

# INSPECTION REPORT

## WELTON ST MARY'S CE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Welton, Lincoln

LEA area: Lincolnshire

Unique reference number: 120591

Headteacher: Mr T Mason

Lead inspector: Mrs M Hulme

Dates of inspection: 22<sup>nd</sup> - 25<sup>th</sup> March 2004

Inspection number: 263279

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

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## **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils:	4 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	407
School address:	School Drive Welton Lincoln Lincolnshire
Postcode:	LN2 3LA
Telephone number:	(01673) 860 339
Fax number:	(01673) 862 947
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Andrew Peplow
Date of previous inspection:	16 <sup>th</sup> November 1998

## **CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL**

St Mary's is a Church of England Voluntary Controlled primary school. It is an above average-sized school situated in a large village, a few miles north of Lincoln. There are 407 pupils on roll, of which 57 are in the Foundation Stage. The 16 teachers, who include the headteacher and one who is part-time, teach the pupils in 14 classes. The pupils are mainly white and British with a few from other ethnic groups. Most come from the immediate village and there are some from other villages nearby. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average. This is a much sought-after school and numbers have been rising over the last few years, which has resulted in additional spaces added to the premises. There are 35 pupils identified as having special educational needs (8.6 per cent), which is well below the national average. Specific needs include moderate learning difficulties, physical difficulties, autism and behavioural difficulties. There are six pupils with statements of special educational need (1.5 per cent), which is similar to the national average. There have been no exclusions for the last few years. Because the school has grown considerably since the last inspection, the attainment on entry is now wider-ranging, but overall is similar to that nationally, with a significant group who have better communication skills than others and a few who have less skills than usually expected at age four. The school's successes are recognised in School Achievement Awards in 2000 and 2002.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
3609	Mrs Margaret Hulme	Lead inspector	Foundation Stage curriculum Religious education Physical education English as an additional language
9942	Mrs Susanna Stevens	Lay inspector	
20417	Mrs Margaret Owen	Team inspector	English Information and communication technology
29995	Mrs Maureen Walker	Team inspector	Science Art and design Design and technology Special educational needs
21858	Rev John Pryor	Team inspector	Mathematics Music Geography History

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**This is a very effective school.** The very good leadership has some outstanding features and is influential beyond the school. The school does very well for its children, who achieve well and reach high standards. The key to its success is the commitment of staff and governors to provide for all aspects of children's development. This is an exciting place to be and the committed teaching and purposeful leadership are the main reasons that children achieve as well as they do. The school provides very good value for money.

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

- Children achieve well and reach high standards by the time they leave school.
- Strong teaching is supporting children's learning well and driving up standards.
- Staff and governors support the headteacher's outstanding leadership very well in providing purposeful direction for the school's work.
- The school is managed very well and governors influence its work and give effective support.
- Provision for the Foundation Stage<sup>1</sup> and for children with special educational needs are very good so they make good progress.
- There is a wonderfully caring and supportive Christian ethos that provides a foundation for the very good provision for pupils' personal development. This results in excellent attitudes and behaviour.
- The very effective partnership with parents and the community results in very good views of the school and makes a very positive contribution to children's learning.

### HOW THE SCHOOL HAS CHANGED SINCE THE PREVIOUS INSPECTION

The school has made **good** improvement since the last inspection. The headteacher provides very firm direction for development and has empowered staff in moving the school forward. The issues in the last report have been tackled successfully. There are now high standards in all subjects. The strong Christian ethos provides a firm foundation for the children's attitudes and behaviour, which are now excellent. Children enjoy coming to school and attendance is very good. There continues to be a strong sense of direction and purpose from which children are benefiting.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

*The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 6 based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.*

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

*Key: A\* - very high; 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.*

**Achievement is good** because the teaching is **very good**. Foundation Stage children start school with attainment which is similar to that nationally. They settle into school well and are on course to attain the goals they are expected to reach by the end of reception and some will begin National Curriculum work early. In 2003, Year 2 children's performance in the national tests for reading,

<sup>1</sup> The Foundation Stage is children below statutory age, usually in the reception class of a primary school.

writing and mathematics was well above average and an improvement on the previous year. By the time they leave school, children reach very high standards in national tests, which was reflected in their written work and in lessons. Since Year 2, these pupils' progress has been better in mathematics and science than in English. Children with learning difficulties achieve well and make good progress.

Pupils' personal qualities, including their attitudes and behaviour are **excellent**. Almost all pupils are enthusiastic and benefit from teachers' high expectations'. The orderly and harmonious community means that bullying is rare. Overall, pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **very good**. An ethos has been created where values and beliefs are respected. Attendance is **very good**. The attendance rate is very high compared with other schools and there are no exclusions. Punctuality is very good and children come willingly to school.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

The school provides a **very good** education. Teaching is very good throughout the school. The excellent relationships and expectations that children will work hard and do their best encourage effective learning. The curriculum is very good, reflecting the very relevant range of learning opportunities and ensuring all groups achieve success. A very good range of additional learning opportunities enriches the curriculum. Care, welfare and support are very good. The staff make good efforts to keep track of pupils' progress, resulting in high levels of support and consequently good achievement. There are very good links with parents, other schools and the community, who contribute very successfully to children's achievement.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

The leadership and management of the school are **very good**, stemming from a strong, caring and purposeful headteacher, who leads the staff team very successfully. The school benefits from the very effective leadership of key staff and the good challenge and support from governors. The school is governed very well. Governors are well organised and informed, take a keen interest in performance and meet their statutory requirements. The very good management results from secure systems to ensure that financial and administrative work is efficiently carried out. Staff and resources are used effectively and decisions are made with improved standards in mind.

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

**Parents:** They have very positive views of the school and are very satisfied with the quality of education it provides and the standards their children achieve.

**Pupils:** They enjoy coming to school for the range of learning opportunities offered them. Self-esteem is high because they are listened to and contribute effectively to the school community.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

There is no significant area of weakness that merits an issue about major development to enable the school to move forward. Since the school is forward-looking, it has already planned further development. The aspects identified in the school development plan for some aspects of the curriculum and its resources should now be carried out, including:

- More time for some subject leaders to observe the teaching and learning across the school.
- The desirability to have more formal means of seeking parents' views.

## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

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

Pupils' achievement is **good** throughout the school, reflecting the very good leadership and very effective teaching. Standards are well above the national average in English, mathematics and science.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- All children achieve well because of strong teaching and parental support.
- Children in the Foundation Stage make a good start, achieve very well and a significant proportion start their National Curriculum work early.
- Pupils reach very high standards in national tests by the time they leave school.
- Standards in other subjects are often high and sometimes outstanding.
- Those with specific learning difficulties achieve well because they are very well provided for.

#### Commentary

##### *Starting school*

1. In recent years, the overall Foundation Stage profile has been found to be different to that at the last inspection and attainment on entry is now wider-ranging because the school has grown considerably since then and there is now a wider range of capability. When children start school in the reception classes, their knowledge, skills and understanding are broadly similar to one another, but a significant group have better language skills and a few are slower learners. They make a good start and most will reach the goals expected for their age in all areas of learning by the end of the reception year. There is a significant group that will do better than this and start their National Curriculum work early.

##### *The school's results in national tests*

2. The table below shows that last year standards at Year 2 improved on the previous year in reading and writing and were similar in mathematics, which were the results expected by teachers. Results are well above those nationally and, when compared with schools in similar social contexts, they are very high for reading and writing but at the expected standard in mathematics. There were few children who did not reach the expected standard and a very high percentage reached the higher level<sup>2</sup>.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	17.3 (16.6)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	16.1 (15.5)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	17.4 (17.8)	16.3 (16.5)

*There were 56 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

3. The Year 6 results last year were a little lower than the previous year in English and mathematics and about the same for science. These results are well above the national average in all three subjects and remain the same when compared with schools in similar contexts. However, when they are compared with prior attainment at Year 2, the progress in

<sup>2</sup> Level of work usually expected at junior age.



English is not as good as in mathematics or science. The school's investigations have not shown why this is so and the difference in scores between English and mathematics is 0.1. Had these scores been the same, then English progress, too, would have rated as highly as mathematics.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	29.4 (30.8)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	29.5 (29.4)	26.8 (26.7)
science	31.8 (31.0)	28.6 (28.3)

*There were 59 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

4. The trend of improvement is higher than that nationally and the results of the statutory targets<sup>3</sup> for English and mathematics at Year 6 can be seen in the table below. The school met its targets for the expected standard, but not for the higher level, although the results were in line with what teachers expected and the school did well to have half the year group at this level.

<b>Statutory targets for English and mathematics at Year 6</b>		
Subject	Targets 2003	Result
English L4+	93%	95%
English L5	60%	49%
maths L4+	93%	93%
maths L5	60%	53%

*Inspection findings*

5. In lessons and in samples of pupils' work, standards in English, mathematics and science are well above average for their age by the time pupils leave school. These findings are similar to the last inspection and the school has done well to maintain such high standards. The secure foundations at the end of the reception year are built on and children continue to make at least good progress, and sometimes very good progress. Action taken to raise standards has proved effective because the leadership has kept its eye on learning as a relentless principle.
6. In Year 2 tests, the girls perform better than boys in reading and writing but boys outperform girls in mathematics. In Year 6 tests, girls outperform boys in English but there is little difference between them in either mathematics or science. To counteract these differences, teachers are using different methods in lessons, setting targets and milestones, and ensuring that all receive the support they need. This is meeting with some success and the gap between boys and girls is narrowing.
7. Standards in religious education meet the requirements of the Lincolnshire Agreed Syllabus but have improved in Years 1 and 2. Now all classes have standards which are better than expected for the pupils' age.
8. Standards in information and communication technology had improved at the last inspection, and have improved yet again, and are now higher than expected for the pupils' age by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. The subject is now taught as a class lesson as well as being used as a tool for learning in other subjects; progress has improved and is now good.

<sup>3</sup> The percentage of pupils who are expected to reach Level 4 and above in English and mathematics.

9. Few lessons were observed in other subjects, but there was sufficient evidence to show that there are high standards in other subjects and pupils' achievement is good. Children's work in art and design is of the highest standard, and some is outstanding. Artwork displayed throughout the school is impressive. Displays of children's work in design and technology indicate that standards achieved are higher than is expected for their age. Children of all ages learn new skills and they design and make a range of high quality products. In geography, pupils have a better than expected knowledge and understanding of geographical terms and ideas, and reach high standards. The samples of work and discussions with pupils make clear that standards in history throughout the school are higher than generally expected. This is a singing school where music plays a very significant part and standards are high throughout the school. There was insufficient evidence to judge standards in physical education, but information available and reports from the secondary school indicate that standards are at least typical for age, and often better, with high standards in all sporting activities.
10. At the parents' meeting, there was general agreement that children were learning as well as they can. Parents said they were very happy with the standards and expectations. In the responses to parental questionnaires, almost all considered that children were making good progress. The small booster groups are effective because they enable children to be more confident and achieve to the best of their ability, for example, after six months a child is now in the top set for mathematics.
11. Children with special educational needs achieve well, reflecting the very good quality of teaching. Most make good progress and some do even better, working towards their own individual targets. Because of the very well focused support they receive throughout the school, most reach the expected standards in literacy by the end of Year 6.

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

This aspect is a significant strength. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are **excellent**. Their response to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural values, promoted very successfully by the school, is very good. As a result, their personal development is consistently of a very high standard. Attendance is **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils' excellent attitudes to learning reflect their enjoyment in school.
- Pupils are eager to attend school and nearly all are punctual.
- The outstanding behaviour stems from respectful and caring relationships.
- The strong, caring ethos forms a strong foundation for personal development.
- Provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good.
- Attendance has improved and is now very good.

### **Commentary**

12. Because of the interesting lessons, almost all pupils have very good attitudes to their work and arrive at school showing interest and enthusiasm for what they have to do. They speak with pride about their work and the activities they participate in, including extra-curricular and sporting events.
13. Relationships between pupils, and between pupils and adults, are exceptional. In lessons, pupils listen well, are attentive and work well together. They are always supportive of one another, considerate and conscious of the impact of their actions on others. Very good modelling of social behaviour by staff and older pupils, 'the buddy bench', and the care shown by pupils when someone has an accident, are examples of the quality of relationships in the school. Older pupils have a clear understanding of what needs to be done, and do it. They are

eager to take opportunities to organise work for themselves or take responsibility for caring for a younger pupil or pupils with special educational needs. Opportunities to demonstrate responsibility also come through involvement in charity work or community activities.

14. The excellent behaviour reflects polite and respectful pupils who are orderly and considerate as they move about the school, sharing a moment of laughter with a member of staff or enjoying praise for holding a door for a visitor. Teachers and all adults in the school have very high expectations of behaviour, to which pupils respond very well. Pupils comment that behaviour such as bullying or any harassment would be unacceptable and dealt with promptly by staff. Behaviour in classrooms and in the playground was excellent throughout the inspection and resulted in very orderly lessons where pupils worked hard, completed work and co-operated well, which contributed positively to the good achievement and high standards.
15. Pupils' spiritual awareness is promoted well and consequently they are confident in expressing their own beliefs and values whilst respecting those of others. The very good approaches in assembly contribute to this, and collective worship, which has a clear and confident Christian character, is, at the same time, accepting of individual differences. Moral development is very good, with staff having high expectations for the promotion of interpersonal skills through the well-presented personal and social education programme. The school council reinforces the need for fairness in a community with a strong ethos, which supports pupils' social development very effectively. Cultural awareness is developed through the planned curriculum and in cultural activities, such as African Arts Week, when story telling, music and drama celebrate the multicultural diversity in the wider community. Pupils' understanding of their own culture is taught through art and design, music, history, literacy and science, which contribute to a knowledge and understanding of western culture, whilst embodying the multicultural society surrounding them in the world today.

## Attendance

Attendance is now well above the national average because parents place a high value on the work of the school and they ensure that their children attend regularly and on time. Parents are very conscientious about notifying the school if their child is absent; there is no truancy.

### *Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (95.8 per cent)*

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	4.2	School data	0.0
National data	5.4	National data	0.4

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

## Exclusions

There have been no exclusions for several years.

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is **very good**, reflecting the strong teaching, good assessment, very good curriculum, high quality care and support, and a very effective partnership with parents and the community.

### Teaching and learning

Overall, teaching and learning are **very good** and sometimes outstanding. Assessment is good. The teaching is a significant strength and one of the main reasons that children do so well.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- The leadership provides very good direction for teaching and learning.
- The establishment of excellent relationships results in very good attitudes to learning.
- Teachers' high expectations of good behaviour ensures sustained work and very good efforts.
- The very effective learning resulting from teachers' very good knowledge is driving up standards.
- The innovative methods make learning more relevant and children enjoy working this way.
- The use of teaching assistants and other support staff contribute very positively to confident, secure children who achieve success and know their efforts are valued.
- Teachers make very good efforts to see that all children are treated fairly and take part in all the activities provided.
- A thorough system of assessment ensures an appropriate response to the needs of individuals.

## Commentary

16. As can be seen from the table below, the teaching is one of the great strengths of this school, and it is one from which other schools benefit because expertise is shared.

### **Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 53 lessons**

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
5 (10%)	25 (47%)	20 (38%)	3 (6%)	0 (0 %)	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.*

17. The teaching has improved since the last inspection when it was generally good. The very good teaching at the Foundation Stage has been maintained and that at Years 1 - 6 has improved yet again. There is a higher proportion of very good teaching and a significant proportion is outstanding. The inspection findings confirm the school's own self-evaluation of the quality of teaching and learning.
18. The leadership of the school is providing very good guidance for staff and the very good teamwork ensures consistency for children, good direct teaching of skills and an innovative approach to teaching subjects that is enjoyed by staff and pupils alike. An extensive programme of professional development encouraged by the leadership gives everyone the opportunity to share the expertise of others and children thrive on the challenging and often inspirational teaching that keeps them interested.
19. The excellent relationships established in all classes have given children trust in their teachers and an appetite to work hard and succeed at tasks. This begins at the Foundation Stage, where the teamwork between teachers and their assistants is excellent. The assessments made at the beginning about what children can do and the very good planning for what they need to learn gives them a very good start towards achieving the goals expected for children at this age. The skills of both teachers and assistants are used extremely well, resulting in a most consistent approach to every activity. As in the reception class, the relationships in other classes are a formidable force for learning because children are eager to please, prepared to work hard and make the efforts that result in high standards.
20. The very good management of children results in the school being a harmonious community where behaviour is excellent and there is an acceptance of social responsibility. Children take pride in finished work and are keen to explain how they achieved it. However, children are not boastful, as seen when a Year 6 pupil talked about choice of words in a very good piece of writing and made no reference to the outstanding handwriting this work demonstrated.

Because the teachers are very good role models, pupils accept that producing their best work should be the norm, but the praise they receive raises their self-esteem.

21. All staff have the same aspirations for the pupils and want to see them do well. The very good knowledge of the subjects or areas of learning they teach is instrumental in the way they plan lessons to meet the needs of individuals, fully prepared to change that planning so all can achieve success – thus, tasks are well matched to capability. Although pupils already reach high standards in some subjects, the teachers are keen to see this happen in all areas, and a good example of improvement because of better teaching was evident in a Year 1 religious education lesson. The teaching of this subject, described as ‘sound’ at the last inspection, is now very good because the stimulating, enthusiastic and consistently challenging teaching stems from an expert knowledge of the subject, how to teach it and how children learn. Consequently, the standards in this subject are higher now than at the last inspection. In mathematics, the teaching of pupils in groups based on capability and teachers’ insistence on high quality work that is well presented, and correct use of mathematical language result in higher standards and pride in performance. The effective use of teaching methods, such as themes or topics, bring imagination and curiosity to learning and occasionally results in some imaginative homework. Inspiration is taken from so many aspects of the curriculum, for example, the work of other artists and cultural traditions in art and design, which produced amazingly high standards in this subject.
22. Teachers make very effective use of teaching assistants and this reinforces and supports children’s learning in just the right way to make them go that extra step in improving their effort because they know it is valued. Children with special educational needs are very well supported in their learning within lessons. The close teamwork between the class teachers and the very knowledgeable learning assistants is central to the very effective teaching that enables the children to achieve as well as they can. Adults thoroughly appreciate each child’s needs and always expect the most of them. Tasks in lessons and individual targets are highly suited to the children’s stage of learning at all times and yet are challenging enough for them to be successful in the work they do.
23. Teachers’ assessments of children’s work are good overall and very good at the Foundation Stage. Consistent and effective practices are in place for assessing work. Assessment is used by all staff to focus sharply on how well all pupils are doing. Marking helps children improve their work and gives teachers detailed information about their knowledge and understanding. Pupils are good at helping to assess their own work as individuals and in whole-class groups, and there are challenging targets, particularly in English and mathematics. In the Foundation Stage, staff collect and record information regularly on experiences and achievements in all six areas of learning, which are shared with parents, who respond as part of an effective partnership.

## The curriculum

Provision for the curriculum is **very good**. Opportunities to enrich children’s learning are **very good**. Overall, accommodation and resources are **good**.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- A commitment to the full inclusion of all children is central to the school values.
- Extensive opportunities greatly enhance a curriculum that makes very natural connections between subjects, adding real interest and purpose to learning.
- Very good provision is made for children with special educational needs and those in the Foundation Stage.
- Children’s personal development is very well promoted through all learning.
- The accommodation and resources serve the school well in meeting the needs of the curriculum.

## Commentary

24. The school provides a very good primary curriculum because there is a very well planned and themed whole-school framework that ensures learning is truly relevant and stimulating for all children. Although the themes show the links between all subjects are very firmly established, the contribution of individual subjects is regularly reconsidered so that the full teaching programme of each is included. Personal, social and health education and citizenship forms an integral part of each theme and reflects the importance the school places on the development of children's many personal qualities, one of which - "*thirst for learning*" - epitomises children's very positive responses to their work and the high standards they achieve.
25. The school provides for children with special educational needs very well so that they have full access to all aspects of the curriculum. A particular strength is the high quality support they receive so all take a full and active part in the work of the class. Only when appropriate are children withdrawn for more focused tasks, for example, the booster sessions. Activities are very well matched to children's stage of learning and, because there is early identification of specific concerns, teachers are very aware of children's progress. Individual education plans are the focus of learning, the targets are few in number, very clear and precise, and progress towards them is regularly checked. Challenging tasks that enable children of all abilities to succeed is a significant feature of lessons and the needs of those with particular gifts and talents are recognised so that they, too, can excel.
26. Provision for the youngest children of the Foundation Stage in the reception classes is particularly good. The very good assessment systems mean that individual needs are well catered for, the range of activities provides first-hand practical experiences and purposeful play, so children make good progress. The curriculum starts with the requirements for this age, but quickly moves into those for the National Curriculum once that foundation is established and staff are confident that children have the knowledge, skills and understanding to move forward.
27. Children benefit greatly from the very many curriculum opportunities they have to take part in sporting activities and those related to the arts, music and drama. A large school choir rehearses regularly and the woodwind band, which includes members of staff, plays regularly. Very many children represent the school in team games, athletic or cross-country events. Regular focus weeks, such as that about "African Arts," offer new, exciting and diverse experiences, for example, in the continent's traditional arts, crafts and music. Through the good range of extra-curricular clubs, children extend their skills and enjoy taking part, but few opportunities yet extend to younger children. Through the many contacts and visits to the comprehensive school and the experiences of fieldwork on their residential trip, children in Year 6 are very well prepared for their move to secondary education.
28. Visits to places of interest are very wide-ranging and many visitors are welcomed into school to share their experiences, enthusiasms or expertise with the children, enriching and widening their understanding and making learning very pertinent and enjoyable in so many ways. For instance, the visit of Year 2 to the National Mining Museum, or listening to a retired teacher of pupils with impaired vision, when they discover how Louis Braille successfully overcame the problems caused by his blindness.
29. The school benefits greatly from very well qualified teachers, many with acknowledged subject expertise that influence the expertise of those in other schools, and well-trained support staff. This very effective team contributes very significantly to the high quality curriculum and to children's achievements. The school accommodation is good, scrupulously well cared for and maintained. Dynamic displays of the highest quality celebrate children's work in informative and very attractive ways, which makes the school a stimulating place to learn. The accommodation has improved since the last inspection but, with constantly growing numbers, further permanent improvements are identified in the strategic plan. Facilities for those with

physical disabilities enable full access to the curriculum. The material resources are good overall, and are used very effectively in lessons. However, the changes to the library are not yet complete and the school is still adding to its book stock.

### Care, guidance and support

This aspect is a strength. The care, welfare, support and guidance of all pupils, based on knowledge of their needs, is **very good**. The involvement of pupils, by seeking, valuing and acting on their views, is **very good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- All procedural matters and practices, with regard to the health and safety, child protection and welfare of the pupils, are very good; the premises are maintained well and are very clean.
- Support and guidance for pupils' personal development are very good and focused on the pupil as an individual.
- The school seeks and values the views of its pupils.
- Class teachers know the pupils well and use information effectively in giving sound advice and very good support.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. Pupils are sensitively and effectively supported.

### Commentary

30. The school provides a very caring, orderly, supportive environment for all its pupils. Parents and pupils endorse the welcoming ethos and approachability of staff. Pupils say 'it's a good place to be' and feel they have supportive adults to talk to about any concerns they may have. Child protection procedures follow the recommendations of the area child protection committee, and staff know what to do if they have any concerns. There are clear health and safety procedures, including risk assessments, which are implemented well. Internet access is supervised appropriately. Parental consent is requested for each visit off site, such as sporting fixtures. Pupils' medical needs are well known to staff and catered for sensitively. The procedures ensure that children work in a healthy and safe environment.
31. The excellent relationships between pupils and teachers are based on trust and mutual respect. Teachers know their pupils well and their understanding of their personal skills ensures that older pupils are encouraged to take on greater responsibility and act as role models for the younger children in the school. Year 6 pupils carry out a range of duties very well and conscientiously. Staff have consistently high expectations that all pupils will behave in a mature and sensible manner. Observations during the inspection confirm that these expectations are justified very well. Teachers and teaching assistants give very good support to pupils with special educational needs. They have a very clear idea of how these pupils learn and encourage them to participate fully in all the school has to offer. Their work is supported by outside agencies when necessary. Pupils settle happily into the Foundation Stage, reflecting the good arrangements that are made with the pre-school groups. Transition arrangements for Year 6 pupils into secondary education are very well organised and pupils feel confident that they know staff, working procedures and what is expected of them when they enter this stage of their education.
32. The procedures for seeking children's views, such as through the school council, are very effective. Children are confident in expressing their views thoughtfully and sensibly because they know that staff will give them serious consideration and act on them where possible. They are involved in many aspects of school life that affect them directly, such as evaluating their work and making suggestions for improvements to the outside play area.

## Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school's partnership with parents, other schools and the wider community is **very good** and this aspect, too, is a significant strength.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents play a big part in the education of their children.
- Information for parents, including written reports, is very good.
- There are strong, collaborative working partnerships with other schools, and very good transition arrangements for older pupils.
- The school is friendly and accessible to parents.
- There is active participation in community events.
- Procedures for seeking and acting on parents' views are largely informal and infrequent.

### Commentary

33. The school encourages parents to support their children's education. Parents who attended the pre-inspection meeting, and those who responded to the questionnaire, agreed that the school works hard to make them feel welcome, and they help in class, assist on trips and support project work at home. The newsletters, curriculum information and letters informing parents of forthcoming events create an effective framework for parents to assist their children with work at home. Parents' meetings are well attended and annual reports provide clear information on their children's progress. Targets are set for each pupil and personal development is analysed fully to enable parents to understand how well their child is doing at school. Although parents' views about possible changes to school life are valued, they are generally sought informally and irregularly. Some parents would like a more formal means for seeking their views and a more obvious recognition that the school considers these.
34. Parents give their children useful support at home and are generally happy with homework, which is provided on a regular basis and reinforces what has been learned in class. The quality of homework is good and, although stated as "occasionally, it is a bit of an effort", parents feel it is appropriate and often enjoyable for them and their children. Parents praise the manner in which the school handles sensitive issues and deals with problems when they arise. Although some parents raised concerns about some pupils being treated unfairly compared with others, they were found to be unjustified, and conversations with pupils endorsed the fairness of staff in all dealings with them. They confirm that auditions for performances and awards are given in a fair and equitable manner with outcomes understood and accepted by all.
35. The school has very good links with the local community. Parents are enthusiastic about this involvement and the beneficial effect on their children's learning and enjoyment. The school choir sings at a residential home. Collective worship sessions benefit from very close links with the church and visits by lay preachers. Visits by local artists and musicians are recorded in displays of pupils' work, as is their enthusiasm for music lessons, such as reception pupils setting 'Billy Goats Gruff' to musical accompaniment in a most accomplished, joyful manner. Opportunities for inter-school competitions and the close partnership with the local comprehensive school provide a smooth transition for older pupils, supplemented by very good arrangements for a series of several taster days.



## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership is **very good**, reflecting the outstanding leadership of the headteacher and the drive to enable children to achieve as well as they can, with the best use of the resources available. The management is **very good** and all statutory requirements are met. The school is governed **very well**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The clear vision and purposeful leadership of the headteacher, strongly supported by the deputy and other key staff, provide firm direction for the work of the school.
- There is very good leadership and management of the curriculum, but some subject leaders lack time to observe the teaching and learning across the school, which limits their effectiveness.
- The very good teamwork and excellent commitment to inclusion has created superb relationships between staff and pupils, which strongly motivate children to achieve their best, and they respond with excellent behaviour.
- The strong commitment to performance management for all staff very effectively brings about improvement.
- There is good challenge and support from governors, who keep in close touch with school's work, making an effective partnership.

### Commentary

36. This is a very effective school and its performance has improved since the previous inspection. The headteacher provides outstanding leadership. He has been at the school for a number of years and has maintained his clear vision and calm, strong sense of purpose, with a systematic approach to school development and insistence on high standards. He appreciates the value of distributed leadership and encourages the development of all staff. Consequently, he receives strong support from a very effective deputy and other key staff.
37. The leadership team has a considerable impact on teaching and learning. The united and supportive team of staff and governors put the children first and are totally committed to making the best provision they can for children's all-round development. The school ethos is one of genuine concern to provide the best for all pupils. Every care is taken to meet children's individual needs, especially those with learning difficulties. The school has increased the number of teaching assistants further and ensures these children are supported well. The leadership of special educational needs is very good.
38. The leadership of the curriculum is very good. The co-ordinators play an important part in leading and managing their subjects. The monitoring of teaching and learning by the headteacher is excellent, enabling him to provide the best possible guidance for the curriculum and teaching. He is supported in this task by subject co-ordinators, which works very well in the subjects of English, mathematics and science. They analyse assessment data, and understand the strengths and areas for development in their subject. They constantly strive to improve provision in their subject in order to raise standards. Co-ordinators of other subjects work hard to drive up standards and improve achievement, but lack time for the more rigorous monitoring of teaching and learning, which makes them less effective because they do not see it first hand. The school has already reviewed the roles and responsibilities of staff and is aware of the requirement for non-contact time for teachers to undertake this task.
39. The school's self-evaluation is very well developed and reviewed annually. The results of national and optional tests are analysed carefully and the teachers' regular assessment of the work of all pupils is used to check that they are making the progress predicted. The information gathered in this way enables the school to identify areas for the school development plan. An effective use of this information was the identification of a need to

improve spelling and this is now being addressed with new materials and methods. Performance management is well developed and now includes all teaching assistants as well as teachers. The deputy head ensures that the training needs of all staff are met efficiently. The school is over-subscribed and does not have difficulty recruiting staff because people enjoy working here as part of a team.

40. The governing body both challenges and supports the school. It fulfils its responsibilities and ensures the school runs efficiently for the benefit of the children. The governors contribute to the school improvement plan, are regular visitors and knowledgeable about what happens here. A few work as volunteers in classes and most have links to subjects and observe teaching and learning regularly. The governors' successful application to increase the number of children the school can accept has been a great benefit and there are now two classes for each year group. The building work associated with this change has been very well managed and new plans have been made to make changes that will help pupils have better learning opportunities, such as extending the hall. When taking decisions about major spending, the governors are keen to see they get best value from the funds available for the educational priorities already identified by the school.
41. The management of the school finances is very good and financial records are detailed and accurate. Balances carried forward in previous years for improvements to the building have been used and the school is now correctly spending all of the current income on the children on the school roll this year. The school provides very good value for money.

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

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	822,747
Total expenditure	821,685
Expenditure per pupil	2,106

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	12,909
Balance carried forward to the next	13,971

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

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

Provision for the reception children in the Foundation Stage is **very good**, reflecting the very effective teaching and support that enables the children to achieve very well.

All the children achieve very well because the teaching is very good. The curriculum is planned very effectively to provide a wide range of activities that are relevant to these children and matched appropriately to their needs. Although some activities are adult-directed, there is a good balance between these and those that children initiate and work at independently. The teachers and their assistants are all very skilled and work particularly effectively as a team with a totally consistent approach to the children. All adults take responsibility for observing how well they are doing and, in keeping tabs on their progress, know exactly what should be planned for the next lesson. They provide a good example to the children and insist on high standards of behaviour, to which the children respond well.

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

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

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

- Excellent relationships have been established so children are secure and happy.
- Teaching is very good and children make rapid progress and achieve very well.
- All adults provide lots of encouragement to give children confidence to try new things and make good efforts.

#### **Commentary**

42. Children achieve very well and most are already reaching the goals expected for their age. Almost all will have exceeded them by the end of the reception year. The teaching and learning of this area are very good. The excellent relationships motivate children to want to learn. The trusting relationships help to build children's confidence, concentration spans have grown and now most manage to maintain attention for long periods of time. All children collaborate well in a small group, share equipment and take turns. Guidance about acceptable behaviour helps to increase children's understanding of what is right and wrong and why it is so. They have settled well into class routines and are familiar with class rules. They understand that unsociable behaviour is unacceptable and that there are warnings first before action is taken. Most children respond well to this and, because teachers provide interesting activities, there are no instances of disruption. Adults are helpful in encouraging children to take care of their personal needs and they gain independence in changing clothes, putting on aprons or finding their reading bags to take home.

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

Provision in communication, language and literacy is **very good** and reflects the innovative teaching methods and very good achievement.

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

- The linking of sounds and letters is taught well and this is successful in stimulating children's interest in reading.
- No opportunity is missed to extend the children's use of language,
- The emphasis on communication is reflected in the print rich environment of the classrooms.

## Commentary

43. Children make very good progress in this area of learning and achievement is very good. Indications are that most children will reach the goals expected for their age and many will do better by the end of the reception year. Because there is an emphasis on activities that involve children in talking and listening, they make fast progress and achieve very well. Practical experiences, such as games that help children learn their letter sounds, or using headphones and tapes to listen to a story, together with discussion times and responses to questions, make children eager to use the skills they have acquired. About a quarter have very well developed skills and others learn from listening to them and their teachers. The very good relationships give children confidence to join in discussion and adults give an emphasis to everyone listening carefully so they will know how to respond. The expressions on the faces of adults give children a clear message that their efforts are valued.
44. When groups are small and adults are able to spend more time helping individuals, the children make rapid progress. Many now control writing tools well and already make good attempts to write their own name on paper, form letters and copy a sentence. When attempting a simple sentence, the older ones know how to use their finger to make a space and independent writing is coming on apace, as seen in the example from the story of *The Three Billy Goats Gruff*, when one child wrote, "I like the port when the whent overt the Brid". No opportunity is missed to stimulate children's use of language and drama is an imaginative way used by teachers to maintain their interest in reading. As they watch the story of *The Three Bears* enacted, they read the speech bubbles and make good gains in word and sentence recognition. Care is taken to make the class a stimulating place to learn where the importance of the printed word is given particular emphasis. The whole class sharing a range of texts extends an enjoyment of books, and most handle them carefully and want to learn how to read. Parental help in reading provides regular opportunities for children to practise the skills they have learned and build on them. Parents are well briefed and work effectively as part of the team.

## MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **very good**, reflecting the teaching and high levels of support.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers make effective use of purposeful play and practical activities to extend mathematical skills and build on prior learning.
- Children benefit from opportunities to work in small groups because they make faster progress.
- The numerically rich environment extends children's understanding.

## Commentary

45. The teaching is very good and children are achieving very well. Most will reach the goals expected for their age by the end of the reception year and some will have started National Curriculum work. Teachers plan regular oral sessions that give children lots of opportunities to practise their counting, recognise numbers, use number fans to show their understanding of such challenges as "show me one more than", or explain such aspects as similarity and difference. Mathematical vocabulary is everywhere and the classroom provides a numerically rich environment. Each session includes a variety of practical activities that reinforce what has been learnt and this works best when the teacher has help from more than one adult because there is more time for individual support and children learn faster. When a governor worked with a small group to make bear-shaped buns of different sizes, it reinforced work on size, shape and mathematical language. Some teachers are very skilled at making their own resources and, when faced with a row of houses of different sizes and numbers, made by the

teacher, the children couldn't wait to handle them, put them in order and find an appropriate one for the many sizes of soft bears provided. Because teachers organise sessions very well and other adults are very effectively deployed, children achieve very well and make good progress.

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

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- A very good range of practical activities, visits and purposeful play provides children with lots of experiences to explore, experiment and investigate.
- Staff use questioning very effectively to enhance the children's knowledge and understanding of the world about them.

### **Commentary**

46. Children have a great interest in the activities provided for this area of learning and achieve very well. They have made good progress since starting school and will reach the goals expected for children of this age by the end of the reception year. Teaching and learning are good. The range of activities is planned to extend the children's understanding and stimulate their curiosity so that they explore, experiment and ask questions. Children collaborated well in the making of a map, which was planned on a whiteboard first and then translated into a model. They explained how they overcame problems, such as the washing line not being big enough, by making a washing basket to hold other clothes. Because teachers plan practical activities when they can explore, experiment and investigate, the children use their senses and select suitable equipment to find out more, and ask questions about why things happen. When they act as young scientists, they take part in an experiment to see whether objects frozen in an ice block will melt fastest if immersed in hot or cold water. Children use such technology as listening centres or computers. In the ICT suite, children are familiar with how to log-on and work in pairs, with the faster learners helping those who are slower. In this way, both partners maintain interest, although the one operating the mouse is more engrossed than the other. They watch the teacher carefully as she demonstrates the task, and work confidently, taking turns and sharing fairly. Because the teacher has organised the activity with an additional parent helper, children have the support they need and make good progress with a challenging task.

## **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in physical development is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children experience a range of activities that inspire them to make good efforts.
- The uses of activities indoors are effective in enabling the development of physical skills.
- The hall sessions are used effectively to extend all physical skills.

### **Commentary**

47. The teaching and learning are good and the children are achieving well. Almost all are on course to reach the goals expected by the end of the reception year. There is very good planning that provides children with a range of activities that they enjoy and are prepared to make good efforts to succeed. Children love the challenges that adults provide, secure in the knowledge that support is available if needed. In the hall sessions, they show an awareness of space, themselves and others. Although these sessions are exciting, such as using the

parachute, they listen carefully to the teacher because they know it is important to follow directions to be safe. A few children take the initiative when they spot something that needs attention and the teacher skilfully changes plans to recognise that effort and praise it. These sessions work well because staff help children feel secure, gain confidence and make good efforts. Activities took place outdoors but these were not observed. Indoors, children handle a range of objects well and have better control of tools, such as pencils, brushes, crayons, puzzles and small construction apparatus. Their enjoyment of play dough and clay is strengthening their fine physical skills and helping to improve tasks such as writing and painting.

## **CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in creative development is **very good**, reflecting the stimulating environment in which creativity, originality and expressiveness are valued.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teachers give children confidence to try something new and use a range of media and materials.
- Effective use is made of role play to develop children's imagination.
- Children make very good efforts because they find the activities enjoyable and interesting.

### **Commentary**

48. The teaching and learning are very good and children achieve very well. Most children will reach the goals expected for their age by the end of reception year and some will do better. Children use a range of media and materials. They clearly use their imagination well in drawing, painting, junk modelling and using collage. Because they are encouraged to use their senses, they touch and explore clay, finding out how malleable is this material. When handling materials to make a collage of an animal, they are encouraged to select carefully for the purpose. The work on display indicates that standards are at least those expected for children of this age and some samples were better, such as the observational drawing of snowdrops. Children paint, draw, use malleable material such as clay, sing and use percussion instruments. Because teachers use role-play effectively, the children make good use of their imagination in their learning. In one session, the use of a role play brought a shoe shop experience to life when they tried on shoes and were totally engrossed in strutting round the shop, deciding whether they were a good fit. They played at being the shopkeeper, deciding prices, writing bills and taking money. On another occasion, role-play was linked to music and drew on their experiences from visiting a farm. Children enjoy musical activities and make very good efforts as they clap out their name or clap a rhythm accurately. Teachers often give challenging tasks, such as tapping out a rhythm on the tambourine; not all are confident to respond but, because they listen carefully, they learn the correct names for the instruments used. Some children demonstrate very good rhythm and have few problems in learning a new song.

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

### **ENGLISH**

Provision in English is **very good**, reflecting the high standards and very good teaching.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children achieve very well and reach high standards.
- The quality of teaching is very good overall and sometimes excellent.
- Good marking informs children how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve.

- Children's attitudes and behaviour are excellent.
- The library is improved but lacks the range of books needed.
- Leadership and management of the subject are very effective.

## Commentary

49. Children achieve very well because the teaching is very good. By the end of Year 2 and Year 6, standards are well above average in speaking and listening, reading and writing. The school consistently compares very well with similar schools for children aged seven and 11, and the trend of improvement in test results is also higher than that found nationally. Almost all the Year 6 group reached the expected standard in the 2003 national tests and half of them attained the higher level. The standards in lessons, and from evidence on display and in children's books, confirm this high attainment. In all classes, there is a wide span of ability and teachers plan carefully to ensure that the work children do is suitably matched to their needs. Most children, including those with special educational needs and the higher attaining pupils, make good progress.
50. The quality of teaching is very good overall, with some examples of excellent lessons. All teachers are skilled in matching the work they set to the children's different levels of ability. Because teachers make the lessons interesting and relationships are excellent, children enjoy answering questions and feel confident in discussions when they use an increasing range of vocabulary. The teaching assistants are valued and particularly helpful when working with children who have special educational needs. Their support helps them make good progress.
51. The marking of work is undertaken regularly and teachers provide comments which are supportive and helpful so children know how to improve. This is enhanced by the effective use made of targets for improvement.
52. As reading is highly valued, children in Years 1 and 2 have good quality individual graded books to share with parents as well as reading in class. An efficient home and school record book ensures that progress is closely monitored and most children can read well by the end of Year 2. The school has recently introduced a new system of teaching letter sounds to focus on the correct spelling of words and further improve children's writing. Most children are proficient in drafting their work and then editing and improving it. This skill is emphasised throughout the school and was the focus of an outstanding lesson with Year 4 children.

### Example of outstanding practice

#### **Emphasising the universal value of improving a draft by using a data projector with screen.**

The teacher encouraged the class to work together on a piece they had produced earlier, strengthening the descriptions and selecting stronger adjectives. The children had considered the original to be a good effort but soon realised that using their imagination or an electronic thesaurus to consider alternative vocabulary could enhance it. Exciting phrases, suggested by children of all abilities, were carefully considered and valued, 'a pungent smell of fire drifting towards them'. When individual pieces of writing were discussed, a favourite sci-fi setting included enchanting descriptions, 'One half of the land was candyfloss purple. A glistening bird flew by.' By selecting examples of work from more-able children, as well as from some who struggle with their writing, the teacher emphasised the value of improving a draft.

53. Overall, the standard of presentation and handwriting in children's books is very good. Teachers show that they appreciate this and writing is a strong feature in most classroom displays. Staff mark work regularly and provide very helpful comments so that children know how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve.
54. The library has had to be moved several times in recent years because of the extensive building work at the school. Although some very good books have been added recently, the school is aware that it needs a wider and more extensive range of books.

55. Leadership and management of the subject are very good. The two co-ordinators work hard to support colleagues in raising standards and they ensure that children's individual targets are directed towards further improvement.

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

56. Pupils are provided with a wide range of opportunities to use their literacy skills in other subjects. Information and communication technology is particularly well used well in literacy lessons and children often illustrate the poems and stories they have written on the computer by scanning or using clip art. Overall, this enables pupils to see a relevance to their work, which helps to raise standards.

## **MATHEMATICS**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching is of a consistently high standard and staff have high expectations of the pupils.
- Assessment is used well and pupils are given a very good idea of how well they are doing.
- The leadership and management of the subject are very good.
- Very good use is made of support staff.
- The insistence on high quality presentation of work and correct use of mathematical language leads to pride in work and higher standards.
- Careful and imaginative planning ensures a good balance between various aspects of mathematics.
- Occasionally, staff taking groups do not pass information about the pupils' work and progress to the class teacher.

### **Commentary**

57. The standards in mathematics are higher than usually found in pupils aged seven and very much higher than those expected of pupils aged 11. Throughout the school, the pupils achieve well because the teaching is consistently good. Often, it is very good and occasionally, it is excellent. The teachers, and the teaching assistants, who are rightly regarded in this school as part of the teaching team, have high, but realistic, expectation of the pupils, who respond very well.
58. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 count confidently in 10s and 5s as well as 2s. They have a good understanding of the four operations, for example, knowing what "sharing" means and that an estimate is a sensible or good guess. They recognise a good range of simple regular shapes and understand their qualities. Work using numbers in practical situations is well managed.
59. The lessons are very imaginatively planned so that the work is enjoyable as well as challenging and the pupils can rightly feel a sense of pride and self-worth in their achievements. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 have good understanding of number bonds and the relationships between, for example, multiples of 3 and 6, and between doubling and halving. They understand time, using an analogue clock face with confidence. The higher achievers work through complex problems related to time with confidence and precision. They explain what they are doing clearly and accurately.
60. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 are engaged in work in number, shapes and handling mathematical information well in advance of what is normally expected of pupils of that age. For example, they made and used decision trees using two-dimensional shapes of the objects, basing the decision questions on their qualities. Older pupils handled both fractions and percentages with



accuracy of understanding. They accurately estimated segments of pie charts using a variety of strategies.

61. In Years 3 to 6, the pupils are arranged in sets based broadly on their current attainment, but also with an eye to their particular individual needs. This ensures that the work is very well matched to those needs and they regularly achieve success. The lessons proceed at a good pace so that learning, which is extensive, is enjoyable and firmly based. It is a truism of education that happy pupils learn best, and this is exemplified very well in this school.
62. The careful planning and very competent management of their learning also ensures positive attitudes to the subject and very good behaviour among all the pupils. Class teachers make very good use of the assessment of pupils' work and progress to ensure that successive lessons build soundly upon each other and the pupils' learning has firm foundations. Supporting this is the care with which teachers ensure that pupils know how well they are doing or where they need to put in some extra effort. A noteworthy element is the teachers' neat and careful marking of pupils' work. This is a very good example of the way in which all the staff carefully model good practice in the subject, ensuring careful presentation of work and the accurate use of correct mathematical terms. All of these factors contribute to higher achievement and very good standards, and to a proper pride in the work shared by staff and pupils alike.
63. Using mathematics in other subjects, such as science or geography, to classify and handle information is a strong feature in the planning and teaching of the subject. Pupils are taught very effectively to think mathematically; they are successfully encouraged to explore different ways of tackling problems. In lessons, the teachers receive their suggestions courteously – again, setting the pupils a very good example of how they should relate to one another. The same generosity of spirit is encouraged in the good support that pupils who have special educational needs receive from the staff, and in the way in which their contributions in lessons are valued. As a result, these pupils achieve results that are higher than might otherwise be expected.
64. The leadership of the subject is very good and draws out the best from the staff, and the management of the teaching and learning is done very effectively, though very occasionally the informality of communication between teachers of mathematics sets and class teachers leads to problems for the latter. Parental involvement in the children's learning in mathematics is encouraged by the homework set and the provision of targets to be achieved, and examples of mathematical games that parents and children can play together.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

65. Good use is made of a wide variety of links that enable pupils to use their mathematical skills. This has a particularly high priority in teachers' planning and is aimed at linking both mathematical and ICT skills in a constructive way. The use of measurement and presenting information in graphs is good.

### **SCIENCE**

Provision for science is **very good**.

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

- Practical learning deepens children's understanding of all aspects of science and very successfully develops their investigative skills.
- Because of very strong teaching, children of all ages achieve well.
- Many visits and visitors enrich children's experiences of science.
- Natural connections with other subjects enhance the relevance of learning.

## Commentary

66. By the end of Year 6, children reach high standards that are well above those found in most schools. In the 2003 national tests for 11-year-olds, almost three quarters of the children achieved the higher Level 5, well exceeding the average for children of their age. Over recent years, the high standards have risen steadily. At the end of Year 2, most children achieved the expected standard for their age and many more reached the higher Level 3. In the lessons seen, all children achieved well and standards were always above those expected.
67. Teaching overall is very good, is never less than good and has many strengths; as a result, all children make at least good progress in all lessons. Very meticulous planning ensures that all aspects of the science curriculum are thoroughly taught within the termly themes and work is very well matched to all levels of ability to challenge the pupils' understanding and take their learning forward. Those with special educational needs or less confident learners achieve well because of the high quality support they receive from very skilled and well-prepared teaching assistants and very good teamwork between all adults to involve them fully in lessons. Teachers have very high aspirations for their children – to which the pupils eagerly respond.
68. Experiencing their science at first hand sparks real interest in learning. All elements of scientific investigations are systematically developed with increasing independence in formulating questions to be investigated, recognising fair test conditions and successfully relating results of experiments to their original hypothesis. When children in Year 4 took up their teachers challenge through a series of investigations to discover the relationship between vibration and the volume of sound, they successfully built on the fascination of the children in Year 2, who experienced, by playing the musical instruments, how the sounds are produced. Understanding and using the correct scientific terminology is central to learning in all lessons – for example, in Year 6, when discussions about micro-organisms encompass their conditions for growth and the causes of decay.
69. Visits to places of interest and visitors invited into lessons bring science alive. From going underground at the National Mining Museum in Year 2, to experiencing the humid conditions for plant growth at Year 6, visits thoroughly expand scientific understanding and very successfully link the work to that in other subjects and to everyday life. Those who share their enthusiasms and expertise further enhance children's learning – from the Star Dome planetarium, musicians, wildlife experts or a visit of a teacher bringing understanding of Louis Braille's life to children in Year 2.
70. Numeracy skills are frequently used to support the work in science: from accurate measurements to tables, bar charts and line graphs that, for example, in Year 6 compare the changing temperature and volume of liquid over time. In Year 1, the children confidently use increasingly complex diagrams to sort the type and number of sounds they hear. Whenever relevant, information and communication technology (ICT) is used effectively: when presenting information, for research, sound recording, or using the digital camera to confirm change in the appearance of decaying fruit; the use of sensors, however, has still to be fully explored. Work is presented to high standards through the school and teachers' marking helps children to know how to improve their work by asking further questions. Science makes a very significant contribution to children's personal development, particularly through the co-operation shown in discussions and in decision-making in many lessons. The school grounds and pond are used well to study areas of science relating to habitats and food chains.
71. Science is led very well. The very knowledgeable subject leader has, through her continuous monitoring of teaching and learning of children's work and achievements, a very clear understanding of the strengths of science and areas for development throughout the school. Her priority is to develop a system that records teachers' regular assessments of children's learning more effectively, so providing clearer information about their progress and helping teachers as they plan new work.

72. There has been good improvement in science since the last inspection. The subject is regularly reviewed to further improve learning and raise the already high standards for all children. For example, the recent focus on that aspect of science that develops children's understanding of scientific investigations has strengthened the expertise of teachers, particularly in the use of measurement and the ways in which the results of investigations can be recorded.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards attained by pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 are higher than expected for their ages.
- The use of ICT in other subjects is good.
- Teaching and learning are very good.
- There is a need for further expenditure to refresh and increase the school's hardware.
- Leadership of the subject is very good.

### **Commentary**

73. There have been considerable improvements to resources and teachers' skills and confidence since the previous inspection; these are significant factors in the improved standards and achievement. Standards improved at the last inspection and have improved again, and are now higher than usually expected for children at the age of seven and 11.
74. The computer suite is very well used, with children usually working with a partner. When children share access to a computer, they collaborate well because relationships are excellent and they are interested in their work. The school also has eight computers in classrooms and both staff and children use 12 laptops extensively.
75. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is very good, resulting in children achieving well. By Year 6, all children confidently use the Internet to send e-mails with attachments. They also use it to select material to illustrate text in desktop publishing for newspaper articles on '*school children lost in the jungle*'. Older children produced very good multimedia presentations about the rainforest using PowerPoint. Although the school has no interactive whiteboards, teachers make very good use of a large screen in lessons where a data projector is operated. In literacy lessons, good use is made of ICT to improve children's writing. By Year 2, children understand that computers help them to carry out editing tasks faster than handwriting. The school makes very effective use of the skills and knowledge of teaching assistants to support the good progress and achievement made by most children, including those with special educational needs.
76. The school now uses ICT for tracking pupils' progress and identifying those who would benefit most from booster group work. All test result data is held on computer and ICT assessment records are used for setting targets for all children. Considerable progress has been made in ICT since the last inspection.
77. The leadership of the subject is very good. The co-ordinator has organised several training courses for teachers and he has produced tutorial materials for staff workshops. He monitors and evaluates teaching and learning well, and teachers' planning is of a high standard.

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

78. Good use is made of ICT in other subjects. There were many instances of links with geography, history, science and mathematics. Increasingly, pupils are using research from the Internet to help them discover salient information and understand the relevance of

technology in other areas of learning. Some excellent geography work on the Amazon rainforest, enhanced by the use of computers, was displayed throughout the school.

## HUMANITIES

No lessons were seen in history so no judgement is made about provision, standards or teaching and learning. Two lessons were observed in geography.

### Religious education

Provision in religious education is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards by Year 2 have improved since the last inspection.
- Teaching is good and children achieve well.
- Children have many opportunities to give their opinions and explain their thoughts and ideas.
- The very good relationships encourage openness during discussions and contribute well to children's personal development.
- There is now a very good range of resources to meet the needs of all religious faiths taught.

### Commentary

79. Standards meet the requirements of the Lincolnshire Agreed Syllabus and have improved by Year 2 since the last inspection. At that time, standards were satisfactory by Year 2 and good by Year 6. Because the teaching has improved at Years 1 and 2 and the quality of written work and discussion is better, pupils reach higher standards than expected for their age. Standards have been maintained at Years 3 to 6 and are higher than expected for the pupils' age, which is similar to the last inspection.
80. Overall, the teaching and learning are good, but in some classes they are very good, and occasionally, outstanding. Pupils make good progress, which is better in those lessons where teaching is particularly good. Teachers have high expectations of what pupils can do and make effective use of discussion times during lessons. The excellent relationships make pupils feel secure, they trust teachers, so are willing to share their thoughts and feelings, even when some topics are difficult to talk about, such as *forgiveness*. Because the teachers prepare lessons very well, and the atmosphere is right, the pupils share personal experiences and contribute thoughtfully to discussion. The very good lessons are especially successful because of the greater variation in tasks. In a Year 1 class, children were involved in discussion, examining Passover cards, looking at artefacts, reading captions, making decisions, and becoming very involved in the meal that celebrates the Jewish festival of Pesach. The stimulating and constantly challenging teaching stemmed from an expert knowledge of the subject and how to teach it. Wonder was expressed as each item of food was revealed and explanations were clear and readily understandable. The group work that completed this session also provided children with practical activities. Occasionally, the teaching is inspirational when difficult ideas are taught in a highly effective way, as in the example below.

## Example of outstanding practice

### Exploring prayer with a Year 4 class.

Starting from the common belief that worship never starts with prayer, the teacher startled the class by using technology to introduce a praise that eventually half the pupils realised was really a prayer. As realisation dawned that poetry or song may be a prayer, because it is really about talking to God, the interest mounted. Now was the time to share the homework – they had researched the subject and written their own prayer, but were they confident enough to read them aloud now that they realised it was talking to God? The secure, respectful relationships and level of trust revealed some mature understandings shared in an atmosphere of openness because the teacher was a good role model and shared his thoughts, too. Everyone was engrossed in their work as they completed a survey sheet; progress was better than might be expected. Achievement was very high because the stimulating and enthusiastic teaching constantly brought challenges, to which they responded very well. The evaluation at the end of the lesson helped pupils to talk about what they had learned and responses demonstrated the sharing of some very powerful writing. A singing prayer completed the successful session that pupils were still discussing the next day.

## Geography

The provision for geography is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is imaginative and gripping and catches the pupils' enthusiasm.
- Good quality topic work encourages the use of different subjects in learning.
- Lessons are supplemented very well by a good range of visits to places of interest.
- The leadership of the subject is good and forward looking.

### Commentary

81. Pupils throughout the school achieve well and standards in geography are higher in each year group than those normally found in primary schools. The pupils have a better than expected knowledge and understanding of geographical terms and ideas. They have high levels of geographical skills, as seen by Year 2 pupils interpreting aerial photographs of the village, turning them into maps, and Year 6, when pupils mapped an Amazonian village using grid references and coordinates.
82. Teachers provide a good basis of first hand knowledge and understanding of the subject, making very effective use of carefully planned visits, such as that to Caphouse Colliery, or the residential visit to Boggle Hole. In each case, the visits provided a basis for work in other subjects. Another significant feature of the work in geography is the use of dedicating a week to such areas as Africa when a very wide range of associated work is undertaken. Because teachers make very good use of short sessions at the end of lessons in other subjects to reinforce geographical skills, for example, mapping skills, the pupils become familiar with places in their own and other countries.
83. The subject is well led by an enthusiastic and knowledgeable co-ordinator. The work in each year group is planned jointly, and the co-ordinator ensures the continuity and progression of learning between years. Geography is seen as a significant contributor to the pupils' cultural development, while their understanding of their place in a wider world context broadens their spiritual, social and moral development.
84. In **history**, a scrutiny of pupils' work and discussions with staff and pupils indicates that standards in history are higher than generally expected, and that the pupils achieve well. The planning is carefully based on the requirements of the National Curriculum and work is planned using topics or themes, often with a historical basis. Very good use is made of visits to places of historical interest, often shared with geography. There is also a good range of visitors, who

share their accounts of their experiences with pupils to extend their understanding. Because teachers take care to develop historical skills systematically, pupils develop a sense of the passage of time and the changes that brings very early on, using their own personal histories as a starting point. By linking many subjects in a single topic, teachers provide good learning and a breadth of understanding such as the study of Louis Braille, which involved history, information and communication technology, literacy, and personal and social education, contributing different insights to pupils' understanding. It also included a visitor who caught the pupils' interest very well. The work is carefully presented because pupils enjoy the subject. History is well led and managed and plays a significant role in providing for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education, which is recognised in teachers' planning.

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

Although few lessons were seen in art and design, design and technology, and music, there was sufficient evidence to judge provision, standards and the teaching of those lessons seen. Physical education was sampled, but there is insufficient evidence to make judgements about provision.

### **Art and design**

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

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

- Children's work, impressively displayed throughout the school, is of the highest standard, and some is outstanding.
- Inspiration is taken from within so many aspects of the curriculum, including the work of other artists and cultural traditions.
- Developing and using very careful skills of observation are central to whatever artwork is undertaken.

### **Commentary**

85. Striking examples of artwork greatly enrich the children's work within a theme each term, the skills and processes, such as drawing, collage and sculpture, are thoroughly taught and explored to the highest standards. The excellent still life images of different light sources, created so effectively, using chalk and charcoal, by children in Years 1 and 2, epitomise the standards achieved. Very close observation of so many different objects, colours or situations inspires children's creativity and fires their imaginative use of different media. In Year 6, the colours and textures of the rainforest are very effectively captured through the older children's three-dimensional textile and clay images.
86. In the one lesson seen, the outstanding teaching resulted in amazingly good efforts in drawing as they created for themselves exactly the right colour and pattern to match those of the musical instruments they studied so closely. Teachers are keen to capitalise on the expertise of others. From outside the school, visitors, such as the expert on bats, fired the imagination of Year 1 as they recorded their unique likenesses of the animals. A week devoted to African Arts generated immense interest and opportunities to experience and investigate many cultural influences through the art and crafts of the continent, from fabric printing to traditional Kenyan necklaces. Visits to places of interest motivate ideas and intrinsically develop aspects of art and design. Sherwood Forest inspired Year 2 to assemble natural palettes of the shades of colour they find in the woodland. Effective use of ICT supports very well the creative work in art and design, from computer paint program to the inventive use of black and white photocopied images. The Internet provides opportunities for Year 3 to investigate the bold line and colour of the work of the artist Mondrian before developing the use of blocks of colour in their own work.

## Design and technology

Provision for design and technology is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Design and technology is highly valued as an integral and important part of children's learning.
- Creative ideas have real meaning and are inspired by many starting points.
- Skills and techniques are thoroughly taught.

### Commentary

87. Very imaginative projects in design and technology greatly complement the themes of work throughout the school, bringing true relevance to the children's work and providing opportunities for all ages to learn new skills and design and make a range of high quality products. Displays of children's work indicate that standards achieved are higher than are expected for their age.
88. In the only lesson seen during the inspection, children in Year 1 achieved highly because of very good teaching. This lesson was inspired by their science work focusing on light. Very detailed and clearly planned tasks with skills emphasised well, together with warm supportive relationships, resulted in great effort and very successful shadow puppets that were recorded using the digital camera. Teachers understand that having a real purpose to the work and developing and refining different making skills are both very important aspects to be planned for. The challenge to design and make a vehicle that would carry an egg safely over the moon's bumpy terrain is the task tackled successfully by Years 3 and 4. Motivation that captures the imagination has given teachers high expectations of what children can achieve. The Amazonian rainforest motivated Year 6 to design and make structures where camouflage is crucial. This activity called not only upon their making skills but also their flair and creativity to conceal their very well finished 'hides' within the forest environment.

## Music

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

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The leadership of the subject is strong and very well managed.
- The teaching is good and teachers are well supported.
- Music is integrated well into the curriculum and the life of the school.
- There are many opportunities for pupils to take part in music activities.

### Commentary

89. Music plays a very significant part in the life of the school and pupils' achievement is good because planning is very good, there is use of imaginative and engaging methods, and enthusiastic leadership and support.
90. Class teachers have a secure knowledge and work with their own pupils, but there is support that they can call upon should they need it. There is good co-operation between teachers and teaching assistants so that all pupils, including those with special educational needs, can benefit from the lessons. Music is imaginatively included in the themes and topics, so interesting links between music and, for example, art and science, are used, such as a very good lesson on sound in science, which used musical instruments as the principal resource

for the session. The very good discussion on the length of chime bars and the sounds they made used scientific understanding effectively in a music-making session. The music used in assemblies is carefully chosen and explained, and the singing of all the children is vigorous, tuneful and very much enjoyed. During a choral worship session, the pupils learned one new hymn and rehearsed several others very quickly and effectively because of very good teaching techniques and co-operation by other staff. The subject is enhanced by other activities, such as the voluntary choir of around 50 that includes teachers and teaching assistants as singing members. Two major musical events occur each year and for these events the choir is augmented to about 100 members. In addition, a woodwind band plays weekly and pupils have strings and brass tuition.

91. In **physical education**, the planned provision is good and meets National Curriculum requirements. Although there is insufficient evidence to judge standards, the school records, information from the co-ordinator and reports from the secondary school indicate that standards are at least typical for the pupils' age and often better, with high standards in all sporting activities. The good leadership from the co-ordinator ensures that teachers receive appropriate advice and support, and time is made to observe teaching. The subject is enhanced by a range of activities, such as rugby, hockey, netball and cross-country, that involve both boys and girls. Pupils benefit from the expertise of visitors, such as a golf professional and badminton coaching. Most pupils can swim by Year 6 and there are extra lessons for those finding it difficult. In the one lesson seen in Year 2, a dance session was planned to be interesting and encourage self-expression and creativity for pupils. The warm-up exercise, choice of music and encouragement were marred by a few boys reluctant to participate, but most used their bodies expressively, reflecting the movement of coalminers well, and the teacher capitalised on this in demonstration.

## **PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP**

Few lessons were seen in this area of the school's work, but the well-planned programme of work indicates the school plans very effectively for this aspect, and provision is **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The excellent relationships give children confidence to discuss aspects of their personal life.
- Good preparations are made for studying citizenship at secondary school.

### **Commentary**

92. Children's personal development is an important part of the school's work and its wonderful ethos is the foundation on which the excellent relationships are built. Because these relationships are so good, children trust teachers and talk openly about their concerns and successes. They feel confident to take part in discussions, ask questions about what they have not fully understood and give an opinion when requested. The programme of activities includes sex education for older children, and other aspects emphasise the need for a healthy lifestyle, the importance of diet and exercise, what the subject of drugs really includes and what to do to keep safe. As a preparation for studying citizenship at secondary school, there are sessions where children are beginning to have a greater awareness of the responsibilities for living with others in socially acceptable ways. All staff set a very good example to children, especially in treating them fairly, encouraging very caring relationships and ensuring that all are included in the range of learning opportunities.
93. In the lessons seen, teaching was good. The younger children were involved in a circle time session about making decisions and older ones were learning what is required to be a good friend. The younger ones showed a growing understanding of what is right and wrong, including the need for self-control and thought for others. The lesson for older children was developed satisfactorily and there was a good understanding of true and false friendship.



Children made clear their views are actively sought and they know they are valued. They made genuine responses in their praise for the school, staff and the fairness of the system.

## **PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS**

### *Inspection judgement*

### *Grade*

<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>2</b>
How inclusive the school is	1
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	2

<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>3</b>
Pupils' achievement	3

<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>	<b>1</b>
Attendance	2
Attitudes	1
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	1
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>	<b>2</b>
The quality of teaching	2
How well pupils learn	2
The quality of assessment	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	2
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	2
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2

<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>2</b>
The governance of the school	2
The leadership of the headteacher	1
The leadership of other key staff	2
The effectiveness of management	2

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