well, from a low base, as a result of good teaching;
- there are very good relationships throughout the school and everyone is valued, resulting in very good attitudes and behaviour;
- the school environment and enriched curriculum widen and stimulate the pupils' learning opportunities;
- standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are below national expectations;
- there are insufficient planned opportunities for learning in the nursery;
- assessment procedures lack consistency, hindering the tracking of pupils' progress.

The school was previously inspected in September 1999. Since then a steady improvement in standards in reading, writing and mathematics, that is just above the national trend, has been maintained. The overall quality of teaching has improved and there is now no unsatisfactory teaching. The hall is now useable throughout the year and there is improved provision for outside play in the reception classes. However, standards in ICT remain below expectations. There are now computers in all classrooms and there is further enhanced provision in the extended teaching area of the library.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

*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*

By the end of Year 2, all pupils achieve **well** and attain **above expectations** in reading, art and design, history and singing. Standards in all other subjects are satisfactory, except ICT. About half the children in the Foundation Stage are on course to attain all the goals they are expected to reach by the end of reception, in all areas of learning, except written communication.

The quality of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **very good**. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are also very good. Attendance is below the national average. The pupils are very positive about all aspects of school life. They collaborate and co-operate well when required. They show respect for other people.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

The quality of education provided by the school is **good**. The overall quality of teaching is also **good**. A sharper focus to the learning intentions and outcomes has led to improved teaching. The very good quality of relationships between the teachers and pupils contributes significantly to the good quality of learning by pupils. The day-to-day evaluation of pupils' performance by the teachers is good but the tracking of their performance during the year lacks consistency and is not yet fully effective in monitoring standards and progress. Planning in the nursery focuses insufficiently on learning opportunities. The pupils express confidence in their teachers and know they will always be listened to.

Trust and mutual respect permeate this school. As a result, pupils are well cared for and supported. The pupils' experience of school life is fostered well in this caring environment and successfully enriched by a stimulating curriculum. There are also good links with parents and the wider community.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

The headteacher provides **effective** leadership and management. She has a good sense of vision and purpose and has high aspirations for providing the pupils with a stimulating and high quality working environment. The governing body has a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development and fulfils its responsibilities effectively. Improvements have been managed well by the headteacher and governing body. Year leaders have a good understanding of their responsibilities and subject co-ordinators are beginning to develop their roles further. The monitoring of performance data and taking appropriate action is satisfactory.

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

Parents feel very happy about the school in general. They have no fears about approaching the school over any matter. The parents are pleased to acknowledge the efforts of all the staff and like, particularly, the improvement in the environment. The pupils like their school and the improvements made to it. They feel very secure in school.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- raise standards in ICT;
- improve planning for learning in the nursery;
- improve the consistency of assessment procedures and the tracking of pupils' progress.

## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

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

Children in the nursery make a good start on their social and communication skills from a low base on entry. About half the children in the reception are currently on course to achieve all of the goals expected for their age by the start of Year 1, except in written communication. Achievement in Years 1 and 2 is good. By the end of Year 2, pupils have progressed to standards at least in line with expectations in all subjects, except information and communication technology (ICT). Overall, there is very little significant difference in the achievement of boys and girls.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children have well-developed communication and social skills on entry to Year 1.
- Standards in reading are above average and literacy skills are used well in other subjects.
- Standards in art and design, history and singing are good. Pupils have insufficient skills in ICT to support their work in other subjects.
- The underlying trend in performance, since 1999 in national tests, has been upward, and pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language make good progress.

#### Commentary

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	16.5 (17.4)	15.8 (15.7)
writing	14.4 (15.0)	14.4 (14.3)
mathematics	16.5 (16.8)	16.5 (16.2)

*There were 90 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

1. Results in the national tests at the end of Year 2 have shown an improving underlying trend that is at least in line with figures nationally. Standards in reading in the 2002 tests were above those of all schools and in line with other schools in writing and mathematics. These standards are the same when compared with schools in similar contexts. Provisional results for 2003 show, however, that there has been a further overall improvement in reading and mathematics. There has also been a notable improvement in the numbers of pupils reaching a level above that expected for their age in all three areas of learning.
2. The majority of children who enter the nursery and reception classes do so with skills, knowledge and understanding that are generally below children of that age. Cohorts of pupils vary and the one entering Year 1 in 2000 had a significantly higher proportion of pupils with special educational needs, that is about 45 per cent. Despite well-focused teaching, this was a major factor in the slight fall in performance in 2002. The effectiveness of the teaching supports well pupils' improving achievement. This is clearly shown that when the proportion of pupils with special educational needs is at the school's average level of just over a third, as in 2003, achievement overall shows a continuing rise. Evidence from the inspection indicates the upward trend is continuing.
3. The overall level of achievement in the reception classes is good and about half the children are well on their way to attaining the goals expected in all areas of personal, social and emotional development, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the



world, creative and physical development by the end of Year 1. A smaller proportion is on course to achieve the written communication goal, as too few opportunities are planned for children's early writing skills. The management of this aspect requires attention.

4. The leadership and management of the school are committed to the raising of all pupils' achievement. Following analysis of the performance of Year 2 pupils, after the introduction of the 'fast-tracking' procedures (setting), and the subsequent raising of standards, it was decided to introduce it to Year 1. Early indications are that it is successful in raising the achievement of higher attaining pupils as they are set more demanding tasks in English and mathematics. The very effective extra support, that is very small groups of five or six, is providing a sharper focus to the literacy and mathematical needs of lower attaining pupils and also improving their achievement. The pupils' motivation to achieve is not lost, particularly of the lower attaining pupils, as the 'fast-tracking' procedures are only used for two sessions out of five. As a result of this strategy, teachers are taking account of the varying levels of pupils' attainment when planning work in other subjects. This was seen, for example, to benefit the achievement of pupils in Year 1 in a good religious education lesson, when different tasks were planned for the re-telling of a parable, allowing all pupils to achieve well according to their capabilities.
5. The good provision that is made for pupils with special educational needs helps to ensure that they make good progress and feel included in all lessons. The number of pupils who speak English as an additional language is very small. Their language competency is similar to other pupils in their groups and they learn and achieve as well as their peers.
6. The majority of pupils read well or have good strategies for tackling unfamiliar words. Most make good progress in their reading as they are effectively supported. Skills in writing are less well developed but the school is trying a range of strategies to raise achievement. Good opportunities are provided for the pupils to write independently in other subjects, such as history and science. This is beginning to have an impact. The pupils' oral skills are generally well developed, mainly as a result of the focus the school has placed on this area of development. Standards of presentation and handwriting are insufficiently developed. Standards in mathematics are improving in all aspects of the subject and are now, overall, average. The pupils work well together in carrying out science investigations. However, these skills are not approached systematically and standards in this aspect of the subject are lower than their understanding of subject content.
7. Standards are good in art and design, history and singing. The pupils apply their literacy skills well in history and write imaginatively. Very effective teaching in art and design contributes to the love and understanding the pupils have for the subject. The pupils' knowledge, skill and understanding of ICT are below average. This is partly due to the lack of resources set within an appropriate location and that basic skills are not being built from an early enough age. This results in a skills deficit and, for example, an ability of the pupils to use ICT to support their work in other subjects.

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils have very positive attitudes to school and learning. They find learning exciting.
- The school's strategies for promoting good behaviour, both in classrooms and at play, are successful in achieving a very positive learning environment.
- Planning for pupils' personal development very effectively ensures a pleasing growth in maturity and positive relationships.
- Attendance is below average.

## Commentary

8. Although higher than at the time of the last inspection, attendance is below average and has fallen over the last year. This is partly because of the difficult social circumstances of some families that impact on their children's attendance. In addition a high proportion of families take holidays during the school year. Unauthorised absence has reduced over the last year in response to the school's prompt follow-up procedures. The school does all it can to make parents aware of the impact of poor attendance on their children's learning. The punctual arrival of pupils ensures the day gets off to a good start.
9. Pupils enjoy their lessons and have very positive relationships with their teachers, whom they like and respect. They are keen to do well and show high levels of interest in lessons that are planned to stimulate and challenge. For example, all pupils in a mathematics lesson derived enormous enjoyment when their teacher used a cartoon character to consolidate learning. Some find it difficult to focus on their work for long periods, but respond very well to planning that takes this into account. They enjoy practical work and find the activities provided outside of lessons to support learning exciting, for example the World War 2 workshop and the 'historical fashion show' that also involved their parents. Behaviour, both in classrooms and around the school, is very good. Those spoken to during the inspection are confident of not being bullied and parents contributing views say instances are few and dealt with well. The few pupils with insufficiently well-developed self-discipline are managed well and so rarely slow learning for others. Pupils enjoy and take pride in helping with everyday routines, such as returning registers to the office and putting books and equipment away at the end of lessons.
10. Pupils respond very well to the positive environment created by the school in which their personal development flourishes. They are proud of the improvements to their surroundings, for example the Italian garden. They grow in self-esteem through awards that acknowledge all achievements. In lessons, they experience wonder as they learn, for example, that Plasticine can be made to float and sugar was seen to jump into the air when a drum was struck during a science lesson. During group time, known as circle time, they explore their own feelings and progressively develop the ability to listen with respect to those of others. They develop a strong sense of right from wrong, understanding school rules and abiding by them. In lessons, they work together well, sharing effectively and co-operating with each other. They play and socialise together well and with pleasing levels of give and take. There is harmony across the cultures represented in the school. Opportunities to visit museums and galleries, theatre productions and similar activities result in growing cultural awareness. Understanding of other faiths and cultures develops well through religious education. This is enhanced by parental support, for example an Indian cookery demonstration and tasting.

## Attendance

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

Authorised absence	
School data	5.9
National data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	
School data	0.1
National data	0.5

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

## Exclusions

### *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	329	0	0
White – any other White background	2	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	7	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	5	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	1	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	2	0	0
Chinese	2	0	0
Any other ethnic group	2	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	3	0	0

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

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

11. The school provides a **good** quality of education. As a result of the predominantly good teaching, the pupils learn and achieve well. Good provision is made for pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language; all are included in all aspects of the school's life. The curriculum is good and enriched by a range of stimulating opportunities and activities. Parents are appreciative of all the school does for their children. Links with the community are well developed.

### Teaching and learning

12. The great majority of the teaching is at least **good**. The quality of relationships in the school helps the pupils to become effective learners. The most effective teaching and learning is in reception and Years 1 and 2. Assessment lacks consistency but, overall, is satisfactory. The overall quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection and there was no unsatisfactory teaching observed.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The teachers create a very good working atmosphere in their classrooms and manage the pupils very well.
- Basic skills are taught well, particularly reading.
- The pupils work hard and generally concentrate well.
- Pupils with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language are supported well and taught effectively.
- The teachers and teaching assistants work very well together in their support of pupils' learning.
- There are insufficient planned opportunities for learning in the nursery.
- The assessment and tracking of pupils' progress are not consistent.

### Commentary

13. The teachers work hard to ensure that their pupils have a clear idea of the nature of the tasks or focus of the lesson. They also share with the pupils what they know well, do and understand and if the goal is achieved. In the best lessons observed, the teachers shared the focus of the lesson on, for example, the whiteboard in language that the pupils, with help, could read. To reinforce the task, it was also referred to at suitable points during the lesson. This strategy gives confidence to the pupils' learning and aids assessment of understanding. It is also one of the most significant factors in the continuing improvement in teaching and has been built on well since the last inspection. The overall quality of teaching, and the absence of unsatisfactory lessons, in this inspection, are shown in the table below.

**Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in [number] lessons**

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0 (0%)	4 (13%)	19 (61%)	8 (26%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

*The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons; figures in brackets show percentages where 30 or more lessons are seen.*

14. Additionally, as a result of this clarity of the learning requirements, the pace of most lessons is good as no time is lost to pupils wondering what they have to do. Add to this the very good way in which teachers manage their classes and very quickly a hardworking atmosphere is created. The pupils respond well to this situation, concentrating hard and seeking to produce their best. In a few lessons, however, the pupils' learning, especially for the lower attainers was hindered by the lack of demonstration of the actual task by the teacher.
15. The teachers know how to teach the basic skills of literacy and numeracy well. They are, for example, particularly successful in the teaching of reading. As a result, the pupils have a good grasp of how to build the sounds within words. A considerable degree of extra support is provided for the pupils, for example by using parents, who are well trained by the school, as reading assistants. The consistent approach to the teaching of reading is of great benefit to pupils' learning. In both mathematics and English, the school's 'fast-tracking', or setting procedures, have a beneficial impact on pupils' learning. By making teaching groups smaller, and providing increased support to the lower attaining pupils, basic skills are reinforced successfully. The teachers, in these whole-morning 'fast-track' sessions, plan very carefully to ensure there are changes of focus of tasks in order to maintain the capacity of learning. This aim is achieved successfully. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language benefit from the smaller group procedures. Other effective, well-managed and focused support and teaching ensures these pupils achieve their individual targets and make good progress.
16. The learning in the nursery and reception classes is helped by the establishment of good routines. The children understand what they are expected to do and the teaching fosters well their eagerness to learn. There is a strong emphasis on personal, social and emotional development and communication, language and literacy, which helps the children to settle quickly and to extend their frequently deficient vocabulary and language skills. As a result they become better learners. However, in the nursery, the teachers do not arrange sufficient opportunities for the children to work at tasks planned for them. In both the nursery and reception classes, the teachers very successfully encourage the children to respect each other, which contributes well to the ethos of the school.
17. The teachers plan their work well. This planning is shared with the classroom assistants who work extremely well with the teachers as a team. This very good co-operation has a very positive impact on pupils' learning. The teachers' planning provides opportunities for stimulation and enjoyment by the pupils; for example when all adults and children wobbled like jellies when working on the letter 'j'; well-reinforced later by the opportunity to make jelly.

18. The pupils are well known to their teachers. The teachers make daily assessments and evaluations of the pupils which are recorded in a variety of ways. This frequently leads to the modification of planning in the short term and is good practice. A number of mid- and end-of-year assessments are also made. However, the tracking of pupils' progress through the year is less well developed, hindering response to their need and the writing of evaluative and analytical annual reports. The process lacks sharpness and precision. This is a barrier to pupils' learning.

## **The curriculum**

Curriculum provision is **good** overall.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There is very good use of literacy across the curriculum.
- A good range of visits and visitors to support and enrich the curriculum.
- Good provision is made for pupils with special educational needs and those with English as a second language.
- Planning in the nursery and reception classes currently is not linked strongly enough to the early learning goals.
- Provision for ICT has improved but accommodation is currently inadequate.

### **Commentary**

19. The curriculum in the Foundation Stage is matched to the recommended areas for learning and is satisfactory and in Years 1 and 2 it is broadly balanced, has a number of strengths and is good. The school provides a wide range of interesting and worthwhile opportunities to complement the curriculum and extend and enrich the children's experiences in learning. As a result, pupils' personal development is very good and attention is given to ensure that the curriculum is inclusive and meets the needs of all pupils.
20. The curriculum meets all statutory requirements including those for religious education and personal and social education. Planning for Years 1 and 2 is good and monitored effectively by the curriculum manager, priorities are linked to the development plan and opportunities are made for further training for staff. Curriculum co-ordinators make good use of national guidance materials and provide good guidance for all year groups. In the Foundation Stage planning is based around topics and insufficient account has been taken in matching the early learning goals to these topics before teaching, to ensure a balanced coverage for all areas. The curriculum is subject to appropriate review by the co-ordinators on a regular basis.
21. The teaching of literacy and numeracy has embraced the best elements from the national strategies and literacy is given much emphasis across the curriculum. This has impacted well on pupils' speaking and listening and reading skills. However, insufficient emphasis has been given to the teaching of early writing skills. The school has been innovative in its introduction of the 'fast track' system for teaching literacy and numeracy. This involves the children in each year group being split into four groups according to ability and focusing on literacy for one whole morning and then numeracy for another. The intention is to enable greater coverage in more depth, for example as a part of the strategy to improve writing. This has, in general, been successfully matched to the needs of the pupils. However, great care is taken to ensure that pupils' interest is sustained and that the pace of teaching and learning does not slow by changes in activities during these long sessions.
22. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good and these pupils benefit from the well skilled learning support assistants who help these pupils to access whole class work. They keep the pupils focused and help them to contribute to class discussions through

prompts and extended questioning. Children for whom English is an additional language are well monitored and they achieve well.

23. The transfer from Year 2 to the junior school is well managed with opportunities provided for visits to new classes and for staff to exchange information prior to transfer. This ensures a smooth transition for the children.
24. The school makes good provision for school visits and visitors which enrich the curriculum and contribute to the pupils' social and cultural development. These include visits to the Talking Pictures exhibition at the National Gallery and a performance of The Nutcracker at Covent Garden. The school makes good use of local resources to enrich pupils' learning. A visit to Hever Castle provided inspiration for the school's recently completed Italian Garden. Music and theatre groups also feature extensively in enhancing the curriculum and extending the children's experiences.
25. Classroom accommodation and supporting areas, both inside and out, are safe, spacious and well maintained. They effectively support the needs of the age range taught. However, the current ICT provision makes it very difficult for a whole class of children to be taught effectively. There is suitable access for those with disabilities. The school is well resourced. The staff have a good range of qualifications, including two pianists, and a wide and balanced range of experience to meet the needs of the curriculum.

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

The provision for pupils' care is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Staff know pupils well and are liked and trusted by them. They are confident of being able to share problems with adults at the school and teachers respond to their needs well.
- Classroom assistants are well briefed and provide strong support for pupils in lessons, ensuring difficulties are dealt with swiftly and well.
- Well-planned guidance in personal, health and social education, circle time and religious education support the personal development of pupils well.
- Induction arrangements ensure pupils settle quickly and happily into the nursery and experience few problems in transferring to the reception class in the main school.

### **Commentary**

26. The school is aware of health and safety requirements and key staff have received suitable training. Premises are kept in a good state of repair and there is close attention to security. There is effective supervision of pupils, both in classrooms and while they are at play. Regular checks on equipment and appliances used in the school fully meet requirements although some partitions in the nursery are currently unstable. There are effective arrangements to deal with first aid emergencies and the administration of prescribed medicines. Child protection procedures are suitably in place and the headteacher ensures all adults working at the school know what to do should a problem arise. The school co-operates fully with the support services where needed, providing reports and attending case conferences as required. The person with responsibility for child protection regularly attends briefings on the latest guidance and subsequently takes time in staff meetings to relate this to staff.
27. Home visits, together with effective arrangements for children's induction into the nursery, ensure they settle into school well. Their subsequent transfer to the reception class is suitably planned to minimise concerns. Pupils' relationships with adults at the school, across the age range, are based on high levels of trust. Those pupils interviewed say the best thing about their school is their teachers because they are friendly and easy to talk to. This results in them being confident about sharing problems when needed. It also enables teachers to establish

pupils' views and opinions well, through, for example, circle time and every day interaction. Classroom assistants are briefed well and know pupils individually. This enables them to provide effective support. Pupils usually know behavioural targets well, but are less consistently sure of those related to learning. Where specialist support is required, this is usually identified and recruited at an early stage. A suitable range of topics is covered within personal, health and social education (PHSE) to provide effective guidance and support for pupils at this stage of development. It includes understanding the community of which they are a part. Arrangements for pupils transferring to Year 3 are sound and provide for an induction visit during the previous term.

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

The school's links with parents are **good** overall.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Parents are very positive about the school and confident of teachers' availability to provide information and respond to concerns.
- Good levels of support in classrooms from suitably trained parents have a positive impact on how well pupils learn.
- Good involvement of parents and the wider community in many activities that support learning outside the classrooms and in fundraising through the 'Friends' association.
- Insufficient analysis for parents in annual progress reports about what their children know, understand and can do.
- Information in the governors' annual report and, particularly, the prospectus, is not presented in a way that promotes parental understanding as well as it should.

### **Commentary**

28. Parents are positive about the school and what it provides and achieves. They are particularly appreciative of their access to teachers, enabling early resolution of concerns. They are interested in their children's work and attendance at consultations about progress is high. The many adults who provide support in classrooms are given guidance with helping children to read enabling them to do this with confidence. Several parents have studied for the classroom assistant's certificate and this enhances their support. Although the school has no regular routine of consulting parents or pupils, those with children in the reception class have recently been asked about the success of transfer arrangements from the nursery. Parent and child art classes, and sessions about managing challenging behaviour, encourage parental involvement.
29. The prospectus is unattractive as a means of communicating with parents and potential pupils. Annual progress reports give good information about work covered and a suitable evaluation of personal development. What children know, understand and can do, their progress, relative strengths and areas for development are less consistently well analysed and reported. The impact of poor attendance on children's learning is made clear. Some parents regret the practice of providing reports at the very end of the school year without formal arrangements for consultation before the holidays and subsequent class changes. The school offers parents the opportunity of two formal consultations with their children's teachers at other times of the year.
30. The 'Friends of Featherby' association organises a range of very successful fundraising events. It supports learning well, for example through the purchase of library books, curtains for the hall, stage equipment and playground enhancement. It is organised by four dedicated friends, and parents recruit good support from parents when needed for individual events. Although valuing the events held by the Friends of Featherby, a few parents are not fully aware of its status as their own parents' association.

31. The community is used well as a learning resource. A wide range of trips and visits, together with visiting theatre productions, enhance classroom learning and widen horizons. Local people are welcomed into the school and support events such as the 'Summer Ball,' historical fashion show, harvest festival and adult carol singing. Pupils participate in the infant schools' music festival. As part of its Education Action Zone activities an exhibition of World War 2 artefacts was organised with community support. The school has suitable links with other schools in the area. Sixth form students help with Year 2 physical education as part of their sports leaders award. The school offers work experience placements and provides a base for some local staff development. Pupils from a local special needs school are welcomed as part of their re-integration into mainstream education.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Leadership and management are **good** overall. The management of the large number of pupils with special educational needs is very effective.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The headteacher provides effective leadership. It has created a good ethos for learning in which standards have improved during the recent years.
- Governors are effective. They know the strengths and weaknesses of the school and are committed to providing a better education for all pupils in the school.
- Management is good. As a result the school systems, including the management of finance, run efficiently.
- The leadership role of subject co-ordinators is not developed as well as it should be.

### **Commentary**

32. The headteacher's vision, based on 'learning, love and laughter' has created a positive climate for learning. Pupils have responded very well to the very supportive and caring environment with very good attitudes and orderly behaviour in and outside the classes. As a result, the quality of learning and pupils' standards of achievement have gone up during the recent years. The headteacher attaches significant importance to good relationships at all levels and has secured a team of well-motivated teaching and non-teaching staff. The headteacher and the deputy headteacher work very well as a driving force and complement each other's strengths. They have created a committed team of senior managers, which includes year leaders, and they manage the school effectively. Relationships with parents are good and they feel that the children are in good hands in terms of the management of their education. The leadership of subject co-ordinators is not as strong and they are not yet in a position to implement developments in their subject areas as well as they could be. Performance management is satisfactory. However, targets lack a common approach to improving standards. Innovation is satisfactory. New initiatives, such as setting three classes in four sets for one full morning session a week for literacy and numeracy, are tempered with tried and tested experiences that maintain stability. The school values each pupil and is committed to providing equitable opportunities for learning to all pupils. This commitment is demonstrated by enhancing the number of support staff to at least one for each classroom.
33. Strategic planning is satisfactory. Some aspects are well thought through, for example, the need for better ICT facilities and subsequent financial planning for building a new computer suite with enhanced facilities. However, what could be done to improve pupils' capability in ICT with the present facilities is not thought through as imaginatively as it could be. The school's improvement plan is sound and the school is looking out for a better format. The issues have been identified to improve the quality of education and raise standards. The school has made satisfactory improvements on issues identified in the previous inspection for development.
34. Governance of the school is good. The governors have done the expected training and are clear about their critical and supportive role. They know the school's strengths and weaknesses well.



They have good working relationships with the headteacher and teaching staff. They oversee that money is spent appropriately. They are committed to education that caters for the needs of all pupils and have put in place all the policies and procedures that are required legally. The usual committees are in place. They look at the results and the curriculum to ensure that the pupils get a deal that they deserve, and this places them in a strong position to see the important issues in the way ahead.

35. The school's management procedures are well established. The office staff is well informed of the school's expectations and make a very effective contribution to its running, including the use of ICT for routine processes. Required financial procedures are followed. The carry forward is large but it is clearly committed to planned projects, such as a new computer suite and relocation of the nursery. The school provides good value for money.

## Financial information

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

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	793,941
Total expenditure	783,234
Expenditure per pupil	3,030

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	120,239
Balance carried forward to the next	131,936

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

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

36. Children enter the nursery in the September or January in the term before their fourth birthday. The children's attainment on entry is generally below average with a wide range of ability. The Foundation Stage co-ordinator is managing the area satisfactorily and is in the process of implementing the new curriculum. However, insufficient time is given to liaison between the nursery and reception classes and assessments, record keeping and tracking systems still need to be refined. At present, there are no assessment arrangements in place as children enter the nursery and this is a weakness of the admission procedure.
37. Liaison between the reception class staff and nursery staff is infrequent and, consequently, underdeveloped. Although planning is scrutinised by the co-ordinator it is not systematic and does not ensure consistency of provision between the nursery and reception classes nor a balance of all areas of learning taught over the year. In sessions seen, there were observations of children completed by staff, although the recording of these was not consistently linked to the stepping stones and early learning goals. The physical distance between the nursery and main school building does little to support links and continuity between the nursery and reception class staff.
38. The Foundation Stage co-ordinator has begun to link the Foundation Stage curriculum well to the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies for the children in the reception classes. However, this has not yet been fully accomplished. A range of teacher-directed and self-selected activities is available. However, there is an insufficient level of challenge for the older children in the nursery in the term before they transfer to the reception classes which hinders their subsequent learning.
39. The nursery has an interesting and stimulating outdoor area with a range of surfaces and levels for the children to explore. The quality of provision for outdoor play for reception children has been improved since the last inspection. There is now a well-planned and well-resourced outside play area where play is effectively structured.

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

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

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

- Teaching and support staff establish good relationships with the children.
- Teaching and support staff foster an eagerness to learn in the children particularly in the reception classes.
- Good opportunities are provided for children to develop independent skills.
- There are insufficient opportunities provided for the youngest children to work alone or in small groups on work planned for them by the teacher.

#### **Commentary**

40. Routines in the nursery and reception classes are well-established and the organisation of resources is helpful in developing the children's independent learning skills. Children were seen choosing from resources within the classroom and always being treated with respect and interest by the adults working with them. This approach increases the children's self-esteem and confidence.

41. There are good resources for indoor activities in both the nursery and the reception classes and they are well organised and cared for in the reception classes. The children have a clear knowledge of clearing-up procedures and help to put things away at the end of each session. In so doing they develop a sense of care and respect for their environment from the beginning of their schooling. In the nursery, the organisation of the room to accommodate wet activities such as painting, sand and water is good. During one observed session, the large room was particularly noisy at one end when the youngest children were settling down to discuss what they had done. The partitions used were ineffective at reducing noise and are unstable for young children. The current organisation of the room is not helpful in providing for purposeful activities and more direction and guidance for the older children as they prepare to transfer to the reception classes.
42. Children are taught to understand the difference between right and wrong and inappropriate behaviour is explained and corrected. Snack time in the nursery is used well to reinforce recognition of name. It is a calm and well-organised time of the day where children are careful of each other and able to take turns. They show a good deal of respect and care for each other. Most children are likely to achieve the early learning goals.

## **COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children achieve well at speaking and listening.
- Every opportunity is taken to reinforce language skills.
- Writing skills are developing too slowly.

### **Commentary**

43. Children enter the nursery with communication skills below those expected for their age. A proper emphasis is put on speaking and listening skills and these develop well with the children able to express themselves clearly in both individual and group situations. This emphasis is continued through the reception classes with the children developing a wide vocabulary which they are able to use appropriately in different situations and for a range of purposes.
44. Children are keen to participate in group time talking about what they learned in the previous lesson, joining in rhymes and listening attentively to a story. These activities are generally led well with the emphasis on developing vocabulary.
45. Reception children make good progress with their knowledge of letter sounds. They participate well in lessons, for example in one class they were exploring the letter 'j' and all stood up wobbling like jelly which made the session effective energetic and fun; the children contributed a range of suitable words all starting with 'j'. In the nursery, there are planned opportunities for letter sound work and a letter sound table for the 'letter of the week', although this was not used in the sessions observed.
46. Writing skills are developing, but too slowly in comparison with the speaking and listening skills. In the nursery there are too few opportunities, both planned and children's own choice, for writing and fine motor activities such as tracing. Differentiation of tasks, especially for the children preparing to transfer to the reception class in September, is limited, with resources to encourage children to choose to write not readily available. It is unlikely that many children will achieve the early learning goals in written communication but most should orally.
47. In both the nursery and reception classes, where there are a number of children with special educational needs and a few with English as a second language, these children were included

in all of the activities on offer and were supported well in their learning by effective learning support staff.

## **MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Lessons are well planned.
- Basic number skills are reinforced at every opportunity.

### **Commentary**

48. Children enter the nursery with mathematical skills that are below those expected for children of this age. The teachers use every opportunity to reinforce the development of these early skills and the children soon have a wide repertoire of number rhymes and songs as a result of good lesson planning. Opportunities are also used to practise early counting skills and the children's early mathematical vocabulary is developed well. This work is continued when the children enter the reception class where the children experience a wide range of practical activities that secure their number knowledge, working with numbers up to ten. Children in the reception classes are also able to name a range of simple shapes and describe their main features. They have many opportunities for exploring these, helping them to recognise some of these in the environment and, therefore, consolidate their learning. A good majority is on course to achieve the early learning goal.

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

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- A wide range of well-planned experiences.
- Good play facilities for inside and outside activities.
- The teaching of basic computer skills are insufficiently developed.
- The environment of the nursery does not provide enough stimulation for the children's interest in the world or for language development.

### **Commentary**

49. Children enter the nursery with limited general knowledge and understanding of the world around them. The adults working with the children have a good understanding of many of the experiences needed to develop this area of learning and provide a good range of opportunities for the children's development. Although some support is given to the children when using the computer, standards achieved are below those expected at this age.
50. Opportunities are planned by the teacher to extend their learning, for example the children in the reception classes enjoyed a demonstration of Indian cookery given by a grandparent and they were able to ask a range of relevant questions. They were keen to taste the food, talk about their likes and dislikes, and showed a good awareness of the differences in clothing and language. Only about half the children are likely to achieve the early learning goals, mainly due to deficient skills in ICT.

## **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in physical development is **good**.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good.
- There is good provision for outdoor activities.

## Commentary

51. Children enter school with the physical development expected for their age. Children in both the nursery and the reception classes have regular access to well-resourced outdoor areas. In the nursery the children enjoy exploring the many levels, surfaces and equipment in the outside area. They gain special awareness using the range of bikes and equipment available. The children in the main school are keen to use the school hall and are able to explore the space available using a good range of imaginative movements. As a result their learning is good.
52. Good teaching ensures that opportunities are provided for the development of smaller movements through well-resourced role-play areas where children can be seen making up and sustaining story ideas. Water play is enthusiastic, with the children given the opportunity to bath the class dolls. Construction materials are used well to refine these smaller movements, as are malleable materials and small tools. Virtually all the children are well on course to achieve the early learning goal.

## CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

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

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children's musical and singing skills are well developed.
- A good range of painting and artwork skill is developed.

## Commentary

53. The environment is bright and stimulating in the reception classes where children's work is displayed well. Good opportunities are provided for children to develop their creative skills. The best of these are through music and art. Children in the reception classes have a large number of songs which they are able to sing well. They enjoy exploring the sounds various instruments make and are able to identify the sound and name the instrument in a simple but imaginative game. They enjoy exploring paint and other materials for drawing and illustrating and are able to produce good observational drawings because of the stimulation provided by the teachers.
54. The children in both the nursery and reception classes like the 'home corners' where they enjoy acting out known stories and creating and sustaining their own story activities; the 'home corners' are well resourced. The quality of relationships enables the children to sustain these activities successfully. The children's creativity is supported and provided for well through the very good teaching, so the majority are on course to achieve the early learning goal.

## SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGE 1

### ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in reading are above average.
- The subject is well led and managed.
- English is used very effectively across the curriculum.
- Pupils' writing skills are underdeveloped.

#### Commentary

55. Pupils have a good range of opportunities to practise their speaking and listening skills across the curriculum and are able to articulate well in discussions, make predictions and use spoken language to extend all English activities. They respond enthusiastically to lessons and are keen to join in class and group discussions. Teachers are skilled in their teaching and questioning skills, developing well the pupils' confidence in using vocabulary beyond that expected for pupils of their age. The results of the 2002 national tests show standards are above average in reading and average in writing when measured against all and similar schools. The trends over the last three years show the school is at least in line with national trends. These results are similar to those at the previous inspection. The provisional results for the 2003 national tests show further improvement with reading and writing. In reading, a number of pupils perform well at the higher level with girls performing better than boys. This is a change from the last inspection when performance was broadly similar.
56. Pupils with special educational needs are provided for well and have clear educational development plans that address pupils' difficulties in English. Pupils whose performance is above average are given extension activities that are well matched to their ability. Pupils for whom English is not their first language perform well and make good progress in both reading and writing skills. The very good support staff are used effectively to help pupils access whole-class activities and discussion time and also the group tasks. This was seen in Year 2 where pupils were supported well enabling them to contribute very good questions and answers in discussion time during a religious education lesson.
57. Standards of reading in Years 1 and 2 are good overall. In Year 2, average and above average pupils are able to read fluently using appropriate expression, letter sounds and pictorial clues. They discuss the character and setting of stories and make sensible suggestions about how the story might end. As a result of the teachers' good knowledge and understanding of the teaching of reading, for example phonic and whole-word skills, the pupils make good progress in their reading.
58. The school uses a range of suitable strategies to develop English skills including a 'fast track' where Years 1 and 2 spend one whole morning per week focusing on English activities of different levels of difficulty. The year group is taught according to ability on these mornings and additional staff ensure smaller more focused groups particularly for lower attaining pupils. Where this works well, pupils are able to sustain a task for the whole session and make good progress, for example where the teachers' planning ensures a range of different tasks during the session. Working in small groups has a good effect on pupils' English skills.
59. In Years 1 and 2, pupils are given a range of suitable opportunities to develop their writing skills in most areas of the curriculum, for example writing up their science investigations. Average and above average pupils are able to record their learning in complete sentences using imaginative adjectives effectively. They can write in different styles for a range of purposes and

audience. However, occasionally some teachers miss opportunities to demonstrate good writing and insufficient emphasis is given to drafting and re-drafting resulting in some poor standards of letter formation, spelling, punctuation and presentation. Pupils do not make as much progress in writing as they do in reading.

60. Teachers have a good subject knowledge and the teaching of English is good throughout the school. Pupils are made aware of learning objectives and success criteria in each lesson and respond to a range of teaching strategies with sustained concentration. Teachers are innovative and use questioning skills well to develop the children's vocabulary and understanding, enabling them to contribute well in oral work and reading skills. In the instances where teaching of writing is very good, teachers set a brisk pace, model writing with the pupils and have high expectations. There is a clear focus on improving pupils' performance in English and good teaching supports and challenges pupils to make good progress in this subject.
61. There are good resources to support the teaching of English. The wide range of books in the library and in the classrooms supports both boys' and girls' reading ensuring that pupils make good progress in reading. There is a wide range of writing materials available. However, there needs to be a more focused approach to using these to develop the pupils' writing. The well-resourced school library supports effectively the structured reading materials available in the school. There is a parents' section in the library to support community reading and thereby, indirectly, the pupils' learning.
62. The subject is managed effectively by an enthusiastic co-ordinator who has produced an appropriate policy and scheme of work. Monitoring includes work scrutiny and lesson observation and tracking although there is not a systematic approach to this at present. The co-ordinator has a number of planned initiatives already arranged for the continuing development of this subject area this year. The school's provision for literacy is good and the quality of teaching enables the pupils to make good progress.

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

63. Every opportunity is taken to develop English skills in all areas of the curriculum. Speaking and listening skills are practised well and teachers are skilled in their use of questioning, enabling the pupils to respond effectively in class discussions, make predictions and discuss cause and effect well. A range of recording skills is developed and pupils write effectively for a range of purposes. This was particularly evident in the history work seen, where pupils had written a diary, a newspaper article and a descriptive story based on the Fire of London. In lessons observed, skills taught in the literacy sessions were reinforced well in all other subjects covered, for example in science where the pupils are frequently required to record their own observations.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching and learning are good.
- Leadership and management are effective.
- Support assistants are used effectively.
- Teachers do not provide enough models for pupils to learn from.
- Insufficient use is made of ICT.

## Commentary

64. Current standards are average. Overall, pupils achieve equally well in all areas of mathematics. Performance of seven-year-olds has risen from well below average at the previous inspection in 1999 to average or above average from 2000 onwards. Provisional results for 2003 indicate further improvement. There is a significant increase in the number of pupils reaching levels above expectations for their age. The school's 2002 results are average in comparison with similar schools. Boys and girls attain similar results.
65. The quality of teaching and learning is good. This helps pupils to achieve well. Teachers' knowledge of the subject is secure. They use this effectively to plan their lessons and explain mathematical ideas clearly. They offer pupils challenging work and use effective strategies that enable pupils to learn and achieve well. Most successful lessons make learning of mathematics fun. For example, learning of place value, including that of zero, was successively made more challenging for all pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and pupils who speak English as an additional language. The lesson was concluded with two digit numbers on a cartoon which pupils were asked, according to their ability, to rub off. This also allowed the teacher to assess learning and exemplify repeatedly for those who were finding place value of digits difficult to grasp. Classroom assistants provide effective support to individuals or groups of pupils allowing the teacher to focus on another group and oversee progress of others. In a less successful lesson, learning of place value was hampered because the teacher did not sufficiently explain the meaning of splitting or partitioning nor provided enough models of what it means to split or partition two-digit numbers. Occasionally, explanatory sessions are too long for pupils to maintain a good level of concentration. At most other times, however, they show positive attitudes and behaviour is at least good which helps them to learn productively and achieve well.
66. Leadership and management of the subject are good. The co-ordinator monitors the subject well and supports colleagues effectively. Assessment criteria and recording of achievement is improving. These now link better with the planned learning intentions. The achievement record is updated each term to track progress. Effective deployment of support assistants has made the curriculum more accessible to pupils. Teaching three classes in four sets for one morning session a week (fast tracking) is having a positive impact on learning. It provides time for more challenging curriculum for each set to build on during the week. However, the use of ICT is ineffective with very little use made in the subject. Improvement since the previous inspection is satisfactory.

## Mathematics across the curriculum

67. The development of numeracy in other subjects is satisfactory. There was evidence, for example, of pupils recording their science observations using some well-drawn graphs. In registrations the pupils all 'work out' the number in attendance after noting the absentees.

## SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The overall quality of teaching is good.
- Pupils are enthusiastic and try very hard.
- The pupils achieve well.
- The development of pupils' investigative and experimental skills is not systematic.
- The assessment and tracking of pupils' progress lacks consistency.



## Commentary

68. In the lessons observed, overall standards are average as was the case in the previous inspection. As a result of the good quality of the teaching, the pupils achieve well. This also applies to pupils with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language, owing to the effective support they receive. About a fifth of the pupils are on course to exceed national expectations. This is broadly similar to the findings of the last inspection. The sense of wonder shown by the pupils, in response to some aspects of the investigative work, planned by the teachers, contributes significantly to their spiritual development, for example when they found they could make Plasticine float, or cause sugar to jump off a drum through vibrations.
69. The teachers have good subject knowledge, manage their classes extremely well and enjoy good relationships with their pupils. Consequently, this creates an atmosphere in which pupils' learning and achievement are good. In lessons, the teachers' question and answer skills are good. They respect and listen to all pupils' responses and are careful to ensure that all groups of pupils are involved in discussions. This mutual respect is a significant contributor to the overall effectiveness of pupils' learning. The clear emphasis given by the teachers to ensuring that the learning intentions are well understood by the pupils, helps to maintain a brisk pace in the lesson, as no time is wasted when individual or group activities begin. This strategy is particularly effective when the learning intention is expressed in 'child friendly' language. In practical investigations, the pupils exhibit good levels of collaboration and co-operation when using the resources, try hard and show pleasure in success. The teaching assistants are particularly effective in supporting the pupils' learning, especially when group investigative work is undertaken. They also support well the maintenance of high standards of behaviour.
70. The drive by the school to raise the standards of pupils' writing is helped considerably by the teachers who provide regular opportunities in science for them to record their own observations. This is done in a variety of ways and is at its best when the writing tasks are modelled, as many pupils have weak vocabularies. Evidence from previous work indicates that little of the work is planned to meet the needs of different levels of attainment. This is a weakness. The work also shows, however, that the teachers plan an appropriate range of scientific experiences for their pupils. Results from these investigations are recorded in a variety of ways, including simple charts and graphs. This is good practice and reinforces their mathematical understanding. However, insufficient opportunities are planned for experimental work, especially to support the important notion of scientific prediction. The teachers appropriately take every opportunity to extend the pupils' technical language, for example the use of 'negative' and 'positive' when working with batteries.
71. The science co-ordinator is newly appointed to the school. She is currently reviewing the present curriculum framework. Two opportunities have already been provided for her to monitor teaching in the subject. This is part of the school's effective strategy to use her strong subject background in the drive to raise standards. She has already identified the need to place investigative and experimental work at the core of the science curriculum and has a clear view of the direction the subject needs to take. Currently, the skills in this aspect of the subject are not planned effectively in a systematic and progressive way. Similarly, assessment procedures lack consistency and do not allow for the effective tracking of individual pupils' progress, curriculum modification in the light of experience and sufficiently analytical reporting to parents.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Leadership and management of the subject are good.
- The school is beginning to make better use of its computers.
- Standards are not yet high enough
- Insufficient use of ICT is made in other subjects.

### **Commentary**

72. Current standards are close to, but below, what is expected of pupils at the age of seven. However, the teachers' increasing expertise in the subject and use of good quality resources are beginning to improve standards. Boys and girls use computers with similar competency. Pupils use or lack of use of computers at home has a significant effect on their standards. In a survey carried out by the school, about one in three pupils in reception class have had no access to computers at home. These pupils are far behind the others in their ICT skills. They need intensive support to bring their very basic skills to a level that will help them to build on these at a rate that would help them to reach expected standards by the age of seven.
73. Teaching and learning are satisfactory and are promoting sound achievement. In one lesson, good planning, clear instructions and confident demonstrations helped Year 2 pupils to achieve well in creating a picture in the style of Kandinsky. The teacher assessed pupils' progress efficiently and attended to their difficulties, such as drawing of lines completely to avoid leakage of colour. All pupils made good progress, one in four reaching the expected standards. The lesson was concluded with successful evaluation of what pupils had learnt and how they could improve. The help of support assistants was vital in ensuring that all pupils made similar progress. Teachers' developing confidence is helping them to use the subject language more critically to raise standards.
74. Leadership and management of the subject are good. The subject co-ordinator has identified strengths and areas for development, for example training in the use of a digital camera and camcorder, weaknesses in the curriculum and tightening of assessment. The school plans to build a new suite with improved breadth of the facilities as part of their strategy to raise standards. Improvements in the subject since the last inspection, for example increasing the number of computers, is satisfactory.

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

75. Very little use is made of ICT in other subjects to assist learning. Currently, most pupils have insufficient skills to do this.

## **HUMANITIES**

76. Inspectors examined work from the previous year. They spoke with pupils and curriculum co-ordinators. Three lessons in religious education and one in geography were observed. No history lessons were available for observation.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

77. There is not enough evidence to judge standards at the end of Year 2. Observation of a Year 1 lesson shows pupils have expected standards and their achievement is satisfactory. The majority of them understand the relationship between the weather and clothes that one needs

to wear. They know appropriate weather symbols, for example for sunny, cloudy and rainy weather.

78. Teachers plan and prepare lessons well. Support and resources are used effectively to engage pupils in gaining new knowledge and understanding. Management of pupils is effective and contributes to orderly learning. Use of literacy is not as effective as it could be. Management and leadership of the subject are satisfactory.

## **HISTORY**

79. No history lessons were observed during the inspection and judgements are based on discussion with the subject co-ordinator and scrutiny of pupils' work. Standards are above expectations and this is an improvement since the last inspection. The scheme of work provides a well-planned curriculum based on national guidance and this enables year groups to plan effectively to ensure shared learning objectives. Pupils apply their literacy skills well to researching the topics covered. From discussion with the pupils, it is clear that the wide range of activities and the interesting visits and visitors promote their learning. Pupils in Year 2 are beginning to develop a sense of the passage of time and are able to place the Great Fire of London, the Second World War and a number of famous people and key events on a timeline. The pupils have been challenged to explore these events from a range of perspectives and are able to compare and contrast information from a range of sources.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

Provision in religious education is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching is good and teachers use a range of suitable activities to engage the pupils.
- The subject does much to explore emotions and moral issues.
- The respect shown to pupils by teachers contributes to the spirituality of lessons.
- There are inconsistent levels of challenge within classes in the same year group.

### **Commentary**

80. Pupils' attitudes and values are in keeping with the findings of the previous inspection. The subject co-ordinator provides good guidance and support to colleagues and has increased the range of artefacts available to support the subject since the previous inspection.
81. The well-planned curriculum enables pupils to respond well and achieve standards broadly in line with the locally agreed syllabus. Pupils' understanding is enhanced by their very good use of speaking and listening skills. Those with special educational needs are supported well, by effective learning support assistants and through activities well matched to their abilities enabling them to achieve well.
82. The main festivals from the Christian calendar, events from the Jewish and Hindu calendars and other faiths are all covered and do much to promote tolerance, understanding and racial harmony. The use of art and literacy skills are used effectively to illustrate Old and New Testament stories with teachers' skilful use of questioning skills helping pupils explore some of the difficult concepts, feelings and underlying meanings within these, for example the story of Moses.
83. Teachers' knowledge and understanding of the subject is secure and lessons have clear learning objectives. Literacy and drama skills are used well to enhance this subject. Pupils show in their recorded work a good knowledge, for example, of the patron saints of Britain. Drama techniques are used well to harness pupils' enthusiasm, in Year 1, where role-play is

used to bring important events such as baptisms to life, the pupils are eager and confident to perform in front of their peers. This effectively supports their learning.

84. The quality of relationships between pupils and also with the class teacher ensures success in pupils' learning and contributes to the spirituality of lessons and the ethos throughout the school. This supports their learning effectively.

## CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

85. As a result of the agreed foci of the inspection, and timetable arrangements, no lessons were seen in music and design and technology. It was possible to observe one lesson only in both physical education and art and design. The coverage in these subjects is appropriately based upon national guidance, and scrutiny of available evidence indicates that provision and standards are, at least, satisfactory.
86. The standard of **singing** in assembly and hymn practice was well above that normally expected for the pupils' age. The pupils sing in a well-modulated, tuneful way, keeping a good pulse and with an early appreciation of dynamics. There is clear enjoyment on the faces of the pupils as they sing. The school has staff with good musical knowledge and expertise and this is being used very well to give the pupils good experiences in this area of the musical curriculum. The musical experiences offered in the Foundation Stage are being built upon well in Years 1 and 2. The musical education of the pupils is also enhanced by the opportunities found in visits to, and participation in, concerts, the provision of violin lessons and choir, and the range of music played before and after assembly. The subject is well resourced.
87. On the basis of evidence provided by the pupils' previous work, that currently on display, and the imaginative and skilful painting observed in the lesson, standards in **art and design** are good. The pupils have a good appreciation that there are different styles of painting. They talk excitedly about which way up they would hang a Kandinsky painting in their bedroom. Work in the style of the artists, Mondrian and Van Gogh, show a good early understanding of different painting techniques. Pupils use collage and paper sculpture effectively and show good observational skills in pencil sketches. Co-ordination of the subject is good. The school has done well to raise the standard of singing and to maintain the improved standard of art noted in the previous report. As in music, the school successfully extends the pupils' artistic experiences by, for example, class visits to the National Gallery.
88. The school was criticised, in its first report, that physical skills acquired in the reception class were not always systematically built upon in Years 1 and 2. In the last report the situation had improved notably and, in the one observed lesson, it was clear that this trend had continued. The standards in this lesson were good. The pupils show considerable imagination and good bodily control when moving over, along and under a range of apparatus. All the pupils were keen to improve their performance and showed positive attitudes towards any of their peers called upon to demonstrate an activity. Positive attitudes towards the subject are also assisted by staff dressing appropriately. Co-ordination of the subject is effective. The key issue, raised in the last report, concerning the condition of the hall, and its adverse effect upon the regularity of physical education lessons, has been addressed very well and is having a positive impact on standards.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>3</b>
How inclusive the school is	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	4
Value for money provided by the school	3
<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>4</b>
Pupils' achievement	3
<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>	<b>2</b>
Attendance	5
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>	<b>3</b>
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	4
<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>3</b>
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	4
The effectiveness of management	3

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

