

# INSPECTION REPORT

**GRAZELEY PAROCHIAL CHURCH OF ENGLAND AIDED  
PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Reading

LEA area: Wokingham

Unique reference number: 110015

Headteacher: Mrs J Bateman

Lead inspector: Mrs. E. Camplin

Dates of inspection: 19 – 21 January 2004

Inspection number: 262005

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: Voluntary aided  
Age range of pupils: 4 – 11  
Gender of pupils: Mixed  
Number on roll: 58

School address: Mere oak Lane  
Grazeley  
Reading  
Berkshire  
Postcode: RG7 1JY

Telephone number: 0118 9883340  
Fax number: 0118 9886342

Appropriate authority: Governing body  
Name of chair of governors: Mr. B. Clark

Date of previous inspection: 16 November 1998

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Compared with primary schools nationally, Grazeley Parochial is a very small school with a strong Christian ethos. It serves a wide area surrounding the village of Grazeley, near Wokingham, Berkshire. Local residents are educationally and economically advantaged compared with the national average. Pupils' backgrounds reflect this, as only one is known to be eligible for free school meals. Nonetheless, pupils come from diverse social and ethnic backgrounds, including, from time to time, the Traveller community. There are 58 pupils on roll, which includes six new Reception children. English is every pupil's first language and most pupils are white. Four pupils are Anglo/Caribbean and two have Asian heritage. Girls considerably outnumber boys and unusually all pupils in the Year 5/6 class are girls. The range of ability is wide. Currently, nine pupils are registered as gifted and talented for a variety of reasons, including special aptitudes in gymnastics, leadership skills and mathematics. Twelve pupils have special educational needs, including one with hearing loss and another with a Statement for severe learning difficulties. The proportion with special educational needs is 23 per cent, which is well above the national average last year. Most of these pupils are in Years 3 to 6. Children's attainment on entry to the Reception year is broadly average, but with such small year groups, is subject to considerable variation from year to year. There is a very high rate of pupil mobility; that is, admission of pupils of different ages at times other than the start of an academic year. The school recently won a silver Healthy Schools award and is participating in the Leadership Development Strategy.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

| Members of the inspection team |            |                | Subject responsibilities   |
|--------------------------------|------------|----------------|--|
| 3586                           | E. Camplin | Lead inspector | Mathematics<br>Information and communication technology (ICT)<br>Geography<br>History<br>Areas of learning in the Foundation Stage<br>English as an additional language<br>Personal, social and health education |
| 9770                           | J. Baker   | Lay inspector  |  |
| 14706                          | B. Knowles | Team inspector | English<br>Science<br>Art and design<br>Design and technology<br>Music<br>Physical education<br>Special educational needs  |

The inspection contractor was:

Nord Anglia School Inspection Services  
Anglia House  
Carrs Road  
Cheadle  
Stockport  
SK8 2LA

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**This is a good school** that is led and managed effectively and provides well for its pupils. Most teaching is good, enabling pupils, including those with special educational needs, to progress and achieve well. The strong emphasis on Christian aims and values aids pupils' very good personal development. Participation in events that promote the arts enhances achievement. Value for money is satisfactory as the school achieves its success with much higher than average costs.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Pupils make very good relationships and by Year 6 are highly responsible and mature, make an excellent contribution to the good of the community and are very well prepared for secondary school.
- Standards are above average overall. Pupils achieve very well in ICT and music.
- Standards could be higher still in reading.
- Not enough is done to develop all pupils' confidence to tackle mental mathematics' problems.
- Unsatisfactory accommodation is a barrier to improvement in physical education and the Foundation Stage.
- Pupils receive many exciting opportunities to learn from experiences in and outside of normal lessons. Strong links with parents and the community also enhances learning significantly.
- The school council gives pupils a strong voice in identifying how the school can improve.

The school has made good improvement since the previous inspection, notably in key issues to raise standards in mathematics and handwriting. Standards in Year 6 have risen from below average to above average in national tests in mathematics and from average to above average in core subjects overall. Teaching has improved from satisfactory to good in Key Stage 2 and remains effective in the class for the younger pupils. Strengths in provision for pupils' personal development, care and welfare, and the partnership with parents and the community have been sustained. The curriculum for ICT has improved considerably and there are many more stimulating opportunities for learning outside of lesson time. The level of challenge for higher-attaining pupils has improved satisfactorily but teachers need to ensure that all pupils make even progress in using numeracy and literacy effectively. Plans are well advanced to improve accommodation by 2005.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

*Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average*

*Similar schools are those with similar percentages of pupils eligible for free school meals*

*Caution is needed in interpreting this data, as numbers in Year 6 are small.*

**Pupils achieve well** and standards are rising sharply because most pupils make good or better progress between the time they enter the school and Year 6. In 2003, compared with similar schools, pupils in Year 6 achieved highly in national tests. Currently, achievement is good in the infant and junior stages. Standards seen are above average overall. They are above average in English in Year 6 and in mathematics, science and music across the school. They are also above average in writing in Year 2 and average in speaking and listening and reading. There are no significant differences in the achievement of pupils of different levels of attainment though pupils in

Years 5 and 6 make the most rapid progress. There was insufficient time to judge standards in art and design, design and technology, geography, history and physical education. Children in the Foundation Stage achieve as well as most other children of their age. The standards seen broadly matched the goals children are expected to reach by the end of Reception but there was insufficient information to make secure judgements in all areas of learning. This was because six out of the ten children were only in their third week of attending school.

**Pupils' personal development is very good. Provision for social development is excellent, moral development is very good and for spiritual and cultural development it is good. Pupils' attitudes to school are very good. Behaviour is good overall.** It is satisfactory when children start school, improves steadily as they get older and is very good by Years 5 and 6. Relationships throughout the school are very good. **Attendance is good and pupils are punctual.**

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The quality of education provided is good.** The **good** curriculum is most effective for pupils in the upper junior years. It has most scope to improve in the Foundation Stage and in physical education once planned improvements to the accommodation are made. **Teaching is good.** Approximately 60 per cent of lessons were good or better, of which twelve per cent were very good. No lessons were unsatisfactory. Teaching in music is a significant strength. There are wide-ranging, exciting opportunities for learning in ICT and through extra-curricular activities. However, the school is right to strive to increase the percentage of very good teaching. It knows that there is a need to promote literacy and numeracy more effectively by setting challenging targets that help all pupils to improve their reading and confidence in mental mathematics. Aims for personal, social and health education are fostered particularly well. Partnerships with parents and the community are very good.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**Leadership and management are good.** The school is very ably led and managed by the headteacher and she is supported well in both by other colleagues. **Governance is satisfactory.** The governing body plays a key role in shaping the school's aims and values. It meets all statutory requirements except that it omits some information required in the prospectus and annual report.

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

Parents think very highly of the school. Although pupils have very positive views of the school too they also have clear ideas of how it can improve further.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- Continue to raise standards in reading.
- Make sure that pupils improve mental mathematics to help them solve problems quickly and accurately.
- Sustain efforts to improve accommodation, especially to improve provision for children in the Foundation Stage and for physical education.

and to meet statutory requirements:

- Insert information about absence and access for people with disabilities in the relevant documents.

## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

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

Pupils achieve well because most pupils make good or better progress from broadly average attainment when they enter the school to reach above average standards by Year 6. Achievement in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory and good in the other two key stages. Given the small numbers of boys and girls in each year group, there are no significant differences in the achievement of pupils of different age or gender. Nonetheless, pupils in Years 3 and 4 do not progress as quickly as older pupils in Years 5 and 6. This is because they do not work collaboratively as often and are not so clear how to improve. Results in national tests are volatile, principally because attainment on entry is equally volatile. However, teachers have recently increased time for reading, drama and for solving problems in mathematics to help pupils achieve closer to capacity.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are rising at a faster than average rate in literacy and numeracy in Year 6 but have declined since 2001 in Year 2. There is potential for some pupils to accelerate progress in mathematics and reading.
- Children in Reception do not always achieve to their full potential.
- Pupils achieve very well in ICT.
- Throughout the school pupils reach standards above expectation for their age in music. Pupils with special educational needs achieve particularly well in this subject.

*The table of national test results for 2003 at the end of Year 2 is excluded because there were only six pupils in the year group.*

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

| Standards in: | School results | National results |
|---------------|----------------|------------------|
| English       | 27.9 (26.3)    | 26.8 (27.0)      |
| Mathematics   | 27.9 (27.7)    | 26.8 (26.7)      |
| Science       | 30.0 (29.7)    | 28.6 (28.3)      |

*There were 14 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year when there were 9 pupils.*

#### Commentary

1. The reasons for rising standards in Year 6 and for falling standards in Year 2 were investigated thoroughly. The school's system for tracking progress was found to be rigorous. Attainment is measured soon after entry to school. School findings are used to set realistically challenging predictions for results in national tests at end of Year 2 and from Year 2 to Year 6. Targets are reviewed from year to year and adjusted, when possible, to take account of the impact of new admissions. However, pupil mobility is very high and some pupils enter too late to change statutory targets for Year 6. The school provided data to show that in 2002 and 2003 all pupils at each key stage, with the exception of one, achieved at least as well as the school expected on the basis of prior attainment. The very poor similar school comparison in Year 2 was almost entirely due to a poor overall points score in reading and the lack of Level 3's in writing. Nonetheless, the high majority of the group of 6 pupils in Year 2 achieved well to perform better than teachers expected them to. All gained at least a Level 2 in mathematics, placing them in the top 5 per cent of schools and all except one obtained a Level 2B in writing, which was well above the national average. Girls in Year 6 have not achieved as well in the last two years as all girls nationally in English and mathematics; the

main cause being that there was a higher percentage of girls than boys with specific special educational needs in both subjects.

2. Pupils in the present Year 2 were average on entry but have higher levels of attainment as a group than the groups in the two previous years. Their handwriting and use of punctuation is well developed and they have a good understanding of the many purposes of writing. This is because they have wide experience of writing in other subjects. Most pupils read and speak competently but a minority lack confidence to talk in front of a large group and read hesitatingly. Others could read more demanding texts to extend their experience. The mixed attainment group in Year 2 is progressing well this term because they are receiving extra support on three mornings per week from a temporary additional teacher who teaches them capably. This is very good use of the school's budget.
3. Pupils in the present small Year 6 group include one who is repeating the year. This small group of girls represents a wide range of attainment. However, each is benefiting from working in a small class with two different teachers who understand them very well. They are on course to reach the 88 per cent predicted for Level 4 or higher in English, mathematics and science. Overall, approximately 40 per cent of the group have a realistic chance of obtaining the targets for Level 5 in all three subjects.
4. Standards in the Foundation Stage are above average in the music early learning goals and average in personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy, and mathematics development. Children who were admitted in September 2003 are achieving satisfactorily overall. Higher-attaining pupils make good progress and have attained most of the learning goals that underpin literacy, numeracy and personal development. The remainder is making sound progress towards them. Newly admitted children have made a satisfactory start. The teacher tries hard to cater for their individual needs, drawing appropriately on support from teaching assistants. However, children do not make as much progress as they could because they have too few opportunities to initiate ideas and explore their small world independently. They are somewhat disadvantaged from being taught in a class where the high majority is from Years 1 and 2.
5. In Years 3 and 4, pupils are still below average overall. Now that time for learning has increased, they are making good progress towards group targets in reading and writing. Their progress and achievement in mathematics, however, is only satisfactory. This is because teaching is not always good enough to help them to cope competently with mental mathematics' problems at the time when pupils are experiencing difficulties.
6. The inspection team evaluated standards achieved in ICT and music in depth. Teachers were keen to obtain an external evaluation of progress towards objectives for improvement in both subjects. The impact of provision proved to be very good. In particular, the installation of an electronic whiteboard in every classroom has helped raise achievement considerably in the past year. Pupils, especially those with special educational needs, find it easier to concentrate for sustained periods in lessons when the board is being used. They join in enthusiastically and concentrate particularly well when ICT is used in music lessons and achieve highly.

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

Provision is good overall and very good by the late junior stage. It is highly valued by parents. The excellent reputation for the way pupils develop socially and emotionally is the principle reason why many families seek a place at the school. The governing body has high expectations for fostering pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and the school has many successful ways of achieving their central aims. The headteacher and staff are strongly committed to teaching pupils to develop a very good understanding of what it means to be a member of the community, distinguish between right and wrong and appreciate the world in which they live. Consequently, their attendance and behaviour is good and their relationships and attitudes to school are very good.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

The school is very good at:-

- Fostering a sense of community and providing opportunities for pupils to exercise leadership and responsibility.
- Encouraging pupils to respect its Christian aims and values and clear moral code.
- Nurturing pupils' gifts and talents and their cultural awareness through participating in music, art and other community events.

## Commentary

7. Pupils' attendance is good and promoted well by classteachers. Their support and care accounts for pupils' very positive attitudes to school and their willingness to attend school regularly. Attitudes are good from when children start school and most pupils participate enthusiastically in all the interesting activities available to them. They enjoy being members of house teams where friendships are forged between all ages. They benefit, for example, from working together to plan and organise house assemblies several times a year. As pupils move through the school, they show an increasing capacity to try hard, develop confidence and a strong consideration for others. They use their energies productively to help each other, the environment and the wider community. By Years 5 and 6, the older girls are very mature, responsible, hard working and enterprising. They often fund-raise for the school, community organisations and charities of their own choice. For example, they recently entered a competition run by the Association for Science Education and won first prize to expand learning resources for the subject. A sunflower growing competition was another popular initiative that benefited the premature baby unit at Reading, Berkshire.
8. Promotion of good relationships and racial harmony is very good. Behaviour is good overall and often very good, especially outside of lessons. Though boys' conduct in the playground is sometimes boisterous it is very good-natured. Pupils get along so well together that they are rarely seen to argue or fall out with each other. The personal and social development of children in Reception is sound. There are strengths in the way they concentrate and sit quietly during registration, form good relationships and understand right and wrong. They find it hard, however, to sustain concentration for long periods and are still at the stage where they are learning to jell as a group. Pupils between Years 1 and 4 also sometimes find it hard to conform to teachers' expectations to be calm and quiet in the classroom but their relationships are very good too overall, especially as a minority in the class has behavioural special needs. Gradually, the school's reward and incentives systems enable pupils to mature and concentrate very well in lessons. By Years 5 and 6, girls have excellent self-discipline.
9. The school has identified nine pupils with very special talents and aptitudes and it does what it can to help them to extend these. It made arrangements before Christmas, for example, to enable one pupil to rehearse and dance in a local pantomime. It gives pupils the chance to develop an appreciation of the arts by entering stimulating events, such as the 'Arena for the Arts'. The school is particularly proud of its choir and percussion group. Pupils sang, for example, in *Noye's Fludde* at the Royal Albert Hall and nine pupils provided the percussion accompaniment in a recent schools' concert at the Hexagon Theatre in Reading. Three were pupils with special educational needs - an excellent achievement.

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

| Authorised absence |     | Unauthorised absence |     |
|--------------------|-----|----------------------|-----|
| School data        | 4.6 | School data          | 0.0 |
| 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.

## Exclusions

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

| Categories used in the Annual School Census |
|---|
| White – British                             |
| White – any other White background          |
| Mixed – White and Black Caribbean           |
| Mixed – White and Asian                     |
| No ethnic group recorded                    |

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

| No of pupils on roll | Number of fixed period exclusions | Number of permanent exclusions |
|----------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 42                   | 1.5                               | 0                              |
| 3                    | 0                                 | 0                              |
| 3                    | 0                                 | 0                              |
| 2                    | 0                                 | 0                              |
| 2                    | 0                                 | 0                              |

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

One pupil was excluded last year for three lunch-time sessions in accordance with the school's clear code of behaviour for dealing with a serious misdemeanour.

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

### **Teaching and learning**

#### ***Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 17 lessons***

| Excellent | Very good | Good | Satisfactory | Unsatisfactory | Poor | Very Poor |
|-----------|-----------|------|--------------|----------------|------|-----------|
| 0         | 2         | 8    | 7            | 0              | 0    | 0         |

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

Teaching is effective overall, though the percentage of very good teaching is confined to music. Assessment of progress is thorough. Good teaching enables pupils to make good progress during their time in school after a sound start in the Foundation Stage. The best features of teaching are adults' promotion of very good relationships, high standards of behaviour and, in Years 5 and 6, of initiative and high productivity. The majority of lessons in literacy are good but some lessons in mathematics do not cater as well as they could for all age or attainment groups within the class.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teachers' expertise and flair when teaching ICT and music fosters pupils' enthusiasm and effort.
- Numeracy and literacy are taught well when pupils are withdrawn for booster lessons.
- Teachers are not so effective in teaching pupils to be mentally agile in mathematics.
- Children of Reception age do not have enough opportunities to learn through independent play.

### **Commentary**

- Teaching in music is very good. Lessons include a variety of exciting opportunities for pupils to sing, play and compose. They are taught with considerable expertise in a lively, infectious manner. It captures pupils' enthusiasm and enables them all to sustain interest and concentration from the start to the end of the lesson. Pupils have access to plenty of resources for music making and are taught how to play percussion and tuned instruments through increasingly demanding activities. ICT is taught imaginatively through most subjects but makes a particularly stimulating contribution in music lessons. Looking at images and listening to recordings of their compositions fascinates pupils and gives them ideas for further improvement. Both music and ICT contribute very well to the personal development of pupils with special educational needs because they gain considerable satisfaction from joining in as successfully as their peers.

11. Adults try hard to plan lessons in literacy and numeracy that meet the wide-ranging needs within each class. They have responded well to the recommendation in the previous inspection report to identify clear learning objectives for pupils of different ages and capability based on assessment of prior learning. Usually, group objectives are shared effectively with pupils and pupils are given time to reflect on and discuss their progress towards them. Teaching assistants support pupils with special educational needs well, as they encourage them to persevere when they find work hard, particularly reading. Pupils in Years 1 to 4 make the best progress, however, when they are taught in smaller groups or individually away from the whole class. Pupils in Year 2, for example, learn quickly in English and mathematics when they are taught as a year group in the library. These lessons are well organised, managed at a lively pace and are appropriately challenging. Pupils with special educational needs benefit from following a special programme called 'Tracks'. It helps them to achieve objectives to improve their knowledge of letter blends and confidence in word recognition. Parents are also productively involved in using these materials with their children. Other pupils, including higher attainers, say they would like small, easily measurable, individual targets for reading that they too can monitor independently. The subject improvement plan acknowledges that would help to accelerate their progress and includes aims to introduce such targets by the end of the term.
12. Teachers invest a lot of time into showing pupils different methods for solving mathematics problems. They sometimes devise very interesting and imaginative opportunities, especially in Years 5 and 6, for pupils to follow up lines of enquiry, both at school and through homework assignments. At other times, teachers have unrealistic expectations of pupils to calculate without any practical aids or do not intervene early enough to resolve pupils' difficulties. This happened in two lessons at the junior stage when pupils were required to either add or divide hundreds, tens and units to solve problems. Teachers have high expectations of behaviour but are not as vigilant in helping pupils raise expectations of themselves. Consequently, younger juniors do not do enough to evaluate their performance in physical education or improve the way they set out their work in mathematics books.
13. Children in the Reception year, especially the four who were admitted in September, clearly benefit academically and socially from learning with older pupils. The newly admitted children do not, however, have enough opportunities to learn through practical activities and imaginative play. This is partly due to accommodation restrictions, but also some activities are too undemanding or lack enough stimulating resources.

## **The curriculum**

The school provides a good range of learning opportunities for pupils and is particularly innovative in developing an up-to-date, exciting curriculum. It manages to provide a sound curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage, despite restricted and inadequate space for imaginative play in their classroom. Topics are imaginatively planned that enable pupils from Reception to Year 2 to use their knowledge of literacy, numeracy and ICT across the whole curriculum. The range and scope of learning opportunities is very good for Years 5 and 6. The older juniors have exciting opportunities to take initiative, work collaboratively and participate in events organised by the local education authority or other schools. Opportunities for enrichment outside of lesson time are particularly good for such a small school. The school works very well in partnership with community organisations and regularly invites into school people with special expertise who foster pupils' interest in learning. Staff frequently take pupils out on educational visits, and are beginning to promote links with schools in other countries. The school meets requirements for collective worship.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Information technology supports work across the curriculum very well.
- The school provides imaginative opportunities for learning in the arts, creative subjects and to foster pupils' personal, social and health education.
- Accommodation is inadequate for gymnastics and is not designed well for children in Reception.

## Commentary

14. The curriculum is greatly enhanced by the recent introduction of the computer linked ICT facility. ICT is used imaginatively to support work across the whole curriculum and was seen used effectively in Mathematics, English, history and music lessons during the inspection. The school has noticed how much the use of electronic whiteboards has improved pupils' attention span and interest in learning, particularly in imaginative writing and composing their own music. ICT is also forging a closer partnership with parents. Parents can visit the school's web site, for example, and read some good cross-curricular poems inspired by the recent visit of Brian Moses, a well-known children's author. They were also invited to listen to a 'talking book' produced by infants about their visit to a farm. This helped parents understand how pupils learn to write and how they can be involved in providing support at home.
15. The school is up-to-date in its thinking and planning for the Primary Learning Strategy and in its promotion of excellence and enjoyment through creative and practical subjects, especially music, drama and art. A wide range of extra-curricular activities and events, such as Arena for the Arts and a visit from the Berkshire young Musicians Trust, considerably enrich the curriculum. Line dancing is a popular after-school club activity and most of Years 5 and 6 are highly motivated to attend the science club. Year 2 pupils are very enthusiastic about learning French. All of these activities contribute very well to pupils' social and cultural development.
16. Accommodation deficiencies hinder access to a broad-based curriculum for children who joined the school two weeks prior to the week of the inspection. For example, freedom to have sand and water play and access to the playground, moving in and out as they choose, is almost impossible at this time of year. The hall is too small to cater satisfactorily for dance and gymnastics and staff do well to use it for as many functions as they do run. Innovative use of the BASE programme (Balance, Agility, Speed, and Efficiency) has, nevertheless, resulted in some improvement in physical education since the previous inspection. Playground space is used whenever possible, as seen when older pupils chose to go out for a hockey lesson in the drizzle.

## Care, guidance and support

The school is very good at ensuring pupils' care, welfare, health and safety. Staff know pupils well and the school is secure and welcoming. Pupils receive good support and guidance and are carefully taught to understand the reasons for good safety, health and hygiene practice. Pupils are consulted about these features of the work of the school and its development.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school promotes very well pupils' healthy and safe living and general well being.
- There is a very good standard of pastoral care but the school could do more to involve pupils in evaluating their own progress.
- The child protection policy is not sufficiently comprehensive.

## Commentary

17. The school pays very close attention to pupils' healthy and safe living, holds the Healthy Schools silver award and is currently working towards the gold award. Pupils' personal safety and general well being is skilfully addressed through the personal, social and health education programme. This includes the effective outside involvement of a Christian organisation called Amethyst. The school also runs 'Learning through Action' days for pupils and parents concerned with sex, drugs education and bullying. These stay in pupils' memories and inform their thinking and writing.
18. Health and safety inspections of the premises are carried out at least termly with any issues recorded and acted upon with appropriate urgency. Risk assessments have been carried out

covering a wide range of activities including sports day, science, design and technology and physical education lessons. Also, there are very good guidelines to ensure pupils' safety during off-site activities, backed-up by a guide to parents who frequently help on these occasions.

19. All staff know the pupils and their families very well, are sensitive to their needs and are thus able to provide very good support and guidance for pupils' personal development. The very good relationships that exist between pupils and staff encourage pupils to raise any concerns that they may have, knowing that they will be dealt with sympathetically. Good assessment procedures and use of assessment to respond to pupils' needs ensures that pupils are generally well supported and guided in their academic progress. However, pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to set their own small learning targets to help them check progress towards the group targets for English and mathematics.
20. Child protection procedures are satisfactory overall. The designated person regularly attends training courses and disseminates information to all staff at staff meetings. They are fully aware of procedures. However, the written policy does not include sufficient guidance on recognising and dealing with possible incidents and needs expanding.

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

Links with parents and the community are very good and make a significant contribution to pupils' academic and personal development. Links with other schools and pre-school providers are good overall, though, due to no fault of the school, are better for older pupils than for younger ones.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Parents are very well informed about the school, the curriculum and their children's progress.
- Parents make a significant contribution to their children's learning at school and at home.
- Parents are extremely satisfied with nearly all aspects of the school, though they are keen to improve the accommodation and a very small minority want more homework in writing in Year 2.
- Very good links with the community help to enrich the curriculum.
- Very good links with secondary schools ensure pupils' successful transfer to the next stage of education.

### **Commentary**

21. Parents are very well informed about the school through newsletters and very frequent other correspondence, as well as the prospectus and the governors' annual report, that contain most statutory information and much more besides. A good curriculum outline is given in the prospectus supported by termly curriculum information, including guidance on helping with learning. Guidance on using reading books in Class 1, for example, includes advice on how to help pupils with comprehension.
22. Parents receive very good information about their children's progress through termly consultation evenings where targets are reviewed and through very good annual reports. These reports give parents a clear picture of what their children can do, targets for improvements, attainment levels for older pupils and general comments on progress. Pupils benefit from being involved in these meetings.
23. Parents provide very good support on trips and visits and practical support with school productions and the grounds. Parents also provide transport when needed and a parent has helped a teacher to run the science club. Virtually all parents support their children with homework, which the school sets regularly. All parents have a copy of the homework policy and were invited to comment on it and suggest improvements, but none did. One criticism, that it was not used sufficiently to extend pupils interest and skill in writing was unsubstantiated.

24. A good proportion of parents responded to the questionnaire, which is a clear indication of their support for, and interest in, the school. They were unanimous in expressing satisfaction with nearly all aspects of the school including exceptionally positive views about leadership and management, the school's approachability, and their children liking school. Parents fully support the governors' plans to extend the school buildings and have helped to raise over £9000 towards the cost.
25. There are very strong links with the church that promote pupils' social and spiritual development very well. These include leading assemblies fortnightly and use of the church to celebrate Christian festivals and as an educational resource. The school is an integral part of the community. Many members of the community support school functions and the village fete is a joint event including the school, the church and the village hall. Very good use is made of the local area as a resource for history and geography.
26. Links with the local secondary schools include good curriculum links in English, mathematics and science. For example, pupils are set a science project, which they start at the end of Year 6 and continue when they move on to secondary school. Parents are very happy with the arrangements for their children to settle into school but not all pre-school groups supply written information to the school about children's prior learning. This makes planning for new children's learning difficult.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

The school benefits from the very effective leadership of the headteacher whose assessment of the school's strengths and weaknesses is highly perceptive. The school is led and managed well overall because all members of staff work as a team to tackle priorities in the school development plan. These reflect appropriate aspects of provision that need to get better to raise standards further. There are several good features and two distinct weaknesses in overall sound governance. The governing body set challenging aims and is successful in meeting most of them. It recruits and retains well-qualified staff and promotes professional development effectively. Teachers and governors plan and work closely together and are equally committed and enthusiastic. Governors understand the principles of best value and manage financial resources efficiently. However, they are not sufficiently aware of things that have not been fully addressed since the previous inspection and omit information required by law in their publications to parents.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The headteacher is the driving force and demonstrates a strong commitment to catering as well as possible for pupils of different attainment and background.
- Future improvement plans are identified appropriately but are not sufficiently rigorous for numeracy.
- Strategic plans to improve leadership and management and accommodation are very well conceived and just what the school needs to enhance the quality of provision.
- Governors are not rigorous enough in some aspects of monitoring.

### **Commentary**

27. The headteacher is very highly regarded by parents because of the energy she brings to building an effective staff team and promoting pupils' personal, aesthetic, physical and academic development. She sets the example in ensuring that the school is welcoming to parents and pupils, whatever their backgrounds. She is there to support them when they have problems or need advice. For example, pupils from the Traveller community are integrated very well when they are temporarily admitted and the school is sensitive to the needs of pupils from other ethnic minorities and those who are going through personal traumas. The headteacher is innovative and resourceful in managing change and development without placing undue pressure on colleagues, pupils and parents. For

example, she is the inspiration behind the school's increasingly effective promotion of the arts in the curriculum. She also effectively manages most of the provision for outdoor games; making up for shortcomings in space for physical education indoors. She takes personal responsibility for co-ordinating the good provision for pupils with special educational needs. She writes detailed reports to governors that draw well on carefully analysed assessment information to explain how successful the school is in adding value from when pupils enter school to when they leave. These reports help governors to monitor the school's effectiveness.

28. The governors' school development plan is firmly based on the school's careful self-evaluation. There is an appropriate emphasis, for example, on the necessary action to raise standards in reading and other core skills in order to raise achievement throughout the school. Teachers and teaching assistants have a good understanding of their roles and responsibilities and work well together to move initiatives forward. When appropriate, they seek external support to provide objective feedback on progress. In the summer of 2003, for example, staff involved a consultant from the local education authority to help them evaluate standards and identify potential for adding value in ICT after the high expenditure invested by governors in improving provision. The increasingly positive effect of this initiative is easy to measure because the success criteria and the time-scales involved are precise. However, the numeracy action plan is not so good. It lacks reference to improving the quality of presentation and the way in which pupils show their working methods. It also lacks specific criteria for deciding how successfully plans to improve pupils' skills in self-assessment are working. Consequently, there are some teaching and learning methods that are not improving as rapidly as they could.
29. Governors monitor the performance of the headteacher closely and ask searching questions about progress towards school targets. The headteacher, in turn, gives teachers adequate time to manage their workloads and progress towards their professional development targets by teaching their classes for them on a regular basis. Governors know the school well and find it easy to provide examples of things they see that reflect the special 'E'<sup>1</sup> factor, described so clearly in the prospectus. They are not, however, as sharp in identifying things from the previous inspection key issues, such as some features of teaching and learning, that are still areas for improvement. They could, for example, raise their expectations of staff to be consistent in insisting that pupils achieve appropriate standards of presentation in exercise books. They communicate well with parents but have been remiss in their duty to publish information about access for the disabled in the annual report and also omitted rates of authorised and unauthorised absence in the last prospectus. In practice, the access plan is very thorough and attendance is above the national average.

### **Particular aids or barriers to raising achievement, and their impact**

30. Deficiencies in accommodation have an adverse effect on standards and the quality of provision, particularly pupils' achievement in gymnastics and on Reception children's learning. Pupil mobility is high, making it hard for the school to set appropriate group targets and monitor all pupils' progress as well as they would like to. In the recent past, the late admission of pupils has had a negative impact on standards achieved in national tests compared with all schools but especially the schools with a similar entitlement to free school meals. The school has also found that emotional upheaval adversely affected the learning of a small but significant group of younger pupils during the time when they were taking tests in 2003. The school has just joined the Leadership Development Strategy so that it can learn more from others about how to deal effectively with its circumstances and context. It has also submitted plans for extending and improving accommodation to the local planning authority. Their approval is expected soon with the aim to start work during the summer holidays. Both these initiatives are vital to the school's future growth and development. They have the

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<sup>1</sup> The school's 'E' Factor is its own description of special qualities in teaching and learning.

potential to make a positive difference to the quality of leadership and management and the curriculum respectively.

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

| Income and expenditure (£) |        | Balances (£)                        |       |
|----------------------------|--------|-------------------------------------|-------|
| Total income               | 247353 | Balance from previous year          | 23658 |
| Total expenditure          | 219859 | Balance carried forward to the next | 27494 |
| Expenditure per pupil      | 3926   |                                     |       |

31. The school carried forward 11 per cent of its total budget, which is 6 per cent higher than recommended but the reasons were justified. One was the late receipt in months 12, 13 and 14, of extra funds for mathematics and science, totalling £8079. £3000 was allocated for redecoration to the upper junior classroom and infant toilets and the school spent £7500 during the summer term on further redecoration and to pay the salary of an extra teaching assistant.

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

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

Children are admitted to a mixed age class at the beginning of the term in which they become five. At the time of the inspection, four had been in school for a whole term and had adjusted well to being taught with older pupils from Years 1 and 2. The other six children were in their third week and were still settling in. They entered with a wide range of attainment, but overall it is around average. There was only one opportunity to observe teaching and learning for the Reception age group on their own. Altogether, five other part sessions were observed, when at least one other year group was being taught. Overall, **teaching and learning were satisfactory in the areas of learning judged** and children's achievement was satisfactory. Two lessons with Years 1 and 2 were good and supported social and creative development well. Too little was written about the Foundation Stage in the previous report to judge improvement since the previous inspection.

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

- The co-ordinator's commitment to her leadership role provides a very good example for other staff and pupils.
- The accommodation is not designed well for delivering the Foundation Stage curriculum.

#### **Commentary**

32. The co-ordinator capably manages the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 simultaneously. She has a very good rapport with the children and works in close partnership with two teaching assistants who support her competently. An appropriate programme is systematically mapped out showing key objectives that cover all the learning goals expected by the end of Reception, together with related objectives for Years 1 and 2. This framework forms the basis of more detailed planning that takes place weekly between the teacher and two classroom assistants. It ensures balanced coverage of each of the six areas, showing how areas overlap and reinforce each other. A good example was combining a literacy goal to listen to and then re-tell a story with a mathematics goal about putting things in order. Assessment is managed well, particularly as the school receives almost no information from pre-school providers about children's prior learning. Adults observe children closely and keep useful notes about their progress towards the goals expected. They enter these regularly in children's individual profiles, and retain samples of work to exemplify little milestones. Adults use them to move children on when they decide they are ready for more challenging work. Higher-attaining children who were admitted in the autumn term, for example, have progressed well enough to work alongside pupils in Year 1 for literacy and numeracy linked to Key Stage 1 objectives. Records are only just being started for the six new children and it is too soon to measure the impact of their use. None are known to have special educational needs though teachers are observing two children to establish whether they require extra support to help them learn.
33. The classroom is not large and has to cater for 28 pupils in total, most of whom are infants following the National Curriculum for Key Stage 1. Limitations on space at this time of year when children have to be inside for most of the time result in too few opportunities for children to use large apparatus and choose their own creative activities.

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

Provision in personal, social and emotional development is **satisfactory**.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Adults care for children very well and help them to form friendly relationships with older pupils.
- Some tasks require children to sit and listen quietly for too long and this makes them restless.

## Commentary

34. Overall, children make sound progress for their level of attainment. The minority of higher-attaining children makes good progress and is likely to exceed expectations in this learning area. The others should meet them.
35. There are several distinct strengths in provision. Adults make very good relationships with parents and find out about children's likes and dislikes when they start school. This helps staff to understand and cater for individual needs. The good ratio of adults to children and a calm, sensitive approach to managing behaviour ensures that children settle happily. Most children feel that there is always someone there to encourage and help them. The teacher and other staff provide a secure environment where classroom routines are quickly established. All children, for example, enter the room quietly and listen carefully when the register is taken. Adults take care to include the youngest children directly when they ask questions, simplifying them so that they develop the confidence to respond. Children are learning to work sensibly in small groups, benefiting from teaming up with older pupils when asked to share ideas. A good example was when children explored feelings about things that make them happy. Their attitudes to helping each other were good.
36. When pupils from Years 1 and 2 need a calm and quiet atmosphere to concentrate on recording their learning, children have to conform to expectations for a low level of noise. The most capable children already cope with formal recording and progress well in this situation. The larger group of new children, and older children, who still need to dispel their energy through practical activity, find it hard to sit still and listen for lengthy periods. Having already sat quietly through assembly and then a story, they were not very receptive when expected to stay seated at a table and concentrate on recognising the sounds of letters. They became restless and this slowed their learning. Overall, children lack sufficient opportunities to work separately from older pupils on activities of their own choice. Consequently, they do not make as much progress in learning independently as they would if the teaching space was larger and better designed for Reception activities.

## COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Early reading and writing are taught well but there are not enough opportunities to develop speech through independent activities of children's own choice.

## Commentary

37. Most children are on course to meet the goals expected in this area. Adults help them to make a good start with reading. They speak slowly and clearly as they gently encourage children to re-call what they remember of a story from the previous day. For example, the teacher asked, "Can you think what happened next after the baby learnt to walk?" She then showed children how to look for clues in the illustrations to identify that the child learnt to talk next and then started nursery school. Her careful explanation of the story helped children to improve their enjoyment and understanding of what was happening. The most advanced children who have been in school for a term have made good progress and their attitudes are good. They enjoy discussing books and join in with reading some of the repetitive phrases. They have also been taught how to form letters legibly. They have considerably improved the

way they write and space words since they started school though a minority still makes errors in the use of capital and lower-case letters. They have begun to write independently, managing simple sentences about things that interest them.

38. Several newly admitted children have underdeveloped speaking and listening skills, know few sounds of the alphabet and have weak hand control. Teaching assistants work hard to teach them initial sounds and how to form letters correctly. They provide daily practice at sounding out letters and thinking of things that begin with them, such as *m* for *mummy* and *monkey*. They then teach them to form the letter by writing it over and over again. Though the activities help children learn sounds, they provide little scope for spontaneous talk. Consequently, in a busy but rather formal setting, children's development of language is inadequately fostered through interesting imaginative play or practical activities.

## **MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision for mathematical development is **satisfactory**. Children are on course to meet the goals expected in this area.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children develop confidence in counting when they participate in games with pupils from Year 1.
- Activities are not exciting enough to engage children's interest for long.

### **Commentary**

39. Adults usually plan soundly to develop counting and mathematical language. Because of this, the higher-attaining children already meet the requirements for this area of learning. They order and count to 10 unaided, use comparative language appropriately to distinguish, for example, between longer and longest, and they recognise coins to 50 pence. Teachers' assessment notes indicate that their knowledge of the names of shapes is good. One boy said, for example, "Oh look, I have made a pentagon." The newly admitted children are just starting to count to five and teaching is successful when teachers play games with them. For example, 'hiding numbers' captured children's interest and enthusiasm. They looked carefully to try to remember the number of counters on the carpet between four and six as the teacher spread them out. They closed their eyes as some were removed. With practice, the lower-attaining children improved their accuracy in working out how many had been taken away. Children also enjoy learning from singing songs, such as 'five little speckled frogs'. However, some activities fail to stimulate them. There was little challenge to colouring in frog and log shapes to consolidate ordering numbers. The supervising adult was anxious not to disturb older pupils. Therefore, there was no lively extension of mathematical language.

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

It was not possible to make an overall judgement of provision in this wide area of learning. However, the story about the birth of a baby and how she grows to become an adult helped to develop children's understanding of human growth and sense of the miracle of life. The teacher used a photograph of a baby well to reinforce understanding of the needs of a small baby and how a family cares for it.

## **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

There were no opportunities to see or judge provision in this area of learning.

## CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision for creative development was not judged because only one lesson was observed where children were participating in a music lesson with pupils from Years 1 and 2. The teaching and learning were **good** as children learnt to recognise long and short sounds and to sing action songs. The teacher varied the activities, giving children plenty of chances to respond rhythmically to extracts of recorded music. She demonstrated actions in a lively manner, encouraging children to learn the song 'heads and shoulders, knees and toes' in an enjoyable way. Their attitudes were highly positive and the contribution to their personal development was good.

## SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

### ENGLISH

The provision in English is **good**. Of the four lessons seen, three were good and one was satisfactory.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The action plan has appropriate objectives for improvement and is leading to higher standards but not all pupils have individual targets, which hinders their progress, particularly in reading.
- Teaching is good and special booster lessons make a positive difference to achievement.

#### Commentary

40. Inspection evidence confirms the school's view that Year 2 achieve at least as well as expected and their attainment is average overall. They attain broadly average standards in reading and spelling, though a minority equal to the national average is above average and capable of reading harder books than those read to an inspector. Standards in writing are above average. At least three pupils in the group attain a high standard when they describe their experiences, present factual information and use their imagination. The present Year 6 also includes a pupil from Year 7 who is repeating the year. The group as a whole achieves well and is on target to attain above average standards by the end of the year. Some of these pupils read slowly when they read aloud but their comprehension is very good and their writing is interesting and broad based.
41. The teaching team tracks pupils' achievement carefully. Teachers identify issues of underachievement where they exist, such as in reading in Year 2 in 2003 and the reasons for it. For example, they realised that pupils needed more time to learn how to tackle new vocabulary and improve their comprehension. The school development plan sets out clear objectives for raising standards in reading and for enabling pupils to achieve as well as they can in literacy. Appropriate steps have been taken to increase the number of times per week for reading in guided groups. These are managed well. For example, in the lesson seen, pupils in Years 3 and 4 extended their knowledge of how to sound out unfamiliar words and discussed their meaning at length. This helped them to develop understanding of the kind of language used in science fiction stories. However, except for pupils with special educational needs, pupils are unaware of individual learning targets. Though they read frequently at home, this denies them the chance to focus on the things that would help them most.
42. There is another appropriate objective to improve speech and communication. This is because many younger pupils lack confidence to speak in front of an audience. With adults' encouragement, pupils in Year 1 make steady progress and achieve as well as expected. Activities, such as 'circle-time' and drama, help them. By Year 2, pupils are more confident to respond to questions. For example, they spoke up well during a drama lesson, with one pupil achieving particularly well as the chairperson directing the dialogue about the rights and

wrongs of the behaviour of Goldilocks. In junior age classes, pupils continue to make good progress. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory in Years 3 and 4 and good in Years 5 and 6. In the lower age group they find it hard to share ideas but gradually improve. By Years 5 and 6 pupils are confident to stand at the front of the class to show and explain their work. A pupil with special educational needs, for example, could explain the purpose of the game she was playing to try to increase her reasoning skills.

43. Pupils in Year 2 have their individual needs managed well by the temporary teacher in charge of special booster classes, introduced in January. Pupils respond well to the interesting activities and high expectations to make good use of their time. "We've got to get cracking," said one pupil as they looked for words containing the letter blends *er*, *ur* and *ir*. A special support programme called TRACKS also helps individual pupils with reading and spelling. Its use in Year 3 is enabling pupils who were well below average in 2003 to make good improvement in literacy.
44. Teaching is brisk in the good lessons and teachers have high expectations of pupils to read independently and do their best in writing. In Years 5 and 6, pupils achieve very good results when amending drafts using a computer. In a lesson on the use of alliteration, for example, pupils inserted 'bare, blistered feet'. Handwriting is taught well and is joined, clear and fluent. Older pupils are well taught to use simple and complex sentences organised into paragraphs. They use a range of punctuation, including commas, apostrophes and inverted commas accurately. This was evident in lively work about Charles Dickens.
45. English is well led and managed and there has been good improvement in provision since the previous inspection. Pupils are much better at handwriting and make more use of the school library for research. Pupils with special educational needs continue to achieve well, due to the one-to-one support they receive. Higher-attaining pupils are achieving closer to capacity but still need more guidance in selecting suitable books to read. The co-ordinator observes and monitors planning, and is working hard with colleagues to meet the needs of the wide attainment range within each class. The homework policy works particularly well in the upper junior years. The higher levels of achievement and standards are reflected in the excellent standards of work seen in a project about food, for example.

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

46. Literacy is used very well to support learning in other subjects. In the lower and upper juniors, teachers use an interactive whiteboard to great effect in their lessons. There are very effective links with ICT when pupils write class topic books, such as 'Our Visit to Odds Farm Park' and 'Moods of the Sea'. Infant and junior pupils use research skills well to write interesting accounts of events in history and life in other countries. Older pupils, however, when talking to an inspector, could not provide examples of times when they had read about the lives of famous composers or artists. This possible gap in their experience reflects the potential to set individual targets for pupils to extend the range of texts that they read independently.

### **MATHEMATICS**

Provision is **good** with good improvement since the previous inspection. Pupils who are capable of high standards are working closer to capacity because support for higher-attaining pupils is better than it was in 1998. Strengths have been sustained and standards have risen. However, there is still scope for improvement in the teaching of mental strategies for solving problems.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Infants are improving at mental mathematics and older junior pupils apply their skills very well when they work collaboratively to investigate interesting hypotheses.
- Pupils with special educational needs receive good one-to-one support.
- Teachers do not always help pupils enough when they are tackling mathematics problems.
- Pupils in Years 3 and 4 lack sufficient guidance for organising and presenting their work.

## Commentary

47. Standards are above average in both key stages, having improved since 2003 in Year 2 and been maintained in Year 6. Taking evidence from sampling work from the past year into account, it is clear that pupils benefit from much good teaching, even though sometimes expectations are unrealistic. Also, in one class, they are not high enough for presentation. Teachers ensure pupils' good progress between entering school and leaving in Year 6. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 make the most rapid progress, because expectations of them are consistently high. Teaching assistants support pupils with special educational needs effectively as they practise new skills or try to work more accurately.
48. Older infants' progress was satisfactory between September and December, though sometimes work set for the higher-attaining pupils in mathematics was too easy. These pupils are achieving well this term because the amount of work they do has accelerated. Being taught as separate year groups on three days a week has led to good improvement in mental mathematics this term, for example, using their knowledge of the two times table to work out doubles and near doubles. Teaching is lively and language is used precisely when new working methods or mathematical ideas are introduced. Careful questioning and a stimulating variety of tasks successfully support the lower-attaining pupils and good opportunities for higher-attaining pupils enable them to show what they can do. These pupils have very good reasoning skills and apply them logically. One girl, for example, spontaneously showed the teacher that she could use her knowledge of the three times table to triple numbers and find near triples! Pupils with special educational needs reach their individual targets because teachers work alongside them and help them record their methods of working on small whiteboards.
49. Teachers make very good use of electronic whiteboards in junior class lessons to demonstrate new working methods. In addition, high expectations of older juniors to listen, think carefully and use their time constructively pay dividends. The class of all girls concentrates very well and always tries very hard to do their best. In one lesson about partitioning numbers, for example, they completed an impressive number of calculations in the time available. Pupils rise very well to challenges that require them to work in groups to plan their own lines of enquiry and decide how to record results. One excellent example was when they found out whether girls spent more time than boys going to extra-curricular clubs, whether boys watch more TV than girls, and whether girls spend more time reading than boys do. They calculated totals and averages accurately, using knowledge of addition, division, decimals and percentages appropriately. They wrote clear conclusions about their findings. Older juniors always present their work neatly and produce a considerable volume each term that reflects their good rate of new learning and good achievement.
50. The attainment of pupils in Years 3 and 4 is below average. This is partly because the percentage of pupils with special educational needs in the small class of 12 is high. Overall, pupils make steady progress because they have group targets that they practise regularly, such as to learn how to round up numbers to the nearest 10 and 100 when adding hundreds, tens and units. When they misunderstand an exercise, or get things wrong, the skills required are usually revised in the next lesson. Some pupils in Year 5 are also slow when tackling division problems that are presented in an unfamiliar way. They found it hard, for example, to work out how to divide bundles of sticks between 100 and 1000 to make three to six-sided

shapes. In both lessons, pupils' progress was hindered because adults did not intervene soon enough to resolve pupils' difficulties.

51. Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. There has been good improvement in using assessment to track progress in national tests, identify weaknesses and address improvement targets in Years 2 and 6. There has also been good attention to raising standards by providing better opportunities for using mathematics in other subjects but monitoring of the way pupils in Years 3 and 4 develop skills in mental mathematics and set out their work requires improvement.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

52. Pupils use mathematics well when studying special topics or units of work in other subjects. For example, infants record in chronological order when identifying key dates when the Great Fire of London occurred. Lower juniors record temperature when learning about weather and older juniors use measure and shape well in investigative tasks in science, design and technology and art and design.

### **SCIENCE**

The provision for science is **good**.

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

- Pupils are very interested in science and many older pupils attend the after-school science club.

#### **Commentary**

53. The trend in national test results in Year 6 has been upward since 2001. In 2003, standards were high compared with national expectations and similar schools. In contrast, standards in the tests in Year 2 in 2003 were low compared with all schools. This was because although the percentage attaining Level 2 was high, none attained Level 3. Inspectors found that, irrespective of the fact that the group was very small, Year 2 had not done enough practical investigations to build their confidence and extend their understanding. Work this year indicates that investigative science is now covered well throughout the school. Standards in Year 2 are rising and are above average and they are also above the national average in Year 6. All pupils now achieve well.
54. Observation of a lesson for Years 1 and 2 indicate that science is well taught, with appropriate emphasis on research and enquiry. Pupils are keen to participate in investigations of different kinds and they use appropriate scientific terms accurately because teachers use language precisely. For example, in their theme of materials, younger pupils had to choose suitable material to pack and send a book to a fictional character, Mr. Benn. The teacher planned the task carefully, and provided pupils with ample resources. All had the same book to wrap but they had the choice of wrapping material, for example, foam, shiny and brown paper. They fastened their parcels with sellotape and popped it in a sack, which was bounced for three turns of the egg timer. By doing this, pupils discovered which parcel had survived best. They recorded their evidence using the digital camera. There followed lively discussion that enhanced their understanding of fair tests.
55. Junior pupils' work was reviewed through scrutiny of books. There was balanced coverage of learning objectives about life processes and living things, physical processes, microorganisms, the earth and beyond. Factual detail is recorded well and pupils collaborate effectively when planning and conducting experiments or testing hypotheses, such as the statement, *'If we had bigger ears, we would hear more!'* Much of pupils' practical work, involving collecting and analysing data, observation and measurement, is recorded on a computer. This work, such as testing how long it takes for a hot drink to cool right down to

room temperature, shows that they have a good understanding of when a test is fair or not. Occasional homework projects and other cross-curricular learning opportunities, such as making models powered by electricity in design and technology, support their learning very well. Pupils of different capability enjoy the subject, inspired by teachers' enthusiasm, and are keen to improve.

56. The subject is led and managed effectively by a teacher with expertise in science. She ensures a balanced, lively programme of study enhanced by educational visits to promote enquiry, for example, to the Science Museum in London. The science club also provides challenge. Some of its members from Years 5 and 6 were recently successful in winning a science competition for which they made a model of the surface of the moon. Using trajectories of different sizes they discovered the bigger the trajectory, the bigger the impact on their plaster moon surface. The next step in the development of science is to complete a bank of activities to ensure rigorous coverage of the experimental and investigative attainment target in each class. This is an appropriate area to improve.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)**

Provision is **very good** and has improved considerably since the previous inspection. This is because the governing body has invested extensively in improving resources for teaching ICT and for training staff to use modern devices effectively. Additionally, pupils have frequent access to ICT, as the ratio of computers to pupils is now 5:1; twice as good as that recommended by national government. This helps them with their studies in other subjects. They also use microscopes, a digital camera and scanners in much of their work to study and produce different images. Teaching and learning are good. There were opportunities in every class to see it being taught to every year group in different subject contexts, with beneficial results.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The school's 'E' Factor comes into its own in this subject. Consequently pupils achieve highly.
- All teachers are committed to making wide and imaginative use of ICT to make lessons more interesting and challenging for pupils of all different levels of attainment.
- The school makes productive use of external advisers to evaluate provision and plan for further improvement.

### **Commentary**

57. Pupils are highly motivated to practise skills and develop their understanding in this subject. Their excellent attitudes are due to teachers' enthusiasm and expertise. They aim for excellence and set high expectations of themselves as they use it. Pupils throughout the school enjoy it, and are excited by its power. They invest effort very well. Teaching has improved since each class had its whiteboard installed and is often innovative. In every class, pupils carefully observe adults using the electronic whiteboard effectively. Consequently, they learn from an early age how to access files, enter, change and store information and how to find things out from CD-ROM or the Internet.
58. Standards are higher than expected of pupils of their age in Year 2 and much higher in Year 6. Pupils in Year 1 and 2 are developing a good knowledge and understanding of a range of computer skills and of the way other devices, such as a scanner, copier, camera and aids in the home are operated. Even pupils who lack confidence to write and read independently, or who have higher attainment but lack the inclination to write at length because their pencil control is immature, love practising their skills. Pupils in Year 2, for example, enjoy drawing and painting pictures and magnifying them, explaining precisely the working process involved. A higher-attaining pupil explained how helpful it is to draft, amend and set out a poem about pets on the computer. In Years 3 and 4, pupils record musical compositions and as they listen to them, they suggest how they can be improved or adapted in future lessons by changing the tempo or instruments. Pupils are very competent in their use of ICT by Years 5

and 6. Six of the girls demonstrated to an inspector, for example, how they use a control box to operate models they had made collaboratively. These included a pelican crossing, a railway line barrier and a remote control garage door. They also discussed their draft PowerPoint presentations about the Victorian Period that they are to present to the class soon. These include digital photographs, moving images, and key facts and figures.

59. The subject is ably led and managed by a co-ordinator with considerable expertise and enthusiasm for the subject. The school draws well on the expertise of a consultant from the local education authority to help teachers to evaluate and improve provision. The subject action plan is clearly based on the recommendations made in June 2003. It is keeping to schedule and success is closely monitored. Subsequent improvement, for example, is equal access to computer time in the three classes and a better system for assessing pupils' progress. Teachers have just begun to use the results of assessment to set targets for individual pupils. This is an appropriate area for future improvement.

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

60. As the examples above illustrate, pupils make good use of ICT in other subjects, such as science, design and technology, art, history and geography. Pupils in Years 1 and 2, for example, found out about the Fire of London and word-processed their findings. They entered them attractively in a class book that younger pupils are now able to read and enjoy. Research projects in Years 5 and 6 about different food products are much enhanced by the use of ICT to communicate the outcomes. The quality of some is excellent.

## **HUMANITIES**

History and geography were sampled through examining previous project work and by talking to pupils and staff. Though insufficient evidence was gathered to judge the quality of provision, standards overall, or teaching and learning, distinct strengths emerged. Leadership and management are good in both subjects. Teachers have clearly taken account of recommendations in the previous report to teach pupils to be more independent in their learning and make effective use of enquiry skills. In history, for example, pupils make much better use of evidence from the past to develop their understanding of how people and nations build on prior experience and skills. Work is planned effectively at each key stage and benefits from the input of visitors, visits to places of historical or geographical interest, including a residential visit for older juniors. The work seen also shows how very well the subjects contribute to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

The small selection of work seen in class project folders and homework from both the infant and junior year groups reflect good standards of achievement even though it was not sufficient to judge standards overall. The infants produced a class book about an educational visit to a working farm. It is beautifully presented and celebrates all pupils' best efforts. They all thought of something different to write about or illustrate and it makes exciting reading. Girls in Years 5 and 6 carried out challenging investigations about food products from other countries. They did a tremendous amount of independent research to find out an extensive amount of information. A very pleasing feature of the work was the emphasis on conservation and fair-trading. It reflected their interest in promoting health and hygiene and their mature views about how to make the best use of the world's resources.

## **HISTORY**

One lesson for Years 5 and 6 was observed. It was well taught and pupils understanding of the idea of reliable evidence above average. Pupils built on prior learning well by responding thoughtfully to questions about pictures projected on the whiteboard. The dialogue was challenging because the teacher expected all pupils to give reasons for their opinions about whether the images were actual photographs or artists' impressions. The tasks for both year groups were interesting and appropriate

though more thought-provoking for Year 6 than for Year 5. By the end of the lesson pupils had all improved their understanding of how to recognise genuine Victorian photographs and documents. The only area for improvement was the quality of the prompt sheet for Year 5 because the illustrations were too small for pupils to see the detail clearly. Topic work from lower year groups was completed well. Years 3 and 4 made an attractive Tudor encyclopaedia in December 2003, for example. It contained well-organised, factual information about life and times in the days of Henry VIII, including an explanation of jousting and hunting with hawks.

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

The provision for music is **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Music teaching is very lively and expectations of pupils to try their best are high.
- Pupils have many worthwhile opportunities to participate in concerts and festivals.

### **Commentary**

61. Pupils attain above average standards in music and their achievement is very good. Teaching by the same teacher across the school enables pupils to relate well to her. They are given clear instructions and they have no doubt about what they are expected to do! Pupils respond with great enthusiasm to the teacher's high expectations of them and work hard. Pupils of all capability and background are included very well in the wide range of activities for singing, listening and composing. For example, pupils in Years 3 and 4 composed in groups using notes in the pentatonic scale. They sustained concentration and effort as they performed to the class. Pupils are effectively taught to evaluate their learning. For example, older juniors describe two positive things about what they hear and give one element for improvement, showing their good understanding of music elements. Pupils listen to a wide variety of music by famous composers, hearing excerpts in the infants' lesson, for example, from the Carnival of Animals to illustrate the elephant's walk. The teacher takes every opportunity to stimulate pupils by using new technology which pupils in turn use confidently to record and adapt their compositions. Pupils sing in many local and national events and have a good reputation for the high quality of their performance. Participation in a recent concert at the Hexagon Theatre, Reading, did much to enhance their self-esteem.

## **ART AND DESIGN AND DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

No lessons were observed and in the time available it was not possible to judge provision in art and design and design and technology. Work seen around the building was well presented and reflects pupils' good range of art skills, care and effort. The display in the school hall, for example, is based on the theme, 'materials'. It shows pupils' collage pictures, inspired by the story of 'The Iron Man', carefully crafted clay tiles and closely observed detailed drawings of different kinds of glassware.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

There was insufficient evidence to judge provision, or improvement since the previous inspection. One lesson was seen. The teaching and learning was satisfactory but adversely effected by the inferior and unsatisfactory space in the school hall. Standards broadly matched expectations for pupils in Year 3, who formed the majority age group. However, standards were below expectations for Year 4 who had clearly not made the progress that might be expected if facilities were good. Pupils achieved as well as could be expected in the very restricted space available to them. The teacher set four challenges for them to practice different kinds of jumps. Though their behaviour was satisfactory, pupils showed some frustration for being unable to move around at speed and spread their limbs. The headteacher manages the subject well. She makes sure that pupils have plenty of opportunities to use the playground and field for games, athletics and sport and swimming lessons are organised from Year 2. There is a good scheme of work.

## PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Provision is **good** overall for all pupils and is **very good** in the final two years in school. Pupils are very well prepared for transfer to secondary school.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school council is an outstanding example of democracy in action.
- Pupils are very well taught to understand what makes a healthy lifestyle and how to keep safe.
- Pupils develop a good sense of what is fair and what would make their life at school better.
- Pupils gradually learn to discuss their spiritual and emotional development.

### Commentary

62. Two recent initiatives have been very effective in improving the school's provision for personal, social and health education. The school established a school council in September 2003, having spent a whole year inducting pupils into its purpose and likely benefits. It resolves problems and contributes as much as it possibly can to helping the wider community. It is entirely elected and run by pupils who believe it plays a very important part in the life of the school. It has, for example, an environment committee that takes responsibility for organising litter picking, watering plants and feeding birds. Pupils have discussed their hopes for better learning opportunities when they have the new extension to the school building. An inspector sat in on a meeting that was very impressively chaired by a pupil from Year 6. Pupils were very respectful of the chairperson; putting up hands and only speaking when invited to do so. All participated in a serious discussion about proposals to run a poster competition to raise money to help old people to look after their gardens.
63. The school has also been participating in the Healthy Schools initiative for the past year. Pupils have already won the bronze and silver awards for their efforts and are now embarking on the gold award. Throughout the school, pupils worked hard for these awards. For example, children in Reception and Years 1 and 2 learnt about how to care for themselves and each other by developing good health and safety habits. They produced 'Our Book of Safety Instructions', full of imaginative ideas for avoiding hazards in the classroom, how to use the toilets properly and evacuate the classroom during a fire drill. Junior pupils learnt about a range of medical ailments and drugs awareness and they fund-raised for sick children. For example, one pupil proudly told an inspector that she collected £15 in coins for the Great Ormond Street Hospital. Parents support their children by also attending training about bullying and reinforce the key messages at home.
64. Many younger pupils are shy and do not find it easy to explain what makes them happy and unhappy. Sensitively managed 'circle-time' lessons give them the opportunity to sit in a ring and practice sharing thoughts and listening to those of their friends. This is good for their self-esteem. Pupils from ethnic minorities and with special educational needs try as hard as their peers and are often the ones who share most, due to the one-to-one encouragement they receive from adults. Gradually pupils open up. In Years 3 and 4, for example, some confided that they want to talk further with teachers about being treated fairly and having more help with mathematics. Teaching methods, such as hand squeezing and applause, give pupils a strong feeling of togetherness. By Years 5 and 6 girls are very mature and thoughtful. They are very willing to share feelings about events that are special to them or events that concern them, such as the needs of deprived and sick children.

65. The area is well led and managed and integrated across the curriculum. A new and up-to-date policy has been written this term and the next step in the action plan is to produce a scheme of work, based on national guidance. This presents staff with a worthwhile opportunity to evaluate how well they cater for each aspect of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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