

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **LYNCH HILL PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Slough

LEA area: Slough

Unique reference number: 109933

Headteacher: Mrs Gillian Coffey

Lead inspector: Frances Forrester

Dates of inspection: 20 – 23 October 2003

Inspection number: 260734

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Foundation
Age range of pupils:	3 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	499
School address:	Garrard Road Slough
Postcode:	SL2 2HX
Telephone number:	01753 524170
Fax number:	01753 691583
Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Kevin Saunders
Date of previous inspection:	October 1998

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Lynch Hill Primary is a larger than average school in Slough. It has 499 pupils on roll, 214 boys and 242 girls. There are 42 boys and 43 girls who attend the Nursery part-time. The school is popular and over-subscribed. Most pupils live in the immediate vicinity of the school and many families have low incomes. Many of the youngest children have immature speech and little idea about numbers when they first start school. There are 13 per cent of pupils who are learning English as an additional language, which is above average and an increased number since the last inspection. The home languages of these are mostly Urdu, Punjabi and Arabic. The school only receives additional funding for ten of these pupils. In addition, there is a small group of travellers. There are 98 pupils with special educational needs, which is quite high compared to most schools. The school has a nurture group, which gives support to very low attaining Year 1 and 2 pupils. Throughout the school, there are four pupils who have an educational statement of their special learning needs. Almost a quarter of the pupils are entitled to free school meals, which is higher than average.

The school has been awarded several important awards for its achievement. It received the Healthy School Award in 2001, the Basic Skills Quality Mark in 2003, Investors in People status in 2002, and two awards from the Department for Education and Skills in 2001 and 2002. The school has received additional funding from the local education action zone.

The school was Grant Maintained until 1999. At the time of the inspection, the deputy headteacher was absent on maternity leave, although she visited the school to meet inspectors to discuss her role.

The foci for the school's inspection were the impact of the school development plan and inconsistencies in writing in classes other than Years 2 and 6.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
11590	Frances Forrester	Lead inspector	English as an additional language, science, art and design, physical education, and religious education
9865	Sue Howley	Lay inspector	
1395	Pauline Hoey	Team inspector	Foundation Stage, music and design and technology
25787	Edmond Morris	Team inspector	Mathematics, special educational needs
19774	Maura Docherty	Team Inspector	English, geography and history

The inspection contractor was:

The Inspection and Consultancy Partnership

360 Lee Valley Technopark

Ashley Road

London

N17 9LN

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**Lynch Hill Primary is a very good school.** All pupils achieve as well as they can because of the successful teaching and very good support throughout the school. By the end of Year 6, many pupils achieve high standards in English, mathematics and science in comparison with schools in similar circumstances. The school is committed to developing basic skills, for which it received a Basic Skills Quality Mark in 2003 and two annual awards from the Department of Education and Skills over the last two years. The school is very well led and managed by the headteacher and other senior staff, with good support from the governing body. It provides very good value for money.

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

- The school motivates pupils to learn very successfully.
- Pupils are happy and enthusiastic about being in school, and they behave well.
- The school expects high standards for pupils' conduct and it works hard to achieve them. It deals very effectively with all forms of bullying and harassment.
- The Nursery provides very good learning opportunities for the youngest children.
- Pupils with special educational needs, and those who are learning English as an additional language, achieve very well throughout the school.
- There are limited resources in a number of subjects, and the budget is stretched because the school has a high staffing ratio in order to support its pupils.
- The outside play activities for Reception children, lack imagination and the resources are inadequate.

The school has made very good improvements since the last inspection in 1998. The leadership and management are now successfully influencing the school's performance. Standards are very much higher and the quality of teaching is better. Identified areas for improvement have been fully addressed. There are many more opportunities for promoting children's speaking and listening in the Nursery and Reception classes. Pupils' skills in information and communications technology art and music are much improved. The school gives much better value for money.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
English	C	C	A	A*
Mathematics	C	B	B	A
Science	B	A	B	A

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

Pupils achieve **very well** as they move through the school. This means that by the end of Year 6, they do as well as they can. Many of the youngest children start school with immature speech and having little idea of number skills. In no time at all, they gain confidence through very good teaching in the Nursery. They achieve very well and, as a result, many exceed the goals that children are expected to reach by the end of the Reception class. Pupils successfully progress and achieve very well by the end of Years 2 and 6, because the school sets high targets and good levels of homework. By the end of Year 6, pupils are responsible, take initiative and reach good standards. The school council is a good example of this, and the elected representatives are impressive and take their responsibilities seriously. There is an inclusive ethos in the school. Good, moral, social and cultural development are strengths. Spiritual development is suitably promoted in school assemblies.

### QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The school provides a **very good** education for its pupils. The key factors are the **good** teaching, rigorous analysis of pupils' progress and the careful target setting. Most pupils are successfully challenged and well motivated, although two lessons during the inspection were unsatisfactory. As a result, they learn successfully. Throughout the school there is very effective support from Nursery nurses and teaching assistants, which impacts on pupils' performance. The school provides good learning opportunities through its curriculum throughout the school, including the Nursery and Reception classes. Effective links are made between several subjects so that pupils develop skills across the curriculum.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Leadership and management in the school are **very good**. There is a very strong commitment to providing all pupils with the best education possible. The school development planning was a focus of the inspection, and it is very successful. It influences the school's performance by ensuring high standards. The school believes that every effort must be made to give every pupil the best chance possible. This means the school budget is tightly and efficiently managed to provide individual support and booster group work when it is necessary. The headteacher and her deputy have a very clear vision for the school, and they work in close partnership with a very effective senior management team. The governors are effective and very committed to the school.

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

The parents believe the school is good, and their children mostly hold it in high regard. Parents are pleased with the standards, but some of them think the school expects too much from their children. Some also think there is too much homework. Most pupils enjoy coming to school, and they say they love using a computer and their work in art.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

The school's very detailed and efficient development plan has already successfully influenced significant improvement. The most important things the school should now do to enhance the school's performance further are:

- Improve the quality of the less effective teaching so that it is more consistent throughout the school.
- Improve the outside play provision for the Reception classes, so that learning opportunities are rich and exciting for the children.
- Seek additional funding to improve the school's resources.

## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

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

Overall, achievement is very good and standards at the end of Year 6 are good. Achievement is good for the under fives, and is very good in Years 1 and 2. It is also very good in Years 3 to 6. Standards in English and mathematics are above average by the end of Year 6, and are well above average in science. Standards are also good in art and music.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children who are under five achieve well.
- Pupils in Years 1 to 6, including those with special educational needs, achieve very well.
- Pupils reach good standards in the important core subjects of English and mathematics by the time they leave the school.
- In science, pupils in Year 6 have very good standards of work. There is a strong emphasis on learning through practical investigations.
- Good standards are reached in art and music.
- Standards attained in information and communication technology have improved considerably since the previous inspection.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	18.7 (17.9)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	17.4 (16.2)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	18.4 (17.9)	16.3 (16.5)

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

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	28.9 (27.1)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	28.2 (28.0)	26.8 (26.7)
science	29.5 (29.9)	28.6 (28.3)

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

#### Commentary

1. The youngest children in the Foundation Stage<sup>1</sup> reach good standards in personal, social and emotional development by the end of the Reception Year. In communication, language and literacy and mathematical development, most exceed the standards that are expected of this age group, because the provision is good. Their knowledge and understanding of the world is in line with national expectations, as is their creative and physical development.

2. In the 2002 national tests, the pupils in Year 2 attained standards well above those found nationally in reading, writing and mathematics. Standards were very high when compared to those found in similar schools. There has been a very good improvement in standards at the end of Year 2 since 2000, when they were below the national average. In 2003, all the pupils tested reached or exceeded the nationally expected level, although nine lower ability pupils in the nurture group were

<sup>1</sup> Foundation Stage is the formal name given to the Nursery and Reception classes. Children cover activities, which promote their personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, creative and physical development and their knowledge and understanding of the world. These activities are called early learning goals.



not included, as the school planned to let them take the tests a year later than their peers.

3. The 2002 national tests for pupils in Year 6 showed them to be in line with the national average in English, and above in mathematics. Pupils were well above the average in science. Despite a few annual fluctuations, the pupils have always reached standards at least in line with the national average since 2000. The 2003 tests show further improvement, with high standards attained in all three subjects. Indeed, 50 per cent of pupils reached the higher than expected standard in English and science, and 40 per cent did so in mathematics. Standards have consistently been well above those found in similar schools.

4. Pupils from Years 1 and 2 achieve very well, particularly in reading writing and mathematics. They are well taught and given a thorough grounding in basic skills that they successfully build on as they move through the school. These high levels of achievement continue through Years 3 to 6 as good or better teaching is a feature of many lessons. However, the school's development plan has correctly identified inconsistencies in pupils' standards of writing in some year groups. The senior staff are putting a lot of effort into monitoring pupils' writing and handwriting skills are now much better than in previous years. Pupils are helped by their teachers to become very effective learners. The whole ethos of the school is geared to high achievement, and pupils rise to the many challenges presented to them with enthusiasm and great effort. They are justifiably proud of their work and are eager to learn more and do well.

5. Standards in art and music are particularly good, and are better than those found in most schools nationally. The standards in art were unsatisfactory in the last inspection, and the school has worked hard to improve. The teachers now focus on skill reinforcement, such as teaching pupils how to use shade. In music, the school has a gifted music teacher who teaches brass instrumental skills. The pupils are very enthusiastic about both art and music and they are so well motivated they try very hard to reach high standards.

6. In information and communication technology, there has been a tremendous improvement in standards since the last inspection. Standards are now similar to those found in other schools, and teachers and pupils work confidently with a range of good quality resources. The very good leadership of the subject and the efforts of the governors and school management team have been significant factors in raising standards.

7. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress and achieve very well as they move through the school. Indeed, many such pupils reach the nationally expected level in English, mathematics and science by the time they leave the school. The pupils with educational statements are well supported and they do as well as they can. This is because work in class is at a suitable level and they are very well supported by well-trained and effective teaching assistants. Individual education plans, written by the class teachers with advice from the special needs coordinator, are relevant and the targets are clear. Pupils know exactly what they have to do to improve.

8. Pupils who are learning English as an additional language are achieving very well. By the end of Year 6, they attain the standards expected of their age group or better. This is not only the result of the school's rigorous monitoring, but, also the impact of various other successful strategies. For instance, an initial assessment is made on entry. Clear targets are set and the specialist teacher focuses on the pupils who need additional support. There is, however, very little time for this work and bilingual assistants are used only rarely to translate from the pupils' mother tongue. The specialist teacher has a very good understanding of what is necessary, but her time is so stretched that she cannot do justice to this expertise. For instance, she also has to give other support to the nurture group and to a group of travellers.

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

Pupils have good attitudes and their behaviour is satisfactory. Pupils' personal development, including their moral, social and cultural development are good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The school makes good provision for pupils' personal development.
- The procedures, which were agreed to promote good behaviour, are effective.

### **Commentary**

9. The headteacher has focused on pupils' behaviour, and this has built on the conclusions of the last inspection. Overall, pupils' good attitudes allow the school to function purposefully and inclusively. In the Nursery and Reception classes, members of staff spend much time promoting children's social development, which teaches them right from wrong. This gives them a good foundation for their future life in school. Pupils develop good relationships, and their personal development is good. Most parents approve of the headteacher's determination to make this a real strength, and like the positive changes in their children's behaviour and maturity.

10. Pupils like school and want to attend. When children join the Nursery, some have poorly developed skills in sharing and interacting with others. Their social development is given a high priority, and improves well as they grow older. Pupils develop positive attitudes as they progress through the school and want to do their best. When teaching is stimulating, pupils strive to display their knowledge, show their interest in lessons, and persevere with tasks to produce an outcome with pride. However, they can show boredom and become restless in lessons where the pace is slow, or teaching is confusing or too directive. Outside the classroom, pupils engage enthusiastically in the clubs, showing their determination to enjoy the school's activities.

11. Overall, behaviour is satisfactory. The behaviour in the youngest classes is good. Pupils accept the school's good behaviour culture, but many have not yet learned the need for self-discipline. As a result, some can be silly when not directly supervised, such as on the stairs, in the dining room and in the toilets. Generally, the school operates calmly and happily, with a developing work ethic. Bullying was not observed during the inspection, but inspectors noted that play fighting can occasionally spill over into real fighting. There are some incidents of challenging behaviour, and the school has needed to make use of exclusions for poor behaviour over the past year.

12. The headteacher has prioritised the building of pupils' self-esteem, and this is effectively promoted by the personal, health, and social education policy. Assemblies enhance pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well, through the celebration of various faiths' and cultures' festivals. For instance, one assembly topic featured the contribution black inventors have made to peoples' everyday lives. The skilful Power Point presentation captured pupils' interest and raised their awareness of key issues about race. The school ensures there pupils respect each other regardless of culture or religion. The pupils who are learning English as an additional language are well supported and made to feel confident when they answer questions in a large group.

13. The headteacher is determined to give pupils greater ownership of the school through the earnest, young school council representatives who take their responsibilities very seriously and conscientiously. Other pupils readily accept the responsibility of performing tasks around the school and make a valuable contribution to their community. Pupils are developing an appropriate spiritual development. They have a good sense of moral and social awareness, which will equip them well for the future. Their cultural development is good.

14. Pupils with special educational needs who have been identified as having emotional and behavioural difficulties are well managed in class. They are well supported by teachers and teaching assistants. The school ensures that they are fully included in lessons and that their behaviour is not

detrimental to their own learning or to that of their classmates.

**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	316	11	10
White – any other White background	7	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	21	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	2	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	10	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	4	0	0
Black or Black British – African	4	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	4	0	0

Pupils’ attendance and punctuality are satisfactory. The school works hard to encourage good attendance.

**Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The school places importance on good attendance, and promotes this well through rewards and incentives.
- Attendance and punctuality are monitored and reported well.
- Most pupils have good attendance and punctuality, which helps them to do well in school.

**Commentary**

15. Attendance has steadily improved and is now satisfactory. The majority of pupils attend regularly and punctually. However, unauthorised absence is higher than the national average. Attendance is well monitored, and the school successfully promotes good attendance through certificates and rewards. A small number of pupils have poor punctuality and attendance, which impacts on their achievement.

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

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	5.2	School data	0.9
National data	5.4	National data	0.4

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

**QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL**

The school provides pupils with a good quality of education. The school has rigorous procedures in place for tracking pupils’ progress. The quality of teaching is good and often very good. The curriculum is also good. The school successfully motivates pupils to learn and to do their best. Its provision for children’s care, welfare, health and safety is very good.

## Teaching and learning

The standard of teaching is good. Many lessons are very good and one lesson was excellent. Assessment is very good.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The teachers choose topics that interest their classes.
- Teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and their productivity.
- Basic skills are successfully reinforced.
- Successful use is made of modern technology to make topics more meaningful.
- Resources are inadequate in several subjects and these sometimes impede the standards attained.
- The weaker and very few unsatisfactory lessons suffer from ineffective class management and lack-lustre topics.

### Commentary

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

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1 (2%)	11 (20%)	33 (56%)	12(20%)	2 (3%)	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.*

16. The quality of the teaching is good, with just under a fifth of lessons, very good or excellent. There were 10 lessons that were satisfactory and two that were unsatisfactory. This inconsistency in the quality of teaching is because some teachers are new to the school or unqualified in this country. The school has very good systems in place for monitoring the quality of teaching and mentoring newly qualified teachers. This is ensuring teachers have a good understanding of any improvements needed. In the last inspection there were a lot more unsatisfactory lessons, so this picture is much improved. The school has very good procedures in place for appraising teachers' capabilities and the induction of new teachers. These ensure pupils benefit from good quality teaching. Strong teaching successfully promotes all pupils' learning, and helps them to achieve very well. There is no evidence of any groups missing out. The lessons are usually interesting, and this often results in very positive attitudes and behaviour.

17. The quality of teaching is very good in the Nursery, and generally good in the Reception classes. Significant strengths include teachers' understanding of the needs of young children and the good team spirit as staff plan and evaluate the progress of children. Planning is detailed and staff make good use of observations to ensure work meets the needs of all children. The assessment system has strong features. Strengths lie in the way staff observe what children do and identify significant steps in children's learning. These are added to children's individual profiles and help to determine the next steps a child should take. Attention is given to assessing and meeting the individual needs of children for whom English is an additional language and for those with special educational needs. As a result, the teachers plan effectively for their needs and thus ensure an inclusive environment. Teachers in the Reception classes make predictions about the children's expected levels in communication, language and literacy and mathematical development by the time they enter Year 1.

18. Teachers always ensure the basic skills are well taught. In English and mathematics, the teaching is good. A good example was the effort made to improve pupils' handwriting, which had an impact on teachers too. The school worked hard to improve the letter formation, size and presentation. Some of the teachers even had to change their handwriting style to make certain their writing was a good model for the pupils. As a result, inspectors were pleased to see neatly formed

writing taking place during lessons and in examples of past work in pupils' books. Teachers emphasise good vocabulary, and they prioritise accurate spelling. For instance in a very good Year 2 science lesson, the teacher had taken great care to label a wide range of materials, and she also provided word cards to help pupils to describe the characteristics of each material. In mathematics, teachers ensure pupils can quickly calculate and that they know their multiplication tables. For instance in a Year 5 lesson, the very challenging start to the lesson motivated pupils to fully participate. The teacher followed up work from a previous lesson by asking the class to find equivalent fractions in tenths to decimals. This stimulated pupils' interest and they responded very well and their achievement throughout the lesson was very good. The lessons in English and mathematics proceed at a good pace, which keeps pupils interested and well motivated. More challenging work is provided for the higher attainers who are often set additional extension work. These features, together with the teachers' enthusiasm and their commitment to their work, contribute to the high levels of achievement and the good progress pupils make.

19. In the less effective lessons, including the two sessions that were unsatisfactory, the teacher failed to successfully manage the more challenging pupils, and some pupils underachieved. In the Reception class, the range of outside activities did not actively promote learning and the children underachieved and were not stimulated to learn. In lessons where teaching is satisfactory, the limitations in some school resources impeded the standards achieved. This was certainly the case in one physical education lesson where the teacher was trying hard to develop pupils' ball skills. The footballs constantly deflated and they eventually had to be abandoned. The teacher was able to save the lesson by changing his activities.

20. Very good support is given to pupils with special learning needs, both in lessons and in small group or individual activities. The special needs coordinator ensures that very detailed records are kept so that the teachers can successfully monitor pupils' progress. Teaching is sympathetic and, in most cases, challenging, to ensure that pupils learn successfully and make good progress. Where individual pupils need additional support, the school does its utmost to provide it.

21. Teachers give very good support in class to those pupils who have special educational needs. Work is well planned at an appropriate level to enable pupils to make very good progress. Teachers use teaching assistants very well and fully brief them about their role in each lesson. Some pupils from Years 1 and 2 are in a nurture group because they find it difficult to cope with learning in a mainstream class. These pupils receive very good support from the teachers and teaching assistants, and make very good progress. All are successfully integrated into the main school classes by the time they reach Year 3.

## **The curriculum**

The school provides a good curriculum for its pupils. It enriches pupils' learning by a range of extra activities and opportunities. Accommodation is good, though not fully exploited for maximum benefit. Resources are generally unsatisfactory, except for those for information and communication technology, which are good.

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

- Improved provision for numeracy and literacy has raised standards significantly.
- The general curriculum is broad and balanced, and is enhanced by a good range of additional opportunities and after-school clubs.
- Clear schemes of work and planning guidance support all staff.
- Good links are made between different subjects to enhance pupils' learning.
- Opportunities to develop literacy and numeracy skills are exploited in most subjects of the curriculum.
- The outside play provision in the Reception classes is unsatisfactory.
- There are limited resources in some subjects owing to financial constraints and poor development over time.

## Commentary

22. There are very good learning opportunities in the Nursery, and they are generally good in the Reception classes. The curriculum is well planned and offers a wide range of activities in all areas of learning. In the Reception classes, the provision for outdoor play is unsatisfactory. The activities provided do not encourage children to explore, investigate, be imaginative, be creative and have fun.

23. The general curriculum is well planned, using nationally approved schemes of work and supported by the school's own teaching and learning policies. These enable all pupils to achieve well, particularly in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology. The pupils who sit national tests aged seven and eleven attain high, and sometimes very high, standards.

24. The curriculum has been enriched by additional opportunities that extend its overall impact. Every pupil has opportunities to play a musical instrument, study their roles and responsibilities as citizens, and to develop appropriate personal, social and health education attitudes. Special curriculum events, for example the arts festival, focus on some aspect of learning, and the displays of work produced testify to the impact on pupils' creativity.

25. A good range of activities, including school clubs, enhances learning. 'Kids' Zone', at the end of the week, presents a carousel of extra activities, which pupils clearly enjoy. This activity needs to be monitored to ensure that pupils do not always choose boys-only or girls-only activities. For example, only girls were dancing while a high percentage of boys chose information and communication technology.

26. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language, have full access to the curriculum. This is because of sensitive planning, good teaching assistant support, and opportunities to take part in a good range of practical activities. The school's "accelerated learning" programme, with drama and speaking and listening opportunities built in, gives pupils confidence, and helps them contribute ideas and achieve learning objectives. The school has organised some classes to bring together pupils of similar abilities to target their learning needs as closely as possible. In Year 2 there is a nurture group, which allows pupils whose attainment is well below that found typically to work together to achieve at the level they are capable of. These pupils did not take the national tests at the end of 2003.

27. Subjects are often linked to enhance pupils' learning; for example in English in Year 6 the work on biographical writing is linked to a historical study of the life of the freedom fighter, Harriet Tubman, a focus in Black History Month. Younger children respond with paint marks as they listen to the music of Vivaldi or illustrate their poetry about sunset, mixing paint to achieve the dramatic colours of an evening sky.

28. Opportunities to develop numeracy and literacy skills are exploited well across other subjects, for example writing up science investigations or historical accounts, and using mathematical charts and diagrams to present data. The school's development plan has identified the need for pupils to have additional opportunities for extended writing to allow them to practise their newly acquired English language skills outside literacy classes. This aims to improve the consistency of writing skills across the school.

29. The school has good accommodation, though it is not always used to best effect. For example, the libraries and reference space do not offer pupils a positive invitation to read or to work independently. This is because library and computer resources are set in corridors or surrounded by cloakroom and locker facilities.

30. The school staffing is generous, including a strong team of teaching assistants. A significant number of teachers is newly qualified or trained overseas, and induction and support are built into the in-service training programme. The teachers ensure that all pupils have equal opportunities and those who are shy and reluctant to answer questions in a large group, sensitively

nurtured. Teaching assistants give good back up and work effectively with pupils with special educational needs, including those with emotional and behavioural difficulties. There is also very effective, support for those pupils with English as an additional language.

31. Much of the school's budget has been used to appoint additional staff to support the extensive learning programme in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology with very good effect. The school believes that pupils deserve the best support. Where pupils come from homes with limited incomes, educational visits are often subsidised. This means resources in other subjects are limited and there is very little money available to purchase consumable items. Class sets of books are not always available, and in two classes pupils read from photocopied sections of a book. Multi-cultural resources are limited as are those for religious education. There are also weaknesses in the resources for science, physical education and outside play equipment for the Foundation Stage. The staff do their best to compensate for these inadequacies and good use is made of photographs. These are well displayed around the school and acknowledge the cultural and ethnic diversity of the school family.

32. The curriculum provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good and, where possible, is linked to the targets in their individual education plans. Pupils are given full access to the curriculum and receive good quality support from teachers and teaching assistants. The nurture group, who need lots of additional support, cover the full curriculum in their class. Some pupils are withdrawn from lessons for additional learning support. Care is taken to ensure that they do not miss any important class work and that the benefits they receive from this extra help outweigh any disadvantages. The pupils from Years 1 and 2 in the nurture group also have access to the full curriculum.

33. Pupils who are learning English as an additional language have access to the school's full curriculum. If they are withdrawn from a lesson to have individual tuition, the teachers check the pupil understands what has been missed. The school also ensures pupils do not have gaps in the same subject by checking that the time they miss is minimal.

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

The school takes good care of pupils and provides very good support, advice and guidance based on very thorough monitoring and tracking.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Procedures for ensuring the welfare, health and safety of pupils, including child protection, are good.
- Staff have very good knowledge of pupils and their individual needs. Guidance for personal development is very good.
- The school is very clean, safe and well maintained, and the classrooms provide bright learning environments.
- Induction arrangements are very good, especially into the Nursery and Reception classes.
- Very good use is made of tracking and monitoring information to provide good targeted support in classrooms.
- Supervision is good, although lunchtime arrangements do not provide sufficient structure to promote the good personal and social development of all pupils.

### **Commentary**

34. This continues to be a strength of the school. Staff work hard to care for pupils' needs and to raise pupils' aspirations so that they achieve their best. Induction arrangements are good, and ensure that staff have a thorough understanding of pupils' individual needs. The provision of a breakfast club, subsidised by the school, ensures a good start to the day for a significant number of pupils. The club also helps to promote good attendance. Child protection procedures are good, and staff are well briefed. The school works effectively with a range of external agencies to provide the

most vulnerable pupils with good support. Health and safety policies and procedures are good. The school is clean, safe and well maintained. Supervision is good, although lunchtime supervision is inconsistent.

35. The school has very good procedures for tracking pupils' progress. The school has successful procedures for monitoring and predicting pupils' performance and this information is used very effectively to organise teaching groups. Good targeted support is provided for underachieving pupils and those with other identified learning needs. Personal and social education is well planned and delivered, supporting good personal development.

36. Pupils are well involved in the life of the school, especially the older ones who are prefects. Staff take good account of pupils' views in classrooms and through the weekly school council meetings. Pupil's views and self-evaluation contribute well to their regular assessments.

37. Pupils with special educational needs are identified early in their school life and are carefully tracked to monitor their progress. Their individual education plans are reviewed regularly. Liaison with outside agencies is good, and the school makes great efforts to ensure that pupils receive as high a level of care as possible. The four statemented pupils in the school receive their full entitlement, as outlined in their statements of educational need.

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

The school's good partnership with parents, other schools and the wider community supports learning and achievement.

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

- Good written communication is provided about the school and pupils' progress.
- The school provides good opportunities for dialogue with parents to raise expectations and standards.
- Parents are generally supportive of the school's efforts with their children. Attendance at consultation meetings is good, and most parents ensure that their children complete homework.
- The Sure Start parent and toddler group, the breakfast club and after school club provide good additional facilities and are well used.
- Friends of Lynch Hill Primary School, a small group of committed parents, staff and governors raise valuable funds for resources.
- Liaison with local schools is good and pupils are well supported through the transfer process.
- Links with the wider community are good, and good business links provide valuable sponsorship for the rewards scheme and support for mentoring.

#### **Commentary**

38. The school works hard to maintain good links with parents. Almost all parents who responded to the questionnaire are positive and pleased with the school. The administration staff are very welcoming and helpful. Parents have good daily access to staff in the Nursery and Reception classes and in Years 1 and 2, but constraints imposed by the building make it more difficult for parents with children in Years 3 to 6. Members of staff maintain good dialogue with the parents of those children who are experiencing learning or behavioural difficulties, and aim to work in close partnership to best support the child. The quality of written communications is good. The four booklets relating to each phase are issued annually, which is very helpful in providing all parents with essential information. Termly dialogue with parents is very supportive of pupils' progress. Consultations are well attended, and most parents want their children to do well and encourage them to complete homework tasks. Reports are well written with clear targets for improvement in the core subjects. The open evenings give parents the opportunity to discuss their child's progress and individual targets with teachers.



39. The school has good links with local schools, the community and other agencies. It works closely with other partners to coordinate provision within the area, for example a range of opportunities through the Sure Start parent and toddler sessions. Good links with local business support the rewards scheme and provide good mentoring support to raise achievement.

40. Parents and carers of pupils with special educational needs are kept fully informed about how their children are progressing, and are always invited to attend review meetings. Parents and carers are always welcome to discuss the provision for their children and how well they are doing in meeting their targets.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

The leadership and management of the school is very good and having a very positive impact on the school's performance. Governance is good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There is a great clarity of vision, sense of purpose and high aspirations.
- The school's leaders very successfully inspire, motivate and influence staff and pupils.
- The school is totally committed to inclusion.
- The school has high ambitions and goals and the school development plan underpins the school's successful performance.
- The school is very effectively influencing performance through self-evaluation.
- Staff performance management and its impact on school improvement are very successful.
- School governance is good.
- Most of the school's budget is used to employ staff. There is a limited budget, which means resources cannot be replaced or increased often enough.

### **Commentary**

41. The headteacher, deputy head and senior management team are the driving force for improving standards and are totally committed to school improvement. The headteacher has significant management skills and she has focused on implementing the school development plan to improve school performance and the quality of teaching. She believes strongly in the principle of providing the best education possible for all pupils regardless of need. The senior management team has established a very strong partnership. The staff have a very clear commitment to school improvement. They enjoy their work and show great devotion to supporting a challenging intake. Many of the pupils have serious learning difficulties or disabilities, and these are successfully and patiently supported.

42. The leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are good. The co-coordinator has an informed vision to raise children's standards. By her hard work and commitment, she provides a role model for the rest of the staff. The leadership and management of the Nursery are very good.

43. Most teachers with responsibility for a subject have focused on developing manageable schemes of work. The procedures for tracking pupils' progress are particularly rigorous, and the school is successful in its monitoring. The school's provision for pupils with special educational needs is very successful. The newly appointed special educational needs coordinator has already forged close links with teachers, teaching assistants, parents, governors, outside agencies and pupils to ensure that the pupils are given a high and effective level of support. She is very knowledgeable. Pupils are set realistic, but challenging targets for improvement, and great importance is attached to enhancing their self-esteem. For instance, stickers, certificates and other rewards are used to motivate pupils to work hard and learn. Pupils who have tried hard are praised in assemblies, and the headteacher makes it a priority to know most pupils so that she can praise them individually when she meets them in the school corridors. The school holds a special activity afternoon, Kid's Zone, at the end of each week when pupils who have behaved well can choose their

activity. Those who have received three warnings are not allowed to participate, so they catch up on their work instead. Inspectors were impressed with this activity. All the staff have a strong working relationship with each other, and a clear commitment to school improvement. Newly qualified teachers reassured inspectors that mentoring support was very successful.

44. The quality of the leadership by teachers with subject responsibility varies. Some are very experienced and they have a great impact on pupils' performance. They are all very enthusiastic about their roles and responsibilities. Even those who have only been in post this academic year for a few weeks when the inspection took place have already set about evaluating the school's provision.

45. The support for pupils who are learning English as an additional language is very good. There is an effective specialist support teacher, but she only has one day to support the whole school. The school's very successful management, rigorous target setting and analysis of data easily identifies any pupil who is at risk of falling behind their peers. The headteacher believes that all pupils have the right to learn, and she tries hard to integrate the provision into the whole school provision. Detailed analyses are kept of pupil's progress, and the school identifies the progress made by different ethnic and heritage groups. This ensures they reach at least average standards by the end of Year 6. However, newly arrived pupils are not very often assessed in their mother tongue. The school has no bilingual assistants to draw on to assess newly admitted pupils' knowledge and understanding. Pupils have targets for language improvement, and very good quality class support enhances their learning. The support teacher does her best to give these pupils good support, but during the inspection it was noted that she had only 20 minutes to support two children in the Nursery. One of the children seemed to talk confidently to the teacher, but much of her conversation was repetition of previous dialogue. The other child was only able to say 'yes', 'no' and 'O.K.', and the time allocated was insufficient to have an impact on her language acquisition.

46. The governing body is enthusiastic about its role in school. There are several governors' committees, and most governors have good knowledge of the community. There are some very good policies. The governors have approved, for instance a very clear policy for target setting and the school's policy for promoting racial equality and cultural awareness. The governors have a very good knowledge of the community and they give the school good support as a critical friend.

47. The school is doing all it can to ensure pupils are given the best education on possible. Children start school with very few skills and many pupils have learning difficulties. There are also a fair number who are learning English as an additional language, and a small group of travellers. From this very low starting point, pupils achieve very good standards in English, mathematics and science when compared to other similar schools. The school is not complacent, and it still feels there is more to do to ensure consistent standards in every year group. Taking this into account the school gives very good value for money.

48. Financial control in the school is very good and spending priorities are clearly linked to priorities in the improvement plan. Governors are involved closely in this process and monitor the budget carefully throughout the year. They take good account of the principles of best value in all their spending decisions. The school has a very effective bursar. She is most efficient and has a very good understanding of her role and responsibilities. She is also a governor and works closely with the finance committee to keep them well informed about expenditure. The chair of finance is very concerned about the limited budget. The finance committee has to monitor expenditure very closely to check it does not have a deficit. Despite everything, it manages to ensure pupil costs are low for a school of this type. The local educational action zone has been a great bonus and has provided essential funding for the nurture group furniture and resources, lap top computers and additional support staff.

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

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	1,314,991
Total expenditure	1,305,706
Expenditure per pupil	2,331.62

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	900
Balance carried forward to the next	9,285

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

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

The provision in the Foundation Stage is **good**.

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

- The Nursery provision is a strength of the school.
- There is good balance between child-initiated and adult-led learning.
- The very good relationships adults form with children provide a sense of security.
- The good teaching of basic skills across the curriculum has an impact on standards.
- There is a clear overview of the standards to be achieved at the end of the Foundation Stage.
- Nursery nurses make a valuable contribution to children's learning.
- Perceptive observations inform future planning and the work children are to do.
- The planning and provision for out-door play in the Reception classes lacks a coherent structure and is unsatisfactory.

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

Provision is **very good**.

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

- Positive relationships and good role models enhance children's social development.
- Children are increasingly developing their confidence and self esteem.
- There are lots of opportunities for children to make choices.
- The staff help children to learn independently.

#### **Commentary**

49. In the Nursery, the provision for personal, social, and emotional development is very good and underpins all its work. Very good teaching, in particular the high quality of relationships and respect shown by adults for the children and their carers, together with the good management of behaviour, leads to good progress for all children in this area of learning. These positive relationships provide children with the security they need when leaving their parents and carers for the first time. All staff provide consistent and encouraging role models. As a result, children quickly learn to have confidence in the staff, whose skilful management and promotion of good behaviour have considerable impact on children's attitudes and behaviour. In this supportive ethos, children develop well. Many opportunities are provided for children to make choices about the resources to select and the activities they wish to engage in. Thus, they take the first steps to being independent learners.

50. In the Reception classes, staff are vigilant about children who lack a positive self-image and cannot concentrate. They share consistent expectations of children taking turns, sharing, and working purposefully. Children's behaviour is well managed and they have a sound sense of right and wrong. There are frequent opportunities for children to work together, alone or in a variety of small group activities such as with construction resources.

## COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Provision is **good**

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Lots of opportunities for the children to answer questions and to talk as part of a large group.
- Good emphasis on teaching children to read and write.
- Discussion stimulated by staff, which improves children's confidence.
- Good choice of stories encourages a love of books.
- Good opportunities to develop language by exploiting spontaneous situations.

### Commentary

51. In the three classes of the Foundation Stage, activities are provided and an environment created where children have good opportunities to develop their oral and written skills. All staff use language well with children and are concerned to develop their vocabulary. This enables children to make progress in all areas of learning. In the Nursery, the role-play areas play a significant part in helping children to develop their language skills. In every activity in the Foundation Stage, staff provide children with a commentary that expresses their activity in words. They also ask questions in order to assess children's understanding, and encourage them to practise describing what they are doing. In the Nursery, staff are highly skilled at planning to use the unexpected or exciting to promote spontaneous language. For example, when the children decided a cardboard box should be transformed in to a space craft a member of staff used the opportunity effectively to discuss space travel and to introduce unfamiliar words. While this excited most children, it was a minority who responded with spoken language. Most children demonstrated with facial expressions and gesture. However, the staff's high expectations mean that they plan for all children to develop their vocabulary effectively. Children learning English as an additional language are assessed to ascertain their levels of fluency. This gives the staff a secure picture of what children need to do next.

52. All staff are adept at promoting children's interest in books, stories and making marks on paper. In the Reception classes, children identify the books they like and are beginning to try to retell a familiar story. The staff are skilled at encouraging children to develop an interest in letters and writing. In the Nursery, children start the day by finding their name card. This successfully promotes their own interest in the sounds and letters that start their name. In the Reception classes, the good teaching and the well-defined systematic approach to teaching sounds is successful, and children demonstrate they are beginning to link a wide range of letters and sounds. Children in the Reception classes develop a good pencil grip and make good progress in forming letters with a regular shape. By the end of the Foundation Stage, the majority of children exceed the early learning goals in communication, language, and literacy.

## MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision is **good**

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good emphasis on teaching children to count and recognise numbers.
- The Nursery activities are interesting for the children.
- The teaching is successful.

### Commentary

53. From the start, a high priority is placed on developing children's mathematical skills. A particular strength of the teaching in this area of learning is the effective planning that ensures the activities using mathematical ideas are relevant to children's interest and experience. As a result, they generate a high level of enjoyment. Mathematical development in the Nursery is an area where

skilful teaching promotes high levels of interest and willingness to learn, such as the activity requiring children to match pairs of gloves. A wide repertoire of number rhymes is used to reinforce the practical work.

54. In the Reception classes, this aspect is taught well and, as in communication, language and literacy, the majority of children exceed the early learning goals. Children gain confidence in participating in activities as practical mathematicians, and begin to understand the relevance of shape and number in their everyday lives. They learn about the consistency of number, and work confidently with numbers to ten. They make very good progress in exploring pattern, shape, and classification. In one class, children made a graph showing the favourite flavour of milk shakes after mixing and tasting a variety.

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

Provision is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There is a wide range of interesting activities for children to explore the wider world.
- Children are given good opportunities to show curiosity.
- There is good emphasis on the natural environment.

### **Commentary**

55. Most children enter the Nursery with very limited experiences beyond their home environment. The provision in the Foundation Stage compensates for children's lack of experience and reinforces effectively children's growing awareness and curiosity about a range of objects and events. Where there is good teaching, the children develop an appropriate understanding of the world in which they live. In the Nursery, the rich and stimulating environment and the wide range of indoor and outdoor activities support children's natural curiosity and enthusiasm effectively.

56. In the Nursery, children control the computer mouse with considerable skill from an early age. Children in a Reception class demonstrate they have observed the use of technology in every day life when they know that it is necessary to swipe the article at the till in the class 'shop' to read the bar code. Nursery children investigated the texture of ice cubes, and watched as they melted in the warm classroom. Out-of-doors the staff continued the theme effectively by providing ice and animals of the cold lands for imaginative play. Throughout each session, there are many opportunities for children to use their senses to find out about different objects.

57. Staff encourage children to observe and discover similarities and differences. In the Nursery, children use a magnifying glass to scrutinise leaves, cones and conkers. In a Reception class, they make close observations of seeds. These children learn about planting and how to nurture young plants successfully. The staff have to work hard to stimulate children's curiosity, and most children seem to have little curiosity.

## **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision is **good**

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There are good opportunities in the Nursery for developing physical skills outside.
- Staff develop children's skills while developing their imagination.
- There are weaknesses in the Reception classes' outside play provision.

## **Commentary**

58. The very good provision in the Nursery ensures that children have many opportunities to extend their physical skills. They gain hand control through painting, making and building. The work continues in the Reception classes, and many children can use pencils correctly when they write and demonstrate good control when using paintbrushes, glue, and malleable materials.

59. Children in the Nursery have a wealth of well-planned opportunities to use the outdoor space. They gradually increase their skills because of the staff's effective planning to meet their needs through all activities. Suitable large equipment is provided for children to climb, slide, and balance. Children pedal and steer with accuracy and move and stack large construction blocks confidently.

60. In the Reception classes, staff provide good opportunities to develop children's skills and improve their co-ordination and develop their imagination. The small apparatus helps them develop throwing, catching, and aiming skills. Regular planned times in the hall for Reception children provide a structured time to develop other physical skills on a range of large apparatus. However, the opportunities Reception class children have to develop their physical skills outside are unsatisfactory.

## **CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

Provision is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There are a wealth of opportunities for children to be creative.
- Role-play is particularly effective in encouraging children to use their imagination.
- Members of staff are enthusiastic.

## **Commentary**

61. Children have many and varied opportunities to be creative. Being immersed in such provision, children attain all that is expected of them in creative development by the time they enter Year1. There is a sense of fun in the Nursery as children explore colour and texture under the skilful guidance of an adult. For example, children printing with their hands were encouraged to watch the effect of colour change as two or more colours merged. They were amazed by the results. Similarly, in a Reception class, children became very excited when they blew paint bubbles and captured the shape on paper. The enthusiastic member of staff stimulated and focussed children's interest on how bubbles are made and the designs created. Other children in the same class enjoyed making divas for Diwali and talked about the texture of the clay and the effect on their hands when clay dries. They were well supported by the teacher who emphasised the special vocabulary and the use of divas for the festival. This work made a contribution to children's cultural development.

62. The indoor role-play areas contain some attractive costumes and props that encourage the children to act out familiar experiences from their lives. Nursery children love to dress up and as they become ballerinas, supermen, and knights, they use their own imagination as they move around the classroom. Reception class children make pizzas and go on picnics as they develop their fantasy world.

## SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

### ENGLISH

Provision for English is **good**.

#### Strengths and Weaknesses

- Standards in reading and writing have improved.
- There is strong leadership.
- There are opportunities for extended writing outside literacy lessons.
- There are good opportunities to write in other subjects.
- There is a lack of opportunity for pupils to write independently for their own purposes.
- Library and independent study facilities are unsatisfactory.

#### Commentary

63. Standards of attainment are in line with those expected in Years 1 and 2, and above in Years 3 to 6.

64. The provision for the development of pupils' speaking and listening skills is good throughout the school. Teachers provide good models for ways of raising and responding to questions. Opportunities for pupils to share ideas and explain their thinking are built into all areas of the curriculum. Pupils' vocabulary is built up systematically in specific subjects and as they explore ideas in the stories they are studying. Teachers understand when to intervene to help pupils make progress, and sensitive questioning to check pupils' understanding was observed in most lessons. Drama is included in lessons as part of the school's 'accelerated learning' programme, and offers pupils speaking and listening and role-play opportunities in a range of lessons. For example in a good lesson about report writing, pupils took different roles in a meeting of farmers deciding how to stop foxes killing their animals. They set up a chairperson and minute-taker, decided a course of action. They then wrote a report about the meeting, with raised understanding and confidence because of the role-play they had been involved in.

65. Most pupils are reading at the level expected for their age and many well beyond. Teachers use the teaching framework of the National Literacy Strategy to help pupils make good progress in their reading. Pupils are developing a range of strategies to help them read unfamiliar words and to understand different authors' deeper meanings from their choice of vocabulary and particular emphases. They use punctuation as a guide when reading, to help them bring more meaning and expression. This raised awareness is achieved because pupils are given regular opportunity to talk about their reading with a member of staff. This approach, called 'guided reading', is making a major contribution to pupils' ability to understand the meaning of different kinds of writing beyond a literal decoding of the words in a sentence.

66. Pupils also achieve good standards in writing because of the way teachers make links between reading and writing in literacy lessons. Teachers draw pupils' attention to the characteristics of different types of writing and the range of purposes they are used for. Pupils are then given the opportunity to adopt these styles and conventions in their own writing. For example, in a Year 2 class pupils learn about the conventions of instructional writing by making a jam sandwich and recording each stage of the task. In Year 6, pupils are taught the difference between autobiography and biography by studying the characteristics of each and using this new knowledge to write about their own or someone else's life. The school has identified additional curriculum time, known as 'extended writing', to allow pupils to practise a range of writing styles developed in literacy hours. This is very effective timetabling, but pupils also have the opportunity to transfer these skills, where appropriate, to other subjects. From a scrutiny of pupils' writing in books however, there are few opportunities for pupils to use their new skills to write for their own study purposes or to explore their own experiences. There is also some inconsistency in writing standards in some classes that have been identified in the school development plan as a priority for improvement. For example, they



might produce an account of school trip to the Tower of London with the appropriate linguistic style, but there is little opportunity planned to write from a personal perspective about the beauty of the crown jewels or the grisly fate of condemned prisoners in The Tower.

67. Teaching in English is generally good. In some classes pupils are grouped according to prior attainment, and in others there are mixed abilities and work is planned to help all pupils make good progress. In mixed-ability classes, different follow-up tasks allow pupils to achieve in line with their capabilities. Teachers draw on the teaching framework from the national strategy to make sure that all aspects of the English curriculum are planned carefully and continuously throughout the year. A range of resources, including projected writing samples, are used to help pupils study particular features of texts. Pupils are given the opportunity to respond individually to teachers' questions about the writing on mini-whiteboards, which encourages full participation and also allows staff to assess pupils' understanding as the lesson unfolds. Occasionally, resources are insufficient to support the learning, for example photocopies of a class book rather than the book itself, and the reading of an extract of a story about loneliness for younger pupils without the book illustrations to make meanings clearer. There are no dual language books and no language programme for pupils who are learning English as an additional language. Assessment in all aspects of the subject is made regularly and thoroughly, and from this targets are identified to encourage pupils to further efforts. Teachers assess pupils' work in books well. Marking generally meets the requirements of the school's own policy, with an indication on what each pupil has achieved and a small note about how work can be improved. There is some inconsistency, however, and marking appears to be less effective and thorough in some books.

68. The subject manager is strong. She is totally committed to raising standards. The expectations are clearly defined as yearly targets, and monitoring is rigorous to ensure teaching and learning levels are high. Good support is offered for the significant number of newly qualified teachers and teachers trained overseas who are less experienced with the English National Curriculum.

### **Language and Literacy Across the Curriculum**

69. The school has made a good effort to provide opportunities for pupils to write more extensively outside the literacy lessons. Pupils write in the conventional way for particular subjects, for example autobiographical writing in history, recording a science investigation, or comparing geographical features of different locations. There is not enough emphasis, however, on pupils' writing for their own purposes, for example to pursue their own interests, or to take ideas presented in lessons further. Such opportunity would allow pupils, particularly higher attaining ones, to write independently and achieve the school's aim of producing life-long learners. Pupils need better library and resource facilities than are currently available.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils leave the school attaining standards in mathematics that are above the national average.
- Teaching is good throughout the school.
- Support staff are used very well in lessons.
- Assessment procedures are very good and are used effectively to raise standards.
- The subject is very well led and managed.

### **Commentary**

70. The pupils currently in Year 6 are also attaining standards above those expected for their age. The consistently good, and often very good, teaching is a significant factor in helping pupils to

reach such high standards. They make very good progress. In 2002, the pupils in Year 2 reached standards well above those found nationally. In 2003, the test results showed that all pupils who were entered for the test reached or exceeded the nationally expected level. Nine lower ability pupils from the nurture group were not included in the data, so the figures do not give a true picture of standards overall. The pupils currently in Year 2 are reaching the standards expected for their age group.

71. The quality of teaching is good overall, with nearly half of the lessons seen very good. This helps pupils learn at a very fast rate. Teachers have very high expectations, and set work designed to challenge pupils of all abilities. They create a positive working environment and insist on high standards of work and behaviour at all times. The pupils respond very well to this and are eager to do their best and achieve high standards. This was clearly seen in a very good Year 4 lesson about coordinates. Much useful discussion took place, and the pupils listened intently to the teacher and also to each other. The teacher used an interactive whiteboard very effectively to grab the pupils' attention and add more interest to the lesson.

72. Teachers use support staff very well to help their pupils learn more effectively. They plan the role of the teaching assistants in each lesson very carefully to maximise their impact. Teaching assistants know the pupils well and, in the best lessons, often help with behaviour management to enable the teachers to concentrate on teaching.

73. The subject is led and managed very well by a very knowledgeable team. They have put in place very useful assessment procedures that are used most successfully to help pupils reach their full potential. The data collected shows how individual pupils or particular groups are progressing, and triggers action if they are not performing well enough. Test papers are analysed to identify areas of strength or concern. Planning of work is then adjusted to address any perceived problems. Recent areas that have been a focus for further development have included shape and solving word problems. The data is also used to help set individual targets for pupils so that they know what they must do to improve. The management team have very clear priorities for the future. For example, they know that with many new teachers in the school, some from abroad, high quality staff training is of utmost importance. They plan training to improve the teaching of mathematics so that all pupils are effective learners and reach high standards.

74. There has been a very good improvement in the provision since the last inspection, when raising standards in mathematics was an issue for improvement. Standards are now high, as teaching has improved considerably.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

75. The pupil's skills in mathematics are often used in other subjects of the curriculum, and their inclusion is planned. When these links are made they prove useful, making learning more relevant and helping pupils reinforce their skills and understanding in mathematics. For example, pupils measure in science lessons and draw tables and graphs of their findings. In some lessons, pupils have access to computers. These are very useful in helping pupils develop their skills in both mathematics and information and communication technology.

## **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Investigative work in science is interesting and innovative.
- Pupils' usually present their work neatly and accurately.
- There are very good examples of teaching.
- The standards are high.

## **Commentary**

76. Evidence was collected from observing the two Year 2 lessons and also the nurture group in Key Stage 1. One lesson was observed in Key Stage 2, and last year's work was scrutinised from Years 3 – 6. The school has done all it can to improve pupils' performance. In the last inspection, the standards were well below average so it has done very well to enhance pupils' performance so that results are now high. The quality of teaching is good overall and there were two very good lessons at Key Stage 1.

77. Examples of work from Year 6 in the last academic year show that pupils made very good progress and they achieved very well. The school worked hard to develop the level of challenge for its higher attaining pupils. Consequently a large number of pupils achieved the higher Level 5.

78. Standards at the end of Year 2 are presently in line with those expected for pupils aged seven and they achieve well. Pupils have a good understanding of the benefits of healthy eating. They know the names of important organs in the body. They know how the importance of making a test fair in their investigations. They recognise a range of different materials and they use a developing vocabulary to describe them. By Year 3, pupils work on light sources and they understand that light travels in straight lines. They make predictions about the impact of the sun going down and its effect on their shadows. There are good links with music in Year 3, when pupils cover a topic on vibration. One interesting investigation was Year 3 testing tights to see which ones were stretchy. In Years 4 and 5, work on the body is extended and pupils consider if it is possible that older pupils have longer bones. The work is of high quality and, for instance in Year 5, pupils testing bubble-wrap paper as a thermal insulator set out their work in a detailed and methodical way. By Year 6, work is written in pen, and titles very neatly underlined. An example is work on microorganisms that is revision of earlier work in Year 5, but in greater depth. Pupils have good attitudes and behaviour. They say they enjoy scientific investigations.

79. Teaching is good overall and there are some lessons where it is very good. Teachers challenge their pupils at a very high level. They take great care with marking, and prioritise neat presentation. Teachers make their lessons lively, practical and relevant. Where resources are inadequate, the teachers willingly make their own. This ensures pupils are fascinated and they learn exceptionally well by hands-on investigation. This was very obvious in a Year 2 lesson when the teacher had collected a wide range of objects for pupils to feel and describe. She had labelled them carefully to help pupils to record their work and to help them name the object. In addition she had made scientific vocabulary cards for display. Pupils demonstrated a very positive attitude and they used equipment very sensibly. They are encouraged to be safety-conscious. The teachers are very good at explaining the wider context and training pupils to work towards logical conclusions. Consequently, the pupils throughout the school put a lot of thought into their work. They learn successfully and achieve better than average understanding. The teachers encourage the older pupils to use graphs to record their results. Teachers often allow them to choose between drawing the graph free hand and using graph paper. Regular rigorous assessments of pupils' progress successfully inform the staff if any pupil is falling behind their peers. Pupils with learning difficulties receive very good support from teaching assistants.

80. Science is appropriately managed by a new co-coordinator. The previous coordinator is helping her to settle into her new responsibilities. The coordinator has not yet had experience of monitoring teaching. She has no budget allocation and limited funds available to purchase consumable items such as batteries

## **Science across the curriculum**

81. The successful attention that Key Stage 2 teachers pay to promoting good opportunities for pupils to draw graphs makes good use of numeracy skills. The pupils regularly use their computer skills to do research that adds to their knowledge and understanding. Pupils use literacy skills well when they record their observations. Their handwriting is neat and well formed. A particularly strong

feature is the attention teachers give to building up pupils' speaking skills, to enable them to report confidently and clearly to the whole class, using scientific language, choosing from a variety of styles.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

Provision in information and communication technology is **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The quality of teaching and learning is good. Pupils achieve very well.
- Pupils have a good attitude to their work and behave well.
- The subject is very well led and managed.
- Good links are planned with other subjects.
- There is a good level of quality resources.
- Pupils' keyboard skills are weak.

### **Commentary**

82. By the time the pupils leave the school at the end of Year 6, they reach standards in information and communication technology that are similar to those found nationally. This represents a very good improvement since the last inspection when standards were judged to be below national expectations and the provision of information and communication technology was an issue. All the criticisms made in that report have been fully addressed. All aspects of the subject are now taught throughout the school. The very good improvements to the resources for the subject and the improved skills and confidence of teachers have been instrumental in raising standards to an acceptable level. Pupils with special educational needs also make very good progress as they are very well supported by teachers, teaching assistants and their classmates. Pupil's keyboard skills are underdeveloped, and they often have difficulty in entering text at a reasonable rate. This frustrates them and limits their output in the available time.

83. The quality of teaching is good and no unsatisfactory teaching was seen during the inspection. All teachers manage their pupils well and create a good working atmosphere in which pupils can concentrate and produce good quality work. In a very good Year 2 lesson putting text into speech bubbles, the teacher was very well prepared and organised so that the pupils were able to learn many new skills. Pupils thoroughly enjoy information and communication technology work and are very proud of their efforts, particularly the Year 6 PowerPoint presentations about the Victorians. These are of good quality and thoughtfully produced. Pupils were learning a whole range of new skills at a tremendous rate. Work is well planned at a level designed to help pupils of all abilities learn effectively.

84. The subject is very well led and managed. The coordinator has worked very hard to ensure that the provision is successfully meeting pupils' needs. Resources are good and are used effectively to raise standards. The 30 laptops are used very effectively in Year 6 to improve knowledge and skills in a variety of subjects and make learning a pleasure for the pupils. The network of computers in the information and communication technology suite is also used very well in lessons to help pupils improve their skills. The use of other, often old, computers around the school is less well organised and they often lie idle for long periods. As they take up quite a lot of room, their usefulness in helping raise standards is doubtful. Budget restrictions mean that some equipment, such as the mice, is starting to fail and this makes teaching and learning more difficult. The lack of headphones when using sound in information and communication technology work makes teaching difficult when 30 pupils are all making music at the same time.

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

85. There are many well-planned links between information and communication technology and other subjects. Nearly all the information and communication technology skills are taught through carefully thought out work that is designed to improve pupils' knowledge and understanding of both

information and communication technology and the other subjects. For example, pupils research the Internet to find out about Judaism and in mathematics they use spreadsheets to create and interrogate their own databases. Sensors are used in science lessons and word processing in literacy. Teachers also use information and communication technology to make their lessons more interesting and effective. The interactive white boards are used very well to teach pupils, and their use is a strong indication of how much the confidence of teachers has risen in recent years.

## **HUMANITIES**

The humanities were not a main focus of the inspection although lessons were seen in religious education, and history. The teaching in religious education was good and there was one excellent lesson. In history, the teaching was satisfactory. No geography lesson was observed. Inspectors also looked at a limited range of pupils' work, and they talked to the teachers who co-ordinate these subjects.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION,**

Provision is **good**.

### **Main strengths**

- Teaching is imaginative.
- Topics are chosen that link world faiths to modern life.
- There is strong class management.
- The use of modern technology is exciting.

### **Commentary**

86. Evidence from three lessons at Key Stage 2, part of another lesson and scrutiny of wall displays and also the locally agreed syllabus, show that the school is continuing to meet requirements. Pupils attain the standards expected of the locally agreed syllabus and they achieve well. At the time of the last inspection, religious education was judged to be only satisfactory so the provision has been effectively improved. The quality of the teaching is now good, and one excellent lesson was observed.

87. The pupils are successfully learning about a wide range of world faiths. They understand that Jesus told stories as a way of teaching people about God and how they should behave in following him. They identify aspects of their own experience and feelings. By the end of Year 6, pupils are sensitive to identifying some religious beliefs and they know some festivals are characteristic of more than one world faith. They also know, from studying the Jewish religion, the meaning of words like 'Yom Kippur', 'Rites of Passage' and 'Passover'. The teachers make good comparisons between religions in their lessons, and this means pupils have a good knowledge of a range of different religions.

88. The teachers have strong relationships with their classes. The topics are carefully planned to make them interesting and relevant to pupils' own lives. For instance in one good lesson in Year 5, the teacher was teaching the pupils about the parable of the Good Samaritan. This was part of a topic on Christianity. The teacher used modern charities such as the Red Cross as examples of people who care for others. He gave the class the opportunity to express their own ideas and to make suggestions. This approach meant all pupils were enthusiastic and fully involved. Teachers assess pupils' understanding in two ways. They assess the pupils' religious knowledge and the impact of these principles on their own lives. For instance, the impact of prayer and recognition of turning points in life. Computers are used to make lessons more interesting. For example, in one Year 6 class, observed only briefly, pupils accessed the Internet to find out about the Jewish faith on lap top computers.

## Example of outstanding practice

### A religious education lesson that captured pupils' attention and enhanced their learning.

One excellent lesson in Year 6 was a shining example of how a religious education lesson can be magically enhanced with modern technology. After spending a few minutes discussing special places, the teacher described her own bedroom where she sometimes escapes for peace. She asked the class if they thought she treated her bedroom with respect or that she wrecked it when she was angry about life. This was an interesting parallel with religion. They immediately recognised that she showed respect in her home. She compared this analogy with the respect people show in a religious building. Using a large interactive screen, she showed her class what happened when she accessed the Internet. She quickly and successfully found an appropriate website, which included a 'virtual' Synagogue. The class was fascinated as they 'entered' the Synagogue. They asked lots of questions, and even those who often have challenging behaviour were totally captivated by this. Once inside the Synagogue she skilfully promoted their learning by suggesting, for instance, 'shall we look inside the kitchen cupboards because we know that Jewish people eat special food'? Every now and then she checked pupils' knowledge by asking them questions such as, 'What is the Torah?' She made skilful comparisons with other faiths. An example of this was when pupils asked about the light over the Ark. She said it was to signify God's presence and she reminded them that light is important in other faiths. They easily remembered previous work on the Christian religion and that people believe God is the light of the world. The lesson was so very successful in stimulating pupils' enthusiasm. Some indicated they would like to see a Synagogue for themselves. The achievement in this lesson was excellent. It was good to see so many eleven year olds taking such a great interest in a religious topic. Clearly, the virtual Synagogue captured their attention and successfully motivated them.

89. The pupils' attitude to their work is good. Talking to them, they are interested in the topics they cover. For instance during a good lesson about Sikhism in Year 3, the teacher linked work from a previous lesson to the topic they were covering. The class discussed the Sikh religion and related their knowledge to Christian principles.

90. Religious education is well coordinated by two teachers. They have drawn up a good programme of study and they give advice to teachers when they need help with delivering a topic. They say their resources are limited.

## HISTORY

Provision in history is **satisfactory**.

### Strengths and Weaknesses:

- Literacy skills and information and communication technology are used to support learning.
- There are strong links between history and geography to bring more understanding to pupils' learning
- The resources are unsatisfactory, with many unattractive and outdated
- There is provision of opportunity for independent research.

### Commentary

91. Pupils achieve appropriately in history. Teachers make suitable use of published schemes of work to ensure the progressive development of knowledge and skills. The planning effectively organises when the different strands of the subject are to be taught, and allocates sufficient time to ensure suitable depth of study. In the week of inspection, time was allocated to history and no lessons in geography were observed. Scrutiny of last year's workbooks confirms an appropriate range of study and indicates that teacher expectations of what pupils should know, understand and record are satisfactory.

92. Some thought has been put into curriculum planning to link history with other subjects. Displays of pupils' work demonstrate this well. Other subjects are also used well to support learning, for example information and communications technology and mathematics to present data

from geographical studies, and literacy skills to record historical information in a variety of ways. There does not appear to be enough opportunity for higher attaining pupils to write at length in these subjects, nor to use independent research skills to supplement what they have learnt in class. Nor does there appear to be enough opportunity for pupils to use their knowledge about places in the world of which they have experience, except for such one-line contributions as 'I went to Sri Lanka for my holiday'. Many pupils have extended family abroad or knowledge about living in different climates, which could be exploited, particularly in geography, for example in the study unit about islands.

93. Resources for both subjects are unsatisfactory. For example, pupils studied Victorian childhood without the benefit of Victorian toy artefacts or well produced illustrations. In another class, minimal resources were available for pupils' scrutiny in a lesson on how ancient Egyptians communicated through hieroglyphics. Such resources bring the subjects alive, and also help pupils understand the significance of historical sources. Some classrooms have maps of the world and of the UK for routine reference, for example to point out where in the world events are happening or to locate the setting of their historical studies.

94. Teaching and learning in history are satisfactory. Teaching is supported by an approved scheme of work. Teachers occasionally enliven the subject by good use of drama, for example Year 5 pupils studied the battle techniques of ancient Greeks, dressing up in helmets and creating for themselves an unbreachable wall of shields, marching in unity and wheeling round with control and co-ordination. There was also opportunity to discuss how the Persians eventually learnt to infiltrate the Greek defences by firing their arrows upwards so that they fell into the advancing army.

95. The subject co-coordinators are keen to help raise staff expertise and confidence for both subjects by building up portfolios of work that indicate the standard expected in each year group across the range of study units. This is an important resource, though without evidence collected by observing teaching and learning co-coordinators' planning for improvement lacks focus. Lack of budget over a considerable period has meant little development in both subjects and left resources unattractive and outdated. This has inevitably a limiting impact on pupils' overall achievement.

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

These subjects were not a main focus of the inspection, but one lesson was seen in Year 4 in art. No lessons were observed in design and technology; however, inspectors saw examples of work around the school. Five lessons were seen in music, and the school band and choir were observed plus pupils' singing in assemblies. Three lessons at Key Stage 2 were observed in physical education. Two of these lessons took place in the school hall and one was outside on the playing fields. In each subject, inspectors also held discussions with the relevant subject leaders.

### **Art**

The provision is **good**.

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

- Teachers always take the trouble to emphasis the development of skills in art.
- Pupils say they always enjoy their art lessons.
- The art coordinator has successfully influenced the pupils' performance.

### **Commentary**

96. Provision in art is good, and there are some very good examples of work throughout the school; pupils achieve very well. The only lesson observed was very good. By the end of Year 2, pupils develop successful drawing skills. For instance, they draw portraits of each other and pay attention to special features such as eyelashes and hairstyles. By Year 3, they draw in freckles and the face shape is improved. They also draw objects from still life. An example is a very good

charcoal drawing of a bucket and spade in Year 2. Throughout the school, pupils cover a wide range of media. For example in Years 4 and 5 they make designs on scraperboard. They look at prints of famous artists and copy the different styles. This was apparent in the very strong lesson in Year 3. The teacher had introduced her class in a previous lesson to the work of Joan Miro. The pupils' paintings had demonstrated that they needed to practise colour mixing and careful brush strokes. The pupils were enthralled as they mixed shades of different colours. One girl told inspectors 'I just love art and I am mixing a delightful purple!' The teacher created a calm working atmosphere by playing music in the background for her class to listen to.

## **Physical education**

The provision is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There is a good coordinator for physical education.
- Resources are impeding pupils' performance in some lessons. The footballs deflated continually during physical education.
- One lesson was unsatisfactory

## **Commentary**

97. The standards are generally satisfactory with most pupils achieving soundly. A small group of agile pupils are clearly achieving well. However, in one Year 6 lesson, the standards of pupils' gymnastic movements were not good enough for their age group. In this lesson, many pupils under achieved. However, the quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. In a Year 4 lesson, pupils developed ball skills, and the learning intention was to teach them how to bounce a ball whilst moving. The teacher managed the class very well, but some boys with challenging behaviour found it difficult to concentrate on the activity. The teacher restructured the activity to make sure all the class fully participated and achieved as well as they could. However, the quality of the lesson was impeded because the footballs deflated constantly. In one satisfactory hall lesson, Year 5 pupils practised a range of movements such as swimming strokes, and sports such as throwing a discus. The teacher successfully motivated the class and most pupils' behaviour was good. Movements were controlled and care taken with composition. In the unsatisfactory lesson, pupils were using apparatus and their behaviour was not good enough. The teacher had an appropriate warm-up at the start of the lesson, but the rest of the lesson was rushed. Pupils were very noisy and the teacher had to shout instructions to the class. The pupils took little care about jumping off the apparatus and little attention was given to precision and fluency in performance. The teacher carried on the lesson regardless, and took no action to stop the lesson to regain control of the class. This resulted in poor performance.

98. The school encourages pupils to be fit. If pupils cannot take part in a lesson they jog around the periphery of the playground. There is also a weekly running club. Pupils in Year 3 go swimming weekly. The weekly KidsZone is also an opportunity for pupils to dance or play ball games.

## **Music**

The provision is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There is very good leadership from the coordinator.
- The pupils love music and they respond enthusiastically.
- There is good teaching by non-specialists, and inspired teaching by the specialist band teacher.
- The brass band activity for older pupils is a strength.

## **Commentary**



99. Provision is good in music. Pupils achieve appropriately and, in band practice, they achieve successfully. They attain the standards that are expected for their ages in Years 2 and 6. Pupils benefit significantly from the expert knowledge of the subject coordinator and the good teaching by other members of staff. Guided by this quality of teaching, the majority of pupils in Key Stage 1 sing in tune and with expression. Pupils are highly motivated through an interesting range of teaching strategies, which include stimulating warming up sessions. They quickly learn the words of songs and, because of the teachers' high expectations; they listen attentively to recall sounds with developing aural memory.

100. As a result of musical skills, knowledge and understanding being systematically taught, pupils in Year 6 sing with clear diction, pitch control and musical expression. In assemblies and choir practices, the pupils sing in unison with a good awareness of other performers. The quality of pupils' singing and the joy with which they perform songs such as 'Where have all the flowers gone?' adds a valuable dimension to the spiritual development of performers and audience alike. Teachers give due consideration to teaching the correct musical terms. In this respect, the subject makes a good contribution to pupils' literacy skills. The subject also makes a good contribution to pupils' social and cultural development, as they listen to and orally evaluate music from different eras and cultures.

101. Pupils of all ages and abilities enjoy music and get great pleasure from singing and playing together. The standard of behaviour and attitudes in lessons is always good, and pupils have the opportunity to learn in a happy environment. The school ensures that boys and girls of all abilities and attitudes play a full part in lessons and extra-curricular activities. Regular opportunities for school performances allow pupils to celebrate their attainment in the subject with parents and friends of the school. There is a useful range of percussion and brass instruments and pupils treat these with respect. The music room is another useful resource and is well used to support pupils' learning.

102. The coordinator's own infectious enthusiasm for music instils in pupils a deep love of the subject. He has a clear vision for its future development, based on his wide knowledge as a skilled musician. His teaching of brass is impressive and pupils make very progress as a result. There has been an improvement in music since the last inspection.

103. No lessons were observed in design technology. However, the school's files and discussions with staff and pupils indicate that the overall provision is satisfactory.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>2</b>
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	2
Value for money provided by the school	2
<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>2</b>
Pupils' achievement	2
<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>	<b>3</b>
Attendance	4
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	4
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>	<b>3</b>
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	2
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	3
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	2
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	3
<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>2</b>
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	2
The effectiveness of management	2

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