

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **FORD PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Cambridge Road

LEA area: Plymouth

Unique reference number: 113270

Headteacher: Mr C Benson

Lead inspector: Mr P Kerr

Dates of inspection: 22<sup>nd</sup> – 24<sup>th</sup> March 2004

Inspection number: 262137

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

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## **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 – 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	210
School address:	Cambridge Road Ford Plymouth
Postcode:	PL2 1PU
Telephone number:	01752 567661
Fax number:	01752 605194
Appropriate authority:	The Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Mary McGill
Date of previous inspection:	8 <sup>th</sup> February 1999

## **CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL**

This average-sized primary school is housed in a dilapidated building in an area of high social and economic deprivation near the docklands area of Plymouth, with 210 children on roll aged three to eleven. About four in ten pupils take free school meals, which is an above average proportion. Six of the pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds and have English as an additional language. Four are asylum seekers from Kosovo. There is a preponderance of boys overall, and an above average proportion of pupils leaves and joins the school over the course of a year. Roughly one third of pupils in Year 6 were not at the school in Year 2. The school site is split, with the nursery provision on the opposite side of a busy road to the main school. Children have well below expected average attainment on entry to the nursery. An above average proportion of pupils have special educational needs. Literacy is the area of greatest need and a significant minority of pupils exhibit challenging behaviour. Currently about one third of pupils are on the register of special educational needs, which is above average. A high proportion of pupils have quite severe needs; five pupils have statements and three others are being considered for statements. The school gained an Achievement Award for its test results in 2000 and the Healthy Schools Award in 2003.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
23583	Peter Kerr	Lead inspector	English as an additional language Science Information and communication technology Design and technology
9837	Roy Walsh	Lay inspector	
27219	Tony Clarke	Team inspector	Special educational needs English Geography History Religious education
23917	Gwyneth Evans	Team inspector	Foundation Stage Mathematics Art and design Music Physical education

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**The school provides a satisfactory quality of education but has serious weaknesses in key areas of its work.** Standards are **below average** at the end of Year 2 and Year 6, but pupils **achieve satisfactorily** overall relative to their attainment on entry to the school. Teaching and learning are **satisfactory** overall. The pupils enjoy school and work well when lessons are interesting. **The leadership, management and governance of the school are unsatisfactory.** The school gives **unsatisfactory** value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Standards need raising in English, mathematics, science, information and communication technology (ICT) and religious education.
- The leadership, management and governance of the school are not effective enough.
- There is a lot of good teaching, but there are weaknesses in the use of assessment.
- The vast majority of the pupils have good attitudes and behave well in lessons.
- Provision for special educational needs is good.
- The school works hard to include some pupils who present very challenging behaviour.
- Teaching assistants make a good contribution to the pupils' progress.
- There are not enough opportunities for pupils to explore and create.
- Reception children do not have adequate access to an outdoor play and learning area.
- The building is in a poor state of repair and there are no fire drills in the nursery.

**There has been insufficient improvement since the last inspection.** Teaching has improved, but some major issues have not been addressed sufficiently, particularly planning for school improvement, the quality of job descriptions, standards in English, mathematics, science and religious education and the need to include the nursery in fire drill procedures.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Achievement is satisfactory overall. Attainment on entry to the nursery is well below expectations. Children achieve well in the nursery and satisfactorily in the Foundation Stage overall, but standards are still below average at the end of reception. Pupils' attainment in Year 2 is below average in reading, writing and mathematics but the school's results show that standards are improving at a greater rate than nationally. The school did as well as schools in similar circumstances in reading and writing in 2003, but less well than similar schools in mathematics.

The school's results in the end of Year 6 tests are usually well below average and were very low in 2003.

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools <sup>1</sup>
	2001	2002	2003	2003
English	E	E	E*	E
Mathematics	E	E	E*	E
Science	E*	E*	E*	E

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

E\* Means that the school's results are in the bottom five per cent nationally.

These results do not paint a true picture of the pupils' achievements, however. Many pupils join the school during Key Stage 2 with very low attainment and often with special educational needs that

<sup>1</sup> Similar schools are those schools that achieved similar results to this school in the Key Stage 1 tests between 1996 and 1999.

limit their capacity to attain the expected standards for their age. In addition, there is a preponderance of boys in most year groups, and boys perform at a lower level than girls nationally. The school's data shows that most pupils who remain in the school from Year 2 to Year 6 make satisfactory progress in English and mathematics, but few achieve the above average Level 5. Standards in science are below average, but achievement is satisfactory, except in experimental skills, where it is unsatisfactory. The pupils' poor speaking, reading and writing skills hold them back in most other subjects. Pupils achieve satisfactorily to reach average standards in ICT in Year 2, but standards are below average in Year 6. Standards in religious education are below the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus.

The pupils have **good attitudes** to work and are proud of their school. Most **behave well** in lessons and enjoy exercising responsibility, but some exhibit poor behaviour. Attendance is below average because of an unacceptable level of absences among a minority of families. The pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is satisfactory. They enjoy **good relationships** and respect the feelings of others. Their knowledge and appreciation of cultural diversity is **unsatisfactory**.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The school provides a satisfactory quality of education.**

**Teaching and learning are satisfactory.** Teaching is good in the nursery, but learning slows in reception as the children are taught alongside Year 1 pupils. Examples of good teaching were seen in most classes in Years 2 to 6. Teachers plan lessons thoroughly and manage the pupils well, but assessments are not used effectively enough to set targets for the learning of key skills, especially for the more able. Literacy and numeracy lessons are often too long and formal for many lower attaining pupils. Teaching assistants give good support to pupils with special educational needs, who learn well.

**The curriculum is satisfactory** overall, and is enriched with a very **good** range of extra activities, but there are too few opportunities for exploration and creativity and inadequate provision for outdoor play in reception. Staffing levels are **good**. The school provides satisfactory guidance for pupils, but the accommodation is **unsatisfactory**. The building is a depressing environment for pupils and staff and presents some health and safety concerns. The school has a **sound** partnership with parents and the community.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**The leadership, management and governance of the school are unsatisfactory.** Delegation by the headteacher is ineffective. Senior staff do not have the information they need to fulfil their roles effectively and are not sufficiently involved in school improvement planning. Job descriptions are not specific enough to give clear lines of responsibility and accountability. The governors are not fully enough informed of the school's strengths and weaknesses, and therefore cannot properly fulfil their roles in holding the school to account for its performance and applying principles of best value to spending.

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

Parents' views are generally favourable, but a minority do not offer sufficient support for their children's learning and do not make enough effort to send their children to school regularly. Parents of children with special educational needs are very appreciative of what the school does for their children. The pupils are proud of their school and enjoy sharing in decision-making and undertaking responsibilities.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

- Make leadership, management and governance more effective.
- Raise standards in English, mathematics, science, ICT and religious education.
- Make more effective use of assessment to plan for key skills.
- Provide more opportunities for pupils to explore and be creative.
- Improve access to outdoor play facilities for reception children.
- Attend to the health and safety issues arising from the poor state of the building.

And to meet statutory requirements

- Ensure that fire drills are carried out in the nursery.

## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

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

**Achievement is satisfactory overall.** Standards in Year 2 and Year 6 are **below average**, but the pupils make **satisfactory** progress compared with their prior attainment. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well, but more-able pupils do not achieve as well as other groups.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are below expectations in English, mathematics and science at the end of Year 2 and Year 6.
- Standards are improving rapidly in Year 2 but have not improved sufficiently in Year 6
- More able pupils do not reach high enough standards.
- Pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards their targets.
- Pupils' poor literacy skills hold them back in other subjects.
- Standards in using and applying mathematics and experimental science lag behind other aspects of these subjects.
- Standards in ICT are too low in Year 6 and older pupils do not use ICT sufficiently to support their learning.

#### Commentary

1. Children enter the nursery with well below expected attainment for their age and with particularly under-developed language, communication and social skills. They achieve well in the nursery but still have below expected attainment when they start in the reception class. Progress slows in reception, but achievement is satisfactory over the Foundation Stage as a whole, though attainment remains below that expected for this age group. Few of the children achieve the Foundation Stage 'Early Learning Goals' by the end of reception and a considerable number fall a good way short of them, particularly in communication, language and literacy.
2. The school's results in the national tests at the end of Year 2 in reading, writing and mathematics have been increasing at a greater rate than nationally over recent years, but were still well below the national average in 2003. The fact that very few pupils achieved the higher Level 3 was a significant factor in holding down the average points score.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	14.2 (12.6)	15.7 (15.8)
Writing	13 (10.9)	14.6 (14.4)
Mathematics	14 (12.0)	16.3 (6.5)

*There were 27 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

3. The school did as well as schools in similar socio-economic circumstances in reading and writing but did not do as well as similar schools in mathematics. The inspection found that the overall improving trend has been sustained, though standards are still below average.
4. The school's results in the national tests at the end of Year 6 in English, mathematics and science in 2003 were very low, and considerably lower than in 2002. However, the pupils' performance in the tests was significantly affected by a major incident in Year 6 which led to the expulsion of a pupil for violent attacks on staff and children. This unsettled the whole class, most of whom performed well below their potential in the tests. The school's assessments show

that had they performed to expectations, the results would have continued the improving trend begun in 2001.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	21.2 (24.2)	27.0 (27.0)
Mathematics	21.9 (25.3)	27.0 (26.7)
Science	24.3 (25.2)	28.8 (28.3)

*There were 32 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

5. The movement of pupils in and out of the school has increased significantly over recent years. Most of the pupils joining the school during Key Stage 2 have low attainment and usually have special educational needs. This has distorted the test results. The school's tracking data shows that pupils who remain in the school from Year 2 to Year 6 make at least the expected gains in average points over this period, representing satisfactory achievement. The inspection findings reflect this analysis. Standards are below average in English, mathematics and science, but pupils are making satisfactory progress in lessons.
6. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards their individual targets, but their low attainment depresses the average points scores. Another significant factor is the very small number of pupils achieving the above average Level 5. No pupils achieved this level in 2003. Some are expected to in 2004, but the school acknowledges that the more able pupils need more challenge and support to achieve higher standards. Pupils with English as an additional language achieve satisfactorily, with a good level of general support in lessons, but the school's system for tracking and supporting their acquisition of English is in the early stages of development. It is therefore unclear how well some of the pupils are doing in learning English.
7. The pupils' poorly-developed skills in speaking, reading and writing adversely affect their achievements in other subjects. For example, they find it difficult to explain how they have solved a problem in mathematics and to explain the results of their experiments in science. Achievement in the investigative strand of science and in using mathematical skills to solve problems and investigate patterns is weak. The pupils make good progress in some of these areas in some lessons, particularly in Year 2 and Year 5, but the school lacks an innovative whole-school approach to improving these key study skills. Too much emphasis is placed on the formal teaching of literacy and numeracy, and working towards identical outcomes for the whole class in science activities. This inhibits differential rates of learning, especially for the more able.
8. Recent improvements in provision for ICT have brought about an increased rate of progress across the school and improved standards since the last inspection. This has resulted in pupils in Key Stage 1 quickly making up lost ground, so that they now reach standards typical for their age in most aspects of the subject. In Year 6, standards are still below expectations because pupils have more gaps to fill in their knowledge, understanding and skills. They are making satisfactory progress in developing their skills in most areas of the subject, but do not yet use ICT enough to support their learning across the curriculum.
9. Standards in religious education are below the expectations of the agreed syllabus. The pupils have a satisfactory knowledge of different religions, but insufficient understanding of how religious beliefs and practices affect people's lives.
10. Standards have not improved sufficiently since the last inspection. Some of the decline in test results can be explained by pupil mobility and special educational needs, but the lack of strong leadership in aiming for higher standards in all aspects of the school's work has also contributed to slow progress, particularly for the more able pupils.

## Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

The pupils have good attitudes to learning. Their behaviour and personal development are **satisfactory**. The school has maintained **satisfactory** provision for the pupils' moral, social and cultural development since the last inspection. Attendance is **unsatisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils enjoy lessons because of the positive climate for learning created by teachers.
- The attendance of some pupils is poor.
- Pupils are very willing to take on responsibilities; this improves their confidence and self-esteem.
- Good relationships between staff and pupils support the pupils' personal development.
- Insufficient is done to encourage an awareness and appreciation of cultural diversity.

### Commentary

11. Most of the pupils enjoy being at school and strive hard to achieve any targets set for them. They are proud of their school, approach their lessons with enthusiasm and concentrate well. Playtimes and lunchtimes are positive social occasions where friendships and confidence are developed. This is an improvement since the last inspection. The behaviour seen in lessons during the inspection was usually good. The consistent use of well-thought-out strategies to reward good work and behaviour clearly contributes to this. The recently introduced 'Golden Time', a clear system of rewards that the pupils understand and appreciate, has started to improve behaviour still further. Some older pupils have been trained to encourage good behaviour; this scheme works well. The poor behaviour exhibited by a few pupils during the inspection was managed effectively by teachers and teaching assistants, ensuring that all pupils were able to play a full part in lessons and other activities. However, a number of pupils with the most challenging behaviour were absent during the inspection period, so these judgements may not reflect the usual day-to-day atmosphere in the school. Some pupils are unable to maintain a high standard of behaviour when working independently or when moving around the school. At least two pupils absented themselves from lessons on occasions during the inspection. This meant that the pupils concerned were not learning effectively and gave negative signals to other pupils about the importance of complying with rules and regulations. There is a lack of clarity among staff and pupils about procedures to be followed when pupils leave the classroom of their own accord.
12. The general level of attendance has slightly improved since the last inspection, but there is still a very high level of unauthorised absences. The school follows these up with the support of the Educational Welfare Officer. The major cause of poor attendance is a lack of appreciation by some parents of how even short absences can disrupt their children's learning. The school brochure and letters home stress the need for good attendance, and certificates are awarded for 100 per cent attendance to encourage pupils to attend regularly. These measures are clearly not having enough impact. Next term the school is planning further initiatives to involve parents more in improving attendance.

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

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data:	5.5	School data :	1.9
National data:	5.4	National data:	0.4

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

### Exclusions

13. There were five temporary exclusions over the past year involving four pupils, one of whom was eventually permanently excluded. The school has been successful in including even the most

challenging pupils in lessons, but this places a great strain on staff and presents a barrier to learning on occasions, as exemplified in the effect that one pupil's extreme behaviour had on the school's performance in the Year 6 tests in 2003.

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

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

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	171	5	1
White – any other White background	3	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	1	0	0
Chinese	1	0	0

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

14. The good relationships in the school enable the pupils to share any worries or concerns with staff. The pupils are eager to show initiative and take on extra duties and responsibilities. They talk enthusiastically of their roles as members of the school council and how they enjoy manning the office at lunchtime. Older children can often be seen helping younger children at lunchtimes, and willingly show visitors and new pupils around the school. These responsibilities do a great deal to improve the pupils' confidence and self-esteem as well as making them feel proud of Ford School. Classroom assistants give invaluable help to individual pupils, often in small groups, and staff work hard to reintegrate pupils with special educational needs back into mainstream learning. The school provides individual education plans for pupils with specific needs and keeps their parents well informed of progress. This helps to keep the pupils motivated and learning well.
15. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory. Its strength lies in the very caring atmosphere generated throughout the school and the way adults celebrate pupils' achievements. Pupils treat each other with respect and are given opportunities to develop self-knowledge through reflection in circle time and assemblies. Receiving certificates and praise in front of the whole school does much to raise the pupils' self-esteem.
16. All staff promote a strong moral code, and the pupils appreciate the time teachers take to discuss the rights and wrongs of actions and their impact on others. They also like the opportunities provided during circle time to discuss problems or gain an understanding of the views and feelings of others. The school engenders a strong community spirit. The annual residential visits for pupils in Years 4 to 6 help to develop social skills and independence in less formal settings.
17. Provision for pupils' cultural development is satisfactory overall. Visits to local museums, theatres and places of interest foster their awareness of their cultural heritage. The school celebrates major religious festivals and is sensitive to pupils' own religious observances. This encourages an appreciation of cultural diversity to some extent, but little is done beyond this to prepare the pupils for adult life in a society that is much more culturally and ethnically diverse than where they live at present. This aspect of provision has not improved since the last inspection.

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

The school provides a **satisfactory** quality of education. Teaching and learning are **satisfactory** overall, but the use of assessment is **unsatisfactory**. The curriculum is **satisfactory**, with good enrichment provided by visits and visitors. The pupils receive a **satisfactory** standard of care, and the school has a **satisfactory** partnership with parents.

## Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is **satisfactory** overall. It is good in the nursery and good teaching was seen in most classes during the inspection. Assessment is not effective enough in raising standards.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching in some classes motivates the pupils and enables them to learn well.
- Assessments do not focus clearly enough on the development of key skills.
- There is not enough learning through exploration and creative activities.
- Expectations for the quality of presentation of written work are not high enough.

18. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. Assessment is used satisfactorily in the Foundation Stage, but is not used effectively enough in Years 1 to 6 to improve key skills.

#### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 27 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	3	14	8	2	0	0

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

19. Teaching was good in about 60 per cent of the lessons seen during the inspection. This is a considerable improvement since the last inspection, when teaching was good or better in fewer than half the lessons seen. The teaching observed in the nursery was consistently good, and examples of good teaching were seen in most classes in Years 1 to 6, with consistently good learning occurring in Year 2 and Year 5. In the most successful lessons, the teachers provided activities that captured the pupils' interest, gave them plenty to think about and do, and engaged them fully in discussions. For example, Year 2 pupils came to an understanding of how air can exert a pushing force by making and testing windmills and explaining how they worked. The learning that occurs in these lessons is secure because it is rooted in well-supported practical activities.
20. The teaching of literacy is satisfactory overall, but too many lessons rely too heavily on the formal structure of the National Literacy Strategy and are too long. The pupils' interest levels then wane because of the lack of opportunities to become actively involved and they do not make sufficient effort to improve. Some success has been achieved in encouraging the pupils to read more. Their current skills confirm that this is a continuing area for development.
21. Good examples were seen of lessons that fostered discussion, drama and presentations to the class. However, opportunities for the pupils to speak at length and in different ways are not systematically planned into lessons. Some lessons fail to engage the pupils' interest and enthusiasm because there is too much direction and instruction from the teacher and too few opportunities for the pupils to discuss what they are doing and explain their thoughts.
22. The scrutiny of the pupils' books undertaken by the inspectors revealed that writing skills are not systematically developed through work across the curriculum. Untidy presentation is too often accepted, and many pupils in Year 6 are still writing in pencil. Some efforts have evidently been made to challenge the pupils to express themselves more fully in writing, but progress is slow. The school lacks an overall lead in this area to provide good models for pupils to emulate and clear targets for them to aim for at each stage.
23. The teaching of numeracy is satisfactory, but does not pay sufficient attention to using and applying mathematical skills to solve practical problems and to learning through investigating. A similar weakness is apparent in science, where investigative skills are not assessed and

developed sufficiently. In general, the pupils are not sufficiently encouraged and supported to explore and explain observations and patterns and to express themselves creatively. Opportunities are given in some classes, but because of a lack of whole school direction, this aspect of the pupils' development has received insufficient attention.

24. Unsatisfactory learning occurs in some lessons because activities do not meet the needs of the full range of children or pupils in the class. In reception, some lessons are structured according to the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies, which is inappropriate for most of the children because they have not yet achieved the Foundation Stage 'Early Learning Goals'. Some lessons in Key Stage 2 fail to engage the pupils sufficiently, leading to silly behaviour and slow learning because of the mundane nature of the activity. Examples of unsatisfactory learning also occurred when pupils were confused about the purpose of the activities they had been given.
25. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good. The teachers and teaching assistant are aware of the pupils' learning targets. The experienced and committed teaching assistants understand the pupils' needs and abilities and provide good help and encouragement. The support given to pupils with English as an additional language is satisfactory, but not closely enough linked to their individual levels of acquisition of English.

### **The curriculum**

The school provides a **satisfactory** range of worthwhile curricular opportunities for its pupils and provides well for a wide range of special educational needs. A very **good** range of opportunities for enrichment enhances the curriculum. The number of teachers and support staff is **satisfactory**. Overall, teaching resources are **satisfactory**. The accommodation is **unsatisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The provision for special educational needs is good.
- There are insufficient opportunities for pupils to develop independent enquiry skills.
- Some formal literacy and numeracy lessons are too long.
- The provision for extra-curricular and enrichment activities is very good.
- The poor state of parts of the building adversely affects the quality of learning experiences.

### **Commentary**

26. The satisfactory quality and range of learning opportunities reported in the last inspection have been maintained. Planning is based firmly on the National Curriculum and the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. A good programme of visits and visitors such as poets and storytellers, both in the nursery and the main school, helps to make learning more meaningful and interesting.
27. Currently there are too few opportunities, particularly for the more able pupils, to extend their skills through exploration and investigation. The school places a strong emphasis on the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies, which have been successfully embedded across the school. However, the strict application of the strategies does not allow enough flexibility for teachers to plan work in as interesting a way as they would like. The timetabling exacerbates this problem, with too much continuous lesson time devoted to literacy and numeracy in some classes. A number of observations during the inspection showed that some pupils' concentration and interest were waning significantly towards the end of such lessons. The organisation of the timetable in this fashion reduces the opportunity for teachers to bring variety and interest into their daily planning.
28. The provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is satisfactory. Personal development is promoted on a daily basis through the good care and attention that the staff pay to all pupils. The recently introduced programme for education about sex, relationships and

drugs makes a good contribution to pupils' personal development. Overall, the curriculum prepares the pupils satisfactorily for the secondary stage of their education.

29. A very good range of extra-curricular activities considerably enhances the curriculum and widens the pupils' learning opportunities. Many pupils are involved in sport and music clubs which teachers and outside professionals organise and supervise. For example, members of local soccer, hockey, rugby and basketball clubs lead coaching activities. Good use is made of the locality to support topic work, and pupils' experiences are further widened by visits to theatres, museums and other places of interest. Their social skills are developed well by the annual residential visits, which provide valuable experiences and opportunities to work as part of a group away from the school environment.
30. Resources are good in ICT and satisfactory in most other areas. The effectiveness of the interactive white boards in some lessons is greatly reduced by the impossibility of shading them from direct sunlight. The accommodation is unsatisfactory. Despite the best efforts of the teachers to brighten their classrooms and of the caretaking staff to keep the building clean, the school remains a depressing learning environment. Much of the internal fabric needs repair or replacement, with flaking paint and deteriorating brick-work in some areas, making the surroundings very uninviting both for pupils and for staff.
31. The match of teachers and teaching assistants to the curriculum is satisfactory. The experienced learning-support assistants make a significant contribution to the good progress made by pupils with special educational needs. Provision for these pupils is good. It is acknowledged by parents as one of the strengths of the school and represents a considerable improvement since the last inspection. The pupils make good progress towards their individual goals, particularly in English and mathematics. The provision for those pupils who have statements of special educational need is equally commendable.
32. The provision for pupils who have English as an additional language is effective in engaging them in lessons and supporting their general progress. They are provided with individual educational programmes, some of which contain targets linked to their acquisition of English. Others are more general, however, and the co-ordinator is working to ensure that support for all of these pupils is equally effective in this regard.

### Care, guidance and support

Provision for pupils' care and welfare is **satisfactory**. Provision for support, advice and guidance based on monitoring is **satisfactory** but there are some safety concerns relating to the school buildings. The level of pupils' involvement in the life of the school is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Staff are caring towards all pupils and very supportive of those with specific difficulties.
- Some outstanding health and safety issues need to be resolved.
- The school council works well.
- Assessments do not sufficiently support the development of key skills.

### Commentary

33. The satisfactory quality of care and guidance reported at the time of the last inspection has been maintained. The school provides a calm environment in which the pupils are able to enjoy and concentrate on lessons, and members of staff provide positive role models for both boys and girls. This has a significant effect on their achievement and learning. Teaching assistants and lunchtime supervisors know the children well and provide good support for individuals. All staff have recently undertaken training in behaviour management. The school's child-protection procedures are fully in place; all staff are aware of the importance of child protection, and the co-ordinator is planning to update their training in the near future.

34. The school has a suitable health and safety policy. Risk assessments and pupil safety briefings are carried out before any visits off site, but some risks to health and safety within the school have not been adequately monitored. The main school building contains a number of safety hazards, the most serious of which is in the art, design and technology workroom, where water damage has exposed and eroded brickwork, which is now unsafe. The school has recently put the room out of bounds and is seeking urgent repairs. Paintwork around the school is flaking off the walls and ceilings, quite badly in some places. Fire drills are still not carried out in the nursery, as was reported at the last inspection; this is a statutory issue requiring urgent action by the headteacher and governors.
35. The informal monitoring of pupils' personal development is effective because staff know their pupils well. Formal monitoring and support is less effective. Older pupils have individual targets for literacy and numeracy which are updated each term. Year 6 pupils are able to say what their targets are and talk about the progress they are making towards them. However, marking and assessments do not pay enough attention to key skills. For example, pupils are not given enough guidance on how to improve their writing. There are satisfactory induction arrangements for children who are just starting school, including opportunities for parents and nursery children to attend school together. These ensure that the youngest children settle quickly in the nursery and reception class. However, nursery parents are provided with the general school handbook, which is not totally appropriate for their needs. Pupils who join the school at other times are allocated class buddies and are quickly integrated into school routines and activities.
36. The school council provides good opportunities for pupils to put forward their views and contribute to the work of the school. All pupils, and particularly class representatives, hold the work of the council in high regard. Its members are democratically elected each year by their peers, and the school takes its views seriously. Recently the council has managed to improve the provision for drinking water and is now lobbying for individual pupil lockers. This level of pupil involvement is a good improvement since the last inspection.

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

The school's links with its parents, other schools and the local community are **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Parents of children with special educational needs are fully involved in the learning process.
- The school finds it difficult to involve some parents in the work of the school.
- The school gives insufficient information to parents on how to help their children learn.

### **Commentary**

37. Parents of children with special educational needs have great confidence in the ability of the school to meet the needs of their children. They are consulted from the earliest stages of identification and fully involved in reviewing their children's individual education plans. This helps their children to maintain motivation and make good progress. Some parents expressed reservations about approaching the school in the questionnaire returns, but none came forward to discuss this with inspectors. Some concerns were also raised regarding general behaviour and bullying. Behaviour was managed well in lessons during the inspection but a number of the pupils who display the most challenging behaviour were absent. The inspectors could not therefore make a firm judgement about how the worst behaviour is managed or the effect it has on the learning of other pupils. Teachers deal with bullying quickly and effectively, but parents are not always kept fully informed of the outcomes.
38. The school communicates with parents in a satisfactory range of ways, for example through regular newsletters, a well-constructed website and an informative school handbook. The pupils' annual progress reports are informative and contain targets in the core subjects for future

improvement. The school issues the same school handbook to all parents. Whilst the information it contains is good, a large proportion of it is not relevant to nursery parents. General school documentation is also sent to nursery parents, which again is not always relevant to them. These arrangements were criticised at the last inspection but there is no evidence to suggest that they have any detrimental effects on current nursery provision.

39. The active parent-teacher association makes a good contribution to the life of the school. It arranges fund raising and social events, for both the school and the local community. This small but dedicated group of parents has recently managed to provide money to replace some of the older big toys used in the nursery. This help is greatly appreciated by the school. A small number of parents are generous in their support with supervision on out-of-school visits, and giving time to help in the nursery.
40. The school has satisfactory links with the local secondary school, with shared visits and teaching and sporting activities. Overall, a satisfactory partnership with parents and the wider community has been maintained since the last inspection.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**Leadership, management and governance are unsatisfactory.**

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Leadership is not effective enough in setting a clear, agreed educational agenda.
- Delegation is not effective enough; some members of staff are uncertain of their responsibilities.
- Governors support the school but do not challenge the headteacher sufficiently.
- The headteacher and governors ensure that the school is committed to including all pupils to the greatest extent possible.
- Provision for special educational needs is well managed.
- Financial planning is not linked closely enough to agreed educational priorities.
- The school makes a good contribution to the initial training of teachers.

### **Commentary**

41. The overall effectiveness of leadership, management and governance has deteriorated since the last inspection. Weaknesses in leadership and management limit the effectiveness of provision in many areas of the school's work. Central to this issue are the school improvement plan and the role of staff and governors in monitoring and evaluating its implementation. The current plan was drawn up by the headteacher without wide consultation and agreement. It was intended as an interim measure, but represents a telling hiatus in the direction given to the school. The priorities in the plan do not relate to standards but to aspects of provision, and it covers one year only. This compares to a three-year corporately agreed plan at the time of the last inspection, and is a significant deterioration in planning for school improvement. Currently there is no mechanism for monitoring the plan, so neither staff nor governors can say what stage the school is at in its implementation. Also, because there is no outline planning for succeeding years, it is impossible to view each priority in a longer-term context.
42. A deputy headteacher and assistant headteacher were appointed less than two years ago to constitute, along with the headteacher, a senior management team. Both are currently engaged in leadership and management training, and have energy, enthusiasm and ideas to contribute. Some of their initiatives are beginning to filter through to day-to-day practice in the school. For example, the improved behaviour-management strategies are appreciated by staff and pupils alike and are therefore effective. Others, such as new approaches to assessment, are waiting in the wings. The mechanisms for implementing such initiatives are unclear, with the senior managers unsure how events will unfold once a proposal is submitted to the headteacher. Their current roles do not adequately complement their leadership and management training because they have insufficient fully-delegated whole-school responsibilities. Their job descriptions are

identical apart from specific subject and key stage responsibilities, so it is far from clear what role each has in strategic planning and management. This also means that the governors cannot measure how effective their investment in this tier of management has been.

43. The subject co-ordinators are enthusiastic and committed to their work, and fulfil their roles to the best of their ability, but their effectiveness is limited by the lack of clarity in lines of responsibility and accountability. The English, mathematics and science co-ordinators, for example, are not provided with all the available data on the pupils' performance, much of which is kept by the headteacher. This limits their ability to come to an overall view of standards across the school. In each case, the co-ordinators have a much clearer view of standards in the key stage within which they work than in other key stages. There is a lack of direction and support for these teachers to develop the monitoring and evaluating skills necessary for their professional development as managers. The PSHE co-ordinator has done some good work in introducing a programme of education about sex, relationships and drugs awareness.
44. All the teachers and teaching assistants are involved in the performance-management process, with the senior managers taking appropriate roles as team leaders. The teaching assistants appreciate the fact that they are included fully and professionally in the teaching partnership within the school. This contributes to their self-esteem which in turn helps them to make the valued and positive contribution to the pupils' progress and personal development that was apparent to the inspection team. The effectiveness of the performance-management process for teachers is limited by their lack of direct involvement in the school improvement plan. An exception to this rule is ICT, the improvement of provision in which is a key strand of the current plan. The co-ordinator keeps a very good record of how the implementation of the plan is proceeding, but its impact is limited because the success criteria in the plan are not couched in terms of pupils' achievements. There remains a lack of a whole-school overview of standards in this subject, as in others.
45. The headteacher plays a vital role in fostering the school's reputation for including and supporting the many pupils who exhibit challenging behaviour. This sympathetic approach to these vulnerable children commands great support from governors and parents. Some of the most disruptive of these pupils were absent during the inspection; the school accepts that this made the day-to-day running of the school less stressful than usual. The headteacher spends a disproportionate amount of time in normal circumstances directly involved in the management of the behaviour of these pupils, diverting time and energy away from strategic planning.
46. The management of provision for special educational needs is good. The experienced co-ordinator is responsible for overseeing the organisation of provision across the school. In collaboration with the class teachers and teaching assistants she ensures that the needs of all pupils are met and, if necessary, brought to the attention of the local education authority. Contact is made with parents as soon as concerns are noted about their children, and they are kept informed and involved in all stages of the statutory 'Code of Practice' regulating provision in this area. Parents and the local education authority support services comment very favourably on the effectiveness of this provision.
47. The management of provision for English as an additional language is in the early stages of development and the school acknowledges that more expertise is required in this area. The responsibility has been allocated, by mutual agreement, to the co-ordinator for special educational needs (SENCO), but this arrangement has not been formalised in her job description. The informal approach to this aspect of delegation has contributed to a lack of rigour and clarity in the support that has been offered to these pupils. The SENCO is diligent in organising and overseeing the establishment and implementation of an individual educational plan for each pupil. Not all of these are clearly enough linked to individual pupils' stages in the acquisition of English; the SENCO is aware of the improvements needed, however.
48. The governing body is very supportive of the headteacher and the school. The chair of governors is very experienced and works very closely with the headteacher. Most other governors are relatively inexperienced, but have much to offer from their personal and

professional backgrounds. Some have specific expertise that is directly relevant to vital aspects of the school's work, for example in behaviour management and financial administration. Their potential to help the school move forward has yet to be realised, however. They require more guidance and support on how best they can evaluate the performance of the school other than through reports from the headteacher. Currently some important information is shared by the chair and the headteacher and not by other governors. The formation of separate committees to oversee specific aspects of the school, such as the curriculum, is helping governors to begin streamlining their operations as well as develop a more detailed view of the school.

49. The governors ensure that the school has all the required policies in place, including race equality and child protection. Health and safety assessments are made, but these have not been effective enough to ensure that the whole school is as safe and healthy as it can be for pupils and staff. The most urgent omission to rectify, which was identified at the last inspection, is the exclusion of the nursery from fire drill procedures. There is also a need to ensure that faults in the fabric of the building, such as flaking paintwork, do not present health risks to the children and pupils.

### Financial management

50. The school's budget is currently in deficit, with predictions for a larger shortfall in 2004 than in 2003. Governors are taking steps to reduce the deficit and are aiming to balance the budget over the medium term. They have had to meet major expenditure on repairs to the building, mostly replacing windows. Despite this, the building remains in a dilapidated state. Some prominent areas are also in a poor state of decoration, adding to the depressing effect of the building and reflecting a lack of drive to make the best of what there is. The governors have overseen some innovative projects such as the installation of electronic whiteboards as teaching aids in each classroom. These have been put to very good use by teachers to make introductions to lessons more interesting (although their impact is reduced in many classrooms by too much direct sunlight from windows).

### Financial information

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

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	658,815	Balance from previous year	32,401
Total expenditure	697,909	Balance carried forward to the next	-6,693
Expenditure per pupil	2,788		

51. The governors are not in a position to fully apply the principles of best value to their spending decisions because they do not have the information they require to evaluate the impact of various initiatives in terms of the school's performance. For example, they do not know what impact the improvements in provision for ICT have had on the standards pupils reach by the end of Year 6. The subject co-ordinators cannot help them in this respect because they too have not been enabled to garner this information.
52. Through sustained close links with a local college, the school facilitates the placement of many trainee teachers. At the time of the inspection, three students were working in the school, making a good contribution to the pupils' learning. The teachers establish good relationships with the students, provide clear and helpful guidelines, and delegate a suitable level of responsibility. The induction of newly qualified teachers to the school works soundly, enabling new teachers to quickly become part of the teaching team, but the continuing professional development of staff is hindered by the limited degree of effective delegation.

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

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

Provision for children in the Foundation Stage in the nursery and reception class is **satisfactory** overall.

53. The attainment of the children entering the nursery is well below expectations. During their time in the nursery the children make satisfactory progress, but their attainment is still well below expected levels overall when they transfer to the reception class, with development in language and communication skills the furthest behind. Although progress slows in reception because the children are taught alongside Year 1 pupils, they achieve satisfactorily relative to their starting points. However, few are likely to achieve the 'Early Learning Goals' for children of this age by the end of the reception year, so their attainment is below average when they begin Year 1.
54. The curriculum in both classes is satisfactory; it covers all the areas of learning for the Foundation Stage. However, there are significant differences in the way that this curriculum is delivered. Provision for this in the nursery is good because the children learn for most of the time through choosing from a range of planned, purposeful play activities. In the reception class the children are taught English and mathematics through the Year 1 Numeracy and Literacy Strategies, which is inappropriate for most of these children. Insufficient has been done to ensure that the successful methods used in the nursery are continued in the reception class until the children are ready to move on to more formal learning. The manager for the Foundation Stage has begun to develop closer links with the nursery in an attempt to improve the overall quality of provision. It is too early to judge the impact of this initiative.
55. The induction procedures for children joining the nursery, including the 'Welcome to School' activities, are satisfactory. The effectiveness of transfer to the reception class is inhibited by the lack of regular contact between the two units, made extremely difficult by the main road. At least one induction afternoon is arranged during the summer term to provide a minimum transfer process. The accommodation in the nursery is satisfactory, but some resources are old and unattractive. Resources in the reception class are limited and are of a similar quality. Provision for outdoor play for the reception children is unsatisfactory. The reception class is situated on the first floor of the school, making access to outdoor play difficult and therefore limiting progress in some aspects of physical development.

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

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

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

- The 'Welcome to Nursery' scheme is used well to involve other agencies.
- Children with special educational needs are fully included in activities.
- The learning environment in the reception class is not interesting enough.

#### **Commentary**

56. A good range of support is offered to parents and carers before their children enter the nursery. For example, talks are given by the Health Visitor and Speech and Language Therapist, advice is offered on work opportunities for the adults, and the nursery teacher leads a session on 'Play with a Purpose' to help the parents and carers support children's learning at home. This support helps the parents to prepare their children for interacting with a wide range of children and adults when they enter the nursery but overall attainment is nevertheless well below average in this area of development.

57. In both the nursery and reception classes every child is encouraged to feel part of the group. The teachers vary the way they talk to the children and take notice of individual responses. This ensures that any special educational needs the children may have are identified early. Appropriate steps are then taken so that the progress of these children is tracked and supported. In the nursery the provision of a wide range of activities ensures that the children are able to make choices according to their needs, leading to good achievement in their personal development. In reception, planning does not sufficiently take into account the children's short concentration spans. Opportunities for them to continue developing independence and confidence are limited by the early formal teaching of numeracy and literacy. The accommodation for reception children is spacious, but there is a lack of vibrant displays or high-quality resources to stimulate their curiosity and encourage learning through exploration. Achievement is satisfactory overall, but attainment in this area at the end of reception remains below expectations.

## **COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Poor communication language and literacy skills impede development in other areas.
- Staff in the nursery make good use of opportunities that arise to improve the children's skills in speaking and listening
- Children in the reception class show a spontaneous interest in books.
- The formal teaching of literacy in reception does not meet the needs of most of the children.

### **Commentary**

58. Children enter the nursery with well below expected skills in speaking and listening. The provision in the nursery is effectively focussed to extend learning in this area. The teacher and nursery nurses use questioning well to encourage children to use phrases and sentences when talking to them as they play, to extend their ideas and vocabulary. Despite the support they receive, many children continue to use single words and non-verbal communication rather than talking when they interact with their friends or answer questions. Their relatively poor communication skills hold back their development in other areas. For example, in learning and using correct vocabulary to help the development of their understanding in mathematics and in their knowledge and understanding of the world.

59. Children in the reception class enjoy sharing books. They follow the sequence of the pictures in a story and recall the main events afterwards. They show a good awareness of print and know that it reads from left to right. However, learning slows in reception because the provision for this area of learning is mostly through the daily 'Literacy Hour' that is designed for Year 1 pupils. The children therefore have too few opportunities to develop their communication skills as they interact with one another and with adults during practical activities. Attainment is below expectations in this area at the end of reception. The children's achievement is satisfactory overall because of the good progress made in the nursery and the general level of support from staff in both classes.

## **MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision for mathematical development is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Staff in the nursery use practical activities well to support learning and understanding.
- The teaching of numeracy in reception is often too formal for most of the children.

## Commentary

60. The teacher and nursery nurse use a range of resources well in the nursery to reinforce the learning of numbers. Learning is good at this stage and some children count to 10 with support. They are beginning to sort and match according to colour and shape. The learning of basic number facts is maintained in reception, where most of the children know that 5 and 5 make 10, and are beginning to use written numerals. During the inspection, they were experimenting with sand clocks to time activities and make simple estimates. The provision in this area of learning in reception is through the 'numeracy hour' structure on a daily basis. This is inappropriate for most of the children who need to use more practical activities to consolidate their understanding of basic mathematical concepts and vocabulary. The children achieve satisfactorily overall but attainment is below average at the end of reception.

## KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Provision for this area of learning is **satisfactory**.

### Strengths and weaknesses

- Provision in the nursery extends the children's experience and understanding.
- The accommodation in the reception room is spacious but there are few opportunities for first hand experiences to attract children's interest and curiosity.

## Commentary

61. In the nursery, the staff provide a good range of objects and experiences in the classroom to interest the children and extend their knowledge of the world. During the inspection, the nursery teacher had collected a broad range of items to stimulate discussion and introduce new words, focussing on materials and their properties. The children were beginning to gain the confidence to use words such as 'big, flat and shiny', using their senses to make these observations. The children in reception make satisfactory progress overall in this area of learning. When using computers, they control the mouse well, for example to highlight an area and fill it with a chosen colour, and they are beginning to print out their work. The very large reception classroom has not been developed sufficiently to create a dynamic, stimulating learning environment. It does little to encourage the children to observe, explore, discuss and solve problems, limiting their progress and achievement. The resources available in the Foundation Stage do not make an effective enough contribution to the children's learning as many are in need of updating or replacing. Attainment in this area is below expectations at the end of reception, though achievement is satisfactory overall because of earlier good progress.

## PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision for physical development is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Provision is good in the nursery, where the children are able to practise and improve their skills indoor and out.
- Provision for outdoor play activities for the reception class is unsatisfactory.

## Commentary

62. Nursery children make good progress as they use the outdoor area for climbing activities and playing on wheeled vehicles. They are beginning to show increasing control when using pushchairs and sharing bicycles and tricycles. They co-operate with one another and develop co-ordination and control, with real enjoyment and an increasing awareness of space. Reception children have access to climbing equipment at playtime, but outdoor physical activity

is not readily available as part of the children's daily routine, so their rate of development slows down. The resources for outside play and learning are also limited. For example, there are no wheeled vehicles for the children to use. The children show developing control on the climbing equipment and an increasing awareness of other children as they play. The skills they develop with small implements such as scissors and pencils are also limited, though progress in this aspect is satisfactory. Despite the shortcomings in provision, achievement is satisfactory, though standards are below expectations at the end of reception.

## **CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

63. It was not possible to make a judgement on overall provision in this area of learning but the standard of work seen in displays is satisfactory. In both classrooms, the children use a satisfactory range of media such as bubble prints and finger paintings to create individual pieces such as portraits of their mothers and large group paintings. There is little evidence of work in three dimensions.

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

### **ENGLISH**

Provision in English is **satisfactory** overall.

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

- Standards are below average in Year 2 and Year 6 but pupils achieve satisfactorily.
- Poor literacy skills prevent pupils reaching higher standards in English and in other subjects.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good.

#### **Commentary**

64. The school's results in national tests at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 have been either well below average or very low since 2001. They were well below average in Year 2 in reading and writing in 2003 and very low in Year 6 in English. The Year 6 results, however, were seriously affected by particular circumstances explained elsewhere in the report. The school's own data shows that the results would have been better, though still well below average, had the pupils performed to their usual standard. Currently, standards are below expectations in all aspects of the subject in Year 2 and Year 6, but achievement is satisfactory.
65. By the end of Year 2 and Year 6, standards in reading and writing are below average. Speaking skills are below expectations but listening skills are better and meet expected levels for pupils in this age group. Well-focussed, informed teaching is beginning to have a positive impact on the pupils' performance. Assessment data shows that pupils begin Year 1 with literacy levels below those expected and make satisfactory progress during their time in school. Many of the pupils who continue having difficulty with reading and writing throughout the school have special educational needs.
66. Most pupils enter the school lacking confidence in speaking and their listening skills are poor. Although their overall attainment is below expectations in speaking at the end of Year 2 and Year 6, the pupils' progress is satisfactory and sometimes good, especially in Year 2 and Year 5. In a good lesson in Year 2, for example, the pupils extended their vocabulary and confidence when acting out simple scenes from 'The Gruffalo'. They were encouraged well by the teacher to use suitable adjectives to describe the emotions of the Gruffalo and the mouse. Some of the older pupils presented their research to other members of the class. Subjects included the life and songs of Elvis Presley, and facts about the Giant Panda. Although their poor vocabulary limited their ability to communicate their findings, they were gaining confidence in speaking clearly to an audience. The lack of planned opportunities throughout the school for pupils to express their own views and to fully extend their vocabulary by usage in drama, role play and

debate activities restricts their progress. The richness and variety of their vocabulary and sentence structure is not sufficiently developed and this limits their ability to write and communicate their knowledge and understanding in other subjects.

67. Standards in reading are rising, but are still below average at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. The rise in attainment is down to the school encouraging pupils to read regularly and supporting them with a variety of teaching strategies. In the infants, a strong emphasis on letter sounds and word building helps the pupils to develop their reading skills. As a result, although attainment in reading falls short of national expectations, most pupils make steady progress and achieve satisfactorily. The very limited language skills of many pupils continue to limit their ability to read new words, however. Although pupils have much more secure basic skills by the end of Year 6, standards remain below national expectations. Many pupils are able to read unfamiliar longer words accurately, but, because of their own limited vocabulary, they often find it difficult to appreciate what the words mean. There is no standard system for monitoring or recording pupils' reading progress. Many average and lower attaining pupils do not have a positive attitude towards reading and, by Year 6, they have become disaffected. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress as a result of the good support they receive from their teachers and teaching assistants. Their progress owes much to the clearly structured letter-sound programmes presented and the good use made of regular assessments of their attainment.
68. Standards in writing are below the national average in Year 2 and Year 6. A number of Year 2 pupils write simple sentences, spell some words correctly and use capital letters and full stops with increasing accuracy. Spelling is taught in a structured way that emphasises links between reading and writing. However, a significant number of pupils have large gaps in their knowledge and their writing is at a basic level. A significant number of pupils do not yet understand how words are built up from their component sounds making their spelling erratic, and they find punctuation difficult. Overall, handwriting and the general presentation of work is unsatisfactory. Many pupils have inconsistent letter formation and write in pencil even in Year 6. Handwriting is not consistently joined and most pupils are slow to develop a cursive style. Not all pupils' have such limited skills however; some older pupils' writing is creative, well structured and interesting.
69. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. Teachers understand how to teach reading and writing, and all are competent in delivering the National Literacy Strategy. Whilst the implementation of the Strategy has resulted in more consistent planning overall, it is not having a sufficient impact because it is interpreted too rigidly. Many of the pupils dislike sitting for long periods of time and then having to spend equally lengthy sessions completing the main activities. Many low ability pupils find it difficult to concentrate in such lessons and lose interest, leading to a slowing down in learning. Generally, teachers nourish the development of appropriate subject specific vocabulary, and work hard to encourage pupils to answer questions and give opinions.
70. In most year groups, teachers' good ICT skills with the interactive white boards help to move learning on. Teaching assistants work well with teachers; they are experienced, committed and give good support to pupils, particularly those with special educational needs. They are also very active during group activities, encouraging, controlling and generally helping pupils take as full a part in lessons as they are able to. The pupils' work books contain regular assessments of their writing, with suitable targets indicated. However, the regular on going assessment of what pupils know and can do is not used to set specific short-term targets and pupils do not know what they need to do to improve each piece of writing.
71. The school historically has a high percentage of pupils who have special educational needs and also a high proportion of low attainers. The current Year 6 continues this pattern; many of these pupils benefit from the good teaching and the very good informed guidance of the experienced teaching assistants and make good progress towards meeting the learning targets set for them. Despite this, their literacy skills are still well below average and this makes learning across the curriculum difficult for them.

72. The management of English is satisfactory. The co-ordinator is aware that standards are not high enough and she has considered the changes necessary for improvement. However, to date, few initiatives have been implemented and the current rate of change in provision is too slow to ensure progress. Some basic analyses of test results are carried out, but these have not yet been used to influence a change in the curriculum for the pupils. The co-ordinator does not yet have full ownership of all the data required to monitor, evaluate and improve standards and provision effectively.

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

73. The use of language and literacy across the curriculum is unsatisfactory because pupils' weak reading and writing skills are undermining their standards in other areas of the curriculum such as science, history and geography. Pupils use their reading and writing skills to gather and present information in some subjects. For example, when they record science investigations, write about their visits and present facts. However there is little evidence of drafting and redrafting work, especially among older pupils, who find writing challenging and arduous. Although pupils' computer skills are developing satisfactorily there is not enough evidence of word processed work in all subjects.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision for mathematics is **satisfactory**

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards are below average at Year 2 and Year 6.
- Learning objectives are not closely enough linked to assessment.
- Pupils with special educational needs receive good support in the classroom situation.
- Good use is made of interactive whiteboards to support teaching and learning.
- There is little evidence of investigative mathematics.
- The low levels of literacy skills are impeding achievement in mathematics.

### **Commentary**

74. Standards in Years 2 and 6 have remained below average since the last inspection, but this reflects satisfactory progress and achievement relative to the low attainment of children on entry to the school. Test results were declining at Year 2 until 2003, when an upturn occurred which has been sustained into 2004. In Year 6, a declining trend was reversed in 2001, but the results slumped in 2003 for reasons explained in the standards section in part B of the report.. The school's data shows that the pupils continued making sound progress in 2003, and this trend has been maintained.

75. In Year 2, pupils have a satisfactory understanding of mathematical ideas related to real life, such as ordering the months of the year, but their poor speaking skills impede progress, especially in the mental and oral part of the lesson. Many pupils do not have a secure grounding in number facts, but do support each other positively when in their groups. In Year 6, pupils have a good understanding of multiples and the more able pupils were progressing to find common multiples. Some pupils were noticing patterns in numbers and were beginning to use this to inform their mathematics. Overall, however, they do not have the knowledge and understanding and skills expected at this age.

76. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. In most lessons, teachers ensure that objectives are clearly displayed, but these are not always discussed with the pupils or used to measure achievement at the end of the lesson. This means that pupils are not always aware of the purpose of the activities they are engaged in, leading to a decrease in motivation and slowing of learning. Teaching assistants encourage and support pupils with special educational needs well. Most teachers use their questioning skills effectively to include all levels of

attainment, but in the lessons observed, few opportunities were given to pupils to demonstrate and explain their thinking.

77. Teachers and pupils use the interactive whiteboard with confidence. Good use of the white board was evident in a lesson when pupils from Year 2 demonstrated their expertise to order the months of the year. On some occasions during the inspection teachers were unable to use the equipment because of the lack of adequate sunlight screening.
78. Scrutiny of pupils' work shows that there are few opportunities given for pupils to use and apply their knowledge and skills in mathematics to carry out investigations and solve problems. The subject leader is aware that this should be one of the areas for improvement. She is keen to develop the subject and provide support for colleagues, but at the time of the inspection she had not been involved in monitoring of teaching and learning or the provision of training for staff. There is therefore a lack of a whole school overview of standards and achievement to inform future planning.
79. In all lessons seen it was evident that the very low skills in language and literacy are having a detrimental effect on the achievement of pupils. In a Year 4 class, pupils were unable to describe the properties of shapes and had difficulties when asked to list information. This inevitably slows down their learning and limits their achievement.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

80. There is some evidence of the successful use of mathematics across the curriculum. Scrutiny of pupils' work showed the use of computer programmes to generate symmetrical designs in Year 2 and in Year 1 pupils have produced graphs linked to their learning in science. However, this aspect of mathematics is not planned systematically to ensure that pupils derive maximum benefit from such opportunities.

## **SCIENCE**

Provision for science is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards in investigative and experimental science are too low at the end of Year 6.
- The quality of teaching is improving, enabling the pupils to make good progress.
- There is insufficient challenge for pupils to improve their investigating and experimenting skills.
- Poor literacy skills impede progress throughout the school.

### **Commentary**

81. Standards are below average at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. The inspection confirms the subject leader's opinion that experimental and investigative skills are particularly under-developed. This is reflected in the teacher assessments at the end of Year 2 and test results at the end of Year 6 in 2003 and in lessons and the samples of the pupils' work. Features of provision that reflect insufficient progress in this aspect of science include:
- Similar starting points for all the pupils in a class.
  - A lack of explanation of experimental results in Key Stage 2.
  - Missed opportunities in some lessons to capitalise on and develop the pupils' ideas.
82. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. It was good in the complete lessons that were seen during the inspection, but some unsatisfactory learning was also observed. The good teaching resulted from detailed planning and enthusiastic presentations by teachers, creating interest among the children, and useful discussions in which the pupils are encouraged to fully express their ideas. Interesting practical activities follow suitable brief introductions, maintaining

momentum in the pupils' involvement and making their learning secure. Pupils in Year 5, for example, thoroughly enjoyed acting out the circulation of the blood around the human body on a large floor diagram provided by the teacher. Their responses to questions later showed that they fully understood what they had learned because they could recall the activity to re-enforce their memory of the vocabulary and processes. Similarly, pupils in Year 2 learned how the air acts as a pushing force on hand-held windmills through making some themselves, trying them out under supervision and being challenged and supported to find the words they needed to explain what happens.

83. Unsatisfactory learning occurred during part of a lesson observed in which all of the pupils in an upper junior class were engaged in exactly the same activity intended to demonstrate how the effect of up-thrust on a falling object varies with its surface area. The lesson lacked interest and challenge for the pupils and the pace of the delivery and support was too slow, resulting in declining interest and participation among the pupils as they all carried out similar activities. There were no opportunities for the pupils to develop their own hypotheses and decide how best to test them. Generally, lessons in Key Stage 2 are too closely geared towards all the pupils arriving at the same conclusions through the same process. This limits opportunities for more able pupils to acquire advanced skills, and was reflected in the similar experiments described in the work samples across the ability range.
84. The pupils need a lot of support and encouragement in this aspect of their work. If they are not challenged and supported to use complete sentences and correct words, they will make do with very limited responses to questions. This is reflected in their writing, which is often untidy and immature. Older pupils in particular do not use writing to explain the results of their experiments fully and to relate these to the science they already know. The more able pupils are seldom challenged to do research to fully explain what they observe or find out how their own findings relate to the work of famous scientists. There are some examples of marking being used well to make the pupils think about what they have written and try and go one step further. For example, a Year 6 pupil provided a good explanation of the difference between a solution and a mixture in response to the teacher's written question in his book. The teacher took this a very useful step further, rewarding the pupil for her effort by acknowledging the response but also providing accurate vocabulary – 'suspension' instead of 'lurks around in the water'. Inaccurate explanations are sometimes accepted, however, when a more useful response would be to point out the error and suggest research or further experiment and discussion to correct it.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

Provision in ICT is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards are too low in Year 6 and pupils do not use ICT sufficiently to support their learning in other subjects at this stage.
- Teaching is good in Year 2, enabling pupils to achieve well and reach standards typical for their age.
- Teachers use new technology well in lessons.
- The co-ordinator provides good support for colleagues.

### **Commentary**

85. Achievement is good in Year 2, where pupils have made up lost ground quickly, but is unsatisfactory in Year 6 because of the gaps remaining in the pupils' skills. Teaching is satisfactory overall, with significant strengths in Year 2. Provision for ICT has improved markedly in recent years, leading to rising standards and better use of ICT in teaching. The improvements have had more impact on standards in Year 2 than in Year 6 because:

- The pupils have less ground to make up in Year 2 than in Year 6.

- The co-ordinator teaches in Year 2, so her expertise has a more direct effect in Key Stage 1; she does not monitor and evaluate standards in Years 3 to 6.

86. Progress is good in Key Stage 1. The pupils are confident in the use of a range of ICT equipment from the keyboard and mouse to digital cameras and interactive whiteboards. They willingly attempt new procedures, for example programming a floor robot to make a series of moves, demonstrating good learning skills. The impact of this on their future learning was evident in a lesson in Year 3, in which the pupils were very much at home on the computers in the suite trying out new procedures for editing text.
87. Pupils in Year 6 have sound word processing skills and they use the Internet to download texts and images and combine them to make, for example, presentations, posters or information sheets. There are still gaps in their skills, however, arising from past shortcomings in provision. The equipment currently available does not plug all these gaps. For example, the pupils do not have the means to use ICT to take measurements remotely (monitoring technology). The teachers' planning shows that the full National Curriculum in ICT will eventually be covered, but for present Year 6 pupils, attainment is still considerably lower than it should be and achievement therefore unsatisfactory.
88. Teaching and learning are satisfactory, with some very good teaching in Year 2. In the lesson seen, the pupils made rapid progress in programming a floor robot to make a journey within a grid. The more able in the group programmed up to 10 successive movements into the machine to get it from one point on the grid to another. The work re-enforced their mathematical knowledge and understanding because they had to continually key in 90 (degrees) to make the robot turn right or left and work out how many moves forward or backwards it needed to go. The teacher also used the lesson well to show the pupils that that they could learn from their mistakes, making a good contribution to their personal development. The level of enjoyment and effort in this lesson matched the very good pace of learning. The pupils not engaged in this activity made good progress transferring their skills to on-screen games, with good support from a student and teaching assistant.
89. Teachers make good use of the interactive whiteboards to enliven their teaching, although in many of the classrooms, direct sunlight on the boards makes them difficult or impossible for the pupils to see at some times of the day. The teachers are growing in confidence with the use of new technology and use it well to streamline and clarify their planning and assessment procedures.
90. The improvement of ICT provision is one element of the current school improvement plan. The co-ordinator has taken full responsibility for the implementation and monitoring of the plan, resulting in good support for staff training and the provision of resources. There is good potential for the leadership and management of this subject to have a bigger impact on standards than it is doing at present, however. Currently, the success criteria in the school improvement plan are not linked to standards and the co-ordinator has no specific remit or allocated time to monitor attainment and achievement throughout the school. This makes it impossible to judge the impact of the improved provision on raising standards.

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

91. The pupils' work on display in Key Stage 1 shows good use of ICT to support learning in other subjects. For example, in Year 1, digital photographs and computer generated graphs have been used to illustrate the pupils' traffic survey on the road outside the school. In Year 2, pupils have produced their own word-processed glossary on vehicles and used computer-produced photographs and charts to illustrate their experiments with vehicles and ramps. There are fewer examples of the use of ICT in Years 3 to 6. For example, there is little evidence of computers being used to manipulate and display data through spreadsheets, graphs and charts.

## Humanities

It was only possible to observe one lesson of **religious education** in Year 5 and a combined **geography and history** lesson in Year 4. A very limited amount of pupils' previous work was available for examination. Poor presentation was seen in most of the books. In all three subjects literacy skills are not developed well enough. Good use is made of the local environment to make work relevant and interesting. Pupils' low attainment in English holds down attainment in all areas of humanities, and consequently standards are below average. Too few lessons were seen to make secure judgements about teaching and learning.

92. The analysis of pupils' work and the examination of schemes of work indicate that all areas of the National Curriculum are planned for in history and geography, but not enough links are planned for between these subjects and others.

## Religious Education

There is insufficient evidence to make a judgement about provision.

93. The very limited evidence available indicates that standards are below the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. In the one lesson seen, the standards indicated by the pupils' oral contributions were average due to the very good knowledge, enthusiasm and expectations of the visiting teacher. However, the quality of pupils' literacy skills limits their attainment; the examination of pupils' written work shows much that is below or well below average. The standard of presentation of the work is unsatisfactory; a great deal of the work is unfinished and poorly presented. All aspects of the agreed syllabus are planned for, but there is too much emphasis on learning facts about religion and not enough on exploring their meaning. The work on different faiths supports the pupils' cultural development.

## CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

94. Two lessons were observed in physical education, two in music and none in both art and design and design and technology. It is not possible, therefore, to make a firm judgement about provision in any of these subjects.
95. The display of **art and design** in the school shows that pupils work with a satisfactory range of materials and techniques mostly in 2 dimensions. Some good work on display in Years 1 and 2 shows that the pupils learn how to use specific **design and technology** skills in everyday situations. For example, they have tasted various pizza fillings and visited a pizzeria to evaluate the products for themselves before designing and making their own. In Year 2, they have examined a variety of glove puppets before making their own and using them to tell a traditional tale.
96. In the **music** lessons observed during the inspection and the singing session for younger pupils, standards were in line with expectations. Year 3 pupils improved their class composition, working together with commitment and enthusiasm, and in Year 5, pupils sang together tunefully in a two part round.
97. Two lessons of **physical education** were seen - one in Year 2 and one in year 3. In both lessons, pupils achieved soundly and used their enthusiasm to create imaginative gymnastic sequences because teachers demonstrated well and explained the task clearly. Pupils were encouraged to modify their sequences to improve the quality of their work. Teachers have a good awareness of health and safety considerations.

## PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION (PSHE)

98. Insufficient evidence was gathered to make secure judgements on provision, standards and achievement in PSHE. Some useful improvements have been made since the last inspection, including positive initiatives by the co-ordinator, who has put in place a good programme of

activities. She has instituted and oversees the operation of a school council, which is having a very positive impact on pupils' attitudes and personal development. A sex and relationships and drug awareness programme is now securely in place. The co-ordinator has also successfully incorporated PSHE into general curriculum planning through topics in Key Stage 1. For example, the pupils have thought about their personal attributes when doing self-portraits in art and design and the benefits of healthy foods when designing pizza fillings in design and technology. Behaviour management has been made easier by pupils discussing their feelings during 'circle times' and the introduction of a rewards and sanctions system agreed and understood by the pupils as well as the teachers. The co-ordinator has also steered the school towards attaining a 'Healthy Schools' award.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>5</b>
How inclusive the school is	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	6
Value for money provided by the school	5
<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>5</b>
Pupils' achievement	4
<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>	<b>3</b>
Attendance	5
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	4
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	4
<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>	<b>4</b>
The quality of teaching	4
How well pupils learn	4
The quality of assessment	5
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	5
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	4
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	4
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	4
The quality of the school's links with the community	4
The school's links with other schools and colleges	4
<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>5</b>
The governance of the school	5
The leadership of the headteacher	5
The leadership of other key staff	5
The effectiveness of management	5

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