

# INSPECTION REPORT

## REDWOOD INFANT SCHOOL

Derby

LEA area: City of Derby

Unique reference number: 112770

Headteacher: Ms. Lindsay Austin

Lead inspector: Mr. George Crowther

Dates of inspection: 17<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> May 2004

Inspection number: 263518

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 - 7
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	283
School address:	Redwood Road Sinfyn Derby Derbyshire
Postcode:	DE24 9PG
Telephone number:	01332 767443
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E-mail:	admin@redwoodi.derby.sch.uk
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs. Val Blundell
Date of previous inspection:	16 <sup>th</sup> – 19 <sup>th</sup> November 1998

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Redwood is a large, community infant school for boys and girls who are 3-7 years old. It has 183 pupils organised in eight classes, and 100 children who attend part-time in the nursery. The school is situated on the southern outskirts of Derby. About half of the pupils live close to the school, but the other half comes from further away. The school is popular with parents and oversubscribed. It serves families from a range of social circumstances but, taken together, these are less favourable than the national picture. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is above average. Overall, pupils' attainment when they start school is below that expected for their age, and many pupils have weak social and language skills. Thirty pupils, a below-average proportion, have been identified as having special educational needs. In the nursery, a significant proportion of pupils have special needs associated with weak speech and communication skills. In Years R–2, the same needs remain, together with a few pupils who have physical or visual difficulties. Two pupils have statements that outline particular special needs. Most of the pupils are from white British backgrounds, but a significant proportion are from a range of ethnic minorities, particularly British Indian. Twenty-eight pupils are learning English as an additional language. The school has Investors in People status, which recognises that it has good systems to support and train its staff. It has also earned a Basic Skills Quality Mark award and, in 2002, a Schools Achievement Award for good results in national tests.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
18814	George Crowther	Lead inspector	Mathematics, science, art and design, music
19798	Jane O'Keefe	Lay inspector	
16492	Robert Lever	Team inspector	English, design and technology, physical education, special educational needs
21334	Savi Ramnath	Team inspector	Foundation Stage, geography, history, information and communication technology, religious education

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**Redwood is a good, effective school** where the staff provide a very positive, stimulating environment for learning. Pupils achieve well, and make particularly good progress in the Year 2 classes. Standards in the current Year 2 are below average because the year group contains more pupils who have special educational needs than is usual for the school. Last year, however, standards were closer to nationally expected levels, and much better than in similar schools. The quality of teaching is good, and pupils receive a lot of encouragement to do well. The headteacher provides very good leadership, with a strong focus on reaching high standards in all aspects of the school's work. The school provides good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are

- Children get a good start to school in the nursery, built upon well in the reception classes
- Pupils achieve well, often from a low starting point
- The headteacher leads the staff team very effectively, constantly seeking ways in which the school can improve
- Teaching is good overall, but there are weaknesses in some lessons
- Pupils enjoy school and behave very well because the staff pay very good attention to their personal development
- Good links are made between subjects, but some lessons include more activities than staff can manage effectively, resulting in loss of focus and challenge

**Since the school was inspected in 1998, improvement has been good.** Standards in national tests are better than at the last inspection and the points for development in the last report have been dealt with. Weaknesses in the quality of teaching have been remedied and assessments of pupils' developing skills are now used more effectively to match work to their needs. As a result, pupils' achievement has improved, particularly in mathematics. Activities that enrich the curriculum have improved and are now good. Management has a clearer view of what the school does well and what needs to improve, which is helping to raise standards.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
Reading	B	D	D	B
Writing	A	C	C	A
Mathematics	A	E	D	B

*Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average  
Similar schools are those with similar percentages of pupils eligible for free school meals*

**Pupils' achievement is good.** In the nursery and reception classes, children achieve well because the good range of well-planned activities stimulates their learning and adults provide effective teaching. Progress in developing personal and social skills is particularly good. By the time they join Year 1, though some children reach the expected standards, many do not, owing to continuing weaknesses in their literacy skills or the short time they have spent in school. In Years 1 and 2, achievement is good because teachers provide a stimulating curriculum that helps pupils to build their skills effectively. By the end of Year 2, standards in reading, writing and mathematics are normally close to those expected. In all other subjects where a judgement was made, standards are close to those expected for pupils' ages. Pupils'

special educational needs, including the needs of those who are learning English as an additional language, are identified early and they do well because they are supported effectively and given lots of encouragement. For the most part, pupils of all abilities and backgrounds achieve equally well, which is a good feature of the school's work.

**Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are fostered very well.** Pupils are confident, very well behaved, and build very good relationships with each other and with adults, reflecting the school's very positive ethos. Although they are keen to learn in most lessons, they do not always show a high enough level of concentration and persistence, particularly when working independently. Pupils' social skills are developed very well and there is a strong emphasis on learning about right and wrong. Attendance is satisfactory.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The quality of education provided by the school is good.**

**The quality of teaching is good.** Learning for children in the nursery and reception classes is well organised to provide a wide range of challenging experiences, and the teaching is good. Adults have a good knowledge of how young children learn best and provide lots of support and encouragement. In Years 1 and 2, teaching is good overall, and strongest in the Year 2 classes. Where teaching is good, whole-class sessions are lively and interesting, so the pupils show enthusiasm for learning and make good progress. Teachers make sure that tasks are relevant and challenging. Other strengths include teachers' good knowledge in a number of subjects, lots of praise and encouragement to make pupils confident learners, and the good contribution made by teaching assistants. In some lessons, however, the pace of learning is too slow or work is not challenging enough to extend pupils' skills, and so they do not make enough progress.

The curriculum is satisfactory. The school is in the process of finding the best way to make links between subjects so that learning is made relevant for the pupils. In some lessons, however, so many activities are available that not all are planned with care to stimulate rapid progress. In mathematics and science, though most aspects of the curriculum are satisfactory, there are two few opportunities for pupils to investigate and experiment. Systems for assessing pupils' attainment and for checking their progress have improved recently and are now good. They help teachers to know what pupils need to learn next. The school provides very good care and support for its pupils and has a good partnership with its parents.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**Leadership and management of the school are good.** The headteacher provides very good leadership and is firmly focused on improving aspects of the school's work. Key staff, including subject leaders, provide good support in identifying and tackling areas for improvement. Governance is good. Governors are very supportive of the school, take a keen interest in its work, and fulfil their statutory responsibilities. They have a good understanding of the school's strengths and of the areas that need to be improved and are increasingly involved in planning future developments. Management is good. There is a clear understanding of what the school does well and what needs to improve because measures to evaluate performance have improved and are now good. The school improvement plan sets out clearly the ways in which management aims to improve the quality of education. Monitoring and evaluating the work of the school is much better than at the last inspection.

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

Parents have very positive views of the school and say that their children are making good progress. They feel they have good relationships with the staff. Pupils are very enthusiastic about the school as everyone is very friendly and they find lessons interesting and fun.

### **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

The most important things the school should do to improve are

- Improve the quality of teaching where there are weaknesses
- Continue to refine the organisation of lessons where a number of subjects is taught together

## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

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

Pupils' achievement is good. Often from a low starting point, children in the nursery and reception classes achieve well in all areas of their learning, owing to a rich curriculum, good teaching and very good relationships with adults. Despite this, many do not reach the standards expected by the end of the reception year. In Years 1 and 2, achievement is good in reading, writing and mathematics because good teaching develops pupils' skills systematically. At the end of Year 2, current standards are below average. Pupils who have special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language achieve well because the school pays good attention to individual needs and ensures that pupils are fully involved in lessons.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children get a good start to school in the nursery, built upon well in the reception classes
- Pupils make particularly good progress in the Year 2 classes
- More able pupils do not always achieve as well as they could

#### Commentary

##### National test results and other performance data

1. The results of the 2003 national tests were better than at the last inspection. Although they were slightly below average in reading and mathematics, they were much better than results gained by pupils in *similar schools*\*. There have been fluctuations during the past few years, with particularly good results in 2001 for which the school received a Schools Achievement Award. In contrast, results for the current Year 2 are likely to be at best below average because the year group contains a higher proportion of pupils who have special educational needs than is usual for the school. This was also clear from work seen during the inspection. In 2003, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected Level 2 in reading, writing and mathematics was above average, but the proportion gaining the higher Level 3 was below average. This reflects that fact that many children start school with very weak personal, social and literacy skills and so they do well to reach the expected standard by the end of Year 2.

\* 'Similar schools' are those with a similar proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	15.5 (15.3)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	15.0 (14.7)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	16.0 (15.2)	16.3 (16.5)

*There were 74 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

2. Normally, children start school with attainment that is below average overall, and so the 2003 test results represented good achievement in reading, writing and mathematics for that group of pupils. The group of pupils who took the national tests in 2004, however, started school with well below average attainment. The school's own performance data show that, by the time these pupils joined Year 1, only about a third had reached the expected standard in reading, very few had reached it in writing and less than a half in mathematics. Given the low starting point, this group of pupils has done well to reach the standards seen in their current work, which are below average, and include a significant proportion of less able pupils who are still

working at a level well below that expected. Pupils' attainment is monitored closely as they move through the school. Records show that almost all the current Year 2 pupils have progressed as well as expected or even better. The good quality of teaching, and good support for the less able, contribute effectively to helping most pupils reach the standard of which they are capable.

### **Foundation Stage** (nursery and reception)

3. Children achieve well in the nursery, even though many of them begin with weak skills for their age. Good arrangements for starting nursery ensure that the children get a smooth beginning. Children make good progress in all areas of their learning because activities are well planned to be interesting and relevant to them. Adults use the activities effectively to help pupils develop a wide range of skills. They provide lots of praise and encouragement. The personal, social and emotional skills that the children require to support all aspects of their learning are nurtured particularly well through consistent guidance about good behaviour. There are also and high expectations that the children will increasingly contribute to discussions, work well with others and be confident in all they do. Children continue to make good progress in the reception year. A good range of activities develops pupils' skills well in all areas of learning. The more structured pattern of lessons suits some of the children for some of their learning, but literacy and numeracy sessions sometimes last too long, and so pupils lose interest and concentration. Expectations of what the more able reception children can achieve are not always high enough. Nonetheless, owing to the positive environment for learning throughout the Foundation Stage, the children get a good basis for work in Years 1 and 2. Teachers and teaching assistants work in very effective teams to ensure that all the children are well supported in their learning.

### **Pupils in Year 1 and Year 2**

4. Pupils' achievement is good in Year 1, and they make particularly good progress in the Year 2 classes because the quality of teaching is consistently good and often very good. In all classes, work is well planned and adults support pupils' learning effectively. Pupils achieve well in reading. They often begin Year 1 reading only a few words and, by the end of Year 2, are fluent and confident reading simple books. Similarly in writing, only a few pupils are able to write a sentence when they start Year 1 but, by the end of Year 2, almost all pupils write short pieces for a range of purposes. Very good teaching of writing skills, seen in Year 2 lessons, helps pupils to do well. Overall, pupils achieve well in mathematics, particularly in number work. The teaching seen in Year 2, where the pupils are in sets for mathematics, was particularly effective. Pupils' past work, however, shows that they are given too few tasks where they are required to use and apply their skills, and so more able pupils, in particular, are not being challenged sufficiently to think for themselves. In science, pupils achieve satisfactorily in building their factual knowledge, but they have too few opportunities to experiment and investigate, and so the skills of being a scientist, testing out questions and reaching conclusions, are not being developed systematically enough. Pupils achieve well in ICT and better than at the last inspection. Improved resources, greater teaching expertise and a more coherent curriculum mean that, by Year 2, pupils reach standards that are as good as those expected for their ages. Other subjects were sampled during the inspection. Where it was possible to make a judgement, pupils' past work shows that standards at the end of Year 2 are close to those expected and there are some examples of good-quality work in both art and design and technology.

### **Pupils who have special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language**

5. Pupils who have special educational needs make good progress in most lessons and towards the targets set for them. Teachers ensure that work is well matched to these pupils' needs and, in many lessons, effective classroom assistants support their learning. For example, in a good English lesson for Year 2, after a lively introduction, a teaching assistant worked successfully with a group of less able pupils, which helped them to complete their writing. The few pupils at the early stages of learning English as an additional language are well supported, often by specialist assistants, so that they are fully involved in lessons and can make good progress.

6. At the previous inspection, pupils' achievements were satisfactory overall, good in the nursery, but unsatisfactory in mathematics and design and technology. Pupils' achievements are now good across the Foundation Stage, good in English and mathematics, and at least satisfactory in all other subjects. This represents a significant improvement since the previous inspection underpinned by strong leadership and effective teaching.

## Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils have good attitudes to their work, and their behaviour is very good. The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. Attendance levels are satisfactory as is punctuality.

### Main strengths

- The very good relationships in the school promote pupils' self-esteem very well
- Pupils enjoy coming to school and are keen to learn
- Pupils behave very well in classrooms and around the school

### Commentary

7. Pupils clearly enjoy coming to this school, which is a happy and welcoming place. When Year 2 pupils were asked what they liked best about the school many answered, "Everything!" Pupils have good attitudes to school and their work. In lessons, most listen and concentrate well and are keen to answer questions. When working independently or in small groups, however, some pupils are easily distracted and lose concentration because their skills are weaker in this area.
8. Pupils behave very well in lessons, around the school and at playtimes where they happily share the good range of equipment provided for them. The very effective behaviour management systems in the school ensure that the small minority of pupils who have behavioural difficulties are well managed and do not disturb the learning of others. Pupils are confident that, should a bullying incident occur, staff will deal with it quickly and effectively. Lunchtimes are well organised, pleasant and orderly. Pupils' social skills are constantly and successfully promoted throughout their time in the school. The reward system is highly valued by pupils and works very well. Praise is used well by staff to encourage and motivate pupils. As a result, pupils are friendly and outgoing with visitors, and most were very happy to discuss their work with inspectors. There has been only one exclusion in the past year.

#### Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British

#### Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
90	1	

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

9. Those pupils given responsibilities around the school carry them out with confidence and pride, for instance the very sensible and committed members of the school council. Relationships are very good in the school and pupils treat each other with much kindness and respect. The 'Squabble Stoppers' work well, dealing with minor disputes in the playground. Pupils are particularly thoughtful and helpful to their classmates who have special educational needs. In one reception class, pupils were observed very sensitively supporting a classmate who had been upset by another and then successfully encouraging a reconciliation between the two.
10. Throughout the school, staff work very hard to build pupils' self esteem, with very clear results. Staff are very conscious of fostering spiritual development and promote it very well across the curriculum and through assemblies. Many spontaneous opportunities are used to encourage a sense of wonder in pupils, for example when they were recently asked to stand underneath and describe a tree in blossom. Pupils clearly understand the difference between right and wrong and this is promoted particularly well through the very good arrangements for circle time (when pupils gather in a circle to discuss their thoughts and feelings). Very good opportunities for pupils to develop socially are provided throughout the school. Pupils are strongly encouraged to work together and play together well and, through the school council, pupils learn to express

their opinions and listen to those of others. Pupils' cultural development is fostered very well in subjects such as art and religious education. Much effort has gone into providing pupils with very good experiences of other cultures and faiths through a wide range of well-thought-out opportunities, including a Hindu wedding and visits to churches, mosques and temples.

11. Most pupils arrive punctually in the mornings. Attendance figures were uncharacteristically low in the last reporting year, owing to continuing problems with a very small minority of families. However, due to the very good efforts of both the school and the Education Welfare service, this situation has now improved and figures for the current year, to date, indicate that attendance is now satisfactory. The importance of good attendance is appropriately stressed to parents and pupils' individual attendance levels are closely monitored.

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

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	6.3	School data	0.3
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.*

**QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL**

The school provides a good education for its pupils. Teaching is good overall, and particularly strong in the Year 2 classes. The curriculum is satisfactory. It is good for children in the nursery and reception classes. In Years 1 and 2, the curriculum provides a sound range of experiences in most subjects, but too few opportunities in mathematics for pupils to use and apply their skills, and too little work in science where pupils investigate and experiment. Good systems for assessing pupils' developing knowledge and skills usually help teachers to plan appropriately challenging work. Pupils are very well cared for and supported. The school has a good partnership with parents, the community and other schools.

**Teaching and learning**

The children are well taught and they enjoy their learning, which helps them to make good progress. Teaching is consistently good in the nursery, and particularly strong in the Year 2 classes. Teaching is usually good in Years R and 1 but, in the lessons where teaching was satisfactory, there were some weaknesses that prevented pupils from learning as much as they could. The proportion of good and very good teaching has improved significantly since the last inspection.

**Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching is interesting, lessons are enjoyable, and so the pupils want to learn
- Adults have very good relationships with the children, which help them to manage behaviour and learning effectively
- In some lessons, teachers do not ensure that the pupils work quickly enough, and so pupils do not make the progress of which they are capable
- Teachers have good expertise in many subjects
- Work is generally well matched to pupils' needs but, in a few lessons seen, the work was too easy for the more able pupils
- Teaching assistants make a good contribution to supporting pupils' learning
- Good systems for assessing pupils' skills help teachers to keep track of their progress

**Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 40 lessons**

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
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	4 (10%)	26 (65%)	10 (25%)			
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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.

## Commentary

12. Pupils enjoy most lessons because teachers have good skills in planning activities that catch and hold pupils' interest. Even when the subject matter is fairly mundane, teachers have the flair to present the lesson in a way that ensures pupils are well motivated to learn. As a result, pupils generally concentrate well and are eager express their ideas. For example, in a very good English lesson for Year 2, the teacher set an intriguing writing task, using a silver box labeled "Handle with care". She asked the pupils to imagine what might be in the box, which stimulated a good range of ideas that enriched pupils' subsequent writing. It was the teacher's lively presentation of the lesson, and her very good questioning of the pupils, that led to them achieving very well. Similarly, in a very good story-telling session in the nursery, the teacher read the book *Jim and the Beanstalk* in such an interesting way that the children were engrossed. At the end, the teacher produced three boxes in which she had hidden items mentioned in the story. This was a very imaginative way to develop the children's recall of what they had heard and kept them fully focused. Such clever teaching techniques help pupils to sustain a high level of interest and maintain the pace of learning.
13. In the Year 2 classes, the quality of teaching is consistently good and often very good. Whole-class sessions are lively and challenging, with very clear explanations of new ideas and skills. Group work is well planned and supported to enable pupils to do well. Pupils' past work in these classes shows that they have completed a good quantity and quality of work in most subjects, which indicates that they are making good progress. The teachers are successful in establishing an industrious working environment, which helps pupils to achieve well.
14. In all the lessons seen, very good relationships between adults and pupils supported learning effectively. Teachers and classroom assistants know individual children very well; they know their personalities, their strengths and their weaknesses. Teachers are very good at targeting questions at individuals to test and extend their understanding. For example, in a good Year 1 mathematics lesson, the teacher involved individual pupils well in 'making 20p' using various combinations of coins. Some found the answer quickly, but those that could not were given time to think and equal praise when they were eventually successful. Teachers' patience and respect for individuals is an excellent role model that rubs off on the children. When pupils are working in groups, adults support their learning well because they have a good understanding of what pupils already know and what they need to learn next. Very good relationships are also the basis of teachers' very effective management of pupils' behaviour. Adults consistently reward pupils for making a good effort, doing the right thing or being successful with their work. Pupils are proud of the stickers they earn, but respond equally well to words of praise from an adult. Teachers' consistent use of a good range of strategies to manage pupils' behaviour ensures that most lessons are purposeful and productive.
15. In a few lessons seen, the pace of learning was too slow. Sometimes whole-class sessions lasted too long, and so pupils became fidgety and did not have enough time to complete their individual work. In a few lessons, the good pace of the whole-class session was not sustained during the group work. Teachers were not clear enough in setting expectations that pupils should get on quickly and they did not remind the pupils about the time remaining. As a result, pupils worked at their own pace and did not complete as much work as they could have.
16. Teachers' good expertise in a number of subjects was clear in their effective planning and in their clear explanation of new work. For example, in an ICT lesson for the Year 1/2 class, the teacher explained very clearly how, using a simple graphics program, the pupils could draw a picture and insert some text. As a result, the pupils were later able to carry out the task well. In the Year 2 classes, the teachers 'set' the pupils for English and mathematics to take advantage of their good expertise in these subjects. This results in lessons that are well taught and in which teachers use their good command of the subjects to enrich the pupils' learning. In the nursery and reception classes, it is the teachers' good understanding of how young children learn best that underpins their good teaching. For example, children in Year R were basing much of their work on the book *Kipper's Birthday*. They made invitations for a party to be held in school, decided to invite all the adults, wrote

names on the invitations and addresses on the envelopes, and then walked to the post office to post their letters. Through a very relevant activity, the children learnt a lot about writing for a purpose and, on their walk, they found out about the local shops. Teachers of the younger children are very good at ensuring the children's learning is interesting and relevant to them.

17. In most lessons, teachers judge the difficulty of the work well so that all the pupils have enough interesting work to do. In a few lessons seen, however, the work was too easy for the more able pupils. For example, in a mathematics lesson for Year 1, the whole-class session was about adding numbers to 10. The teacher wanted to focus on the methods pupils might use to add 3 and 4, but many of the children already knew the answer; they already had effective methods and there was no need to unpick them. When some whole-class sessions last too long, it is the more able pupils who are marking time. Where teachers organise a wide range of activities around a theme, the more able pupils do not always complete as much work as they could when working independently.
18. Teaching assistants sometimes help a pupil who has particular special needs, but more often provide support for a group of pupils. They make a good contribution to the quality of teaching and learning. For example, in a writing lesson for Year 2, the teaching assistant provided very good support for the less able pupils, and particularly those with special educational needs, which enabled them to be successful with the task. Assistants who work with pupils who have special needs keep them focused on the lesson and provide invaluable support when these pupils are tackling activities. Teachers make sure that the assistants know what to do and value the part they play in pupils' learning. The combined efforts of the staff ensure that the quality of teaching is good for pupils who have special needs.
19. Good systems for assessing pupils' attainment and monitoring their progress generally help teachers to ensure that work matches pupils' different needs. From the time children join the nursery, regular assessments, particularly in English, mathematics and science help teachers to track pupils' progress. Teachers use assessment information well to plan the right work for the class, for groups of pupils and for individuals who have special educational needs. Teacher's marking of pupils' work is thorough, positive, and the best identifies pupils' level of attainment and what they need to do next to improve.

## **The curriculum**

The curriculum is satisfactory overall. Good extra-curricular provision enriches the experiences of pupils, as do special events, visits and visitors. Staffing, accommodation and learning resources are satisfactory overall.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The curriculum for children in the nursery and reception classes is rich and relevant
- The school makes good provision for pupils who have special educational needs and for those learning English as an additional language
- Good links between different subjects make lessons interesting and relevant to the pupils
- In mathematics and science, there are too few opportunities for pupils to experiment and investigate
- The organisation of afternoon sessions does not always support good achievement
- The cramped and open-plan nature of some classrooms has an adverse effect on learning

### **Commentary**

20. The curriculum meets statutory requirements, including all National Curriculum subjects and religious education. It is of satisfactory quality and provides an appropriate range of opportunities for learning, with good provision for pupils' personal, social and health education (PHSE). The allocation of curriculum time ensures that literacy and numeracy are well covered. Although it is appropriately broad and relevant to pupils, there are minor weaknesses in the balance of the curriculum because there are too few opportunities for investigative work in mathematics and science. At the last inspection, there were some significant weaknesses within the curriculum, for example in mathematics and design and technology. These have

largely been remedied, and so improvement has been good. Positive developments, in subjects such as ICT, represent solid foundations upon which improvements in standards can now be built.

21. In both the nursery and reception classes the curriculum is good. It is broad and balanced and children have access to a wide range of stimulating experiences drawn from the six areas of learning that are required for this age group. Activities are well planned around a central theme that is relevant to the children, and adults are skilled at ensuring that aspects of children's personal and social development, and tasks that develop their literacy skills, are part and parcel of almost all that the children learn. As a result, the children make good progress whilst they are in these classes. In reception, however, having literacy or numeracy activities for the whole of a morning can result in the children losing the good level of interest they show in most of their work.
22. In Years 1 and 2, teachers plan a wide-ranging curriculum organised round a theme such as 'communication' so that it provides interest and motivation for the pupils. English and mathematics lessons have appropriate emphasis and are well taught. For the rest of the curriculum, good links are made between a wide range of subjects, often including the development of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. For example, linked to work on *The Pirates' Treasure Chest*, pupils in Year 2 developed their mapping skills and the use of simple keys when drawing treasure maps. There are good links with mathematics and ICT when they complete a tally chart of the chest's contents and present the information as a block graph. Good use is made of pupils' literacy skills when writing poems about pirates inspired by the work of Andy Tooze, and skills in colour mixing are well extended when painting pictures of pirates. In some afternoon sessions, however, too great a range of activities is planned, which makes it difficult for adults to ensure that all pupils make the progress of which they are capable. It is often the more able pupils who are not challenged enough. For example, in a Year 1 lesson, a group of more able pupils worked independently to classify various types of animals. Although they completed the task, the lack of adult input to extend their thinking meant that they did not achieve as well as other groups of pupils working with the teacher and teaching assistant.
23. In general, the curriculum meets the needs of all pupils reasonably well. It allows boys and girls and pupils from different ethnic backgrounds to have equal access the curriculum but the needs of more able pupils are not always well met in some lessons. The school has already identified this and measures are in place to meet the needs of these pupils more consistently.
24. The provision for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) is good. The curriculum is appropriately organised for those identified as having SEN and no pupils are disapplied. Arrangements for using individual education plans are generally effective in ensuring learning needs are met, whilst still enabling pupils to have access to the whole curriculum. The teaching assistants play a significant part in supporting pupils who have SEN, often working with them individually or in small groups during lessons. Teaching assistants are experienced and well trained, which helps them to provide the right balance of support and challenge for these pupils. The accommodation is good, with shared areas and rooms where pupils can be withdrawn to be taught individually or in groups. The building allows easy disabled access, and a disabled toilet and changing facilities are provided.
25. Pupils learning English as an additional language (EAL) are well supported and make good progress. In the nursery, bi-lingual assistants ensure that learning can take place through the child's first language, as well as English, and the fact that a number of staff speak one of the principal community languages is very reassuring for these parents. As EAL pupils move through the school, most of them become much more competent in English and, by Year 2, very few pupils have a lack of understanding of English that has a significant impact on their

learning. Nonetheless, even at this stage, a bi-lingual assistant is available to ensure that pupils are well supported, if needed. The school monitors the progress of EAL pupils carefully so that they have full access to learning.

26. The curriculum is enriched effectively by a number of educational visits and visitors, including parents. For example, during the inspection, members of a local church led a lively assembly, and Year 1 pupils walked to the local shops to post party invitations and to learn about the purpose of each shop. The school provides well for pupils to learn outside the school day and this is a strength. Pupils participate in a good range of after-school clubs.
27. The school building is safe, attractive and adequate for delivering the full curriculum. The open-plan nature of some of the classrooms, however, provides a challenge for teachers to deliver lessons in some reception and Year 1 classes. In some lessons observed, groups of pupils in one class began their independent activities whilst an adjacent class was still listening to their teacher. Both pupils and teachers cope well with the potential distractions to learning. In contrast, the outdoor accommodation is good. There is good play space with the mix of hard and grass areas. Children in the Foundation Stage have access to an attractive, well-equipped outdoor play area. Resources for learning are adequate in all subjects and good in religious education and design and technology. The school has sufficient teachers and a good range of teaching assistants who play an important role in supporting pupils' learning.

## **Care, guidance and support**

The school takes very good care of its pupils and guides their learning well. It actively seeks their views and takes notice of what they say about how the school could be improved.

### **Main strengths**

- The school is a very caring place
- Very efficient procedures for health and safety and good child protection procedures ensure pupils' welfare
- Good assessment arrangements enable staff to support pupils' learning well
- The school council seeks and values pupil's views very effectively
- Good induction procedures ensure a smooth start to school and support the move between classes

### **Commentary**

28. As at the last inspection, staff have a very caring approach and look after pupils very well. This ensures pupils' welfare and general well-being and is much appreciated by parents. Pupils know who to see if hurt or feeling unwell and appreciate the care they receive from staff. The school has a happy atmosphere where all pupils are treated as individuals, and so they feel safe and secure. A senior teacher is the person designated to deal with any child protection concerns and staff are made fully aware of the necessary procedures when they start work at the school. Staff get to know pupils and their families and support them well. Comprehensive arrangements are in place for ensuring the health and safety of all in the school. These are being implemented very efficiently by the school's health and safety representatives with very good daily support from the caretaker.
29. The school now has good procedures for monitoring pupils' academic progress, which were weak at the last inspection. Good systems for recording pupils' progress have been established and staff use the results well to support pupils' learning. Staff get to know each pupil well. They monitor pupils' personal development as they move through the school and provide sensitive support to those experiencing difficulties. Foundation Stage staff manage the process of 'starting school' well. Children are made very welcome by staff who visit them at home prior to entry. They have good opportunities to get to know staff and the school before they arrive and, as a result, pupils settle quickly into school life. The school council is well established and promotes pupils' independence and confidence successfully. Members of the council meet regularly to discuss suggestions and concerns and take pride in having their say on the running of the school.

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

Parents are very happy with the care and education their children receive. Partnerships with parents are good. Links with the local community and other schools are good.

### **Main strengths**

- Parents are very happy with the school and have a good partnership with it
- The school provides very good information for parents
- Good links with the local community enrich the curriculum

### **Commentary**

30. Parents are very satisfied with the education and care their children receive at the school. The school works very hard to build and maintain its good partnerships with parents. Parents receive effective information on general matters through regular newsletters and personal contact with staff. The school's prospectus and governors' annual report are clearly written and meet all the legal requirements for their content. Consultation meetings are both well supported

and appreciated by parents. Homework and initiatives such as the 'Share' and 'Peep' schemes help parents to support their children's learning. Annual reports are issued in the summer term. These have improved considerably since the last inspection and now very effectively provide detailed information on work pupils have covered, progress made and suggestions of ways they could improve. They also contain particularly useful suggestions of how parents themselves can help their children improve.

31. The school listens carefully to parents and actively seeks their views, both informally and through questionnaires, on the school and its future. Parents have recently been involved in drafting a new anti-bullying policy for the school. Staff respond positively to any suggestions or concerns raised. The school provides very good support to families wishing to know more about their children's education with well-planned meetings and courses held to explain different areas of the curriculum. Unfortunately, attendance at these events is often disappointingly low. Although fundraising events are well supported by parents, there is currently no parent/teacher association to help staff with the organisation. The school is very aware of this situation and is exploring ways of further increasing parents' involvement. Social and family events, such as the Diwali evening, are very well supported by parents.
32. The school has established good links with the local community. Good relationships have been built with local churches and pupils visits many other places of worship. Such links support pupils' attainment and personal development well as they take part in local visits and events such as Walk to School Week when the pupils' walk to school was transmitted live on local radio. Good commercial links have been established, for example with a local supermarket where pupils have visited the bakery and entered competitions. Pupils and their families take part in many fund raising events for local and national charities and good use is made of the local area for visits.
33. Good links have been established with other schools in the area, and very good links with the junior school that shares the same site. Curriculum links are strong and developing, and staff from both schools work very closely together to ensure that transition to Year 3 is handled effectively. This has a positive effect on pupils' attainment as they progress through their school lives. The staff are very supportive of local schools and colleges in welcoming the many students who gain work experience at Redwood.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

The leadership, management and governance of the school are good.

### **Main strengths**

- The headteacher provides very good leadership, which helps the staff team to know exactly what they are trying to achieve
- Key staff support the headteacher well and have led important developments in a number of aspects of the school's work
- The management of the school shows clear understanding of all aspects of the schools' performance
- The governors provide good support and challenge for the school

### **Commentary**

34. The headteacher has a very clear vision for the school and is firmly focused on improving all aspects of its life. She has high aspirations for the school, which have resulted in good improvement since the previous inspection. She provides a good lead in curriculum developments and in seeking to improve further the already good quality of teaching. She is highly regarded by parents and pupils, and is very well respected by teachers and governors.
35. The school management team has produced a good school improvement plan, which gives clear direction for the school. It gives detail for the first year and helpful, outline priorities for a three year period. These are determined through an ongoing cycle of reflective self-evaluation and review. Good systems to check on the quality of teaching and learning are enabling the headteacher and key staff to identify aspects of the school's work that need to improve, and to tackle them. Subject leaders are taking an increasing role in this process. In the core subjects

they analyse available data and identify strengths and areas for development. An example of their success is the drive to improve boys' interest in reading with initiatives such as the Reading Rucksacks. All teaching observations are followed by verbal and written feedbacks and lead to the setting of agreed targets for improvement. A good system for performance management helps teachers to evaluate their own strengths and weaknesses and plan appropriate training. Everything to do with staffing, including induction, training, professional development and performance management is well organised and of high priority for the school. Management of the provision for pupils who have special educational needs, and that for pupils who are learning English as an additional language, is good. There are accurate records of pupils' progress and the required documentation is in good order. Leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are also good.

36. The governors ensure that the school fulfils its legal duties and there are appropriate policies in place. There is a businesslike relationship between governors and senior staff in leading the school. Governors have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and are supportive. Equally, they are prepared to ask questions if they have concerns about any aspect of the school's work. Finances are monitored regularly and resources are identified for key educational priorities. The school has effective management and administration systems which work well and free governors and senior staff to consider important priorities, necessary action and strategic planning issues. The governors use best value principles in their strategic development planning and maintain a balanced budget.

***Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004***

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	731,865
Total expenditure	780,997
Expenditure per pupil	2602

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	91,925
Balance carried forward to the next	42,793

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

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

37. Provision for children in the Foundation Stage (nursery and reception classes) is good overall. Since the previous inspection, the quality of provision has been maintained in the nursery and has improved in the reception classes. When children join the nursery, overall attainment is normally below that expected for their age, and some have very limited language, social and play experience. From this low base, children achieve well, although by the time they join Year 1, many do not reach the expected standards in most areas of learning. Children who have special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language are identified quickly. They are fully integrated and, in most cases, make progress at the same rate as the rest of the class. The quality of teaching and learning for children in the Foundation Stage and its leadership and management are good.
38. There are three, termly intakes into both the nursery and reception classes, with the youngest children spending only one term full time in a reception class. At the time of the inspection, approximately one quarter of the children in the nursery had attended school for only four weeks and, in the reception year, the youngest children had only recently started full-time. This limited time in the Foundation Stage has a negative impact on overall standards by the time children move to Year 1. Arrangements for both starting school and for children moving on to Year 1 are good. Parents are involved well through a programme of meetings and home visits.

#### **Personal, social and emotional development**

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

##### **Main strengths**

- The very good progress children make is supported by high-quality relationships with staff
- Induction procedures are good, ensuring that children settle quickly and enjoy their learning
- Good opportunities are provided for children to take responsibility and to develop independence

##### **Commentary**

39. This area of learning has a high priority because many children join the nursery with social skills that are at a level expected of much younger children. Progress is very good and, by the end of the Foundation Stage, most children are likely to reach the expected standards in terms of their behaviour, social development and understanding of what is right and wrong. They quickly understand the routines of school life such as lining up, putting their hand up when they want to contribute to a discussion, and knowing how to behave when working co-operatively. Children are happy and secure and enjoy good relationships with others. They develop their independence well when selecting activities and making decisions about the resources required. Most show a good level of interest in what they are doing and are developing their concentration well. The quality of teaching is very good and, as a result, children learn quickly. Adults plan carefully to help children to develop social skills. The many opportunities provided for children to achieve success help to build confidence and independence. The calm and friendly manner of the adults has a positive impact on behaviour and attitudes to learning, and adults value each child's contribution. Staff have high expectations of behaviour and explain to children the reason why some behaviour is acceptable and some is not. Partnership with parents is good because all teachers maintain a good day-to-day dialogue with parents and carers as they bring and collect their children.

## **Communication, language and literacy**

Provision in communication, language and literacy is good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Opportunities to develop children's language are fostered through almost every activity
- Adults use questioning well to extend children's language skills, which aids learning greatly
- The teaching of early writing skills is not systematic or rigorous enough and literacy sessions are too long for young children

### **Commentary**

40. Despite making good progress, the majority of children do not reach the standard expected by the end of the Foundation Stage. In both the nursery and reception classes, adults provide plenty of opportunities for children to ask and answer questions, and to talk about their work, for example when discussing what happens when beans are planted. Even so, many children find it difficult to express themselves and, by the end of the Foundation Stage, they still do not speak naturally in sentences. Children very much enjoy listening to stories and show by their comments that they understand the meaning and sequence. For example, in the nursery, they listened attentively and were absorbed by the story *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*, whilst in the reception class, more able children accurately recalled the sequence of *Kipper's Birthday*. Most children understand that print conveys meaning and more able children in the reception classes are beginning to use their knowledge of initial sounds and pictures clues to read unfamiliar words. When they write, some are beginning to show awareness of letters and a few more able children write their names and simple sentences independently. By the end of the Foundation Stage, however, letters are not always accurately formed and many children are unable to write independently.
41. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children listen well because stories are well chosen to interest them, and a wide range of resources such as 'Joey the puppet' and other visual aids are used well to maintain their attention. Adults interact very well with children, extending their vocabulary and building their self-esteem. They ensure that children are constantly encouraged to listen and respond, while less secure children are questioned sensitively, enabling them to respond and build confidence to speak in front of others. For example, less able children were given the part of Kipper in a role-play activity and answered questions about the presents 'he' received for his birthday. In the reception classes, teaching is adapted from the National Literacy Strategy and there is a designated time for literacy on alternate days. Some of these sessions, however, are too long, and so the children become restless and lose interest. In addition, there is insufficient adult intervention when children are practising letter formation or 'writing' for a range of purposes.

## **Mathematical development**

Provision in mathematical development is good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Activities are well planned and stimulate the learning of every child
- The classrooms provides a wealth of very well organised and easily accessible resources, which supports children's learning
- Expectations of more able children are not always high enough

### **Commentary**

42. Although children make good progress, many do not reach the standard expected at the beginning of Year 1. Standards are affected by many children's weak language skills, which hinder their ability to explain their thinking and reasoning, and by the limited time many children

spend in the reception classes. Through games and practical activities, younger children successfully sort bears and match objects by their colour and shape. Some recognise simple two-dimensional shapes and, through sand and water play, are beginning the first steps in understanding the concepts of volume and capacity. In the reception classes, many recognise, describe and recreate attractive patterns using pasta, lentils, peas and kidney beans and more able children are beginning to solve simple money problems. Most are familiar with rhymes such as *Hickory Dickory Dock* and the story *What is the time Mr Wolf?* which are well used to reinforce their understanding of time. More able children successfully add and subtract simple numbers, recording their answers independently, while average-attaining children do so with the help of adults. Despite this, many children are unable to identify missing numbers in a sequence, add two numbers up to 10 correctly or write clearly formed numerals.

43. The quality of teaching is good. Teachers have a good knowledge of how young children learn, and they make good use of methods adapted from the National Numeracy Strategy. In all lessons observed, a wide range of well-planned activities, lively interaction and very good use of practical resources enabled children to achieve well. All classes are well equipped with a good range of practical apparatus, which gives children constant opportunities to reinforce and improve their skills and understanding. Although many children make good progress in counting and recognising numbers, there are too few opportunities for more able children to work with numbers beyond ten. The school recognises the need to challenge these children so that more of them attain the expected standards.

### **Knowledge and understanding of the world**

Provision in knowledge and understanding of the world is good.

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

- A good range of activities ensures that children achieve well
- Learning for children with weak language skills is slow because many activities require vocabulary with which they are not yet confident
- Staff use questioning very effectively to enhance the children's learning

#### **Commentary**

44. By the end of the Foundation Stage, standards for many children are well below the level expected. Most children are becoming increasingly aware of their surroundings and enjoy exploring the new experiences offered. In the nursery, children begin to understand the needs of living things by planting beans, and more able children understand that plants need water to grow. They use construction equipment skilfully to make a house for 'Floppy', while older children design and make clocks and investigate the different ways of fastening the pendulum. All children use ICT to support their learning in literacy and numeracy. Most know the function of the buttons on the keyboard and operate the mouse skilfully when 'dressing teddy'. Good opportunities are provided for older children to enhance their understanding of the local area through visits, for example to the post office and supermarket. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers' secure command of this area and the meticulous organisation of purposeful play activities enable children to achieve well. Teaching assistants are very well deployed and use skilful questions to probe children's understanding. Their sensitive use of praise and encouragement raises the children's confidence and self-esteem and results in them having positive attitudes to learning.

### **Physical and creative development**

Provision in both physical and creative development is good.

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

- Intervention by adults in children's role-play is generally very effective

- The outside play area is very well equipped and is used very productively to support learning in many areas
- Pupils' skills in manipulating small objects are not developed well enough

### **Commentary**

45. Children make good progress and, by the time they join Year 1, most are likely to reach the expected standard. A significant proportion, however, still find manipulative skills difficult, such as cutting and pencil control. This is partly because of the low level of skills on entry, but also because children do not always complete activities that are designed to promote these skills, owing to a lack of concentration. Since the last inspection, the school has improved the outdoor provision. There is a wide range of small and large equipment, including wheeled toys. Children use these confidently and enthusiastically. Many run, jump and climb with appropriate dexterity and are developing a sense of balance as well as an awareness of their own space and the needs of others. Children draw and colour pictures with varying degrees of accuracy and detail, as demonstrated in their self-portraits, and they chose colours sensibly to represent their attractive pictures of spring blossom. Children handle a range of percussion instruments carefully and are beginning to identify high and low sounds. Imaginative play is fostered very successfully through activities in the play area where children undertake different roles with confidence in 'Kippers House' and 'Redwood Clock House'.
46. The quality of teaching and learning is good. In all classes, teachers plan a wide range of stimulating activities for the children and very good links are made with other areas of learning. For example, linked to the poem *Hickory Dickory Dock*, children created attractive mouse puppets, enabling them to explore colour, texture and shape. In all classes, adults intervene actively in well-planned opportunities for role-play, in order to develop children's language skills and encourage imaginative play.

## **SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGE 1**

### **ENGLISH**

Provision in English is good.

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

- Pupils make good progress and achieve well because the teaching is good
- Leadership of the subject is very good
- Pupils enjoy their lessons, behave well and are attentive
- Good adult support helps pupils who are experiencing difficulties
- Too little use is made of ICT to support and extend pupils' writing

### **Commentary**

47. Results of the 2003 national tests for Year 2 pupils were average in writing and slightly below average in reading. They were much better than results gained by similar schools. Standards in the current Year 2 are below those expected in speaking, listening, reading and writing because the year group contains a higher proportion of pupils who have special educational needs than is usual for the school. The 2003 year group started Year 1 with below average skills in communication, language and literacy, and so their test results indicate good achievement. Only a third of the current Year 2 reached the expected standard in reading at the beginning of Year 1, and very few reached the expected standard in writing. Therefore, these pupils have also made good progress and done well to attain the standard of work seen during the inspection.
48. The quality of teaching has improved significantly since the previous inspection when it was judged to be satisfactory overall, with some unsatisfactory teaching. Now, it is consistently

good and sometimes very good. Teachers manage lessons very well, insisting on good behaviour, and so pupils are attentive and concentrate well on their tasks. They enjoy their work and behave well. Teachers plan meticulously, often using the National Literacy Strategy, and work is well matched to pupils' needs. For example, in a good lesson for Year 1 re-telling the story of monster pet, the teacher planned three levels of task that were suitably challenging for all the pupils in the class. As a result, all the pupils made good progress at their own level. There is a wider range of writing opportunities than at the last inspection, and the quality of pupils' handwriting and presentation has improved. Marking is consistently good. It is evaluative, encouraging and tells pupils what they need to do to improve. The school has introduced a greater range of reading materials to increase boys' interest and motivation. The reading rucksacks have proved a successful addition, with increased interest in reading and improved standards for all pupils.

49. Teaching is at its strongest in the Year 2 classes and pupils made very good progress in the lessons seen. For example, in a writing lesson, the teacher set an exciting scenario, capturing pupils' interest and firing their imaginations, as she produced a bottle of 'Enlarging Potion'. After a skilful introduction, pupils could not wait to get on with their writing. The teacher kept the pace of the individual work going well by setting time targets, and both the teacher and the teaching assistant supported pupils well. As a result, the pupils produced good-quality work. In some lessons, teachers keep the pupils on the carpet a little too long when they really need to get on with their independent tasks.
50. Pupils who have special educational needs receive good support from adults, particularly the teaching assistants, and make good progress towards the targets in their individual education plans. There is good support through a range of initiatives, such as the Early Literacy Strategy and reading and speaking partners, which are skilfully planned and taught. Pupils learning English as an additional language are also doing well in the subject, and those at the early stages of learning English make good progress.
51. The subject is very well managed. Good monitoring of planning, work and lessons enables management to have a clear view of strengths and weaknesses in teaching and learning. Areas for development have been tackled, which has raised standards. Assessment is now good, when at the previous inspection it was unsatisfactory. Teachers evaluate pupils' work against the standards expected nationally and use their assessments to set targets for individual pupils. This has raised expectations because teachers are keen that pupils should reach the challenging targets that have been set for them. Records tracking pupils' developing skills show that about two-thirds of the current Year 2 have made better than expected progress in both reading and writing. There is too little use of ICT to support the subject and to develop pupils' computer skills. There was little evidence of word-processed work or of the use of computers to develop basic skills.

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

52. There are satisfactory opportunities for pupils to use and develop their literacy skills across the curriculum. Opportunities to develop speaking and listening are evident in most subjects and pupils learn technical and scientific vocabulary. Teachers give time for talking to partners and group discussions. In science, pupils often write up their findings from investigations without the need for worksheets. In history, there are good examples of letter writing in the topic on Florence Nightingale and good description in the work on the Great Fire of London. Project folders in design and technology give good opportunities for pupils to make lists, describe what needs to be done and write evaluations of their products.

### **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is good and has improved considerably since the last inspection.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils achieve well, often from a low starting point at the beginning of Year 1
- The quality of teaching is good overall, and strong in the Year 2 classes, but there were weaknesses in some of the lessons seen
- Pupils' good attitudes to their work support their learning well in most lessons
- The curriculum builds pupils' skills steadily in number, shape and measures, but there are too few tasks that encourage them to use and apply their skills
- Management is good, and so weaker aspects of teaching and learning have been identified and are being tackled

## **Commentary**

53. Pupils' overall attainment when they join Year 1 varies considerably from year to year, and this is reflected in the results of national tests at the end of Year 2. Results of the 2003 tests were slightly below the national average, but better than those gained by pupils in similar schools. This represented good achievement because a significant proportion of the pupils had a low level of skills when they joined Year 1. Standards in the current Year 2 are below average, and results in the 2004 national tests are likely to be lower than last year because the group contains more pupils who have special educational needs than is usual for the school. Pupils' achievement, however, continues to be good because less than a half were reaching the expected standard when they joined Year 1, and so all have made good progress to reach the current standards. Good teaching, particularly in the Year 2 classes, ensures that pupils do well. Pupils' achievement is much better than at the last inspection when it was judged to be unsatisfactory.
54. In Year 2, all but the least-able pupils have a sound grasp of calculations with numbers to 100, adding and subtracting accurately and beginning simple multiplication and division. For example, most pupils know that a quick way to add 11 to a two-digit number is to add 10 and then 1, and they can extend this method to adding 21 or 31, or subtracting 9 or 19. More able pupils work with numbers to a 1000, for example rounding numbers to the nearest 10 or 100. About a fifth of the pupils, however, are still not confident calculating with numbers beyond 20, indicating the very wide range of attainment in this year group. Pupils' past work shows that most understand simple fractions, solve problems posed in words, collect information to draw block graphs, and know the properties of a range of shapes. Teaching ensures that pupils make good progress in developing their skills in number, shape and measures. There are, however, too few activities that encourage pupils to develop their skills in using and applying mathematics, such as exploring patterns in numbers and shapes, which would help them to reach a higher level. This was also a weakness at the last inspection.
55. Pupils' achievement is good because lessons are usually well planned to help them take the next step in their learning. Teachers give different tasks to pupils of different abilities, and they provide good support, particularly for the less able pupils. In the Year 2 classes, pupils are grouped in two ability sets for their mathematics lessons and this is successful in enabling the teacher to match work appropriately to pupils' needs. The same teacher takes both mathematics sets, which creates a beneficial consistency in teaching and learning. Pupils of all abilities, including those who have special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language, make good progress. In a few lessons, the work for the more able pupils is not challenging enough, and so they do more of the same type of work rather than being challenged to extend their skills.
56. The quality of teaching is good overall, but there were weaknesses in a few of the lessons seen. Where teaching is good, the whole-class sessions at the beginning of lessons are lively and really catch the pupils' interest. For example, in a Year 1 lesson, pupils picked numbers from a bag, and the others had to say how many more was needed to make 10. The teacher

made this very enjoyable through her quick, perceptive questioning, which kept the pupils on their toes and made them think hard about the answers. Teachers use a good range of methods in these sessions, such as pupils having 'number fans' to show their answers, which makes sure that all are involved. In some lessons, teachers do not make enough use of quick-fire mental mathematics activities to sharpen pupils' recall of number facts. Teachers explain new work clearly and they question pupils to check that they have understood. For example, in a Year 2 lesson, the pupils found the skill of using a 100 square to support addition and subtraction quite challenging, but the teacher explained the method in a variety of ways until the pupils understood. Individual and group activities are generally suitably challenging but, in some lessons, teachers did not ensure that pupils made a quick start on their tasks, or that the pace of learning was sustained, and so pupils worked too slowly. Teaching assistants add significantly to pupils' learning because, where they work with a group of pupils, they keep them focused on the task, provide good support and ask searching questions. Teachers' consistent use of praise gives pupils the confidence to try even harder.

57. Management of the subject is good because there is a good understanding of what is done well and what needs to improve, based on analysis of pupils' work and the quality of teaching. As a result, the school has identified and is tackling weaker aspects of pupils' learning, though it has not yet evaluated the impact of these actions. In almost all the lessons seen, ICT activities were linked well to mathematics, which developed pupils' skills in both subjects. Good systems for assessing pupils' skills are helping the school to track progress carefully and are supporting teachers in their lesson planning. Improvement since the last inspection has been very good because a more structured approach to teaching has lifted pupils' achievement. Management is clearly focused on finding ways in which standards can be raised even further.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

58. Pupils' use and development of mathematics in other subjects is satisfactory. There are some good examples of pupils recording results in graphs and tables in science, and measuring when making products in design and technology. In ICT, work seen on symmetry added to pupils' mathematical skills. In topic work, teachers make incidental links with mathematics, but opportunities to develop mathematical skills are not planned systematically enough.

### **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is satisfactory.

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

- Pupils make steady progress in developing their scientific knowledge, but their science skills are not developed systematically enough
- Teachers place a good emphasis on pupils learning the language of science
- Teachers are good at explaining new facts and skills, but group and individual activities are not always challenging enough
- In the lessons seen, the pupils enjoyed their learning, particularly the practical tasks

## Commentary

59. Standards are lower than at the last inspection, but pupils' achievement is about the same. In 2003, teachers assessed Year 2 pupils' attainment as average, with almost all the pupils reaching the expected Level 2 and about a quarter gaining the higher Level 3. These results were better than those of similar schools, indicating that the pupils had done well to reach these standards.
60. Standards shown in Year 2 pupils' current work, however, are below expectations, largely because the year group contains a higher proportion of pupils who have special educational needs than is usual for the school. These pupils, about a fifth of the year group, have covered some of the factual aspects of science expected for their age, but do not yet have the skills to carry out simple experiments, with support. The rest of the pupils have a sound knowledge of science for their age, such as describing the life cycle of a plant, classifying materials into natural and man made, and making an electrical circuit. In some of their work, they carry out simple experiments, for example answering the question, "What does a seed need to grow?" They make simple predictions about what will be the best conditions, test these out by placing seeds in different parts of the classroom, and they deprive the seeds of water, light or soil. They are beginning to learn that they must keep everything the same, apart from one variable, if the experiment is to be fair. There are, however, too few examples of this type of investigation in pupils' work, and so the skills of being a scientist, testing out questions and reaching conclusions, are not being developed systematically enough. This also lowers the overall standards in Year 2.
61. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. When they join Year 1, standards are below average because many pupils have weaknesses in their language skills that have held back progress in most subjects. In Year 1, simple practical tasks, such as sorting materials into magnetic and non-magnetic create opportunities for adults to build pupils' knowledge and understanding through discussion. Pupils' past work includes some good activities where they used their senses to observe, touch and listen carefully. There is little evidence, however, that the more able pupils are beginning to understand the process of being a scientist and reaching simple conclusions from their observations. In Year 2, a sound range of factual work ensures that pupils continue to build their knowledge steadily. Recording their findings in a variety of ways makes good links with skills in other subjects. For example, in a Year 2 lesson, some pupils classified minibeasts on a Carroll diagram, developing mathematical skills, whilst others made detailed drawings that enhanced their art skills. There is not enough emphasis, however, on making clear to pupils the distinctive skills of being a scientist – "Why do scientists classify things and what conclusions do they hope to reach from their investigations?" As a result, the conclusions Year 2 pupils have reached from the experiments they have carried out are very simple and do not reflect the level of scientific thinking they showed they were capable of in discussion with inspectors.
62. In the three lessons observed, the quality of teaching was good in two and satisfactory in one.
63. In whole-class sessions, teachers are good at explaining new facts and ideas, and they get the pupils thinking by posing thought-provoking questions. They plan good activities and use appropriate resources to catch the pupils' interest and to encourage them to discuss what they are finding out. For example, Year 1 pupils looked at the features of different kinds of animals. Some pupils made clay animals, which was an enjoyable, practical activity that created good opportunities for discussion. Other pupils classified animals into those with legs or no legs, or used a computer program to find out about animals, or played in the 'vets'. A weakness in this type of lesson is that, with so many activities happening at once, those pupils working without adult support do not always get as much done as they could. In a Year 2 lesson, the whole-

class session was very productive, reviewing what the pupils had already learnt about minibeasts and teaching them how to record their classifications in a Carroll diagram. When they began their independent activities, however, the pace of the first part of the lesson was lost and many of the pupils worked too slowly because the teacher had not given clear deadlines. Teachers introduce and reinforce effectively the use of correct scientific vocabulary. When they work with groups of pupils, both teachers and teaching assistants add significantly to pupils' learning through the questions they ask, the praise they offer and their ability to focus the pupils on the task in hand.

64. The curriculum is satisfactory, and there are good links with other subjects, but coverage of various aspects of science lacks the depth that a more investigative approach would provide. Management of the subject is satisfactory. There is a clear view, based on scrutiny of pupils' work and teachers' assessments, of what needs to be done to raise standards, but a past focus on increasing the amount of experimental and investigative activities in lessons has not been successful enough. Pupils make satisfactory use of ICT, with some good programs available to support their work. Systems for assessing pupils' attainment and tracking their progress in the factual aspects of the subject are satisfactory, with useful assessments after each unit of work, but there is too little attention to monitoring the development of pupils' scientific skills. The school recognises that, to build on satisfactory progress since the last inspection, improving pupils' skills in experiment and investigation is the main priority.

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

Provision in ICT is good.

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

- Pupils achieve well because the quality of teaching and learning is good
- New equipment and improved resources have enhanced the overall development of ICT
- Procedures for monitoring and evaluating provision and standards are not good enough
- ICT is not used consistently enough to support pupils' work in other subjects

#### **Commentary**

65. Standards in ICT are broadly in line with those expected at the end of Year 2 and have been maintained since the last inspection. Levels of achievement are good, and better than at the last inspection, despite the limitations posed by the building, which have made it impossible to create a designated computer suite for teaching skills to a whole class. Once a week, teachers introduced a topic and skills in a whole-class lesson round the computers in the classroom, and pupils then complete activities throughout sessions during each day. Pupils' make good progress because this method is used consistently and teachers ensure that all pupils have equal access to ICT experiences.
66. Overall, pupils' learning and achievement are good throughout the school. Year 1 pupils select words from a word bank and wordprocess simple sentences with accuracy. They use a graphics program successfully to draw and colour pictures, learning to use the various tools such as the pencil and brush, and changing between them confidently when drawing pictures. In Year 2, most pupils work with relative independence on the computers. They use a variety of programs with increasing confidence, log on and off the computers, and print and save their work without adult support. Most change font, size and colour easily to enhance their work, merge text and graphics skilfully and access information about different animals from a CD-ROM competently. Pupils have a good range of experiences in ICT and cover all aspects of the required curriculum.
67. The good progress pupils make, and their positive attitudes towards the subject, are a direct result of the good teaching. All teachers have at least a sound knowledge of the subject and a growing confidence, and many have good expertise, which is reflected in their work with pupils. Where teaching is most effective, specific skills are taught within a meaningful context, which ensures that, for the most part, pupils quickly become familiar with the basic skills. For example, in a good Year 2 lesson, pupils quickly learnt how to use a digital camera because they were taking photographs of their own work. The teacher introduced correct vocabulary and gave precise instructions very systematically, which ensured that nearly all learnt the skill successfully. Good opportunities were provided for less confident pupils to have a go and consolidate learning, whilst others reinforced the skills taught when taking photographs of their finished design and technology products. As a result, learning was good.
68. The subject is led and managed satisfactorily by the recently appointed subject leader. Good advice and support is provided to colleagues in planning and teaching. However, formal procedures for monitoring teaching and learning in order to identify precisely where support is required, and for

assessing pupils' attainment, are not fully in place, though rightly identified as areas for development. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory overall, but good improvements have been made in resources and staff confidence and expertise since then.

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

69. The use of ICT to support pupils' learning is good in mathematics with some use in art and design where pupils successfully used a graphics program for a variety of purposes, including images in the style of Mondrian. Although pupils are becoming increasingly confident with skills that could be used in other subjects, too little use is made of ICT to support and extend learning. Overall, the use of ICT is not yet systematically planned for in many subjects.

### **HUMANITIES**

70. Only one religious education lesson was observed, and no lessons were seen in geography or history. As a result, it is not possible to make judgements about overall provision in any of these subjects. A reasonable selection of pupils' work was available, however, from which to make a judgement about standards. Inspectors also examined teachers' planning and talked to teachers and pupils. Suitable ranges of activities and adequate time allowances are provided to enable pupils to meet the National Curriculum expectations for geography and history and to reflect the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus for religious education.
71. In all three subjects, pupils' earlier work shows standards are around the levels expected and that the full range of work is covered. From discussions with pupils in Year 2, many obviously enjoy the subjects because learning is made lively by varied activities.
72. In **geography**, Year 1 pupils have a satisfactory understanding of their own locality through studies developed around Sinfin. They go on local walks, look at different types of buildings and their purposes and, on a local map, accurately locate their homes in relation to the school. In Year 2, pupils compare and contrast their own locality with that on the fictional island of Struay, noting the differences in buildings, transport, work and leisure to those with which they are familiar in Sinfin. Literacy skills are extended well when pupils express their own views on what they like and dislike about the two localities and give reasons for them.
73. In **history**, Year 1 pupils appreciate that things change over time and they compare and contrast life in the past with that of today, for example by highlighting changes in bath time over the centuries. Pupils in Year 2 understand how people like Samuel Pepys used diaries to record things as they happened, and how these sources of information can be used to understand changes in people's lives. They learn about events from British history such as The Great Fire of London and about famous people and their contribution in the past and the present, for example Florence Nightingale and Neil Armstrong.
74. Leadership and management for history and geography are satisfactory. Throughout the school, teachers mark pupils' work regularly, but little written advice is provided to let pupils know how they could improve their work. Very good use is made of the local environment and a range of visits play an important part in making the work interesting and relevant to pupils' experiences. Although pupils' work is generally not well presented, displays around the school are of a good quality and indicate that careful consideration has been given to making sure that links are made with other subjects to give pupils a richer experience.
75. In **religious education**, pupils in Year 1 are aware that people worship in different ways and that different faiths have both similar and contrasting practices. By Year 2, pupils have a sound understanding of the richness and diversity of different religions by looking at, for example, Christianity and Sikhism. They are beginning to understand the concept of God as creator, know that Jesus is a leader of Christianity and recall some of the main facts of his life. They have a satisfactory knowledge of some aspects of the Sikh faith, for example the significance

of The Five Ks and the belief that Sikhs hold that “there is only one God and men and woman, poor and rich are all important”.

76. Teaching was good in the one lesson seen in the Year 1/2 class. The lesson was very well prepared and resources were well used to enliven the telling of the creation story. As a result, pupils were engrossed which led to good learning. Skilful questioning extended pupils’ oral skills as well as increased their awareness of the view held by Christians on how the world was created.

77. Good leadership and management has made sure that the new local guidance has been adapted well to interest pupils and to reflect the many religious faiths represented in the school. As a result, the quality of provision and respect shown to religious education are making a very positive impact on the good relationships highly visible within the school between pupils, adults and parents and with the school's local community. Assemblies make a positive contribution to the development of understanding, with some of the issues introduced in assemblies being extended in religious education lessons. Good use is made of visits to place of worship, such as churches, a temple and the Gurdwara, to stimulate pupils' interest in the subject. Visits by parents of different faiths such as Islam and Sikhism are also used effectively to support pupils' learning. Attractive displays make an effective contribution to the school's ethos and the subject makes a positive contribution to the pupils' spiritual and cultural development.

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

78. Two lessons were observed in physical education, but it was not possible to see the full range of the curriculum. Only one lesson was seen in each of art and design and design and technology. No lessons were observed in music. As a result, it is not possible to make judgements about overall provision in any of these subjects. In art and design and design and technology, a reasonable selection of pupils' work was available from which to make judgements about standards. Teachers' planning and the views of subject leaders were also taken into account.
79. As at the last inspection, standards in **art and design** are as expected for pupils' ages, and there are some examples of good quality work. Pupils experience a wide range of activities, using a variety of media, which helps them to build their skills steadily. For example, Year 1 pupils have produced some good-quality drawings of animals in pencil, chalk and pastels. They extended this work by making animals in plasticine, and subsequently in clay, many of which show a careful use of the material and capture the features of the animals well. In Year 2, pupils have used colour well in their striking paintings of pirates, showing a good ability to mix paint to produce a wide range of colours. Collage, linked to work in geography about a fictional island in Scotland, uses a wide range of materials to portray the coastal landscape, and imaginative use of paint to show the various shades of the sea. These pieces are of good quality for this age group. Eye-catching prints, in panels of four, inspired by the work of Andy Warhol, show that the pupils plan their work carefully and have good skills in making a printing block and using it precisely. High-quality pastel drawings of fruit, linked to work in science, show that the pupils have good skills in using this challenging medium.
80. The quality of teaching was good in the Year 2 lesson observed. The art work was linked well to science, with pupils making detailed drawings of minibeasts. The teacher and teaching assistant ensured that the pupils looked carefully at the shape, colour and texture of the minibeasts, and there was a strong emphasis on learning the skills necessary to use the drawing materials effectively. The pupils were beginning to understand how they could use shading techniques to enhance their drawing. They really enjoyed the lesson and concentrated well on their task. Management of the subject is good, with a clear view of the strengths gained by linking art with other subjects, whilst recognising the need to develop art skills in their own right. Teachers have good expertise, which is evident in their planning. A portfolio of pupils' work is a very useful way for teachers to show the expected development of pupils' skills as they move through the school. A collection of portraits, from pupils of all ages, illustrates their growing skills very well.
81. In **design and technology**, pupils reach the expected standards by Year 2, and some aspects of their work are above expectations. This is a considerable improvement since the previous inspection when standards would seem to have been low because the report said pupils made unsatisfactory progress. There was insufficient use of mechanisms and too few

opportunities to take things to bits to see how they were made. From pupils' work on designing and making a playground, this is obviously no longer the case. Year 1 pupils have visited a local play park to see how equipment is made and have designed and made their own. They looked at methods of strengthening structures and erecting them, and evaluated their own products. They learned to use the digital camera to record their own work.

82. In the Year 2 lesson seen, teaching and learning were very good and pupils showed a real sense of achievement and produced work of a good standard. The teacher provided a good range of materials and gave plenty of opportunities for pupils to plan their work and use their problem-solving skills. They showed high levels of concentration and perseverance as they built their structures and fitted their winding mechanisms to models representing nursery rhymes. They used the digital camera to record the construction process and finished products. They had used an art package to produce symmetrical objects and were developing an appropriate technical vocabulary. Good improvement since the last inspection is due to good leadership and management, which has given the subject a higher profile in the school.
83. In **music**, very little evidence was gathered. There are clear and detailed plans for class music lessons, with a scheme of work that supports teaching well. Teachers have had training to build their confidence in using the teaching materials. Pupils' singing in the assemblies seen was of a typical standard for their age, and they particularly enjoyed the songs with actions. They listened with interest to the music that was played at the beginning and end of each assembly. A few pupils are learning to play the recorder and about 20 sing in the choir, taking part in a number of special events. Management of the subject is satisfactory, and keen to provide lots of opportunities for music making. A start has been made on monitoring the quality of teaching and learning in lessons. Pupils' social skills are developed well through concerts and performances in school, which are much enjoyed by parents.
84. In the two **physical education** lessons seen, standards were as expected for pupils' ages. The quality of teaching and learning was satisfactory, but there was too great an emphasis on organising the pupils and too little on keeping them active. Pupils showed appropriate movement and skills for their age, as when, in a gymnastics lesson, Year 1 pupils explored various ways of travelling. Pupils know the reasons for a warm up and are aware of the effects of exercise on their bodies. They enjoy the lessons. Sufficient time is given to the required aspects of the subject and there are clubs each term, after school, for dance, gymnastics, games and athletics. Pupils have participated in activities through the School Sports Programme. These included a dance festival, 'get sporty' challenge day and a cross-country event. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 have the opportunity to attend Central Soccer School training run by qualified football coaches. Children have been given the opportunity to be more active at playtimes and dinner times through the provision of playtime toys and games.

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

85. No lessons were seen in this subject and there was no past work completed by the pupils that could be used to evaluate the standards achieved. As a result, it was not possible to make judgements about pupils' achievements or the quality of teaching and learning. The curriculum section of this report evaluates provision for pupils' personal, social and health education as **good**.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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

