

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **THE ASHBEACH PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Ramsey St Mary's, Huntingdon

LEA area: Cambridgeshire

Unique reference number: 110685

Headteacher: Ms H S Lambert

Lead inspector: Graham Bate

Dates of inspection: 19<sup>th</sup> – 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2004

Inspection number: 260736

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:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	124 pupils
School address:	Ashbeach Drove Ramsey St Mary's Huntingdon Cambridgeshire
Postcode:	PE26 2TG
Telephone number:	01733 844262
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr T Butson
Date of previous inspection:	October 1998

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The school is situated in the small fenland village of Ramsey St Mary's. It serves other small communities and about half the pupils travel to school by bus. The school is smaller than the average nationally, having 124 pupils on roll aged four to eleven years, of whom 15 are in the reception class. A local independent playgroup, with which the school has very good links, uses a very small room in the building; most of these children subsequently attend the school. The pupils are organised into seven single-age classes during the morning sessions, with the reception class and Year 1, and Years 4 and 5 joining together for the afternoon. The current building was opened in 1993 and there are two mobile classrooms. Significant numbers of new houses are being built in the vicinity and the numbers on roll are rising slowly. Except for four pupils of ethnic minority heritage, all the pupils are from a white British background. The standard of children's attainment, on entry into the reception class, covers a broad range but, overall, is below average. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals, and those having special educational needs, are both in line with national averages. Just over two per cent of the pupils have statements of special educational needs. Pupil mobility is increasing slowly.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
20926	Mr G Bate	Lead inspector	Mathematics Science Art and design Design and technology Music Physical education Special educational needs English as an additional language
9417	Ms E Owen	Lay inspector	
22967	Ms M Griffiths	Team inspector	English Information and communication technology Geography History Religious education Foundation Stage

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a very effective school that provides good value for money. Each individual pupil and adult are very important in the school and, as a result, a caring, enthusiastic, family atmosphere permeates it. The commitment of all adults in the school to the pupils' needs ensures that value is added to the pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills and they all achieve well. The school is highly regarded by the parents and the community.

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

- the school is extremely well led, managed and governed;
- all pupils achieve well as a result of the good quality of teaching;
- relationships within the school are excellent, consequently the pupils have very positive attitudes and their behaviour is very good;
- the school provides an exceptionally good range of curricular experiences;
- there are no significant weaknesses but some areas for further development are indicated later in this summary.

The school has effectively dealt with the issues raised in the last inspection of October 1998. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are now average, and the teaching of all subjects, to all ages, is at least good. There has also been a good improvement in the pupils' vocabulary and writing, and the role of the subject co-ordinators is well developed. The governing body has a clear understanding of the impact of spending decisions. All other aspects, deemed to have been good or very good in the last inspection, have been maintained or improved. This represents good overall improvement.

### 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	B	C	C
mathematics	E	B	C	C
science	E	B	C	D

*Key: A - well above average; B – above average; C – average; D – below average; E – well below average  
Similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 2.*

By the end of Year 6, all pupils **achieve** well in relation to their capabilities. Test results, year-on-year, should be treated with care as cohort sizes in the school are very small. Importantly, the pupils attain standards that are at least in line with expectations for their age in all subjects. Attainment in art and design and music are above expectations. By the end of Year 2, pupils, overall, are attaining standards expected of those aged seven years. Despite a standard of attainment on entry to the school, which is below average, at least half of children in the Foundation Stage are on course to attain most of the goals they are expected to reach by the end of reception.

The quality of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **very good**. The pupils' behaviour and attitudes are also **very good**. Relationships with their peers and adults are excellent. Virtually all the pupils are very positive about school and all that it offers them. They respond well to the teachers' high expectations for behaviour and show great respect for the needs of others. Attendance and punctuality are good.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

The quality of education provided by the school is very good. The overall quality of teaching is good; the teaching of the seven to eleven-year-old pupils is very good. All the pupils are very well known to their teachers and their progress is effectively monitored, especially in English, mathematics and science. All teachers have high expectations that their pupils will behave and achieve well whilst maintaining excellent relationships with them. Pupils know what is expected of them and are challenged by stimulating curriculum opportunities that are very well planned. The raising of all pupils' self-esteem is important to the teachers. As a result, for example, pupils with special educational needs make good progress in response to the very effective provision.

As a consequence of the mutual trust and respect that is clearly evident in the school, the level of care and support for all pupils is very good. All pupils have an excellent and trusting relationship with at least one adult in the school. The school works hard to develop relationships with both parents and the community. These links are very good and give great support to the pupils' learning.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

The headteacher has an extremely clear understanding of the needs of the pupils and the school. She is an excellent leader and manager and has high aspirations for everyone who learns in the school. She is very well supported by all her colleagues. The governors are able to give very effective support to the school through their very good understanding of its strengths and areas for development. The subject co-ordinators lead very well and the analysis of available data, especially in the core subjects, is very good. The governing body ensures that the school complies fully with statutory requirements.

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

Parents are extremely positive about all aspects of school life. At the well-attended pre-inspection meeting, parents spoke overwhelmingly in support of the school. The parents were particularly impressed by the school's approachability, friendliness and 'all round' development of their children. All pupils spoken to were enthusiastic about their school and what it offers them; they feel secure and like school.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

The school should seek to build further on addressing the good start it has already made on the following issues to include considering:

- additional strategies to raise overall standards in English and mathematics;
- opportunities to extend the provision for the cultural development of the pupils;
- extending the good assessment practice in the core subjects to a whole-school approach in the foundation subjects.

## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

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

The standard of children's attainment on entry to the school is broad but, over a number of years, has been consistently below average, particularly in speaking and listening skills. As a result of the good teaching, however, all pupils achieve well in relation to their individual capabilities. Evidence from the inspection indicates that there was no subject where performance overall was below expectations.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- All pupils achieve well in all subjects, including those pupils with special educational needs.
- The pupils use their information and communication technology (ICT), language and mathematical skills well in other subjects.
- Standards in art and design and music are above national expectations.
- Build more on strategies to raise standards in English and mathematics.

#### Commentary

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	13.9 (13.9)	15.7 (15.8)
Writing	14.1 (13.0)	14.6 (14.4)
Mathematics	15.4 (15.8)	16.3 (16.5)

*There were 15 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	26.6 (27.8)	26.8 (27.0)
Mathematics	26.6 (27.8)	26.8 (26.7)
Science	28.4 (29.7)	28.6 (28.3)

*There were 17 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

1. Comparisons with the national figures should be treated with great care, owing to the small size of the year group. The trend in performance by Year 6, since 1999, has been broadly in line with the national picture. Results at the end of Year 2 in 2003 indicate below average performance against all and similar schools nationally in writing and mathematics and well below in reading. In the Year 6 tests, performance was average in English, mathematics and science against all and similar schools. Inspection evidence indicates that standards are at least in line with performance in tests. For example, standards in Year 2 in mathematics and writing are satisfactory. In Year 6, some aspects of the pupils' work in mathematics, English and science are above average.
2. On the basis of the current information, despite well-focused teaching, it is likely that just over half of the children in the Foundation Stage will attain all the national early learning goals by the end of the reception year. It is, however, expected that all will attain the goal in their personal, social and emotional development.



3. The pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards the targets set in their individual education plans.
4. The school's strategies used so far to improve the quality of writing, for example the focus on the extension of vocabulary and using literacy skills in other subjects, are beginning to have a positive impact on standards. The school is also aware of the need to focus on the use and application of mathematics in order to raise standards further. This, too, is beginning to have a positive effect. Standards in all subjects are being assisted by the positive marking policy, and the targets and support given as a result to pupils. In the drive to raise standards, such strategies as the 'thinking skills' and 'art start' programme, and the wide curricular opportunities offered by the Ashbeach Common resource, raise pupils' interest and motivation and, therefore, the overall quality of their work.

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

Attendance is **good** and above the national average. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are **very good**. Pupils' personal development including spiritual, moral, social and cultural is **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Relationships across the school are excellent and promote pupils' confidence and self esteem.
- Staff have consistently high expectations of pupils' behaviour and conduct to which pupils respond very well.
- Pupils are keen to take on responsibility in a number of areas.
- Personal development is supported very well.
- Opportunities for the cultural development of the pupils are not yet fully extended.

### **Commentary**

5. Pupils are very keen to come to school and their excellent relationships with teachers and other staff result in secure and confident children. The school has introduced thinking skills at the start of the school day, which is developing the pupils' ability to approach new challenges with confidence and a greater self-awareness, and to put them to good use across the curriculum. Pupils have a strong interest in their learning, especially in Years 3 to 6, are keen to succeed and take pride in their work.
6. Teachers and other staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and pupils respond well to this and do not waste time with poor behaviour.
7. Pupils take on responsibility with enthusiasm, and the school council and Eco Committee provide excellent opportunities for them to do so. As well as fundraising for various projects, school council members discuss issues such as bullying, of which there is virtually none, and concerns raised by other pupils. Year 6 pupils undertake a range of duties across the school, and pupils take on the role of 'buddy' to pupils who are new to school or who need support or help at lunch and break times.
8. Pupils are developing a very good awareness of the world around them. Their work on waste and recycling, and their experiences in the Ashbeach Common environment, are giving them a well-informed picture of wider global issues, as well as nurturing their spiritual development. Adults in school are strong role models and help to give pupils a very good understanding of right and wrong. Pupils work and relate to each other well, participate in decision-making and problem-solve together. Although the multicultural aspects of the school curriculum have been developed considerably, pupils' sense of living in multicultural Britain is less evident, as their experience of other cultures and beliefs seem remote from their everyday lives.

### **Attendance**

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

Authorised absence	
School data	4.8
National data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	
School data	0.0
National data	0.4

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

### Exclusions

#### Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
Mixed – White and Asian
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani

#### Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
120	0	0
1	0	0
3	0	0

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

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides a very good quality of education. The pupils learn and achieve well as a result of the overall good quality of teaching. Overwhelming support came from the parents for the commitment all adults in the school have to their children. Pupils with special educational needs are very well supported and included in all aspects of school life. The pupils' learning is especially well supported by the vibrancy and breadth of the school curriculum. Links with the parents are very good.

### Teaching and learning

All of the teaching is at least good. As a result of the quality of teaching, pupils learn well through the school. Assessment is good. The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of relationships in the classroom is excellent and, as a result, pupils collaborate and co-operate very effectively.
- Teachers manage their classes very well, have high expectations for behaviour and challenge pupils' thinking.
- The pupils concentrate very well and work hard because of the stimulating teaching.
- The teachers and teaching assistants co-operate extremely effectively in the support of pupils' learning.
- The tracking of pupils' progress in English, mathematics and science is very good; it currently lacks a whole-school approach in other subjects.

### Commentary

9. Teaching is very clearly a strength of the school. The teachers have a very good knowledge, not only of their subjects, but also of how pupils learn. As a result, they offer realistic and appropriate challenge to the pupils; consequently, all the pupils learn at least well. The most significant contributor to the quality of the pupils' learning, are the relationships in the school. It

is evident that each individual pupil is seen as important, leading to high levels of self-esteem and pupil confidence in their learning.

10. In all the very good planning, the teachers identify the expected learning outcomes. Without exception, these learning goals are effectively explained to the pupils as the teachers build on the pupils' previous knowledge and understanding. In conversations with pupils during their independent work, it was clear that all knew what their task was and what they were aiming to learn. This not only maintained the pace of the lesson but the pupils were effectively acquiring skills, knowledge and understanding. Such new learning is well reinforced by the teachers in good plenary sessions, for example in a very good literacy lesson the teacher used musical instruments to stimulate and reinforce pupils' understanding of the use of adjectives to describe sound. The particularly good co-operation between the teachers and teaching assistants is a major factor in many aspects of the pupils' good learning. It is particularly effective in ensuring all pupils are included in all aspects of lessons, resources are deployed and used effectively, and encouragement and support are given to any who are unsure or experiencing difficulty.
11. Major contributors to the overall quality of teaching are the challenge the teachers give to the pupils and their high level of expectation. Very good behaviour is expected as the norm, presentation is expected to be good and all are expected to relate well to one another and co-operate. The challenge offered to pupils' thinking is helped considerably by the systematic programme of 'thinking skills' run by the school and about which the pupils speak enthusiastically. As a result, the pupils learn well and teaching is at least good as shown below.

**Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 26 lessons**

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
2	11	13	0	0	0	0

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

12. The provision for the teaching of pupils with special educational needs is very good. The teaching assistants, in particular, take initiative in monitoring and supporting behaviour strategies, where appropriate, implementing the well-written individual education plans and maintaining, with the teachers, good records. Their weekly meeting with the special educational needs co-ordinator ensures close monitoring of special educational needs pupils' progress against their individual targets and for moderation of them in the light of on-going experience. The teaching assistants are discrete in the support they give to these pupils which greatly enhances their self-esteem and, therefore, learning.
13. As an element within the school's programme to raise the quality of writing, the school has focused on the extension of pupils' technical and subject language. This thrust has been successful. In a high proportion of lessons, this strategy was very evident in the teaching and the pupils' response to 'new words' was very positive as a result of the effectiveness of the teaching.
14. The assessment of pupils' progress in English, mathematics and science is very good. It provides data which is used effectively by the school to identify future learning targets and to predict outcomes. As a result, there is a very good response to the needs of individual pupils. The introduction of individual pupils' targets in the core subjects is helping pupils to become more aware of their own progress and what they need to do to improve. The teachers keep comprehensive records of assessments in most subjects outside English, mathematics and science. However, the lack of a whole-school approach inhibits comparison of progress and transfer of information. The teachers make good evaluations of pupils' progress on a daily basis which leads to effective modification of planning. This process is aided by the good quality and supportive marking of pupils' work.

## The curriculum

The school provides a **very good broad, balanced and enriched curriculum** that ensures all groups of pupils have the opportunity to learn and to make progress.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The breadth of curricular opportunities is very good.
- Expertise from within and outside the school is used very well to enrich the curriculum.
- Extra-curricular activities extend pupils' physical and artistic skills.
- The curriculum prepares pupils effectively for later stages of education.
- The school is developing the curriculum well by introducing innovative ideas.
- Teaching and non-teaching staff are well qualified to meet the needs of the curriculum.

### Commentary

15. The school provides a broad range of worthwhile curricular opportunities by having a curriculum that not only meets National Curriculum requirements but also those of the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. It also develops the curriculum further. For example, the school has introduced a daily 'art start' initiative, which has given pupils opportunities to enjoy various art activities at the beginning of the school day and has improved their confidence in different skills and helped them in other art projects. The school has used various expertise from outside the school to enrich pupils' experiences. These have included visits from a sculptor and a landscape architect. After-school activities currently involve a specialist in drumming and percussion, and professional coaches have been used to enhance the provision of sporting opportunities. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 have opportunities to go on annual residential visits which include outdoor and adventurous activities.
16. The availability of an 'outdoor classroom' provides an exciting environment for the pupils close to the school. This area is greatly valued by staff and pupils alike and gives many enterprising curriculum opportunities for pupils who have been involved in developing many of the initiatives which are part of Ashbeach Common. For example, the Time Machine provides different opportunities to enhance the history curriculum. It is currently 'Archie's Cottage' giving the pupils an opportunity to imagine living in a Victorian cottage. It has previously been a World War Two air-raid shelter and also a pyramid. Children in the reception class have enjoyed developing vegetable plots and sold the potatoes locally. Year 6 pupils have made various items for the area during design and technology lessons, such as bat and bird boxes. This 'outdoor classroom' provides a stimulating environment for pupils where they can not only learn about the local environment but also use their imaginations, such as when enjoying stories in the 'Story Tree'.
17. The pupils are well prepared for moving through the school and also on to secondary school. Teachers come from the secondary school to work with pupils in Year 6 on various projects, such as in design and technology and science. There are a number of opportunities for pupils to visit the secondary school and also activities, such as science days, are organised which involve other local primary schools, giving pupils the chance to get to know pupils from other schools.
18. The curricular provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. The school ensures that all these pupils are included in all aspects of the curriculum, by providing well-informed and effective support and carefully written individual education plans. The teaching assistants are very knowledgeable about these plans, working hard to promote independence in the pupils.

19. Teachers and non-teaching staff are well qualified to meet the needs of the curriculum, and learning resources are appropriate to the needs of the pupils. Classroom accommodation for pupils aged four to seven years is restricted, with a small group room having to be used regularly as a classroom. The school hall is spacious and the open-air heated swimming pool is used in the summer. There is a small playing field and an extensive, intensively used outdoor classroom area known as 'Ashbeach Common', which supports many aspects of the curriculum. The school copes well with the cramped accommodation for younger pupils but there are some difficulties with the transference of sound between classes which does not have a beneficial impact on learning.

### Care, guidance and support

Arrangements for pupils' care, welfare, health and safety are **very good**. Provision of support, advice and guidance based on monitoring is **good**. Involvement of pupils through seeking, valuing and acting on their views is **very good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Excellent relationships mean pupils are known and supported very well.
- Pupils' views are listened to and valued, so that pupils have a real influence on school life.
- Issues to do with pupils' health and safety have a high profile in school.

### Commentary

20. Staff and pupil relationships provide the basis for very effective support; the pupils have a number of adults in school to whom they can turn should problems arise. Assessment is generally good and enables very effective tracking in the core subjects across the school. However, this is not as systematic across all subjects and years so that guidance in these areas is less well informed. Pupils with special educational needs are very well supported and guided. There is a significant and effective procedure in place to identify potential need at an early stage. Pupils' progress is monitored very carefully and effective action taken to inform those concerned. There are good links with the pre-school provision, which is held in school, and helps a smooth transition. Equally, there are effective links with the neighbouring secondary school which means pupils leave the school with confidence. More pupils have moved into the area in recent years, and the school arranges very good support for them.
21. The school council and Eco committee provide a very effective way for pupils to influence what is happening in school. A suggestion box in class allows all pupils to pass on views or concerns to the council members, who make decisions, for example over the purchase of new equipment, or charity to be supported following a fundraising initiative, which is itself initiated by pupils. They also discuss issues like football in the playground, and have agreed a compromise to suit all. The Eco committee is also a body elected by each class, and organises the composting of vegetable waste, the recycling of a range of materials, and is currently discussing the most eco-friendly way of hand drying, which could lead to changes in school. It has gained nationally recognised awards for its good practice.
22. Teachers are also very open to pupils' views and suggestions, and the development of pupils' thinking skills is encouraging them to express their views and ideas.
23. The school safety week effectively raises pupils' awareness of safety, both inside and outside school, and gives a real focus to these issues involving a number of outside experts. Staff are all very aware of the issue of child protection and receive regular training. The school actively discourages pupils from eating unhealthy snacks at break time, and they are encouraged to bring fruit. There is also active encouragement for pupils to drink chilled water rather than soft drinks, which is encouraging an awareness of healthy eating.

## Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Links with parents are **very good**. Links with the community are **very good**. Links with other schools are **very good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Much effort is put into developing good links with parents.
- Links with the local community are very strong.
- Good curriculum links are in place and are developing with the secondary phase of education.

### Commentary

24. Parents are extremely supportive of the school and there is a strong sense of partnership. They receive very good information about school life, the curriculum and their children's progress through newsletters, open evenings, curriculum information evenings and other events. For parents of children new to the reception class, there was an evening on reading, and an early parents' evening to discuss settling in. Parents are given every opportunity to be involved in the discussions about the individual education plans of pupils with special educational needs. Attendance at reviews is quite good. A strategy to help parents support their children at home is being prepared by the mathematics co-ordinator. Pupils' reading records are used well as a general link with parents. They are especially useful for pupils who come to school on transport provided, as day-to-day contact with the teachers for those parents is more limited. Good quality information is provided in the governors' annual report and prospectus. Results of the national tests for seven and eleven-year-olds remain to be included in the prospectus.
25. The school is very well supported by the local community, and an increasing number of local groups use the facilities on a regular basis. The school also serves the local community very well, for example by pupils singing at the mayor's concert and by inviting local people to attend an 'art gallery event'. A number of local professional people come to work with the pupils, and have made wonderful contributions to Ashbeach Common. A member of the British Antarctic Survey was in school during the inspection, providing valuable enrichment to the geography curriculum.
26. The school works closely with its local school cluster including the nearby secondary school. The induction arrangements are thorough, and involve a number of visits and meetings for both staff, pupils and parents. In addition, pupils in Year 6 work on some transition units, which are marked by the primary teacher and continued in the secondary school. Curriculum links are also being developed in science, literacy, and ICT. There is also a summer school at the secondary for targeted groups of pupils prior to starting in Year 7. The sports centre attached to the secondary school is used for swimming and other activities, so pupils become familiar with the site.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are **very good** overall. The headteacher is providing excellent leadership. The governance of the school is good.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher has clear vision for the school.
- The leadership of key staff promotes good teamwork.
- There is a committed governing body that is helping to shape the vision and direction of the school.
- There is a very clear focus on what the school has to do to continue to raise standards.
- The monitoring of progress and achievement is thorough.

- Subject leaders have a clear understanding of how to improve their subjects further.
- There is a strong commitment to the continuing professional development of the staff.
- Induction for new staff is good.

## Commentary

27. The headteacher provides very clear educational direction and promotes a good ethos through adjusting the curriculum to meet the needs of pupils. Her leadership is reflective and innovative and she has a clear vision for the school in the future. She is committed to enabling the school to fulfil its vision. She has forged good relationships with parents and secured the commitment of all the staff and the governors. She very much leads by example. Her monitoring and evaluation of staff performance are thorough and the outcomes are supported with additional training or classroom support. Key staff are influential in improving teaching and learning in their subjects. Induction for new members of staff is good and they feel welcomed and supported.
28. The governors are kept very well informed by the headteacher of developments in the school. They meet regularly and have a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and a clear focus on raising standards. They understand very well the challenges faced by the school and share the headteacher's vision for its future and set appropriate priorities for development. Each governor is linked with a subject co-ordinator and regular meetings enable governors to have a very good understanding of the curriculum, as well as by monitoring their individual subject in school. Governors are well involved in the school's improvement plan, which is based on regular analysis and evaluation of the school's performance. Spending decisions relate well to priorities for improvement and once these priorities have been identified the best value principles are always applied. The governors ensure that the school complies fully with statutory requirements.
29. The management of special educational needs is very good. The special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) uses additional funding very effectively. The SENCO raises awareness of developing issues, and of individual pupils' progress, by holding a weekly meeting with the teaching assistants. The teaching assistants' effectiveness is improved by their attendance at courses dealing with such issues as autism and language development. This is very good practice.
30. Since the previous inspection, when the role of the subject co-ordinator was identified as an area for development, there have been opportunities for teachers to attend appropriate courses. As a result, subject leaders are now well informed about their subjects and monitor the provision to ensure appropriate development and coverage, as well as offering support for colleagues. This, in turn, has meant that there is an improvement in pupils' teaching and learning.

## Financial information

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

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	328,390	Balance from previous year	45,380
Total expenditure	339,011	Balance carried forward to the next	38,684
Expenditure per pupil	2,830		

31. The staff and governing body have a clear understanding of the school's financial position. As a result, the financial management of the school is good.

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

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

The overall provision for children in the reception class is good. The children enter reception in the year in which they are five and parents are provided with clear information about starting school. Children join the reception class with attainment that is below average, especially in speaking and listening skills, but they achieve well because teaching is good and the well-planned curriculum provides a wide range of challenging, stimulating activities that are well matched to their needs. Teaching is effective in all areas of learning and so children make good progress. They achieve particularly well in personal, social and emotional development. The provision is well managed and the children's progress is carefully monitored. The reception class is well led by the class teacher and ably supported by the nursery nurse.

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

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

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

- Good quality teaching.
- The daily routines offer security and lead children towards increasing independence.
- Very good support provided for all children.

#### **Commentary**

32. All children are well cared for and supported. They come into class happily at the beginning of the day, hang up their own coats and choose an activity to do. They are well used to class routines and put up hands to answer questions and listen to other children. They are beginning to concentrate on their various activities and quickly learn the correct way to behave. When necessary, adults correct the children firmly but gently, supporting self-esteem. They expect the children to be responsible and take every opportunity to encourage this. There are good routines to encourage responsibility. For example, children take the registers to the school office every day.
33. The high expectations of the teacher and nursery nurse, and the opportunities given to the children through the good teaching, enable them to make good progress in this area and the majority is beginning to achieve what is expected for their age. Staff form good relationships, ensuring that children are happy and relaxed and benefit fully from activities. The majority of children are expected to reach the early learning goals in this area of learning by the end of reception.

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

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

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

- Every opportunity is used to develop the children's language skills, and teaching is good overall.
- The development of reading is a strength.



## Commentary

34. Just over half the children are on course to reach the expected levels by the end of reception. Achievement is good, although standards are below expectations and many children still have insufficient language to express themselves clearly. This is because most start school with such poorly developed language skills. Many speak in single words or use body language to communicate. Very good emphasis is placed on improving the children's speaking and listening skills by encouraging them to answer in sentences and by asking them to repeat words about which they are unsure. Good opportunities were provided for speaking when children played in the 'Bears' Cottage' after hearing the story of Goldilocks.
35. The development of reading and writing skills has high priority. Careful records are kept of each child's development in both areas so that appropriate help can be given to move children forward. There is a valuable reading partnership building up between the school and parents. The teacher makes available a wide range of picture and storybooks for parents and carers to share with their children. The guidance on how to share these is very helpful and gives good opportunities for parents to be involved in their children's learning. There are many opportunities for children to listen to stories and to enjoy looking at books.
36. All adults reinforce early writing skills and there is a good supply of paper, pencils and crayons available for children to enjoy using for writing activities. The good teaching is characterised by a good understanding of the needs of young children and very well organised activities that motivate them. During the inspection, the teacher helped more able children to write simple sentences such as 'Goldilocks was asleep in baby bear's bed'.

## MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good quality teaching.
- Good use of mathematical vocabulary.

## Commentary

37. Teaching and learning are good. Achievement is good and just over half the children are on course to reach expected levels by the end of reception. Many opportunities are used for counting activities, such as counting the words in a sentence they are writing as a class activity. Most children count confidently forwards and backwards from 0 to 10 and some more able children can add together the number of bears in different groups.
38. The mathematical language of number and shape is clearly displayed in the many areas of the classroom and its use is a regular part of adults' conversations with children. During play in the 'Bears' House', children use words like bigger and smaller when they are talking about the three bears' beds. There are good resources, such as board games, large number tracks and objects for sorting and counting, and planning for mathematical development is carefully matched to different abilities.

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

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There is a wide range of activities that are imaginative and enjoyable.
- Good use is made of the outside environment.

### **Commentary**

39. During the inspection, the effective teaching by both the teacher and the nursery nurse led children to discover the world around them. The planning of a range of activities encouraged the children to use all their senses. Opportunities are used well, such as going outside to look at the emerging snowdrops and talking about spring flowers. The Chinese New Year was celebrated with a number of activities, such as looking at Chinese writing, dance and opportunities to try a variety of different Chinese foods.
40. Good use is made of the 'outdoor classroom', Ashbeach Common. Although the poor weather during the inspection meant that opportunities for its use were limited, the children went out to show the area to a child who had just joined the class. They enjoyed looking at a pumpkin stalk left over from the vegetable plot that was planted last year, and finding a seed from a cherry tree. Over half the children are expected to reach the expected levels in this area of learning by the end of reception.

## **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in physical development is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Good quality teaching.
- Well-planned activities.

### **Commentary**

41. The art activities at the beginning of the school day are providing useful opportunities for physical development, such as in dancing and drawing. During the inspection, children were enjoying an activity with playdough and rolled and manipulated the material with great care. On the day of the Chinese New Year celebrations, children enjoyed dancing and moved well to music and showed good awareness of space. The children were unable to play outside during the inspection as the weather was unsuitable, but planning showed that the outside area is used regularly for larger play apparatus with tricycles, scooters and a large tractor. The majority of children are anticipated to reach the expected levels in this area of learning by the time they reach Year 1.

## **CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in creative development is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There is a wide range of activities which are imaginative and enjoyable.
- Effective planning.

## Commentary

42. Over half the children are expected to reach the expected levels by the end of reception. The good range of activities provides children with good opportunities for developing their creative skills. Children's artwork is attractively displayed and they have recently enjoyed making pictures of winter trees with handprints and cut out shapes. There are opportunities for role play in the 'home corner' and during the inspection, children enjoyed acting out imaginatively the story of Goldilocks and the Three Bears'.

## SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

### ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The children achieve well.
- Leadership and management are very good.
- Teachers' subject knowledge is very good and their use of subject vocabulary is good.
- Teaching is very good with a strong focus on improving writing and also speaking and listening.
- The recently developed marking scheme is proving effective.
- Lessons are well planned.

## Commentary

43. Results in the 2003 national tests for eleven-year-olds indicate average standards against all and similar schools. Seven-year-old pupils in that year performed well below average in reading and below average in writing against both all and similar schools.
44. There has been a good emphasis on improving pupils' writing since the previous inspection and this is an indication of the commitment the school has made to its pupils. Teachers have attended a number of courses on improving pupils' writing and the very good leadership provided by the subject co-ordinator has improved the teachers' own subject knowledge which in turn has resulted in pupils achieving well. The subject co-ordinator has recently introduced a new marking scheme which is providing pupils with more help as to how they may improve their writing skills. This is at an early stage but is being used well by teachers and is beginning to be effective. As a result of the efforts that the school is making to improve writing, standards of pupils' writing are now at the expected levels.
45. The teaching of English is very good. Teachers have secure subject knowledge and, whilst they are familiar with the requirements of the National Literacy Strategy, they have used imaginative ideas to stimulate pupils further. The use of subject vocabulary is good in all lessons and this enables pupils to use correct words such as 'idioms' and 'connectives' or 'persuasive writing' confidently. Reading skills are taught very systematically enabling pupils to make good progress and to achieve national standards by the age of eleven. Pupils demonstrate an enjoyment of reading and talk enthusiastically about books they have read and their favourite authors. Teaching assistants are well briefed and support small groups and individual pupils extremely well. Teachers use a range of strategies successfully to encourage pupils to improve their written work, such as making good use of ideas that interest the pupils, for example creating an information leaflet about Ashbeach Common or writing a balanced argument about not selling this area to developers.
46. As pupils enter school with speaking and listening skills that are below average, there is an emphasis on improving these skills. In a lesson in Year 3, pupils acted the story of 'Little Red Riding Hood' and, because the teacher had planned the lesson well and made it fun for them,

they responded well and enjoyed thinking what the trees might whisper to Little Red Riding Hood as she walked through the forest. In a religious education lesson, pupils in Years 4 and 5 were given opportunities to present to the class the results of their research about different artefacts used in the Jewish faith. They spoke confidently in their groups, and this activity gave good opportunities to develop pupils' speaking and listening skills.

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

47. There has been an emphasis on extending writing in other subjects, and pupils have had opportunities to use their writing skills in science when they write up experiments, or in design and technology when they write the instructions for making a Viking longboat. In history, they have written an information book about Ancient Egypt and, following a visit to the local church, Year 6 pupils wrote a good description of its interior. Wordprocessing is used effectively and regularly in many subjects of the curriculum.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The overall quality of teaching is very good.
- The pupils' achievement is good.
- Pupils apply themselves with sustained concentration and, overall, have very positive attitudes to their learning.
- Assessment and tracking of pupils' progress is very effective.
- The subject is very well led.
- The pace of some mental mathematics sessions is not rapid enough.
- Still more experience of using and applying mathematics is required.

### **Commentary**

48. Lesson observations and scrutiny of work done so far this year indicate that Year 6 pupils are attaining standards which are, overall, at least in line with expectations. Pupils in Year 5 are currently attaining above average standards. Standards in the remainder of the school are broadly average. Results in the 2003 national test for eleven-year-olds indicate average performance against all and similar schools but below average in the tests for seven-year-olds. Inspection evidence shows that all pupils achieve well. Most pupils have a good recall, appropriate to their age, of multiplication facts and number bonds. They use this understanding well in computing number, for example Year 3 pupils accurately write out a 'number sentence' in dealing with money problems that required the giving of change. Higher attaining pupils deal well with two stage money problems. The pupils' achievement in mathematics is assisted by a good overall standard of presentation of work, thereby avoiding unnecessary computational errors.
49. In all lessons, the pupils were very keen to answer questions during the oral session and generally worked with commendable degrees of application on their set tasks. Owing to the exceptionally good relationships in the classes, virtually all pupils are prepared to suggest answers to questions without fear of appearing inadequate to their peers. This ensures that in introductory mental sessions, for example, all pupils are inclined to join in, stimulating their learning. The teachers show considerable imagination in their choice of strategies to generate interest in this aspect of the lesson. For example, one lesson used the form of a well-known television programme, much to the enjoyment and stimulation of the pupils. However, some of these lessons lack sufficient pace to generate a momentum and sense of achievement in the ability to compute mentally very rapidly.

50. Planning and evidence from previous work indicates good coverage of a wide range of mathematical concepts, particularly in Years 3 to 6. Pupils generally learn at a slightly slower pace in Years 1 and 2. It is clear that, by Year 6, many of the pupils are being challenged successfully by such mathematical concepts as probability, percentages and the interpretation of graphical representations. Some higher attaining pupils showed a good understanding of the concept of the translation of co-ordinates into the fourth quadrant. This is a good example of the expectations and challenge that are features of most of the teaching which keep the pupils on their toes mathematically, as in an excellent Year 5 lesson, where a range of problems was solved by all the class using various and appropriately different strategies. Evidence from the pupils' previous work shows that they have opportunities to use and apply their mathematical knowledge and understanding. However, currently they have limited opportunities to undertake practical mathematical work. The school is aware of this and has plans to deal with the issues. Within this area of the mathematics curriculum, however, the teachers place considerable emphasis on the correct use of mathematical language which results in its very effective use by the majority of pupils.
51. The teachers have a very good command of the subject, engage exceptionally well with the pupils and, within their classes, generate an atmosphere of mutual encouragement. As a result, the learning is, overall, very good. The teachers know the pupils very well and give good support to the pupils' progress by effective and encouraging marking of work. There are very clear assessment procedures that are consistent through the school, aiding considerably the analysis of whole-school data. Much of this work centres upon the setting of key mathematical targets and is being successfully built upon by the development of target-setting and the beginnings of pupils' self-evaluation. The pupils' learning is supported by the regular setting of homework which most pupils appear pleased to undertake. Co-operation between the teachers and teaching assistants is very good. The pupils' learning is very well supported as a result, for example when a teaching assistant notes the responses from pupils during the introduction of a new mathematical topic.
52. The leadership of the subject is very good. The recently appointed co-ordinator has devised a very clear plan of action for the further development of the subject. Some aspects of her action plan are already in place, for example target-setting. She has a number of interesting strategies for supporting pupils' learning, such as setting up a new scheme for parents to be able to work with their children at home rather than just seeking support for the completion of homework. The co-ordinator has already carried out some monitoring and she has a very clear understanding of the subject's strengths and areas for development.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

53. The school's cross-curricular approach gives pupils good opportunities to use their mathematical knowledge, skills and understanding in a variety of ways. ICT is a developing tool that is used well in most classes. There was also evidence of the use of measuring in design and technology and of graphical representations in science.

## **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The pupils achieve well.
- The overall quality of teaching is good and the teachers have a very good command of the subject.
- Pupils show a very good level of concentration and collaborate very well.
- The balance between investigative work and recording is not always appropriate.

## Commentary

54. The pupils' knowledge and understanding of the world is, on the whole, below average on entry to the school. A result of the good level of achievement in science, evidence from previous work and the standards observed in lessons, indicates that performance, overall, is at least in line with expectations for pupils of their age. The trend in performance, over the last three years, has matched the national picture. In the practical and investigative aspects of the subject, standards are good throughout the school. This is not only the result of the good teaching but is a consequence of the pupils' very positive attitudes. The pupils' social ability to collaborate and co-operate very well in practical investigations helps to improve their learning and gives good support to understanding. This was particularly noticeable in a very good Year 6 lesson. The pupils carried out their investigations systematically, building well on their previous understanding, both of forces and the notion of fair testing. Consequently, there was very good achievement leading to a good level of understanding of equal and opposite forces. Pupils with special educational needs also make good progress as they are supported well in their learning generally, and effectively, but discretely during practical sessions.
55. The teachers' very good knowledge and understanding of the subject promotes well the pupils' learning. It also leads to effective planning which is systematic, has clearly stated learning outcomes and, in the very best, an indication of where outcomes were not attained previously. However, in some cases, it does not always lead to an appropriate balance between informal notes of investigations and recorded work, leaving some gaps in the pupils' ability to reflect on their previous work. The good overall planning ensures effective coverage of all elements of the science curriculum. The scientific learning of the pupils is enhanced by the teachers placing experimental investigation at the heart of this planning, and by the clarity with which the learning outcomes are identified. In lessons, these outcomes form an important focus to the teaching and, as a result, the pupils know the nature of their tasks, which maintains a good pace to their learning and helps their self-evaluation of progress. The high expectations the teachers have for behaviour also help the pace of the pupils' learning, as no time is lost to the maintenance of discipline, even during potentially 'over-exciting' investigations, for example into the creation of sound. Occasionally, the pace of learning is compromised by overlong introductions to the topic.
56. Many pupils have difficulty in recording their science investigations, especially in Years 1 and 2. The school is aware of this issue and has, quite appropriately, made it a focus of some of the planning. For example, in a good Year 2 lesson, the pupils entered the essential components of their practical work on melting ice into a matrix. This focused the pupils' learning well on identifying what was important to record. In conversation, most pupils in the school understand the importance of accurate observations to help them understand phenomena. The observational skills of the pupils are particularly well assisted by the availability of the school's 'outdoor classroom'. It provides very good opportunities, particularly in the life processes and living things element of science. The school makes full use of this excellent resource. The effectiveness of the pupils' practical work is greatly assisted by the close co-operation between the teachers and teaching assistants. Resources are deployed very effectively and they support well the learning of the pupils.
57. The subject is very well led by an extremely knowledgeable and enthusiastic co-ordinator. She supports her colleagues very effectively, contributing much to their command of the subject. The co-ordinator monitors the planning and some of the teaching and scrutinises the pupils' work at the end of the year. As a result, she has a clear understanding of the subject's strengths and areas for development, which support well the pupils' continuity of learning. Good relationships have been established with the secondary school, resulting in, for example, joint working in an investigation for Year 6 pupils at the end of each academic year.

## INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology (ICT) is **good** and has improved substantially since the last inspection.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Significant improvement since the last inspection as the school now has adequate resources.
- Improvement in teachers' confidence and subject knowledge means that teaching has improved and, as a result, pupils achieve well and are making good progress.
- Leadership in the subject is very good.

### **Commentary**

58. Pupils are now achieving well in ICT. Standards have improved since the previous inspection now that pupils have more access to better equipment and more informed teaching. The overall standards in all aspects of work are satisfactory and include the use of ICT across the curriculum. There are significant improvements in the overall provision.
59. Teachers have benefited from training in ICT, which has improved their skills and confidence, and the overall quality of teaching and learning. Although no teaching was seen during the inspection, the good range of pupils' work shows that teaching and learning are now good as a result of teachers' improved confidence in the subject.
60. The co-ordinator has a very clear vision for the subject and is fully aware of what needs to be done to improve the subject further. She has developed good assessment procedures which give clear indications of pupils' experiences in ICT and their progress. A useful portfolio of pupils' work is being assembled, which will provide a good resource bank of ideas for teachers to consult.

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

61. ICT across the curriculum is a major focus for this year. Pupils in Year 6 use computers for a variety of tasks, such as in science to produce graphs to show the temperature in the classroom through the day, and have used a microscope with the laptop to examine mould on bread. They have enjoyed using the Internet for researching endangered mammals. Younger pupils in Year 5 confidently use wordprocessing skills and desktop publishing when they are putting together an information pamphlet about Ashbeach Common. During the inspection, pupils in Year 3 created pictures on their computers in the style of Mondrian during an art and design lesson, and pupils in Year 1 had great fun writing sentences on the computer, such as 'the donkey plays with a ball in the classroom' during an English lesson.

## **HUMANITIES**

In geography and history, it was possible only to sample work and hold discussions with pupils and subject co-ordinators. It is not possible to make an overall judgement in provision but, on the basis of this information, there is every indication that standards are in line with expectations in these two subjects.

## **GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY**

62. Analysis of previous work and planning indicates that the curriculum coverage in these two subjects is appropriate. Standards in the subjects are greatly assisted by the quality of marking, which has both praise and developmental comments.
63. In history, a sense of change over time was evident in some of Year 2's work on the comparison of homes of 200 years and two years ago. Year 6 pupils, in conversation, also showed recognition of the passage of time when they spoke of their understanding of ancient Egyptian and Tudor life. Their knowledge and understanding of Tudor life was enhanced by a good curriculum initiative; dressing up, doing lessons and eating a meal as the Tudors did.
64. In geography, the emphasis by the school on good standards of presentation led to the production in Year 6 of accurately and neatly drawn maps, for example of India, indicating both major human and physical features. Year 6 pupils showed a good understanding of the immediate local area, indicating why a public house in the vicinity had been so named, the focus of the local economy, and the history of the local church. They also showed a good understanding of some of the wider aspects of national and world political and physical geography.
65. Both of the subjects are led by effective co-ordinators. Assessment is currently left in both subjects to the discretion of individual teachers, but this aspect of the school's work is under review.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The curriculum covers distinctive features of religious traditions in major world faiths and their application to everyday life for believers.
- Leadership and management are good and there is a good range of resources available to enhance the teaching of religious education.

### **Commentary**

66. Standards of attainment seen during the inspection remain in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus, as they were at the time of the last inspection. Analysis of pupils' work and discussions with pupils, indicate that achievement is good.
67. During the inspection, two lessons were observed. Year 6 pupils had good opportunities to learn about Hinduism in a lesson about the 'puja tray', and looked at the different artefacts used for worship in a Hindu home. The resources available made the lesson meaningful for the pupils. Similarly, pupils in Years 4 and 5 enjoyed finding out about an interesting range of artefacts from the Jewish faith. Younger pupils in Year 1 have recently enjoyed thinking about what special gifts they could give to people without spending money, such as 'making a cup of tea for mum'. This has helped them to have an understanding of the real value of gifts.
68. The co-ordinator demonstrates clear leadership and has recently reviewed the subject policy. She has attended a course on assessment and has trialled the ideas with colleagues. She has clear vision for the subject and knows what needs to be done to improve the subject further.

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



There were limited opportunities to observe lessons in this curriculum area. Where available, pupils' previous work was examined and conversations held with pupils and teachers responsible for the subjects. In two of the subjects, art and design and music, there was sufficient evidence to make a judgement about provision, but no such judgement can be made for design and technology and physical education.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Art and design is taught well as the teachers have a good command of the subject.
- The pupils achieve well and overall standards are above expectations.
- The pupils have very positive attitudes.
- The range of art and design activities is wide.
- The subject is well led.
- There were no significant weaknesses.

### **Commentary**

69. Although the amount of direct teaching of art and design was limited, it is clear from a scrutiny of previous work, and conversations with pupils, that the subject is taught well. As a result, pupils achieve well across a wide range of media leading to standards that are above expectations. Pupils have good opportunities to experience fabrics, weaving, painting, observational drawing, clay and sculpture work. The teachers' planning is focused appropriately on the development of skills to enable pupils to build on their previous experiences.
70. Many additional artistic opportunities come from the school's participation with the 'Art Start' programme. Daily involvement, for example in drawing and modelling, raises in the minds of the pupils the importance and spiritual and cultural dimensions of the subject. Opportunities are also provided by the school to introduce other elements of art and design as part of the 'Thinking Skills' programme. For example, some pupils offered many interesting ideas when discussing an abstract sculpture, suggesting a good range of titles to reflect the artist's aim. The pupils responded well when the title, the 'Rock Drill', was revealed by the teacher, showing quite mature artistic imagination.
71. In addition to focusing on the systematic development of skills, the teachers develop well the pupils' understanding of such technical language as 'primary colour' and 'perspective'. The teachers also plan appropriate experiences of a range of different painting styles. Some Year 6 pupils produced some good and imaginative paintings in the style of Picasso. In a very good Year 3 lesson, the style and language of Mondrian was very well examined by the teacher, as a result the pupils produced good quality work in his style using both collage and computer-generated pictures. The pupils displayed very positive attitudes when undertaking the work, showing pleasure in successful outcomes and were pleased to talk about their artistic experiences; consequently, learning was very good.
72. Art and design has a high profile within the school and contributes a great deal to the pupils' curricular experiences. The subject is led effectively and the co-ordinator has worked very well with her music colleague in generating a first-class portfolio of previous work and in jointly preparing the submission for the Arts Mark gold standard award. The portfolio is used well, not only for internal moderation of standards, but in comparing with the outcomes of other schools. This is very good practice. Considerable imagination has also been shown by the school to support pupils' learning; every pupil had one of their pictures professionally framed and the whole school became an art gallery, to which parents and the community were invited. The

subject co-ordinator has had some opportunities to monitor work, team-teach and organise a whole-school in-service session. Currently, there is no whole-school assessment and recording policy but the portfolio is used as an aid to maintaining standards.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

73. Discussions with pupils indicate that they have developed a good understanding of the design process, including the need for evaluation of the outcomes. In order to motivate the pupils' learning, much of the good planning centres upon designing for a purpose and to use skills in other subjects, such as science, when it is appropriate, for example designing a 'musical instrument' in work on sound. Evidence from previous work includes effectively designed and made bird boxes, a bower seat and an entrance to the school's outdoor curriculum area. Currently, in useful and good co-operation with the local secondary school, the pupils are designing and making large-scale beanbags for the reception class. Effective joining and making skills were demonstrated in the construction of small-scale Tudor houses and paper Viking ships. The pupils have positive attitudes to the subject and are often well challenged by the tasks, for example when making solar-powered kebab makers. The subject is well led by an enthusiastic co-ordinator who is keen to move the subject forward. Assessment and recording of progress is currently at the discretion of individual teachers and is appropriately based around progression in skills.

## **MUSIC**

Provision in music is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards are above expectations.
- The pupils are taught well.
- Pupils enjoy their work and behave very well.
- The subject is well led.
- A wide musical curriculum is offered.

### **Commentary**

74. An essential component of the 'art start' programme, with which the school is involved, is musical appreciation and rhythm. These two elements are part of a weekly rotation of other work in the arts with which each day starts. As a result of this strategy, the pupils' musical experiences are deepened and widened. For example, some Year 1 pupils listened very sensibly and calmly to some Saint-Saens. They certainly enjoyed the music and used their imaginations well to consider which animals the music was portraying. Their musical appreciation was clearly beyond that normally expected for pupils of their age.
75. The teachers' expertise and high aspirations for quality performance, in a whole-school singing assembly, resulted in very good learning and good standards. The practice was not merely a rehearsal of the words of a new hymn but a lesson in the techniques of singing. The pupils respond very well and show considerable pleasure in achieving the high standards set by the teachers; even singing scales with enjoyment. They show an ability to sing well in tune, with a keen appreciation of tempo and dynamics. The pupils' diction is clear and good. The very good quality of relationships, excellent behaviour and attitudes of the pupils, together with the classroom management skills of the teachers, contributed to very good achievement, even with a large group of pupils.
76. The teachers place a strong emphasis on the use and understanding of the correct musical terminology. In a very good Year 6 lesson, taken by a part-time music specialist, the pupils showed a very good understanding of such terms as 'rondo', 'concerto' and 'binary'. When

playing in the rondo form, they played accurately, showing the ability to compose attractive, repetitive phrases. Again, the pupils' learning is supported well by the teacher's attention to the skills required to play tuned percussion instruments well.

77. The co-ordinator is an effective leader of the subject. She has a clear understanding of the subject's strengths and areas for development, which include assessment and formal monitoring. The co-ordinator runs a choir and a percussion group, run by a specialist teacher, and the pupils have the opportunity to learn to play the recorder and have brass and woodwind tuition. A wide range of other opportunities is provided for the pupils which adds very beneficially to their musical experiences, such as singing at the mayor's service and private events, an annual concert, cutting their own CD and listening to performances by visiting players. The subject makes a very significant contribution to the school's dynamic curriculum.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

78. The school makes full and very effective use of its good physical education facilities. After-school clubs, run by staff and volunteer helpers, include rugby, soccer, netball, cricket and athletics. In some of these sports, the school enters into competitive matches. The school makes full use of its swimming pool, ensuring that virtually all pupils can swim 25 metres by the end of Year 6. As part of a weekly rotation of activities, the pupils have the opportunity to take part in indoor tennis and yoga, in addition to the full programme of prescribed National Curriculum activities.
79. In the one very good physical education dance lesson it was possible to observe, the pupils showed very positive attitudes towards the activity. It was clear that the Year 6 pupils had developed, during their time at the school, an understanding of the need to respond immediately, in physical education, to the teacher's instructions, not least in the interests of safety. The expectation set for high quality movement was clearly evident, leading to good levels of individual achievement.
80. The school offers a rich physical education curriculum that is generating the pupils' positive interest in a wide range of activities. The newly qualified member of staff is being inducted well by the school into her eventual role as a subject co-ordinator from the beginning of the next academic year.

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