

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **BLACKSHAW PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Bolton

LEA area: Bolton

Unique reference number: 105175

Headteacher: Mrs L Lescure

Lead inspector: Mrs J E Platt

Dates of inspection: 9 – 11 February 2004

Inspection number: 262624

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

© Crown copyright 2004

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

## **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	217.5
School address:	Bideford Drive Broughton Bolton Lancashire
Postcode:	BL2 6TE
Telephone number:	01204 333505
Fax number:	01204 333506
Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr H Crompton
Date of previous inspection:	1 February 1999

## **CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL**

Blackshaw Primary School is an average size school having 217.5 pupils on roll. This includes 18.5 children in the nursery which provides places full or part time with an option for parents to pay for additional sessions. The school is situated in Bolton and serves an area which socially and economically is similar to the national picture. A very small number of pupils are from minority ethnic groups and none of these pupils needs help because English is not their first spoken language. A below average (5.5 per cent) number of pupils are entitled to free school meals. Twenty-eight pupils are on the school's register of special educational needs. The local authority has designated the school an inclusive school and it has additional resources to cater for pupils with formal Statements of Special Educational Need. Currently, seven pupils have formal statements and needs include profound and multiple learning and social and emotional difficulties. The overall attainment of children when they start school is average. The school has a basic skills quality mark and received an Achievement Award for improved results in national tests in 2002.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
11565	Mrs J E Platt	Lead inspector	English English as an additional language
9399	Mr R Watts	Lay inspector	
22740	Mrs M Leah	Team inspector	Information and communication technology Areas of learning for children in the Foundation Stage
30834	Mrs A Lowson	Team inspector	Mathematics Humanities including religious education Special educational needs
7418	Mrs K Rollisson	Team inspector	Science Creative, aesthetic, practical and physical

The inspection contractor was:

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

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be made initially to the inspection contractor. The procedures are set out in the leaflet '*Complaining about Ofsted Inspections*', which is available from Ofsted Publications Centre (telephone 07002 637833) or Ofsted's website ([www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

## **REPORT CONTENTS**

	Page
<b>PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS</b>	
<b>STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS</b>	<b>9</b>
Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
<b>QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL</b>	<b>12</b>
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
<b>LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING, SUBJECTS AND COURSES</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE</b>	
<b>SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2</b>	
<b>PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS</b>	<b>33</b>

## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

The school provides an **acceptable quality of education with some good features**. Overall achievement is satisfactory. It improves considerably in Year 6 and as a result standards are above average. Standards are average in Year 2. Teaching and learning are satisfactory with a strong feature in the support for pupils with special educational needs who make good progress. Leadership and management from headteacher, key staff and governors are satisfactory and the school runs smoothly. **The school provides satisfactory value for money.**

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Achievement is good in Year 6 and standards exceed the national average in English and mathematics. Standards in science are above average in Years 2 and 6. Achievement is satisfactory in the infants but higher attaining pupils are underachieving in writing. Children who are under five get off to a good start to their education.
- The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory and several good and very good lessons were seen. However, not all lessons are organised well and staff do not make it clear to pupils what they are going to learn.
- The management of special educational needs is good. Other management responsibilities are not evenly distributed and staff do not have enough time to fulfill their management roles.
- Governors do not give enough attention to the effectiveness of major spending decisions.
- Assessment procedures are in place but information is not being used effectively.
- The curriculum is good and is enriched by a good range of clubs, visits and visitors. As a result, pupils enjoy school and attendance is very good.

Since the school was last inspected in 1999 it has had to overcome many changes. Threatened closure led to fluctuations in intake as pupils changed schools. Almost a half of the staff had maternity leave last year and others were absent with ill health. The effect of these disturbances can clearly be seen in the decline in the school's national test results. Taking everything into consideration overall improvement has been satisfactory. High standards have been sustained in Year 6. Facilities for the under fives are now good. Provision for cultural development is satisfactory. Governors have extended their involvement in school. Teaching seen was similar to the last inspection. Staffing disturbances have prevented the school eradicating all of the identified weaknesses.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

#### Year 6 results

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

*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.*

Overall achievement is **satisfactory**.

Test results in English and mathematics in Year 6 last year were not typical for the school as many pupils who had reached above average results when in Year 2 had left the school. This mainly affected results in English when few exceeded the level expected for their age. Although the group included far more boys than girls the difference in their performance was negligible and boys and girls do equally well over time. Overall achievement in the juniors is good but the pace of achievement varies between classes and relies heavily on the very good teaching in Year 6. Consequently, achievement rises and standards are above average in English, mathematics and science. Staffing disturbances especially affected national test results in Year 2 last year which were below average. Current standards are average in mathematics and English and above average in science. Achievement is satisfactory although in writing higher attaining pupils are underachieving. Standards are above average in science and achievement is good. The under fives make satisfactory progress and reach the level expected for their age. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress. Pupils who are academically gifted receive extra support and also make good progress.

Overall provision for pupils' personal development is **satisfactory**. **Moral and social development is good** and this leads to good relationships. **Spiritual and cultural development is satisfactory**. Attendance is very good. Attitudes to work and behaviour are satisfactory.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

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

The overall quality of teaching and learning is **satisfactory**. The best teaching seen was in Year 6 and the teacher's high expectations considerably increased the rate of learning. Pupils mature in this class and respond well to the teacher's challenges. Teaching for the under fives is good and is based on a good understanding of the needs of this age group. Throughout the school the strength in most lessons is the positive relationships between staff and pupils and the focus on learning independently. This especially increases learning in practical activities. Teachers do not always make it clear what they want pupils to learn so they are unsure of the focus of their tasks. When teaching was unsatisfactory expectations were not high enough and the organisation did not ensure lessons ran smoothly. Support staff make a positive contribution to learning especially ensuring that pupils with special educational needs play a full part in lessons. Assessment is satisfactory. However, staff do not check closely on pupils' progress in lessons or set them targets so that they know how to improve.

The curriculum is good with a focus on social and health education and the all round development of the individual. Accommodation and resources are good. Support and guidance is satisfactory. Pupils feel secure knowing they can turn to a member of staff for advice. Partnership with parents is satisfactory. Many help their children at home. The school has good links with other schools that has especially benefited the gifted and talented pupils.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

The overall quality of leadership and management is **satisfactory**. Governors are supportive and know the school well. Insufficient attention is given to checking that spending is having a positive effect on standards. Leadership and management from headteacher and key staff are satisfactory. There is an uneven distribution of management responsibilities and staff with additional duties have insufficient opportunity to fulfill them.

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

Parents are generally satisfied. A few had concerns about recent staffing disturbances and felt consultation and information about progress could be better. Pupils are happy and raised no concerns.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- Ensure higher attaining pupils in the infants make enough progress in writing.
- Improve the quality of teaching especially where unsatisfactory lessons were seen.
- Make better use of assessment information.
- Give closer attention to monitoring the impact of spending.
- Ensure management responsibilities are evenly distributed and that staff have enough time to fulfil their roles.



## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

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

Overall achievement is **satisfactory**. Children in the Foundation Stage<sup>1</sup> make satisfactory progress and reach the level expected for their age. Achievement is satisfactory in the infants and good in the juniors and pupils leave school with standards which are above average in English, mathematics and science.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement in Years 3 to 6 is slow to start but boosted to good by high expectations in Year 6.
- Higher attaining pupils are underachieving in writing in Year 2.
- Children in the Foundation Stage make good progress in their personal, social and emotional development.
- Pupils with special educational needs make good progress.
- Standards are above average in science in Years 2 and 6.
- Academically gifted pupils make good progress in the juniors.

#### Commentary

1. Children in the Foundation Stage settle well into school because of the very good provision for their personal and social skills. They exceed the early learning goal<sup>2</sup> in this area of learning and this enables them to take advantage of the stimulating experiences planned for them. They make satisfactory progress in other areas of learning and reach the level expected for their age.

#### *Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 – average point scores<sup>3</sup> in 2003*

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	25.7 (28.5)	26.8 (27.0)
Mathematics	27.2 (29.4)	26.8 (26.7)
Science	31.3 (31.5)	28.6 (28.3)

*There were 28 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

2. This grid shows that the results of national tests in 2003 were not as high as in previous years. English results were well below the national average. This was because very few pupils reached the level expected for their age. This is not a true reflection of standards in the school and the trend over time has been above the national trend. In 2002 results were much higher

<sup>1</sup> Foundation Stage begins when children start in the nursery and finishes at the end of the reception class.

<sup>2</sup> Early learning goals are the expectations for most children to reach by the end of the Foundation Stage. They refer mainly to achievements children make with communication, language and literacy; mathematical development; personal, social and emotional development; knowledge and understanding of the world; physical and creative development.

<sup>3</sup> Average point scores. The average point score provides schools with a single statistic to compare the overall grades by all of their pupils with the grades attained by all pupils in another school as well as an average for all schools nationally. The score is obtained from the National Curriculum level attained by pupils in the national assessments. For example, in mathematics pupils are awarded 9 points for a level 1, 15 points for level 2 and 21 points for level 3. The average score is then calculated by adding up all of the points and dividing by the number of pupils who were tested.

and the school received an Achievement Award. The Year 6 class in 2003 was most affected by the changes in the school at the time of threatened closure and many pupils who had achieved well in English in the national tests at the end of Year 2 had left the school. Boys significantly outnumbered the girls. However, analysis of results did not show any consistent pattern of gender imbalance and during the inspection there was no evidence of inequality. Current standards show a return to the previous positive picture and are above average in English, mathematics and science. A good number of pupils are working at above average levels in all subjects. Although overall achievement in the juniors is good it varies very much between classes. Achievement is slow as pupils start in the juniors where teaching is unsatisfactory. The current high standards in Year 6 rely heavily on the very good teaching in this class. As a result, progress improves as pupils move into this class and much is achieved in the last year in school.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	15.1 (17.7)	15.7 (15.8)
Writing	13.7 (14.6)	14.6 (14.4)
Mathematics	15.8 (17.6)	16.3 (16.5)

*There were 30 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

3. Test results in Year 2 in 2003 were below the national average and well below the average for similar schools in reading, writing and mathematics. Again staffing changes affected the learning of these pupils. To avoid having a new teacher implement the national tests these were taken early and possibly affected the overall results. However, the pupils did not do well and the school's overall trend in results fell below the national trend. In response to a more stable staffing situation standards in Year 2 have started to improve and are average in reading, writing and mathematics. Overall achievement is satisfactory although in writing higher attaining pupils are underachieving because tasks are not sufficiently challenging to enable them to work at a fast rate. This is not the case in science where teaching is good and standards are above average.
4. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are in line with what is expected throughout the school and achievement is satisfactory.
5. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is well managed. Many of these pupils reach standards in line with their age and ability, and in some subjects, such as mathematics, by Year 6 reach standards similar to their peers. This represents good achievement. These pupils benefit from well-targeted teaching support given by teachers and learning support staff. In the juniors the school has effective links with their local secondary school which provides teaching a day a week for pupils identified as academically gifted. These pupils have experienced a variety of subjects and activities and make good progress.

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

Attendance overall is **very good** and punctuality satisfactory. Pupils have **satisfactory** attitudes towards their school and most are keen to learn. Pupils' behaviour and personal development is **satisfactory**. Social and moral development is **good** and cultural and spiritual development is **satisfactory**.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Overall attendance last year was very high compared to the national average. The school has improved attendance by very good procedures.
- Children in the Foundation Stage have good attitudes and behaviour. In the rest of the school, although the majority behave well, a minority of pupils find it difficult to maintain good levels of concentration and behaviour for any length of time.
- Older pupils in particular are keen to accept responsibility and the school deals well with the few incidents of bullying.
- Pupils know right from wrong and respect the views of others.

## Commentary

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

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	2.7	School data	0.2
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.*

- Attendance has steadily improved since the previous inspection. The school monitors this well and rewards those who have exemplary attendance records.
- Almost all parents believe that their child enjoys school and most pupils agree. Pupils' attitudes to learning are very much related to the quality of the teaching. Where the teacher has a stimulating and encouraging style, for example in Year 6, pupils are motivated to learn, answer questions keenly and work hard. However, in some classes they find it difficult to sit and listen, or to concentrate on work when they are asked to. This is sometimes because they are not sure about what they are trying to achieve or how to achieve it. When offered other activities many pupils are keen to take part, with pupils enjoying playing in the orchestra and being extremely enthusiastic about sports.

### 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	159	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	5	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	2	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	4	0	0

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

- There have been no recent exclusions and most pupils behave well in lessons, in assemblies and around the school. Some pupils have emotional or behavioural problems; these are usually handled well but sometimes their disaffection disrupts the learning of others as the teacher has to spend too much time on behaviour control. The school has adopted a policy of assertive discipline in all classes, but this is not always consistently applied, and so is not having as much impact on overall discipline as it should.

9. Most pupils get on well together and with staff. Conversations with older pupils show that they respond very positively to the school-wide responsibilities they are given, are becoming mature and well prepared for secondary education. Some of the younger pupils are less positive and do not always respond politely or act with enough attention to the needs of fellow pupils. Parents feel that instability, resulting from the high level of permanent staff absence, may be adversely affecting their children and the school concedes that in some cases this is so. Pupils are encouraged to share their feelings and discuss attitudes towards others in personal and social education lessons and such activities raise pupils' social awareness. Most pupils understand right from wrong and can talk about the impact of their actions on others. Older pupils are beginning to recognise that consideration for others can be a principle for deciding how to behave morally.
10. Assemblies, although orderly, rarely lift the spirits of pupils. During the inspection, the exception was the celebration assembly where pupils responded generously to the achievements of others and a real school community ethos was evident. Normally, there is no focal point to encourage reflection, little if any music, either playing when the pupils come or leave, or in singing and pupils have limited opportunity to participate.
11. Pupils meet their own culture well within lessons like English, art, history and religious education, and the study and experience of the plays of Shakespeare in Year 6 is a strength. However, around the school few displays stimulate pupils' interest in their own culture, for example famous paintings or displays of local pictures. Pupils are aware of other cultures through history, geography and religious education and good displays remind pupils of these. However, few books in the library are available about other cultures to raise the awareness and esteem of other traditions and literature.

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

The school provides a **satisfactory** quality of education. This is the result of **satisfactory** teaching and learning, a **good** curriculum, **satisfactory** links with parents and **sound** attention to pupils' welfare.

### **Teaching and learning**

The overall quality of teaching and learning is **satisfactory**. Procedures to assess progress are **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching in the Foundation Stage is based on a good knowledge of the needs of this age group.
- Teaching in Year 6 is consistently very good.
- Teaching in Year 3 is unsatisfactory because of the lack of a team approach between the two teachers and weak management of the pupils.
- Teachers do not always make it clear what pupils are to learn in lessons.
- Support staff provide effective help for pupils with special educational needs.
- Assessment information is not being used to set challenging tasks especially in writing in the infants.

## Commentary

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 37 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0 (0 %)	6 (16 %)	13 (35 %)	15 (41 %)	3 (8 %)	0 (0 %)	0 (0 %)

*The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons; figures in brackets show percentages where 30 or more lessons are seen.*

12. The school's staffing disturbances have affected the impact of the action taken to resolve some of the weaknesses seen at the time of the last inspection. The change of staff and absences mean that all staff have not had access to the school's training programme or monitoring procedures. The action plan drawn up after the last inspection tackled the unsatisfactory teaching but the recent circumstances of staff disturbances mean that some of the weaknesses have returned and the overall quality of teaching is similar to that seen in the last inspection.
13. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is good and leads to effective learning. On arrival children are met with a stimulating variety of experiences so that they are eager to explore and happy to be at school. Staff are alert to every opportunity to extend children's social and personal skills so that children learn to co-operate and appreciate what is acceptable behaviour. Early literacy and numeracy skills are taught through practical activities and children in the reception class are using their letter knowledge well in their early attempts at reading and writing and enjoy using their counting skills in simple daily activities.
14. In the infants and juniors the overall quality of teaching is satisfactory but it varies considerably between classes. It is very good in Year 6 because the teacher has high aspirations for the pupils and shows great determination to get the best from every pupil. As a result, pupils mature quickly, recognise the value of work and rise to the challenge. Teaching is unsatisfactory in Year 3. Most of the weaknesses are a result of the present system of having two teachers leading the class and this is leading to some confusion for pupils. Staff use different behaviour management strategies and the organisation of the lessons leads to staff talking at cross purposes. As a result, pupils lose interest, their attention wanders and behaviour deteriorates. This does not encourage effective learning. The current system has only been in place for half of a term and the school has identified the need to adjust procedures.
15. A positive feature in many lessons is the positive relationships and the way staff encourage pupils. A busy atmosphere is evident in most classes and pupils try hard to finish their tasks. Teachers have a good knowledge of teaching science and the practical aspects of mathematics. This reflects the school's involvement with the International Baccalaureate Organisation and the focus on independent learning. A commitment to this can be seen in the focus on using a variety of approaches that encourage investigation and collaboration. For example, drama is often used which makes learning more exciting and results in pupils showing a good capacity to work collaboratively as well improving their speaking and listening skills. Staff effectively plan to link subjects and this makes learning more relevant to pupils. For example, the links between history and literacy in Year 6 led to pupils eagerly extracting information from texts about evacuees because they had a desire to learn more following the video that had clearly whetted their appetite. Teachers use ICT well in the lessons in the suite to support learning in other subjects but this is less well developed when planning the use of computers in class.

16. In many lessons there is a higher focus on teaching rather than learning. This is often caused by teachers not making it clear what pupils are to learn in lessons. As a result, pupils do not fully understand the purpose of their tasks. Similarly, the conclusions of lessons are not as effective as they could be because teachers celebrate achievement but fail to consolidate learning. This is most evident in literacy lessons when the focus on the type of writing being taught is unclear. This part of literacy lessons fails to get enough attention and so pupils are not always clear about the features of the writing they are being asked to do. In comparison, in science lessons an additional planning sheet is used which makes learning outcomes very clear and includes key questions. As a result, the teaching seen in science was good and standards are higher than literacy and numeracy.
17. Teaching of those pupils with special educational needs is good and has improved since the last inspection. Individual education plans contain crisply written targets, which are used effectively by teachers to plan tasks and activities with either individual or small group teaching support. The school has a good number of learning support staff who know the pupils well and have caring relationships with them; this has a positive effect, not only on their learning, but also on their behaviour and attitudes.
18. The overall quality of assessment is satisfactory. Many teachers offer effective advice as pupils work and start lessons by sharing with pupils the work from the previous lesson. This time is often used well to tackle weaknesses which were noted when marking pupils' work. This relies mainly on teachers' informal observations. Lesson plans have a space for daily evaluations but while some teachers conscientiously complete these and amend their plans, others do not. This leads to a lack of challenge especially for the higher attaining pupils. This weakness can also be seen in the use of worksheets in mathematics and English which are not matched to differing abilities and lead to higher attaining pupils completing work which is too easy before moving to more challenging tasks. A similar trend is evident in the marking of pupils' work. A few comments point out to pupils how they can improve but most fail to show how pupils can make their work better. The school is in the early stages of using assessment information to set targets. Teachers are not yet using this system effectively to tell pupils how well they have done in relation to their targets and give them reminders of how to achieve them.

## **The curriculum**

The overall quality of the curriculum is **good**. Provision for extra-curricular activities is **good**. The accommodation is **good** and resources are **adequate**.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Purposeful and perceptive review and development of the curriculum ensures that the school's particular priorities are met.
- Recent innovative promotion of personal life skills across the school is beginning to engender positive attitudes to learning.
- The curriculum in the nursery and reception classes is integrated carefully to meet the children's needs.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good.
- The use of ICT in other subjects is not well planned.
- Extra-curricular provision has improved since the previous inspection and is now good.

## Commentary

19. Statutory regulations are met in all subjects.
20. The school regularly reviews the curriculum in the light of its performance in national tests, as well as in regard to national and local initiatives. Accordingly, the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies, whilst fully implemented, are successfully adapted to meet the school's needs. The curriculum has been developed successfully to promote writing skills in other subjects. In mathematics, more attention is being given to the area of shape, space and measures. Since the previous inspection, the school has increased its focus on problem solving and investigational work in mathematics and science. This is raising standards in these areas.
21. The school is committed to the all round development of its pupils. Consequently its recent initiative through the International Baccalaureate Organisation is helping pupils to develop independence and a sense of responsibility. Although in its early stages the effect on the curriculum is already apparent. For example, pupils are consistently encouraged to be *thinkers* and *risk takers* in solving problems for themselves. The effects of this approach can be seen in the high standards in science throughout the school.
22. The curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage is appropriately based in a wide range of well organised practical activities. Careful planning ensures a good balance of teacher directed tasks and structured play. Particular emphasis is rightly given to personal, social and emotional development and communication, language and literacy.
23. The school makes good provision for pupils who have special educational needs, so they achieve well in relation to the targets set for them. The special educational needs provision is well organised to enable these pupils to play a full part in all activities.
24. Lower attainers receive valuable support in small groups in English. However, they are sometimes withdrawn from class at the beginning of a lesson and miss the teacher's introduction. This is not supportive to their progress in class. The school has good arrangements to provide extra challenge for gifted pupils in the juniors and they make good progress.
25. Information and communication technology is taught soundly in weekly lessons in the ICT suite. Whilst there are some good examples, the use of ICT to support learning in other subjects is not consistently planned with sufficient rigour or focus to consolidate skills or fully realise the benefits of modern technology.
26. A good range and number of after-school or lunchtime clubs in sport, craft, chess and music, enrich the curriculum for junior pupils. The provision for the development of talents in music is a particular strength. Peripatetic lessons provide good opportunities to learn to play the violin and flute and pupils enjoy sharing their talents in the recently formed school orchestra, choir and recorder groups. The music specialist extends the curriculum imaginatively in all classes. The arts curriculum is effectively enhanced by visiting artists and drama groups together with museum and theatre visits. The residential visit in Year 5 and 6 supports independence and social development well. The homework club, available on a weekly basis for all pupils in Years 3 to 6, consolidates learning effectively.
27. Whilst resources in English are generally satisfactory, many books are in poor condition and are in need of replacement. Resources for ICT have been significantly enhanced since the previous inspection. The computer suite and laptops are used effectively but insufficient use is made of the interactive white boards to extend learning beyond the classroom. The nursery

was established four terms ago and together with the well organised outdoor play area shared with the reception class makes good provision for three to five year olds. There is a good number of support staff who are appropriately deployed and provide effective support for small groups and individuals with special educational needs.

### Care, guidance and support

The overall care of pupils and the monitoring of their personal development are **satisfactory**. The school has **good** procedures to involve pupils in the life of the school.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Day-to-day care is good.
- Procedures to introduce children to school are good.
- The risk assessment procedure is insufficiently rigorous.
- The school council is a useful forum for seeking pupil views.
- Pupils do not have clear targets to help them improve their work.

### Commentary

28. Child protection procedures are firmly established and the school has good liaison with outside agencies. Staff are trained in first aid care for pupils who are ill or who have accidents. Most pupils are confident and secure. Those pupils who have particular medical problems are very sensitively looked after by both staff and pupils and the newly started inclusive schools project has drawn on support from several outside agencies such as occupational therapists.
29. The site is safe and secure and equipment is regularly checked for continued safe operation. The site manager makes routine inspections to identify any hazards but governors are insufficiently involved in regular, focused general site risk assessment. The specific assessment of risks associated with recent building work was, however, good. Procedures for planning off-site activities are in place, in line with regulations.
30. Staff discuss personal issues with pupils regularly in class. For example, at the start of the day the teacher in Year 1 made very good use of the registration time to settle the pupils and, by small personal comments and questions, made them feel secure and ready to learn. Pupils are set individual targets for improvement in English and mathematics but these are generally too broad and long term to allow pupils to relate them to specific activities in lessons. As a result, many pupils are unclear about what they need to do to succeed. In comparison pupils with special educational needs have clear targets on individual education plans. These are reviewed regularly and during the reviews, parents and pupils are invited to share the process and make their views known. As a result, these pupils know what their next targets are and what they need to do to achieve them.
31. The school gives good attention to pupils' views and values their opinions. The school council, for pupils from Years 3 to 6, acts as a good sounding board for pupils' views and can recommend action to improve the school. Older pupils also seek the views of pupils in the infants and reception classes and show a genuine concern for their welfare.

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

The school's links with parents and the community are **satisfactory**. There are **good**, productive links with other schools.



## Main strengths and weaknesses

- General information for parents is good but pupil reports are insufficiently helpful to parents.
- Parents give good support to the school and their children.
- Membership of the Education Action Zone<sup>4</sup> has resulted in enrichment of the curriculum and good support for staff and pupils.
- Academically gifted pupils benefit from links with the local secondary school.

## Commentary

32. The school has been through a difficult period, including absorbing pupils from another school and the absence of many of the permanent staff for significant periods over the last 18 months. This instability has resulted in some strained relationships with parents which were manifested at the meeting before the inspection and in the parent questionnaire. The school has generally weathered this period well and is now rebuilding parental confidence. Although parents had concerns about information reaching them, this appears to be a shortcoming in the method of sending the letters rather than the information itself, which is helpful.
33. Pupils' annual reports cover all the curriculum subjects and meet statutory requirements. However, they are couched in too much jargon and so are not always easy for parents to understand. National Curriculum levels attained are included and a separate letter informs parents about the significance of these. Targets for the year are shared with parents at the initial meeting with the teacher, but parents would like a meeting in the spring term so that progress can be discussed. The school is considering this.
34. The school ensures that parents of pupils with special educational needs are kept well informed of how their children are progressing against the targets set for them on their individual education plans. Parents are informed early if the school has any initial concerns about their child and parents and carers are invited to termly reviews of their child's progress.
35. Parents of children starting in the nursery receive good guidance on helping their child and can borrow learning resources, such as *story sacks* to continue learning at home. Most parents are supportive of their children's work and of the school in general. The Parent Teacher Association organises social events and raises valuable funds for resources. The school has consulted parents about the organisation of child-care both in the nursery and at each end of the school day. This provision, for which parents pay, is now running but it is not clear whether the service is viable in the longer term.
36. Links with other schools in the Education Action Zone have produced significant benefits to the education of pupils. Information and communication technology resources have been improved and staff trained. Gifted and talented pupils increase their skills well by attending a secondary site one day a week and there are links which enhance sport and music. The school co-operates with three other local schools that are also involved with introducing the International Baccalaureate curriculum.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The overall quality of leadership and management is **satisfactory**. Governance of the school is **satisfactory**. The school is **soundly** led and managed by the headteacher and key staff.

---

<sup>4</sup> Education Action Zones are local partnerships of schools, local educational authorities, business and community organisations working together to develop new and innovative ways of raising standards of education.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Governors have been very helpful to the school and are especially willing to share their expertise.
- The headteacher is eager to take on new initiatives to lead the school forward.
- Management of special educational needs is good.
- The allocation of management roles is not evenly balanced and staff do not have enough opportunity to fulfil these roles.
- Insufficient attention is given to checking that major spending is having a positive effect on standards.

## Commentary

37. Governors play a satisfactory part in the running of the school and have a clear picture of the school's strengths and weaknesses. As at the time of the last inspection they ensure all statutory requirements are met. They have been very supportive during a period of change, whilst the school buildings were extended, additional pupils taken in and during a time when so many teachers were absent. Since the last inspection governors have extended their formal links with the school through more contact with subject co-ordinators although this can be further developed to establish a role in the Foundation Stage.
38. Overall leadership is satisfactory. The headteacher has steered the school smoothly through some difficult times and every effort was made to reduce the effect of staff absences on the quality of education. This led to less time being available to follow up other management roles. For example, although the monitoring of teaching is carried out regularly the effectiveness of this has received less attention than might otherwise been the case. Nevertheless, the headteacher has been eager to take on board new ideas to lead the school forward with a clear vision for the future. The involvement with the International Baccalaureate Organisation is closely linked to the school's aim to encourage independent learners and critical thinkers. Similarly, the headteacher and governors have fully embraced inclusion and eagerly accepted the responsibility of becoming an inclusive school for the local authority and providing places for pupils with considerable learning difficulties.
39. Leadership from key staff is variable but satisfactory overall. The allocation of management responsibilities is out of balance with some staff carrying a heavy load. Most staff fulfil their role of evaluating their subjects and aspects and draw up informative action plans that feed into the school's development plan. However, the role of monitoring change is hampered because they have insufficient time to check how their plans are impacting on practice.
40. The special educational needs co-ordinator provides good leadership and manages the provision of special needs in the school effectively. Day-to-day management of provision is good, with policies and guidance for staff kept up to date and well organised. However, the co-ordinator does not have allocated regular time away from teaching to carry out the many duties the role requires.
41. The school's development plan is a collaborative document. Its starting point is evaluation led by subject leaders and shared with all staff. It is an easy to follow document with action, monitoring and further action clearly identified. All subjects receive attention with the purpose of raising awareness in all subjects. However, this does lead to some watering down of the main priorities and it becomes unclear how the plan is tackling the weaknesses which the analysis of test results reveals. In practice, the school includes additional action plans, for example, the provision for additional literacy sessions for those who need an additional boost to their learning.

42. Overall management is satisfactory. The school has self-evaluation procedures in place to raise standards, curriculum and teaching. As yet, other aspects of school receive attention as the need arises but the school lacks a formal procedure to look in depth at all aspects. For example, links with parents are reviewed if a concern is raised but time is not allocated to an in depth review of information, consultation and overall partnership with parents. The school has satisfactory procedures to monitor its performance based on analysis of test results which are now providing the school with a wealth of information about individual progress. Records are available that track progress through the school and give predictions for the end of year assessments. This information is used well to check the school's overall performance as well as provide additional support for the academically gifted pupils and those needing an additional boost to their learning. The school has recently introduced more rigorous interim assessments so that it is now possible to spot more precisely when a pupil is not making enough progress during the year.
43. Although a programme to monitor the quality of teaching is in place not all staff are acting upon the aspects they need to improve and are unclear how to do this. A contributory factor to this lack of effectiveness has been staff absences which as well as hampering the implementation of change has restricted the amount of time available for monitoring both by the headteacher and other key staff.
44. Performance management is fully established and training records identify a close link between school and personal needs.
45. The school has good procedures for day-to-day financial management and the process of calculating the budget is secure. The school faced a large deficit at the end of the last financial year, largely because of circumstances outside its control. Sensible steps were taken to reduce that in the current year. Since then, however, decisions have been taken which will increase the deficit again, and the rationale behind some major expenditure decisions, such as employing two teachers in a single Year 3 class, were not clearly defined and have not been evaluated. Furthermore, the full governing body was not involved in that decision, nor were the financial consequences fully explored when they were informed. This element of searching out value for money is not being fully followed up in action. More attention is given to searching out best value when spending on the building and the school seeks out several estimates before making any decisions.

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

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	508,897
Total expenditure	531,531
Expenditure per pupil	2,806

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	8,455
Balance carried forward to the next	22,634

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

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

46. The provision for children in the Foundation Stage is **good**.
47. Since the last inspection, the establishment of the nursery has considerably improved provision. There are currently 29 three and four-year-olds on roll in the nursery. Most attend half days, for which there is no charge, but 11 pay for additional half days and attend full time. There are 30 full time children in the reception class. The children are taught as two classes, but teachers plan together so that the Foundation Stage curriculum is relevant and consistent. Children benefit from the full range of activities in each area, at their own level. There is good provision for children with special educational needs. They are well supported and fully included in whole class and group work and make good progress.
48. The school's catchment area has recently changed due to the closure of another school. Standards on entry are not as high as they were and are now broadly average. Achievement over the Foundation Stage is satisfactory and does not reflect the good standards of teaching and learning seen during the inspection. This is because the current good provision has not yet had time to make a full impact on standards and the establishment of the Foundation Stage was hampered by the absence of the early years co-ordinator for two terms. Leadership and management are good. Children are currently in line to reach the early learning goals in each area of learning by the time they start in Year 1. In personal, social and emotional development, provision is particularly strong and children are exceeding the level expected for their age. Strengths in the teaching across all areas of learning are:
- Positive, supportive relationships.
  - Good knowledge and understanding of children's needs.
  - Impressive teamwork of teachers and learning support assistants.
  - The use of on-going assessment to plan new work.
49. Leadership and management are good, enabling all staff to work as a cohesive team with a common purpose.

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

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

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

- Teaching is very good and children learn very well.
- Good opportunities are provided for pupils to become independent learners.
- Respect and awareness of other cultures is fostered very well.

#### **Commentary**

50. All adults listen carefully to children and respect their ideas. Their positive and encouraging response enables children to grow increasingly confident in seeking help, and adventurous in exploring activities. Many exciting opportunities are planned so that children can be independent and make choices for themselves. Consequently, almost all children are interested and enthusiastic and older children concentrate for good lengths of time. Adults communicate their high expectations and establish routines clearly so that children quickly learn how to succeed. Because of the teacher's firm but positive reminders, children in the

nursery wait their turn to mix the baking ingredients and are helpful to others in passing on the bowl. Reception children co-operate in pairs at the computer or negotiate plans to share dressing up clothes because the teacher sets out her high expectations very clearly. All staff provide good examples of positive attitudes and appreciation of the needs of others. Good use is made of stories and artwork to promote children's awareness of other cultures. For example, nursery children are aware that Australia is so far away you would need to travel by plane. The influence of Aboriginal art is apparent in their own work. Visitors provide good first-hand experience as when a Chinese visitor helped children appreciate the traditions of the Chinese New Year. Circle Time<sup>5</sup> sessions are organised particularly well to provide real opportunities for children to think, decide and choose and this has a positive effect on learning.

## COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are good.
- Good emphasis is given to developing speaking and listening skills.
- Early reading and writing skills are taught well especially in the reception class.
- Clearly focused group work consolidates learning successfully.

### Commentary

51. Staff use questions effectively to help children verbalise and extend their ideas. They give clear guidance about listening to others. As a result, a purposeful working atmosphere is established where children extend their communication skills successfully. Teachers choose vocabulary with care and give clear explanations to promote understanding. Carefully planned topics, for example, *The Teddy Bears' Picnic* inspire relevant and purposeful activities across the Foundation Stage. In whole class sessions, the teachers encourage children to talk through the task of making invitations. Consequently, children know what is expected and work purposefully to follow this up in small groups. Nursery children are confident in making marks on paper and ascribing meaning to them. Reception children use their knowledge of letters and their sounds to write their own messages. Because of clear and direct teaching of letters and their sounds most reception children correctly identify the first letter in a word by sound. Higher attainers build up simple words like *cat* and *dog* accurately. Teachers tell stories dramatically and demonstrate appreciation of books. As a result, children enjoy listening to class stories and sustain concentration for increasing lengths of time. Many children enthusiastically choose to look at a book on their own. Higher attainers in the reception class recognise some words and follow simple text in the first reading scheme books.

## MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **satisfactory**.

---

<sup>5</sup> During Circle Time pupils discuss a wide range of personal and general issues. It is agreed by all pupils that no interruptions should occur and only one person at a time will speak. Respect for other pupils' views will occur at all times and therefore pupils feel confident that they can talk with ease free from any interruptions from other children.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Relevant practical first-hand experiences effectively promote understanding of mathematical concepts.
- Teachers give clear demonstrations and instructions.
- Some group tasks do not support learning well.
- Potential higher attainers are not always suitably challenged.

## Commentary

52. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Children learn soundly through attractive sorting and counting activities, which catch their interest well. Teachers are skilled at grasping incidental opportunities throughout the day to promote counting and matching skills. For instance, children accurately count the number of children present or share snacks one-to-one. The outdoor area is used imaginatively to promote learning. Nursery children recognise and name circles, squares and triangles as they jump in and out of shapes chalked on the ground. Through the teacher's careful questioning and demonstration, children make comparisons using appropriate language like *big* and *small* accurately. The reception children recognise numerals and count to 12 accurately. Higher attainers, with help, add and subtract with objects. Whole class direct teaching effectively combines clear demonstrations by the teacher with opportunities for children to practise and to demonstrate to others. Group work is not always sufficiently focused to consolidate what children have been taught as a class, and when there is insufficient adult support, some children lose track of intended outcomes. As a result the pace of learning slows. Tasks are usually clearly planned to meet children's needs, but there are occasions in the reception class when work is too easy for potential higher attainers. For instance, when children who know that 26 is one more than 25, spend time counting up to 12.

## KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are good overall, and very good in the nursery.
- Learning is fun. Exciting, interesting, practical activities motivate children to use all their senses to explore the world around them.
- Teachers build successfully on what children already know.
- Staff use questions effectively to extend and assess understanding, but provide few opportunities for children to ask questions of their own.

## Commentary

53. Teachers make good use of the local area as a learning resource as when children take their letters to the post box. On their return, the teacher questions nursery children well about features in the environment, so that they use their own observations to compare different types of houses. The teacher builds on the children's experience of watching window cleaners at work to explore the need or otherwise for long ladders when working on a bungalow or a house. Children successfully reinforce their knowledge of the journey of their letters through role-play. Practical experiences like blowing bubbles, baking, and controlling a programmable car are used expertly to promote children's observational skills as well as to extend their sense of wonder, of change, shape, colour and pattern. Careful preparation of resources enables reception children to explore the waterproofing properties of different materials confidently. Whilst they make suggestions based on their experiences, their ability to ask their own focused questions is not well developed.

## PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are good.
- The wide range of attractive resources is well prepared, but expected learning outcomes are not always made clear.
- Teachers manage children well.

### Commentary

54. Children are managed well and teachers organise resources effectively in the outdoor area so that children use the space carefully with good awareness of each other. They confidently control large wheeled toys and are adventurous using the climbing frame. Whilst there is a good range of outdoor activities, tasks are not always clearly focused to build up physical skills systematically and children are not always shown how to improve. Children in the reception class use tools like pencils, paintbrushes and scissors adeptly because they are carefully taught these skills through class demonstrations and encouragement. The provision is enhanced by use of the school hall for dance and physical education lessons (not observed).

## CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are good.
- Well managed role-play and drama supports progress effectively.
- Learning support assistants make a significant contribution to learning.
- The curriculum is enhanced by the contribution of a music specialist.

### Commentary

55. Adults intervene purposefully to add extra resources or to ask questions, which help children to extend their ideas in the well-resourced imaginative role-play areas. Most nursery play is based on the children's own experience, for instance, in *playing house*. In the reception class, staff are skilled in helping children to use their knowledge of stories in stimulating drama sessions in the hall. In small groups children show good imagination and confidence in composing and performing their own short playlets. Their ideas are clearly influenced by the wealth of *bear* stories they have experienced. Learning support assistants are well briefed and efficiently deployed. They provide particularly good support and encouragement in helping children learn new techniques, for example, when mixing paint to explore different shades of brown. The weekly visit of a talented specialist promotes very positive attitudes to music. Children in the reception class respond to the guitar accompaniment and sing a small repertoire with gusto and with an awareness of dynamics. Clear demonstrations enable the children to reach good standards as they identify changes in pitch.

## SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

### ENGLISH

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is very good in Year 6 and pupils leave school with above average standards.
- Achievement is slow at the start of the juniors because teaching is unsatisfactory.
- Achievement in the infants is satisfactory but higher attaining pupils are underachieving in writing.
- Pupils with special educational needs and those in the juniors who are gifted in English make good progress.
- Assessment information is not being fully used to adjust lessons plans and set pupils' individual targets.
- Leadership and management are good and a detailed action plan is in place to raise standards.

#### Commentary

56. Overall achievement in the juniors is good but the rate of progress varies considerably between classes. Pupils get off to a slow start because teaching is not organised well, pupils are not concentrating and this is not leading to effective learning. The pace of learning increases considerably as pupils move into Year 6 and respond to the teacher's high aspirations. Consequently, standards are above average and the high standards identified in the last inspection have been sustained. Current standards are more typical of the school than the results of national tests in 2003 which were below average because few exceeded the level expected for their age. This is not now the case and there is a significant rise in the number of pupils working at above average levels. In response to many opportunities for drama and discussion standards in speaking and listening are good. Pupils are confident expressing their opinions and delegating tasks when working in small groups. Every day includes a session for individual reading and so many enjoy a good story and have favourite authors. They confidently use these skills to research information. Pupils in Year 6 benefit from a wide range of writing experiences and have a secure understanding of writing in a range of different styles. This is less evident in other classes. For example, limited examples of poetry were seen during the inspection. Again the strength in teaching is evident in the presentation of work in Year 6 which is generally well presented and higher attaining pupils especially showing accuracy in punctuation and spelling.
57. Test results in Year 2 in 2003 were well below the national average and well below the average for similar schools. A combination of factors led to these low results, not least the early taking of the national tests because of the imminent maternity leave of the teacher. Current standards are in line with what is expected for this age and show that stability of staff is leading to a steady return to previous standards. Many pupils speak confidently but are not always listening with sufficient care to instructions. Most are reading at the level expected for their age. They know the importance in checking that their reading makes sense. They do this well because the teacher effectively teaches this skill by masking words in a big book and encouraging pupils to suggest suitable words. Writing is not taught as well as reading. Although overall achievement is satisfactory higher attaining pupils are underachieving. This is linked to a lack of challenge in tasks and an overuse of worksheets which are not matched to pupils' ability.
58. Although the overall quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory it varies from very good to unsatisfactory. Common strengths in most lessons include the variety of approaches used to capture pupils' interest. This is especially evident in the opening to lessons with a good choice of texts and effective question and answer sessions. The management of pupils is based on



good relationships and most lessons run smoothly. Teachers spot misunderstandings in the introductions to lessons and offer additional advice. This is less evident in other parts of the lessons as the teacher focuses on one group and others are not always working at sufficiently challenging tasks. This is linked to teachers not keeping a close eye on pupils' on-going progress and then adjusting plans to match pupils' current needs. A contributory factor to this weakness is the lack of clarity of outcome for lessons. These are often too many or too general to guide teachers and so conclusions are not sharp enough to assess whether pupils have achieved the intended outcome.

59. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because staff are guided in their planning by detailed individual education plans. In the juniors academically gifted pupils benefit from a day a week at the local high school. These sessions enable pupils to work at higher than usual levels and they make good progress. Although many classes have more boys than girls, an analysis of test results does not reveal any differences in attainment linked to gender.
60. Leadership and management are good. Planning follows the guidance of the National Literacy Strategy. Additional sessions are planned for those needing extra help which effectively enable pupils to catch up to the expected level. These sessions are usually planned to coincide with literacy lessons but occasionally pupils miss the introduction to these lessons and then find it hard to catch up with the class when they return. The co-ordinator's focus on improving non-fiction writing is yielding good results especially in the juniors. However, the lack of opportunity to monitor what is happening in class is restricting the co-ordinator's overview of current standards and teaching and so good practice is not being shared across the school.

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

61. Effective management means the promotion of literacy and language in other subjects is good. The co-ordinator has put in place a detailed plan that links different types of writing to different subjects. The benefits of this can be seen in many subjects. For example, in Year 5 pupils write up detailed reports about the wives of Henry VIII and in Year 4 pupils show accurate use of labels and numbered bullet points in design and technology. Pupils confidently research information in books and using the computer.

### **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

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

- Very good teaching in Year 6 leads to high standards.
- Pupils with special educational needs receive good support and achieve well.
- Teachers plan a broad, balanced and interesting curriculum.
- Learning objectives are not shared with pupils at the start of a lesson.
- Pupils do not have learning targets so most do not know how to improve their work.
- Some teachers rely too much on using photocopied worksheets; consequently pupils miss regular opportunities to learn presentation skills.
- There are not enough planned opportunities to use ICT.

#### **Commentary**

62. Standards in the current Year 2 are broadly in line with national expectations. Pupils' progress and overall achievement are satisfactory. Overall achievement in the juniors is good. However, it is inconsistent between classes and relies very much on rapid progress in Year 6

which enables pupils to reach standards that are above the national expectation. Higher attaining pupils in particular are on target to reach standards well above those of similar schools. This rapid progress is linked directly to the consistently very good teaching in Year 6, which is marked by high expectations, lessons that are lively and fast-paced and activities that are very challenging. The high standards seen in Year 6 have been maintained since the previous inspection and have improved since the national tests in 2003. Standards in Year 2 are better than the results of national test since 2003 but are not as high as those found at the previous inspection, mainly because when children enter the school, their skills are now not as high as they were.

63. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well over time and this is the result of the consistently good support they receive from teachers and learning support staff. The management of special educational needs throughout the school is also good, and this good management by the special needs co-ordinator, leads to well-targeted support. As a result, by Year 6, all pupils with special educational needs achieve standards that match their ability and many achieve beyond this, reaching standards equal to their peers and matching national expectations. This represents a good improvement from the previous inspection, when pupils with special educational needs were judged to make satisfactory progress in mathematics.
64. The achievement of pupils in the school is satisfactory overall. It is not better than this, even though when pupils leave school at the age of eleven, they reach high standards. This is because apart from the good pace in Year 6, the overall rate of learning and quality of teaching is satisfactory. During the inspection, the teaching seen ranged from unsatisfactory to very good and was satisfactory overall. What teachers do well is to provide pupils with a good range of activities that cover all aspects of the curriculum and as a result, pupils benefit from a broad, balanced and interesting curriculum. The initial parts of lessons are used to good effect to encourage pupils of all ages to talk about how they will tackle problems, or to discuss different ways of working out their answers. Pupils are encouraged to think, offer a range of solutions and talk to others as they pose answers to questions. This develops their ability to tackle new learning positively, building upon the strategies they already have. Good examples of this were seen in both a Year 2 and a Year 4 lesson, as pupils were introduced to new knowledge, building directly upon what they already knew and understood. In the one unsatisfactory lesson, pupils did not make sufficient progress because of problems relating to the unsatisfactory behaviour of a significant minority of the pupils, which was not managed well enough by the teaching staff.
65. A common weakness is the lack of clarity about what pupils are to learn. These outcomes are not shared with pupils at the beginning of each lesson, so that they fully understand what they will be expected to learn and told how their work will be marked as a result of this learning. Currently, this practice is inconsistent throughout the school. Pupils are not given clear individual learning targets, so they do not know what they need to do to improve their work. Pupils do have steps to the next level stuck in to the beginning of their books, which pupils tick off when they feel they have met the requirements, but some pupils have ticked all of the statements and are clearly not yet ready to move to the next level. Teachers do not refer to these levels at all when marking work, so their effectiveness as a learning tool is diminished.
66. In many classes, teachers make too much use of photocopied worksheets and in some cases this inhibits the pupils' ability to learn how to present their work correctly. For example, in a lesson on plotting co-ordinates, higher attaining pupils were quite capable of drawing their own grid and did not need one already provided for them and this would have given them good opportunities to become more skilled at using a ruler accurately. Many pupils, up until Year 6, are not very skilful when using a ruler, either to construct graphs neatly, or to measure accurately, because they get too little opportunity to set their work out independently. Younger pupils do not present their work as well as they could, but this is made harder for them by the school's use of books without squares. This does little to help younger children set their sums out in neat rows and columns.

67. During the inspection, very little use was made of ICT to support learning in mathematics. A weakness is the lack of planning to use computers to support mathematical learning. Currently, too much is left to the discretion and confidence of the individual teacher, so a consistent approach to developing and extending the use of ICT is missing. Some good examples are evident of computers being used effectively to teach data handling skills, but these are the exception.
68. The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. This was judged as good at the previous inspection. It is not as good now because of a lack of regular checking of mathematics teaching throughout the school, so opportunities to tackle weaknesses in teaching, or to build on good practice, are missing. What is done well is the analysis of test results to look for weaknesses. This has led to the recognition that the teaching of shape, space and measures was a weakness and this has now been successfully tackled. This is a good improvement since the previous inspection.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

69. This aspect of the curriculum is satisfactory in the infants and good in the juniors. There are some good examples of mathematical skills being used effectively to support designs in pupils' art and design work and in science, skills are used well to present findings using tables, charts and graphs. In geography, particularly in Year 6, pupils use good mathematical skills as they use information from a range of sources to present their data.

## **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards are above average in Years 2 and 6 and achievement is good.
- The good teaching and support enables higher attaining pupils and those with special educational needs to achieve well.
- In some classes, pupils have insufficient opportunities for well presented scientific writing.
- Not enough use is made of ICT in science.
- Assessment is not used consistently to adjust weaknesses in lessons and set meaningful targets for pupils.
- Science is well managed and the co-ordinator provides good leadership and guidance for staff.

### **Commentary**

70. The above average standards found at the last inspection have been maintained and built upon. The rate of pupils' progress and achievements and the quality of teaching are now consistently good. Pupils use and have a good understanding of appropriate scientific vocabulary. Those pupils with special educational needs now achieve well because of the good support they receive. The achievements of higher attaining pupils have also improved as a result of challenging teaching.
71. Pupils' investigative skills and their understanding of physical processes have been identified by the school as areas for development. These are well taught, consolidated and extended. From Year 1 onwards, pupils are encouraged to suggest ideas for their own investigations, to describe and explain their findings and to record their work in a scientific way. Younger pupils make a *sound book*. Pupils record the number of strides from the source of the sound of a remote controlled doorbell and classify photographs according to loud and quiet sounds.

Pupils in Year 2 are developing a good knowledge of living things, materials and forces and talk confidently about the ways to make a test fair, for example, when measuring the distance a toy car travels down a ramp set at different angles of slope. Sometimes, however, there are too few opportunities for pupils to produce scientific writing and work is not always well presented.

72. A strength in the teaching is the emphasis placed on helping pupils to use scientific language. This is very evident in the very good teaching in Year 6 which leads to above average standards. Pupils show well-developed scientific skills and concepts. They have a good scientific vocabulary and use a varied range of scientific recording to predict, describe and explain. In a lesson about the separation of solids and liquids, groups of pupils investigated ways of separating a mixture of gravel, sand, salt and water. Meticulous attention was paid to safety, including the use of eye protection. Using previous knowledge and a very appropriate range of laboratory equipment, pupils were able to discover for themselves how the materials changed when they were mixed together and how they could be changed back. They were confident and knowledgeable in their use of the terms *filtration*, *evaporation* and *reversible change*. Another positive feature of the teaching is the link made between science and numeracy, literacy and art. However, ICT is not used as much as it should be. There are some satisfactory computer programs in use, but the lack of suitable software restricts the use of the school's interactive whiteboards. However, additional resources have been ordered.
73. Leadership and management are good. The co-ordinator keeps abreast of new developments in science teaching. Good planning systems are in place and the monitoring and evaluation of samples of pupils' work in every class is helping to improve pupils' achievements. Though a form of assessment is currently in place, this is not used to track pupils' weaknesses or set targets for them. Better systems are currently being developed and tried but are not yet used consistently.

## INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The direct teaching of ICT skills is sound and leads to satisfactory progress overall.
- Pupils in Year 6 make good progress due to good teaching.
- The day-to-day reinforcement of skills in class and the use of ICT as a tool for learning in other subjects is not consistently developed.
- Resources are good but not always used to their full potential.

### Commentary

74. Standards in Year 2 and Year 6 are average and overall achievement is satisfactory. In discussion, pupils in Year 2 identify their favourite programs. They clearly explain how to use the computer to organise and classify information and present their findings, for instance, in a block graph about their favourite fruit. Pupils are becoming independent in word-processing skills. They successfully communicate ideas, changing font and colour to match, for example, their firework poem. Their knowledge and skills in using control devices are not well developed. Pupils in Year 6 interrogate a web site efficiently when researching a topic. They use information technology systems competently to control equipment by writing a set of instructions. Most pupils are beginning to use spreadsheets skillfully to model and investigate, as when modelling the space needed to house attractions at a school fair. Higher attainers investigate profits from each event inputting formulae confidently to speed up their calculations. Pupils have very little experience of using e-mail in school. They are not familiar with the use of sensors as the school's equipment is broken.

75. No teaching was seen in Years 1 and 2. Teaching in the juniors is satisfactory, and leads to sound learning. Teachers' planning for weekly lessons in the computer suite is soundly based on national guidance and provides effectively for the step-by-step development of skills. Teachers start lessons efficiently with a brief recap of earlier work which helps pupils put new learning into context. However, lesson objectives are not shared. Consequently pupils are not always able to focus on precisely what is to be learnt. Occasionally the pace of lessons is too slow and management skills inefficient. As a result, some pupils do not concentrate well and do not make as much progress as they could. Teachers use questions effectively to extend pupils' thinking and help them solve problems for themselves. Learning support assistants are well deployed particularly to support pupils with special educational needs in small groups or individual work. The enthusiastic and knowledgeable teaching in Year 6 supports learning well because of the teacher's high expectations, clear objectives and brisk purposeful pace. Assessment procedures are in place at the end of each unit of work but these are not used efficiently to plan new learning.
76. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Whilst the co-ordinator monitors teachers' plans and samples of work, she has not had the opportunity to monitor teaching and learning in class. As a result there are some inconsistencies in provision. Involvement with the Education Action Zone has greatly enhanced the school's resources. The quality and quantity of hard and software in the suite and in class are much improved since the previous inspection and are now good. However, the effect of much training has been dissipated by staff absences and there is some insecurity of knowledge and understanding amongst the teaching staff. As a result of this and of some technical difficulties, insufficient use is made of resources like the interactive whiteboards to enhance the curriculum.

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

77. In weekly lessons in the suite sound links are made with subjects such as English, mathematics, history and art. However, the everyday use of computers or whiteboards in class is not well developed. Teachers do not plan systematically to use ICT skills at appropriate levels to reinforce learning in the suite, or to support learning imaginatively in other subjects.

### **HUMANITIES**

In humanities, work was sampled in **history** and **geography**, with only one lesson seen in history. It is therefore not possible to make an overall judgement about provision in these subjects. The evidence seen does indicate that standards are broadly average. Both subjects are soundly led but the limited opportunity to see what is happening in lessons leads to inconsistencies in teaching and expectations between classes.

#### **History**

Younger pupils in the school find out about life in the past from a range of sources. For example, in Year 1, pupils enjoyed talking to a pupil's grandmother who came to talk about life in the past. They were interested to ask whether, as a child, she had a bathroom in her house! Pupils use books and artefacts to find out about Victorian England. In their studies of Florence Nightingale in Year 2, pupils think about what conditions were like in the hospitals in Scutari, then use their imagination and literacy skills to write letters home. For example, *I have been shot in the shoulder and the hospital here is very muddy and dusty*. What the school does well is to make effective use of non-fiction books and artefacts to develop historical skills. What could be improved is the often over-reliance on photocopied worksheets, which sometimes leads to undemanding tasks. Inconsistencies exist between teachers in their expectations of the way pupils present their work. Whilst this is consistently good in Years 5 and 6, other work shows an acceptance of weaker presentation skills. Whilst literacy and numeracy skills are used satisfactorily to support learning in history, very little evidence was available to indicate that enough use is made of ICT.

## Geography

No lessons in geography were seen, but the scrutiny of pupils' work in books and on display around the school shows that a good feature of the work in geography is the way pupils are taught to use literacy and numeracy skills to support their geographical skills. There are good examples of this in the work of Year 6 pupils, who have used literacy skills effectively to write persuasive booklets encouraging people to visit Grasmere in the Lake District. Numeracy skills have been used well as pupils have estimated the distance from Grasmere to towns and cities in other parts of the British Isles. Pupils made interesting use of an extract from the visitors' book from Dove Cottage in Grasmere to make a graph to show where visitors had travelled. This information was then used to plot the countries on a map of the world. It is evident that this work has been well planned, enjoyed by the pupils and has had a positive effect on their geographical knowledge and skills.

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Provision in the subject is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum is taught in depth, so pupils develop sound knowledge.
- Teachers make good use of literacy skills to support learning.
- Not enough use is made of visits to enrich the curriculum.
- There are not enough planned opportunities to use ICT to support learning.
- The co-ordinator has limited opportunity to observe how the subject is being taught.

### Commentary

78. Standards of attainment seen during the inspection remain in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus, as they were at the time of the previous inspection. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall, which again reflects that found at the previous inspection. The scrutiny of pupils' work indicates that the teaching in Year 6 is consistently good. The achievement of all pupils, including those with special educational needs, is at least sound throughout the school and this is because the subject is taught in some depth. An example of this was seen in a Year 2 lesson, where the teacher tackled the subject of the Islamic pilgrimage of Hajj in an interesting way, with pupils re-enacting the ceremony of attacking the devil in the desert. The lesson deepened pupils' knowledge of Islamic religious ceremonies. What would have improved this lesson would have been a wider range of visual resources, such as large books and posters, or the use of the Internet to view the Hajj pilgrimage.
79. In a good lesson in Year 6, the teacher built upon the research pupils have been doing on Hinduism, by talking to pupils about a Hindu wedding that she had recently attended. Pupils enjoyed looking at the wedding photographs and the lesson extended the pupils' knowledge and understanding of Hindu festivals and celebrations, whilst also having a positive effect on pupils' awareness of the rich diversity of religious and cultural traditions.
80. Scrutiny of work shows that what teachers do well is to give pupils many opportunities to reflect and form thoughtful views on religious issues. The work of Year 6 pupils is well presented and these pupils have completed an impressive amount of work. Throughout the school, teachers make good use of literacy skills to support learning, either by the use of reading skills to research topics or to extend writing skills as they write reports and accounts about what they have learnt. What could be improved is the use of ICT to support learning. Whilst some use is made of the Internet for research, the opportunities to use and develop these skills are not consistently planned for and this is a weakness. Currently, the school

does not provide opportunities to visit churches from different faith communities and this is a missed opportunity to enrich the religious education curriculum and to extend pupils' knowledge and understanding.

81. The subject is led and managed satisfactorily. The subject co-ordinator regularly scrutinises pupils' work throughout the school and teachers' planning is regularly checked. However, no monitoring of teaching has taken place, so the co-ordinator is not in a position to have an informed view of the quality of teaching. Resources for the subject are satisfactory, but there are gaps in computer software programs and in the range of posters and large visual resources available to teachers.

## CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Work was mainly sampled in **art and design**, **design and technology**, **music** and **physical education**. Insufficient teaching was seen to make any overall judgement about provision in these subjects. Overall leadership and management are satisfactory. Co-ordinators draw up action plans based on an annual audit of their subjects. These plans are informative but co-ordinators have limited opportunity to check on their effectiveness in lessons.

82. In **art and design**, pupils have access to a wide range of materials and techniques. Younger pupils are enthusiastic about the variety of experiences offered. This was observed during a lesson when pupils wove colourful fabrics, threads and materials to create attractive designs using various structures such as bicycle wheels and flower arranging cones. Pupils developed their ideas further as they observed the weave of different fabrics through a magnifying lens and understood the terms *weft* and *warp*. The work on display provides an attractive environment. Sketch books in Year 6 are good and are used effectively for pupils to practise, develop and refine their skills in pattern and design using textiles and iron-on crayons. The school takes advantage of the *Artists in School* scheme which stimulates pupils' interest in art and design and helps to improve their achievements.
83. In **design and technology** pupils follow national guidelines in the subject. Older pupils show a good understanding of the design process and are fully aware of the principles of planning, making and evaluating. They understand how different materials are suitable for different purposes. Pupils said that the teacher makes learning fun. They enjoy designing and making motorised buggies and testing them. Younger pupils make moving pictures using split pins to make a crocodile's jaw move. Pupils in Year 4 are encouraged to generate their own ideas and use syringes to design pneumatic machines capable of operating a jack-in-the-box or a washing machine. The oldest pupils are looking forward to using their existing skills in their next project, which is to design a fairground.
84. The school's curriculum is enriched by the opportunities provided to explore **music** and the way sounds can be combined and used expressively. The input of specialist teaching is raising standards and learning is good in these lessons. Pupils sing tunefully and maintain a beat and rhythm using percussion instruments. A recently formed school orchestra including violins, flutes, recorders and percussion is already producing music of a very good standard.
85. A good **physical education** curriculum encourages pupils to enjoy exercise, develop healthily, play competitively and be enthusiastic about participating in team games. Pupils in Year 6 go swimming in the summer term but this is too late to help pupils who find this skill difficult. In a Year 2 gymnastics lesson, pupils worked co-operatively and learned how to observe, describe and copy what others have done. In a dance lesson, younger pupils performed good basic skills and used movement imaginatively. Older pupils extend their skills and participate fully in the wide range of physical education opportunities provided by the school. These include tag rugby, handball, cycling, tennis and judo. The school football team is successful in local competitions.

## PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Only one short lesson was seen and it would be inappropriate to make an overall judgement about subject provision on this limited evidence.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Classes have lessons that focus on developing pupils' personal and social skills.
- The school has clear planning guidelines to help teachers.
- Many activities are organised to develop pupils' understanding of their role in society.
- Leadership and management are good.

### Commentary

86. The school appreciates the importance of this area of pupils' education. This can be seen in the school's involvement with the International Baccalaureate Organisation with the aim to *teach pupils to relate the experience of the classroom to the realities of the world outside*. All classes have a specific lesson allocated to developing personal and social skills. For younger pupils this is a Circle Time session and for older pupils, lessons often include drama and more formal debate. In the lesson seen in Year 1 the teaching and learning were good and pupils grew in understanding about friendship and how their actions affect others. Other topics include healthy lifestyles, respect for others and property. Themes used in assemblies also develop pupils' social skills as they learn about what is acceptable in society and how they can contribute to caring for the environment. This is also evident in the school's fund raising activities which encourage pupils to see how practically they can support others less fortunate than themselves.
87. The school values the opinions of pupils and members of the school council feel a valued group because their suggestions are given serious consideration. Year 6 carry out many responsibilities in the school and they do this very conscientiously. Not least of these is their support for the younger pupils. The effect of this can be seen in the school as the younger pupils run to the older ones for a hug or a word of reassurance. This reflects the success of the school's determination to promote good relationships.
88. The subject is well managed and staff have clear guidance to help their teaching. The school is raising awareness of the importance of this aspect of the school with the focus on independent learning and is in the process of gaining recognition as a healthy school. Although the co-ordinator does not observe lessons being taught the impact can be seen in the daily life of the school.



## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>4</b>
How inclusive the school is	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	4
Value for money provided by the school	4
<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>4</b>
Pupils' achievement	4
<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>	<b>4</b>
Attendance	2
Attitudes	4
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	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	3
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	3
<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>4</b>
The governance of the school	4
The leadership of the headteacher	4
The leadership of other key staff	4
The effectiveness of management	4

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