

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **THORNHILL LOWER SCHOOL**

Houghton Regis

LEA area: Bedfordshire

Unique reference number: 109504

Headteacher: Mrs A Packer

Lead inspector: Mr Brian Gosling

Dates of inspection: 10 –12 November 2003

Inspection number: 260610

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	First school
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 – 9 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	201
School address:	Grove Road Houghton Regis Dunstable Bedfordshire
Postcode:	LU5 5PE
Telephone number:	(01582) 863516
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Adrian Spicer
Date of previous inspection:	April 1999

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Thornhill Lower School is situated on the edge of a local-authority housing estate to the north of Houghton Regis, with pleasant, open countryside to the rear. There are 160 full-time pupils, and a further 82 children attend the nursery and reception classes part-time. There is a broadly similar number of boys and girls. Census information indicates that there is an element of social deprivation and the proportion of pupils who are eligible for free school meals is above the national average. Pupil mobility is high. The number of pupils at the school is falling due to external events, such as the closure of a major local employer, and this has necessitated the reorganisation of the school into mixed-age classes. Approximately 90 per cent of the pupils come from a white background and there are no pupils at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of pupils with special education needs is above average, and the proportion with Statements of Special Educational Need is broadly average. These pupils are not spread evenly around the school and some year groups have significantly more than other year groups. The school's records show that the attainment of children when they start at the school is variable, but overall it is well below the county average. There have been significant disruptions to the stability of the school staff recently as a result of a high level of long-term absence arising from staff illness.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
22453	Brian Gosling	Lead inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Creative, aesthetic, practical and physical subjects
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21059	Christine Power	Team inspector	Science Foundation Stage Special educational needs
24528	Garth Muton	Team inspector	English Humanities

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

Thornhill Lower School provides a **satisfactory** standard of education for its pupils that shows improvement in a number of areas. It is providing satisfactory value for money. Although standards are low, pupils' achievement is good. The quality of teaching and learning is variable but satisfactory overall, with almost half of the lessons being good or better. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good. The Foundation Stage curriculum provides a good start to school for the children and there is a good range of after-school clubs and other activities. The governing body carries out its duties well, and the leadership and management of the school are satisfactory overall, but the role of subject managers has not been organised sufficiently for them to be fully effective in raising standards. There have been significant barriers to achievement in the last few years. This includes the long-term absence of a number of staff due to illness, which has created challenges for the management of the school. There has also been a high level of pupil mobility due to the closure of a major local employer and the decision of some parents to move their children to other schools in preparation for the schools to which they will transfer. This has presented considerable challenges for the school.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The nursery provides a rich and stimulating start to school life.
- Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good because the school's provision for their personal development is good.
- Teaching has improved since the last inspection.
- There is a wide range of extra-curricular activities that enrich the curriculum.
- This is a caring school that provides a safe and secure learning environment for the pupils.
- The school has established good links with parents and the community.
- The governors have organised themselves effectively to fulfil their duties well.

However,

- Standards are not high enough, although they are rising more than in most schools.
- Roles have not been organised sufficiently for subject managers to be fully effective in raising standards.
- Assessments of what pupils have or have not learned are not used well enough.
- Curriculum planning does not take sufficient account of the classes with mixed-age pupils.
- The school day is not organised well enough.

The school was last inspected in 1999 and has made satisfactory improvement since then despite particular difficulties with staff illness and pupil mobility. Standards are higher in Year 4, but this group of pupils has been a high-attaining year group throughout their time in school, and younger year groups are not achieving such high standards. Nevertheless, the quality of teaching has improved, with less unsatisfactory teaching, some that is very good and almost half that is good or better. The provision for pupils' personal development has improved and so has the learning environment. In particular, the school has established an information suite that comprises the library and a computer suite, and improved the outdoor play areas. It has satisfactorily addressed the main areas for development identified in the last report, although more remains to be done with curriculum planning and the role of subject managers in the light of changes at the school.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Pupils' achievement is **good**. It is good in the Foundation Stage and satisfactory from Years 1 to 4. Children arrive at the school with attainment that is well below the county average. Some attain the goals they are expected to reach by the end of reception in all areas of learning. However, most children do not attain these goals, particularly in communication, language, literacy and mathematical development. Pupils' attainment in English and mathematics is below average at the

end of Year 2, but meets national expectations at the end of Year 4, and some pupils exceed them. Standards in information and communication technology and science meet national expectations at the end of Year 2 and Year 4. The school's results at the end of Year 2 rose dramatically in 2002 and fell just as dramatically in 2003. However, the 2002 group of pupils, who are currently in Year 4 has been an unusually high attaining group throughout the school. Results have generally been low, but there has been an improvement in writing and, most importantly, the school's results are rising more than in most schools nationally, even when the 2003 results are taken into account. One of the major reasons for the low results in 2003 is the large proportion of pupils with special educational needs in this year group.

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
Reading	E	C	E	E
Writing	D	A	C	B
Mathematics	C	A	E	E

*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' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are **good**. Their attitudes and behaviour are good as a result of the school's good provision for their personal development and the insistence of teachers on high standards of behaviour. Attendance is below average despite the school's encouragement because some parents do not do all they can to ensure that their children attend as often as possible.

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is **satisfactory**. Teaching is **satisfactory** overall, although it is good in the Foundation Stage and almost half of all lessons seen were good or better. Teachers maintain a positive learning environment in all classes and teaching assistants provide good support. However, time is not always used well and in too many lessons pupils are not expected to do enough to ensure that their rate of learning is as effective as it might be.

The school is amending its curriculum provision, which is satisfactory, to the changing needs of the pupils and changes in its organisation into mixed-age classes. A good range of after-school activities is provided for pupils. The school's care, guidance and support for pupils are good and good links have been established with parents and the local community.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are **satisfactory** overall. The work of the governing body is good and they support and challenge the school well. The headteacher has established a positive learning environment, but the role of subject managers is not organised well enough for them to be effective in raising standards of attainment.

## PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Pupils have very positive views about their school. They particularly like the support they get from the adults, learning new things and being trusted to do things on their own. Their major concerns are the behaviour and friendliness of other pupils. This is understandable and the number of comments about how much they enjoy playtimes indicates that the school is generally controlling this potential difficulty well. Parents are very supportive and there are no areas of significant concern.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- Raise standards, particularly in reading and mathematics.
- Develop the role of subject managers, so that they are fully effective in raising standards.
- Use assessment when planning lessons to meet the learning needs of pupils better.
- Revise curriculum plans to meet the learning needs of pupils in mixed-age classes.
- Review the organisation of the school day to make the best use of the time available for teaching.



## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

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

Achievement is good in the Foundation Stage and satisfactory in Years 1 to 4. Girls tend to do better than boys, which reflects the national picture. Standards in English and mathematics are below average at the end of Year 2 and most pupils meet national expectations at the end of Year 4, with some exceeding them.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve well in the Foundation Stage.
- Standards are not high enough in Years 1 to 4, although pupils' achievement is satisfactory.
- The trend in the school's results is rising more than in most schools.

#### Commentary

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	13.4 (15.8)	15.7 (15.8)
Writing	14.5 (16.0)	14.6 (14.4)
Mathematics	14.4 (18.0)	16.3 (16.5)

*There were 42 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

1. The school's results<sup>1</sup> in the national tests in 2003 fell sharply from the results in 2002, which, in turn, had risen sharply from the results in 2001. The group of pupils that took the national tests in 2002 was a particularly high-attaining year group and their results are the exception rather than the rule. Indeed the trend in the school's results is rising above the national trend, despite the low results in 2003.
2. Nevertheless, although pupils' achievement is satisfactory throughout Years 1 to 4, standards are not high enough in Years 1 and 2. Results in 2003 were well below the average both of all schools and of similar schools in reading and mathematics. Standards in writing were close to the national average and above the average of similar schools. The results of teacher assessments in science show that standards were a little below the national average and above the average of similar schools. The results in writing and science are encouraging. However, the low results need to be considered in the light of the high proportion of pupils with special educational needs in this group. Consequently, a significant proportion of the pupils did not attain the nationally expected Level 2<sup>2</sup> in all three tests. Also, the school has encountered

<sup>1</sup> On the school's results: An average points score provides schools with a single statistic with which to compare the overall grades attained by their pupils with the grades attained by pupils in other schools. At Key Stage 1, the National Curriculum levels of attainment are given a score. For example, in mathematics Level 1=9 points and Level 2=15 points, and so on. The average test score achieved by a school is calculated by adding up all the scores achieved by the pupils and then dividing by the number who took the test. These comparisons are the ones used in the figures printed in the summary of the report. When the percentage of pupils attaining a particular level is compared to that in other schools, this is stated clearly in the text.

<sup>2</sup> On Levels: The National Curriculum has been written on the basis that, by the end of Year 2, pupils are expected to attain Level 2 in all National Curriculum subjects. Those who achieve Level 3 are therefore attaining above nationally expected levels. It is a national expectation that all pupils should reach Level 4 by the end of Year 6. Pupils who reach Level 5 are therefore attaining above the nationally expected level for their age.

significant challenges in the last year, with high levels of staff absence due to illness and the high proportion of pupil mobility. Despite these difficulties a good proportion of pupils attained the higher Level 3 in reading, writing and science.

3. The school has analysed the results in 2003 to take account of the high proportion of pupils with special educational needs and to investigate the effects of the large percentage of pupils who were born in the summer. This analysis shows an improvement in the results of all three tests, particularly when the proportion of pupils with special educational needs is reduced to broadly average. Nevertheless, results in reading and mathematics remain low. The school has responded to the low results in 2003 by reorganising the classes and teachers to best meet the learning needs of the pupils. Action plans are also being implemented for English and mathematics. These measures are having a beneficial effect and inspection judgements are that standards of attainment in English and mathematics have improved but remain below average at the end of Year 2, and are meeting national expectations at the end of Year 4. Standards in science meet national expectations at the end of Year 2 and Year 4. Boys tend to do better than girls to an extent that is similar to the national picture. Nevertheless, the school is considering ways to improve the achievement of boys.
4. When children start at the school their attainment is well below the county average. They achieve well in the Foundation Stage and some reach the Early Learning Goals<sup>3</sup> expected of children of this age in all areas of learning by the time they enter Year 1. However, most children do not reach them by Year 1, particularly in language, literacy and mathematical development. Nevertheless, their good achievement in the Foundation Stage is due to the good teaching they are given, especially in the nursery, which provides a good start to school. Pupils' achievement in Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory and continues to be satisfactory in Years 3 and 4.
5. The school is establishing a system to monitor pupils' progress as they move through the school. This is in the early stages but is designed to ensure that all pupils' achievement is good and that they learn effectively despite low standards of attainment. Suitable attainment targets for the school have been agreed with the local education authority, and individual pupils are given targets in English and mathematics. However, these individual targets are not always sufficiently challenging.

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

Pupils have good attitudes to school. They behave well in lessons and around school and form good relationships with adults and each other. The overall development of children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness and understanding is good. Attendance is unsatisfactory.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good.
- Relationships are good throughout the school.
- Pupils' moral and social development is given a high priority.
- The attendance rate is too low.

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<sup>3</sup> On Early Learning Goals: QCA (Qualifications and Curriculum Authority) has produced a set of Early Learning Goals for children in the Foundation Stage of education. These outcomes are a set of skills, knowledge and understanding that children might be expected to achieve by the time they start the National Curriculum in Year 1 in six areas of learning: communication, language and literacy; mathematical development; knowledge and understanding of the world; creative development; physical development; and personal, social and emotional development. The Foundation Stage continues until pupils enter Year 1, when they begin Key Stage 1 of the National Curriculum.

## Commentary

### *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	137	0	0
White – any other White background	5	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	1	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	5	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	2	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	1	0	0
Black or Black British – African	1	0	0
Chinese	1	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	1	0	0

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

6. From when they first enter school in the nursery, children are set clear expectations of how they are to behave. Routines and procedures are consistently reinforced by all adults. Adults' respect for each other and co-operative ways of working provide good models for the children.
7. Pupils' behaviour and relationships are good, both in school and in the playground. The school has worked hard to establish a code of conduct that supports all pupils and this has particularly benefited the few with behavioural problems. 'Playground Friends' sensibly and maturely make sure that everyone is involved and feels secure during playtimes. Pupils act responsibly and have good attitudes to learning. In lessons, they can sustain attention and look after tools and materials. When teaching is less effective, pupils become bored and behaviour deteriorates. The school council takes an active part in the life of the school. It has influenced various developments, such as the provision of playground equipment and games. When things do go wrong, pupils understand what they must do. They enjoy lessons as well as activities offered outside the school day and they know that, if they want to participate, there is a good chance of doing so. These factors enable pupils to benefit fully from their time in the school. Arrangements for pupils' social development have improved since the last inspection and pupils have positive views of the help and support they receive in lessons to help them learn.
8. Moral values are demonstrated effectively in the everyday life of the school. Adults take time to explain why some actions are hurtful and they encourage pupils to consider the effect an action may have on someone else. This has a direct effect on their behaviour and relationships. Pupils are aware of different cultures and there are celebrations to mark major events in a variety of religions. Teaching in a range of subjects is beginning to incorporate and emphasise the traditions of other cultures. In lessons, opportunities for pupils' spiritual development are sometimes missed as there is insufficient time for reflection and the pursuit of personal thoughts and ideas.

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

Authorised absence	
School data	6.5
National data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	
School data:	0.1
National data	0.4

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

9. The school stresses the importance of full attendance in its brochure and monitors attendance and punctuality daily. However, some parents do not do enough to ensure that their children attend fully and this limits the achievement of pupils. Procedures to monitor pupil absence and lateness are in place.

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is good in the Foundation Stage and satisfactory in Years 1 to 4. Teaching is satisfactory overall and good in the Foundation Stage. The curriculum is organised suitably but does not fully meet the changing needs of the pupils and the organisation of the school. The care of the pupils and the links with parents are good.

### Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. For children in the Foundation Stage it is good. In the nursery, teaching is consistently good with features that are very good. Teaching is generally satisfactory in Years 1 to 4 but variable, and practices are inconsistent between classes and year groups. Most pupils' learning and progress are satisfactory. In the Foundation Stage assessment is good, but the use of assessment is unsatisfactory in Years 1 to 4.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection.
- Agreed practices are not implemented consistently.
- Teachers successfully promote good standards of behaviour.
- Teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve in lessons are not high enough.
- Time is not always used well.
- Teachers use resources, including teaching assistants, effectively.
- Assessment is not used well enough to inform future planning.

### Commentary

#### **Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 36 lessons**

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0 (0%)	1 (3%)	15 (41%)	18 (50%)	2 (6%)	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.*

10. Teaching has improved since the last inspection, particularly in English and in the Foundation Stage. There is significantly less unsatisfactory teaching and almost half of the lessons seen were good or better. However, there are inconsistencies in classroom practices in teaching and learning throughout the school. For example, expectations of pupils have been discussed and agreed and there are examples where whole-school training has supported these initiatives. However, the implementation of the negotiated strategies is insufficiently reviewed and improved. For example, although it is expected that learning intentions are clear and explained to pupils in a way that they understand, this is only achieved in some lessons.

11. Relationships between adults and pupils, and between pupils themselves, are strong. Encouragement and praise are frequent, pupils' efforts are rewarded and they are made to feel good about themselves. All pupils are equally valued. Routines and procedures are well established and this effectively supports pupils' behaviour. Even when pupils have become excited about an aspect of the lesson, teachers use a range of strategies to return to a calm, purposeful atmosphere that is conducive to learning. In the nursery, expectations of children's attitudes and behaviour are very high. They comfortably work in collaboration with each other, but they also maintain high levels of interest when working independently.
12. When pupils call out and lose attention and concentration, this is often the result of slow and laboured teaching or an uninteresting activity. When pupils' thinking and conversations wander from their tasks, this is usually because tasks are insufficiently challenging. Teachers' expectations are too low and too often tasks do not stretch or deepen pupils' knowledge and understanding. On these occasions, pupils do not fully apply themselves and consequently do not produce enough work in the time given. The time available for teaching is often not used well. Some lessons are too long, but pupils do not produce more work because the time is taken up by teacher talk and the pace of the lesson is too slow.
13. Teachers make good use of resources. This is particularly evident in mathematics and science. Pupils learn best when they can actively participate in all aspects of the lesson. They enjoy being given the opportunity to contribute by writing on an individual white boards, for example. They benefit from handling artefacts, manipulating materials and representing their ideas with information and communication technology. Teaching assistants are effectively targeted in small-group sessions on specific pupil groups and they provide good support for pupils. In the Foundation Stage particularly, teaching assistants contribute positively to planning and note the learning of individual children. Overall, pupils with special educational needs are taught satisfactorily.
14. The quality of assessment is unsatisfactory. Procedures for assessing pupils' learning and setting targets are developing, but their use in lessons is inconsistent. Short-term targets are not seen by pupils as something to aspire to. In many lessons, teachers do not regularly check that all pupils have understood the intended learning, and teaching continues regardless, leaving pupils unsure of the purpose of the tasks set. When given feedback about their achievements, pupils are not always told clearly what to do to improve their work. Good use is made of day-by-day assessment in the Foundation Stage, where gains and misconceptions in children's learning are collected throughout the day and discussed by all adults to amend learning programmes for the following day.

## **The curriculum**

The quality of curriculum opportunities provided by the school is satisfactory, with a good range of activities after school. The quality and quantity of resources, including staffing and accommodation, are satisfactory.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is good.
- There is a good range of after-school activities and a variety of visits and visitors.
- Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- Curriculum planning does not offer sufficient guidance on the teaching of mixed-aged classes.
- The school day is not organised well enough to make the best use of the time available.
- Pupils' individual education plans are not used well enough.

## **Commentary**

15. The curriculum offered by the school is satisfactory and has improved since the last inspection. It is broad and balanced and meets the requirements of the National Curriculum, the locally agreed syllabus for religious education and the curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage. There is an appropriate emphasis on developing pupils' personal, social and health education that is effective and permeates all aspects of the school's work. This has significant benefits in developing pupils' positive attitudes to learning and the good relationships maintained in the school.
16. Pupils are encouraged to take part in a wide range of after-school activities, which includes a number of musical activities and a school majorettes' team besides the more usual football and netball clubs. Pupils from many of these groups have opportunities to participate in inter-school tournaments and events as well as appearing at community events. Visits and visitors enrich pupils' classroom experiences. As well as using the local environment for studies in geography and science, pupils go further afield to such places as Cadbury World, Wardown Park Museum and Dunstable Downs. Parents and other members of the community come into school to share their experiences with pupils, and a number of theatre and music groups are invited to entertain pupils and to increase their cultural awareness during the year.
17. A number of initiatives have been implemented to prepare pupils for the next stage of their education, including a new scheme of work in science that is the same as that in the middle school to which most pupils transfer. Pupils also have a mathematics and literacy book that they start in their last term in school and take with them to their new school. A number of visits to the middle school are arranged for pupils, and both pupils and staff from the middle school come to talk to the pupils in Year 4. By the time they leave the school, pupils are used to doing regular homework.
18. Curriculum planning has improved since the time of the last inspection and there have been successful timetable innovations such as a 'Design and Technology Day'. However, teaching plans refer to year groups and do not provide sufficient guidance for teachers with mixed-age classes. Consequently, lesson plans are often focused on the younger age group and this lowers the expectations the teachers have of what the pupils will achieve. Curriculum action plans are produced but are not rigorous enough in examining the effectiveness of pupils' learning. The school day is organised into three sessions of different duration with an additional, short session following an afternoon break for pupils in Years 1 and 2. These times are used with varying effectiveness by teachers, and some lessons are too long and the pace is too slow because teachers do not have high enough expectations of what the pupils can produce in the time available.
19. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory overall with some good aspects. The identification of individual pupils' learning needs is rigorous and learning programmes are well planned with literacy as the major focus for additional support. At present, the co-ordinator for special educational needs writes individual education plans for all pupils. This is satisfactory, but teachers are not sufficiently involved in the process to make effective use of the plans in lessons.
20. The accommodation and resources are satisfactory. There have been significant improvements since the time of the last inspection that include a spacious purpose-built nursery and the addition of an information suite that comprises a library and a computer suite. The school has established playgrounds with stimulating play equipment. With fewer pupils, the school has successfully converted the extra classrooms into an art room and a parents' room that is shared with a mums' and toddlers' group. However, it is necessary to walk through classrooms in order to move around the school.

## **Care, guidance and support**

Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety are good. The provision of support, advice and guidance for pupils and their involvement in the school's work are also good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Arrangements to ensure that the school is a healthy and safe environment for pupils are good.
- Pastoral care and relationships between pupils and staff are good.
- Induction arrangements for pupils are very good.
- The involvement of pupils in the school's work is good and their views are valued.

### **Commentary**

21. Child-protection procedures are very clear and all members of staff know them well. The child-protection officer is diligent and very good links have been established with outside agencies. Arrangements for dealing with accidents, illness and medicines are very good and members of staff have up-to-date first-aid qualifications. Health-and-safety procedures are good and members of staff have a proper understanding of health-and-safety issues. Fire practices are held regularly and risk inspections are carried out. All equipment inspections are up-to-date, and hazardous substances are well managed.
22. Induction arrangements for new pupils are very good. The school hosts a weekly family-and-friends playgroup, which enables parents and children to become familiar with the school and nursery. New parents are very pleased with the induction programme and the support they receive from the school. Relationships between pupils and members of staff are good and pupils receive sound support. Members of staff know pupils very well and pastoral care has a high priority. Pupils feel safe and secure. They trust their teachers and confide in them when they are worried or upset and older pupils support younger ones in play-area activities.
23. Pupils are closely involved in the school's work and development. Their views are sought through discussions, questionnaires, assemblies and the school council, and are valued and, where appropriate, acted upon, examples being school rules and improving playground facilities. Pupils' views of the school are very positive. In particular they like the guidance and support they receive from adults at the school, which help them feel secure.

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

The school has developed good links with parents and the local community, and has made strong efforts to involve parents in school life. Links with other schools and colleges are satisfactory.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The school consults parents well and values their views highly.
- The school has established good communication with parents.
- The school's links with the local community enliven learning for the pupils.

### **Commentary**

24. The school seeks parents' views through an annual questionnaire and discussions with parent governors and helpers. Parents are pleased with the school's provision for their children and have no significant concerns about any areas of the school's work. Concerns and complaints are dealt with quickly and appropriately. The quality of information the school provides for parents is good and this allows parents to become more involved in their children's education. As well as holding planned meetings, teachers are always readily available to speak to parents. Newsletters are informative, and school reports are good and include clear targets for improvement. The prospectus and governors' annual report to parents meet statutory requirements. Parents make a suitable contribution to their children's learning. The school

values the part parents play in pupils' education and encourages their interest in all aspects of school life. Some parents and grandparents come into school and help with reading. There are reading diaries, but few parents use them effectively to support their children.

25. The school's links with the local community are good and local people are supportive and proud of the school. Pupils attend church services and are involved in local events, such as the Mayor's carol service. They support local appeals and national charities. The school competes in a variety of sporting competitions, and educational visits and visitors to the school enliven the curriculum for pupils. Links with other schools and colleges are satisfactory. College students and trainee teachers undertake placements at the school. The arrangements for the transfer of pupils to middle schools are well established. The school advises parents about their choice of middle school and eases pupils' worries by issuing them with transition books.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. The governance of the school is good and management is satisfactory. The role of subject managers has not been developed sufficiently.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The headteacher has established a positive climate for learning at the school.
- Governors are well organised to fulfil their statutory duties.
- The role of subject managers is not organised well enough for them to be fully effective in raising standards.

### **Commentary**

26. The headteacher provides sound leadership and has a clear idea of how the school should develop. She is suitably supported by the deputy headteacher and together they form the senior management team. A number of improvements have been secured since the last inspection in the pastoral care and social development of the pupils, the accommodation and outside play areas, especially for the Foundation Stage, and in teaching, particularly for English and the Foundation Stage. These developments contribute to the positive climate for learning in the school.
27. The results of the national tests are analysed well. For example, the headteacher investigated the effects on the results in 2003 of the high proportions of summer-born pupils and those with special educational needs. This showed that, without these higher-than-average proportions, the results improved, although they remained low. The co-ordinator for Key Stage 1 is responsible for analysing the tests to identify weaknesses in pupils' learning, which is done well. Unfortunately the co-ordinator is currently on long-term sick leave and so these findings are not incorporated in lesson planning as well as they might be. The deputy headteacher is the subject manager for both English and mathematics, with the result that she has not been able to fully influence planning during the co-ordinator's absence. The headteacher has acknowledged the importance of reassigning subject managers' responsibilities following staff changes. The roles of subject managers have been developed since the last inspection, but they do not have suitable, planned opportunities to monitor and evaluate fully the strengths and weaknesses in teaching and learning in their subjects. They are, therefore, not able to be fully effective in raising standards. The leadership and management of special-educational-needs (SEN) provision are satisfactory. Much of the management lies with the SEN teacher, who targets support on individuals and small groups of pupils, and the temporary co-ordinator for special educational needs. They are thorough and work hard to offer good intervention programmes for pupils. However, managers of SEN in the school do not have a clear overview of the use of additional resources, including support staff, and the difference they make to pupils' learning.



28. The governing body is well organised into four committees, each with agreed terms of reference, that meet each term and report to the full governing body. Link governors receive reports from subject managers and meet with them regularly. They also visit the school to observe lessons. Clear records are kept of these visits that are shared with the full governing body. The finance committee includes the chairs of each of the other committees, and its submissions, along with those of the curriculum committee, contribute to the school improvement plan. All governors are invited to attend the planning day at which the basis of the school improvement plan is agreed. These procedures enable the governing body to develop a clear idea of the strengths and weaknesses in the school's educational provision and actively contribute to strategic planning. The school improvement plan is a comprehensive three-year plan and there is a clear programme of monitoring and evaluation. There is a clear focus, both in terms of an overview and detailed plans, on raising standards and school improvement.
29. There are significant barriers to raising achievement that confront the leadership and governance of the school. There have been a number of disruptions to the stability of the staff in the last year, with the headteacher having to teach classes for absent colleagues. The falling roll and budget restrictions have also necessitated the creation of mixed-age classes. In addition, the social background of the pupils is changing, with an increase in the proportion with significant behavioural and learning difficulties, and many parents are reluctant to become more involved in their children's learning.

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

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	555,915
Total expenditure	528,563
Expenditure per pupil	2,765

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	31,503
Balance carried forward to the next	27,352

The finance committee monitors spending well and has a clear view of possible future budgetary constraints.

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

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

30. Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is good. The nursery provides a rich and stimulating environment for the youngest children. Overall, good provision has been maintained since the last inspection and it has improved for physical development. The outdoor play area has been recently developed and now offers a variety of interesting learning opportunities. The space is effectively used as an extension to the classroom, and all children benefit from these facilities. Accommodation for children in the nursery is very good.
31. A significant number of children begin nursery with poorly developed communication, number and social skills, and attainment that is well below the county average. By the time they are ready to start in Year 1, they achieve well and some reach the goals expected by the end of reception, except in communication, language, literacy and mathematical development. This good progress is because of good teaching, particularly in the nursery. The induction arrangements for new children are thorough and effective.
32. There is no overall manager of the Foundation Stage. All teachers collaborate to ensure that learning is continuous for the children, but there are some inconsistencies in practices. Consequently, no one has an overview of the rates of progress made by children or of the standards reached across the whole Foundation Stage.

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

Provision for personal, social and emotional development is **good**.

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

- Relationships are good.
- Children are independent.
- Expectations of behaviour and routines are very clear.
- In the nursery, opportunities for children to show initiative are very good.

#### **Commentary**

33. Children achieve well because the teaching is good, although many are unlikely to attain the Early Learning Goals by the end of reception. In all classes children are helped to work and play together. They are able to share and take turns. They are encouraged to show their feelings. Adults take every opportunity to reward and praise, so that children's confidence is growing. There is a strong emphasis on independence. Children are expected to take responsibility for their equipment and tidy away. When asked to work without the direct support of an adult they concentrate and seek help from each other.
34. In the nursery, there is a good balance between activities planned by an adult and those that children plan or initiate themselves. Children take the lead and actively engage in purposeful tasks. They can sustain interest and become engrossed. Adults know when it is appropriate to intervene and do so well to extend children's learning.

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

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

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children listen well.
- Children enjoy a wide range of books.
- In almost all activities, children's use of language is promoted.
- The skills of handwriting are underdeveloped.
- Not all children want to write.

## Commentary

35. Children achieve well because the teaching is good, although most are unlikely to attain the Early Learning Goals by the end of reception. Children enjoy listening to stories and music, and respond in a lively way. Adults model active listening and value children's involvement and efforts to communicate. When adults take every opportunity to explore and extend children's vocabulary, gains in learning are good. The effective use of collaborative activities, such as cooking, helps children to talk about what they are doing. They question what is going to happen and wonder at upside-down images of their faces in metal spoons.
36. Literacy skills are developing. Some children can hear initial sounds in words and recognise a few key words. Some children form letters that are recognisable. However, strategies to teach early co-ordination and pencil control are not consistent throughout nursery and reception classes. When writing, children's confidence to 'have a go' is variable and the environment does not always support and enrich their written language.

## MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision for mathematical development is **good**.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are many opportunities for children to count in purposeful ways.
- The language of mathematics is used in everyday dialogue.
- Simple calculations are seen as fun.
- Teaching challenges children of all abilities.

## Commentary

37. Children achieve well and this area of learning is taught well, although most are unlikely to attain the Early Learning Goals by the end of reception. Children are keen to participate, many delighting in their understanding and use of number. Every chance is taken to count during registration, on the way to the hall and at playtime. Children solve problems well because they think carefully about how to first identify what calculation is required and then work it out.
38. Children use everyday words to describe position and movement. A majority of the children talk about regular shapes and can describe them, noting sides and corners. Activities are presented in fun ways, often through games, and this helps children to think about what they know and to apply it to new situations.

## KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are good opportunities for children to explore and investigate.
- Children use a wide range of tools and techniques for a variety of purposes.

- They are developing a keen sense of themselves.

### **Commentary**

39. Children achieve well, although many are unlikely to attain the Early Learning Goals by the end of reception. Good teaching in this area of learning ensures that children ask questions and look closely at how things change and are different or similar. Children constantly use their senses to find out about things. However, information and communication technology is underused. During cooking and construction activities, safety is emphasised and healthy foods are discussed. Children are beginning to learn about their local environment and how this might be different to other places.

## **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision for physical development is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The outdoor play area is used very effectively all the year round.
- Children show good control of their movements.

### **Commentary**

40. Children achieve well because the teaching is good, although many are unlikely to attain the Early Learning Goals by the end of reception. The outdoor area has been extensively developed since the last inspection. It has been creatively planned and offers a wide range of activities. Children make the most of the new sandpit, respecting each other's space, yet often collaborating to reach a better result. They are gaining in confidence when balancing and climbing. Adults guide children's handling of small objects and tools safely and with control.

## **CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

Provision for creative development is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children enjoy singing and responding to music.
- There is insufficient emphasis on encouraging children to express themselves imaginatively.
- Children are developing reasonable manipulative skills.

### **Commentary**

41. Children achieve well because the teaching is good, although most are unlikely to attain the Early Learning Goals by the end of reception. There are many opportunities for them to develop their creative skills. Activities are planned with materials made available for children to select and use. Role-play areas in reception classes are cramped due to a lack of space and adults do not sufficiently support children's play activities. Children engage quietly in some activities and do not fully express themselves by communicating their ideas in different ways. At times, activities in all areas of learning are too reliant on adults and this can limit the development of children's creativity and imagination.

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

### **ENGLISH**

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching has improved.
- Achievement in pupils' writing has improved and is now satisfactory in Years 1 to 4.
- Standards are not high enough at the end of Year 2.
- The arrangements for subject management are unsatisfactory.
- The information about pupils' learning needs is not used effectively to raise achievement.

## Commentary

42. At the time of the last inspection, the quality of the teaching of English was unsatisfactory. During the inspection, no unsatisfactory lessons were observed and there were examples of good lessons. Overall, the quality of teaching is now satisfactory both in Years 1 and 2 and in Years 3 and 4, and pupils' achievement is satisfactory. This is leading to a gradual improvement in standards, although standards in Year 2 are below average in reading and writing. In Year 4, pupils' attainment meets national expectations in reading, writing, speaking and listening and many exceed these expectations. These pupils have made satisfactory progress in Years 3 and 4.
43. Recent staff changes have resulted in subject leadership for English and mathematics being held by the same member of staff. This arrangement limits the effectiveness of subject management because insufficient time has been arranged for the subject manager to be fully effective in raising standards. Nevertheless, a very detailed action plan has been drawn up and is beginning to be implemented. Action has already been taken to improve pupils' spelling and word recognition by placing an emphasis on the spelling and recognition of common words and by introducing a scheme for teaching letter sounds. A concentrated focus on improving the technical aspects of writing such as punctuation and grammar is contributing to improved achievement in this area. The action plan does not include a critical evaluation of the way in which time is used to teach reading and writing skills. However, it does include a large number of initiatives to improve standards, including the use of information about weaknesses in pupils' learning.
44. Although teaching is satisfactory and often good, there are inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and learning. Whilst all teachers insist on high standards of behaviour and manage pupils well, there are too many occasions when the pace of lessons is slow and teachers' expectations of both the amount of work produced and its quality are too low. The management of pupils' individual reading is good and pupils read regularly to adults in the school and always have a choice of books at the appropriate level of difficulty.
45. Many pupils start school with limited speaking and listening skills. Teachers are very aware of pupils' lack of confidence in this area and several occasions were observed during the inspection when pupils were being sensitively encouraged to develop their speaking and listening skills and, as a consequence, satisfactory progress was being made. However, the school action plan does not include specific strategies to promote an improvement in speaking and listening.
46. Pupils make satisfactory progress in reading in between Year 1 and Year 4. However, the standards achieved by seven-year-olds remain below average. Whilst pupils are able to employ a number of strategies to read unknown words and many read accurately, few are able to express opinions or preferences about fiction and non-fiction. New resources have been purchased to develop pupils' comprehension skills. In Year 3, and particularly in Year 4, pupils read with increased confidence and clarity.
47. The range of pupils' writing in Year 2 is not wide enough, although they regularly write their 'news', and handwriting is limited. In Year 4, pupils' writing is legible and many write with good sentence structure. However, work is often not finished and less able pupils often produce very little. A number of procedures are being introduced to improve pupils' writing that includes

an emphasis on spelling, grammar and punctuation. However, the assessment systems currently in place do not give teachers a clear view of the next steps in pupils' learning, especially in reading. A new system of giving pupils individual targets does not yet extend to reading, and targets for writing do not give sufficient emphasis to the organisation of different forms of writing.

### **Literacy across the curriculum**

48. Teachers use other subjects, such as history and science, to give pupils opportunities to develop writing and reading skills. Information and communication technology is also used well to develop pupils' literacy skills. However, the school does not take full advantage of the potential that exists in all aspects of school life to enrich pupils' enjoyment of reading and writing, and to improve their literacy skills.

### **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

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

- Standards at the end of Year 4 meet national expectations.
- Standards are not high enough at the end of Year 2, although pupils' achievement is satisfactory.
- Teachers' do not expect enough of pupils in lessons.
- The role of the subject leader has not been developed sufficiently.

#### **Commentary**

49. Standards of pupils' attainment are below average at the end of Year 2 and they attain standards that meet national expectations at the end of Year 4, with some exceeding these expectations. The group of pupils currently in Year 4 attained good standards in the national tests at the end of Year 2 in 2002 and their achievement, along with that of pupils in Year 2 and those with special educational needs, is satisfactory. However, standards are not high enough at the end of Year 2, and are lower than at the time of the last inspection. This reflects the pupils' lower attainment on entry to the school.
50. Pupils develop a sound grasp of the number system, and in Year 2 use their knowledge of odd and even numbers when ordering large numbers, whilst pupils in Year 4 use their skills at doubling to multiply by 4 and 8. They develop good strategies for working with number, and most are able to compute number facts by Year 2 and many multiplication facts by Year 4. However, few pupils have a good recall of these mathematical facts and this restricts the ease and the speed with which they can solve problems. Pupils' understanding of shape and measures is less secure because less time is spent on these aspects of the subject.
51. The quality of teaching is variable, but satisfactory overall both in Years 1 and 2, and in Years 3 and 4. Pupils have positive attitudes to learning, and teachers maintain a positive learning environment by insisting on high standards of behaviour. Teaching assistants are used well by teachers and make a good contribution to pupils' learning, particularly of those with special educational needs. In one lesson seen, the learning intentions were clear and shared with the pupils. However, this practice is not consistent and in other lessons pupils were unsure of what the teacher intended them to learn. Teachers plan activities for lessons with varying difficulty to take account of the pupils' different levels of ability. However, planning does not take sufficient account of the different needs of pupils in mixed-age classes. Teachers' expectations of pupils are not high enough. Too many pupils produce very little in lessons and this is accepted by teachers, which has a significant impact on the low standards attained. Time is not used well and some lessons are too long, with an insufficiently brisk pace. This does not help pupils to maintain concentration, and additional time appears to be spent by the

teacher talking to the class rather than the pupils working at mathematical tasks. One teacher assessed pupils' learning in one lesson well and identified that they had not learned what she intended. Consequently, she amended her teaching plans to include more work on the topic before moving on to more-advanced work. This is good use of assessment. However, assessment is not secure enough in many lessons to effectively inform teachers' planning for future lessons.

52. The subject manager is also the subject manager for English. Weaknesses in pupils' learning have been identified from the results of the national test by the Key Stage 1 co-ordinator, who is currently on long-term absence. The subject manager has not been able to fully familiarise herself with this analysis and this limits her ability to support colleagues in raising standards. A further constraint is that the role of the subject manager has not been organised well enough to enable her to be clear about the strengths and weaknesses in the teaching of the subject and to ensure consistency, with the best practice shared across the school.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

Pupils' numeracy skills are developed in science and art and design, in particular. However, there is greater scope in identifying opportunities for using mathematics in other subjects and to link this additional work with pupils' learning in mathematics at the time.

### **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

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

- Standards have improved in 2003, particularly at the higher levels.
- The quality of learning and teaching is inconsistent.
- Resources to match teaching programmes are developing.
- The curriculum is not well planned for pupils in mixed-age classes.

#### **Commentary**

53. The school has been effective in continuing to raise standards since 2002, and all pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Their attainment at the end of Year 2 and Year 4 meets national expectations. The proportion of seven-year-olds reaching the higher levels has improved since the previous inspection. The subject has been a priority for improvement, resources are more plentiful and a commercial scheme has been introduced. This has resulted in a balanced science curriculum and secures teachers' subject knowledge and understanding. Pupils with special educational needs are appropriately supported in lessons through modified tasks and adult help when it is available.
54. The quality of teaching is variable, but satisfactory overall. In the better lessons, teachers are very clear about what pupils will learn. They make good use of learning in previous lessons and explain new ideas well. Pupils learn best when they are given practical activities and discussion clarifies their thinking. For example, younger pupils created a healthy lunch box after they had examined various foods for their fat and sugar content. Older pupils talk together constructively about the conditions that must remain constant when setting up a fair test to find out what plants need in order to grow.
55. Recording in science lessons is varied but teachers take opportunities to practise writing in different forms, such as instructions and presenting findings of experiments. However, the literacy focus is given a greater emphasis than the scientific at times and this detracts from learning in science. An investigative approach is being developed across the school and enquiry skills are taught suitably. However, this is not always reflected in lessons where work is too reliant on the commercial scheme.

56. The co-ordinators have a growing awareness of their responsibilities and are keen to raise the profile of the subject. As yet they have had only limited opportunities to monitor and evaluate standards, teaching and learning in science. The organisation of pupils into mixed-age classes has created some difficulties in planning the science curriculum so that no area is repeated or missed. The co-ordinators appreciate this and plan to develop a progressive and continuous science curriculum for all pupils from Year 1 to Year 4.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The school has established a computer suite that facilitates effective lessons.
- ICT is used well to develop pupils' literacy skills.
- Planning for the subject does not ensure that tasks are appropriate for all pupils in mixed-age classes.

### **Commentary**

57. Pupils' attainment meets national expectations at the end of Year 2 and Year 4, and their achievement is satisfactory. The school has established a computer suite since the last inspection that is combined with the library to create an information suite. There is a timetable to ensure that all classes benefit from regular use of the computer suite. In addition, pupils in Year 3 communicate with a school in Australia by e-mail and this helps them to develop their understanding of the opportunities offered by computer technology. Although computers are underused in the Foundation Stage, pupils use them confidently by the end of Year 2. They enter, save and retrieve their work and make good use of a word processor and a drawing programme to produce work using both text and images. In the juniors, pupils amend the font, font size and colour of the text to present their ideas.
58. Teaching is satisfactory overall. Some good teaching was seen in the computer suite, but planning is limited for mixed-age classes because teachers have to work from two separate plans for the different year groups that do not focus sufficiently on developing pupils' skills in ICT progressively. Pupils are enthusiastic about using computers and they concentrate well. Teaching assistants are used well to introduce the lesson to small groups of pupils. This helps to ensure that they all understand what they are expected to do in the lesson. There is no subject manager currently and the headteacher is taking this role temporarily. There is a need to review planning for the subject to ensure that all pupils develop their ICT skills at an appropriate level in all lessons. Little of the pupils' work is kept and this creates difficulties for the subject manager in establishing standards in the subject and also in identifying weaknesses in pupils' learning that could inform planning for improvement in the subject.

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

59. ICT is used well to develop pupils' literacy skills. Younger pupils in the infants create short sentences, ensuring that they begin with a capital letter and end with a full stop after locating these functions on the keyboard. Pupils in Year 4 make good use of the opportunities offered by computers to organise the layout of a play script that they have written. Computers are also used in mathematics to demonstrate mathematical principles and for pupils to practise their number skills.

## **HUMANITIES**

60. It was not possible to observe any lessons in history or geography so it is not possible to make a judgement on standards achieved by pupils or the quality of teaching. However, discussions



were held with members of staff, pupils' work was sampled, including work on display, and school planning documents were examined.

61. Nationally-produced programmes of work have been adopted for these subjects, and teachers try to ensure that pupils do not miss or repeat aspects of work if they are in mixed-age classes. This is an improvement since the last inspection. However, further work to make sure that school planning shows clearly the progression in pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding has not been done. Both history and geography appear on weekly timetables, but lessons are relatively short. The small amount of recorded work indicates that the overall teaching time available is not being used in the most effective way.
62. Pupils' work is enriched by a number of visits to such places as the Wardown Park Museum, Duxford and St Albans. The school has a 'Grandparents' Day' when visitors spend time in classrooms to talk about their schooldays. Pupils' interest is also enlivened by attractive displays in the classrooms. There are limited examples of teachers using ideas in history to develop pupils' writing skills such as writing 'in role' as an evacuee during the Second World War.

## **Religious Education**

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- A full programme of work is in place.
- Subject planning does not define a clear progression of skills.

### **Commentary**

63. The programme of work follows the locally agreed syllabus so that by the time pupils leave the school they develop an understanding of things that are special and a sense of belonging to a community. They also learn stories from the Bible, the life of Jesus and aspects of other world religions. Stories in assemblies contribute to this understanding. Pupils' classroom work is enriched by visitors such as the local vicar or people from the school community who talk about aspects of their life or religion. The quality of teaching is satisfactory and the standards achieved by pupils meet the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. However, the planning systems do not define clearly enough the steps in learning which pupils have to take at different ages and abilities.

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

64. One lesson in art and design and one lesson in physical education were observed. No lessons were seen in design and technology or music. Some examples of pupils' work were looked at in art and design and design and technology. Photographs of pupils working in physical education and planning for these subjects were considered. It is not possible, therefore, to make secure judgements on standards or the quality of teaching in these subjects.
65. Displays show that pupils work in a range of media and how an artist in residence helped them to design and weave an image of the playground. There are many examples around the school of pupils' work in design and technology, including 'dreamcatchers' that pupils had made, and also work produced during a design-and-technology day in October. The subject manager's file for music shows that planning is based on a nationally produced scheme of work that covers all aspects of the National Curriculum for music. Pupils sing suitably well in assemblies. In physical education, photographic evidence shows that pupils enjoy a full range of activities, including swimming. A football practice and a match against a local school were

observed after school. The evidence available indicates that the provision for these subjects is satisfactory.

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

The provision for pupils' personal, social and health education (PSHE) is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Specific time is allocated for this aspect of pupils' learning.
- A complete programme of work is in place.
- Pupils' personal development is promoted by good care and guidance.

### **Commentary**

66. All classes have two separate times allocated for PSHE, one of which is devoted to circle time when pupils have good opportunities to discuss current issues and concerns. During the inspection one of the sessions observed was effective in resolving a friendship problem. Another session on the timetable is devoted to the programme of work that covers the complete range of personal and social development, including drugs awareness and education for sex and relationships. Both of these issues are dealt with effectively and at a level appropriate for the age of the pupils.
67. Some of the content of PSHE is covered in other lessons and it is embodied in the overall organisation and ethos of the school. There are examples elsewhere in this report of good development of pupils' attitudes and the encouragement of personal responsibility. Pupils' personal development is encouraged by the positive and caring relationships that exist in the school.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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