#### **INSPECTION REPORT**

# HALSALL ST CUTHBERT'S CHURCH OF ENGLAND (VOLUNTARY AIDED) PRIMARY SCHOOL

Ormskirk

LEA area: Lancashire

Unique reference number: 119480

Headteacher: Mr D Scholes

Lead inspector: Mr P Martin

Dates of inspection:  $19^{th} - 20^{th}$  January 2004

Inspection number: 263548

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

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#### INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Primary

School category: Voluntary Aided Age range of children: 4 to 11 years

Gender of children: Mixed Number on roll: 96

School address: New Street

Halsall Ormskirk Lancashire

Postcode: L39 8RR

Telephone number: 01704 840253

Fax number: 01704 841427

Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mr D Bonner

Date of previous inspection: 8<sup>th</sup> February 1999

#### CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- Halsall St Cuthbert's is a small rural school catering for 96 boys and girls between the ages of 4 and 11 years.
- Most children come from a white British background.
- Other children, about 2 per cent, come from a white, non-British background.
- No children are at an early stage of learning English.
- The percentage of children with special educational needs, about 14 per cent, is similar to the national average.
- No children have statements of special educational needs.
- The percentage of children who have free school meals, nearly 7 per cent, is below the national average.
- Children come from a range of backgrounds but socio-economic circumstances are average overall.
- Two children joined the school at other than the usual time last year, but none left.
- In 2002, the school received a Schools' Achievement Award for improved results.
- The school gained Investors in People status in 2003.
- A new headteacher has been appointed since the last inspection.

#### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM**

Members of the inspection team		ion team	Subject responsibilities
23262	Mr P Martin	Lead inspector	Science; Information and communication technology; Music; Physical education; Special educational needs; English as an additional language.
9907	Mr W Orr	Lay inspector	
7399	Mr P Roberts	Team inspector	English; Geography; History; Personal, social and health education.
7994	Mrs P Weston	Team inspector	Foundation Stage; Mathematics; Art and design; Design and technology.

The inspection contractor was:

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#### PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

#### **OVERALL EVALUATION**

This is a **good and improving** school, which provides good value for money. The school helps children to achieve well and reach above average standards of attainment. Leadership and management are good. These help to ensure that the school is working to maintain standards and improve provision.

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

- Children achieve well.
- Standards in English, mathematics and science are above average by the end of Year 6.
- Leadership and management are good.
- · Teaching and learning are good.
- There are no assessment procedures in subjects other than English and mathematics.
- Assessment procedures in the areas of learning for children in the Foundation Stage are underused in planning lessons for these children, except in communications, language and literacy and mathematical development.
- Parents of children with special educational needs (SEN) are insufficiently involved in their children's education.
- There are very good links with the community.

There has been **good** improvement since the last inspection. The key issues of that report have been successfully dealt with. There have been good improvements in standards reached in English and mathematics by the time children are 11 because the school now plans for teaching in each subject to ensure that children build on what they have learned. This planning takes full account of the mixed-age classes. The quality of teaching is now good. The governing body are involved in drawing up useful plans for the school's development and improvement. These plans and the work of the governors help them to evaluate the effectiveness of their spending.

#### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end		similar schools		
of Year 6, compared with:	2001	2002	2003	2003
English	В	В	Α	В
mathematics	Е	A*	A*	A*
science	D	А	A*	Α

Key:  $A^*$  - very high in comparison (in the top five per cent of schools); A - well above average; B – above average; C – average; D – below average; E – well below average.

Similar schools are those whose children attained similarly at the end of Year 2.

There were 15 children in the year group. This is a relatively small number and care needs to be taken when using this data to make comparisons with other schools or years.

Achievement is **good**. Children in the Foundation Stage (those in the Reception group) also achieve **well**. When children start school, attainment is average. Children attain the learning goals they are expected to reach by the end of Reception and in some cases go beyond. Standards in reading, writing, mathematics and science are average by the end of Year 2. However, this represents a good level of achievement because there are a number of children with SEN, including a few who have not been in school during both Years 1 and 2. This small number nonetheless represents a significant proportion of the Year group and has an impact on reported results. Children make good progress but not all reach the expected or higher levels. Children reach above

average standards in English, mathematics and science by the time they leave school. This represents good achievement. By the time children are 11 years of age, standards of attainment are above expectations in history. Achievement is good because of the good quality of teaching and the full and interesting curriculum.

The school makes **good** provision for children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural education. Children show a good level of maturity and responsibility. They very much enjoy being at school. This is reflected in their good attitudes and behaviour, and these have a positive impact on their learning.

#### **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

The quality of education is **good**. Children learn well throughout the school because teaching is consistently **good**. The school provides a range of curricular opportunities, both during and beyond the school day, from which children benefit. The interests of all children are at the heart of the school's work, and it provides good care, guidance and support. The school has effective links with parents and with other schools, and particularly effective links with the community. All these links greatly enhance the quality of education provided and have a positive effect on children's achievement.

#### LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management of the school are **good** overall. The headteacher provides very good, inspirational leadership and the staff share his clarity of purpose and high expectations. This results in an effective ethos in which the children's interests and their quality of learning are central to the school's work and purpose. Governance is good because governors understand the school's strengths and weaknesses, and work hard to build on the former and overcome the latter. Statutory requirements are met.

### PARENTS' AND CHILDREN'S VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Most parents are very pleased with the school and the quality of experiences provided for their children. Children themselves are very happy with the school. They feel they are treated fairly, that teachers help them to learn and they enjoy coming to school.

#### **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- Ensure that there are useful assessment procedures in science and the non-core subjects, and that these are used to plan work for individuals and groups.
- Ensure that the assessment procedures in the Foundation Stage areas of learning are used as
  effectively in planning other work as they are in communications, language and literacy and in
  mathematical development.
- Involve parents of children with SEN more fully in preparing plans for their children's education and in reviewing their progress.

### PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

#### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY CHILDREN

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

Boys and girls of all ages and ability levels achieve **well**. At the end of Year 2, children's attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is **average**. By the end of Year 6, standards in English, mathematics and science are **above average**. Over the last three years, girls have performed slightly better than boys in the National Curriculum tests in English and mathematics at the end of Year 6. However, no significant differences were noted between their performance during the inspection.

# Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Children in the Reception year achieve well.
- The school's average points scores in English, mathematics and science for children in Year 6 have been improving at a greater rate than nationally.

#### Commentary

#### **Foundation Stage**

1. Children start school in Reception with average attainment. They receive a good quality of education and achieve well overall, particularly in personal, social and emotional development and communications, language and literacy. By the time they start Year 1, their attainment in these areas of learning exceeds expectations.

#### Key Stage1

2. The school's trend in the average points score<sup>1</sup> for reading, writing and mathematics has been below the national trend. This is because a significant proportion of children who join the school at times other than at the beginning of the infants have SEN. Although they make good progress, they do not reach the same standards as the children who have been at school for longer. Inspection findings show that standards of attainment in reading, writing, mathematics and science at the end of Year 2 are similar to those expected from children of that age. Teachers judged that the proportion of children reaching the expected level in science was very high in comparison with the national average and that reaching higher levels was about average. This agrees with inspection findings in science.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	14.7 (15.1)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	14.0 (14.2)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	15.7 (16.4)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 14 children in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> The average points score provides schools with a single statistic to compare the overall grades attained by all of their children with the grades attained by children in another school as well as an average for all schools nationally. The National Curriculum Level attained by each pupil, for example, in mathematics, is given a score. A Level 1 = 9 points, a Level 2 = 15 points, a Level 3 = 21 points and so on. Therefore, the average points score in mathematics is worked out by adding up all of the points based on the level attained by children and then dividing by the number of children who took the test. This means that a school whose average points score for mathematics in the end of Year 2 national tests is greater than 15.0 is one whose children are performing above that expected for their age. The average points score for Level 4, the nationally expected level for children at the end of Year 6 is 27.

#### **Key Stage 2**

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	29.1 (28.0)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	31.3 (30.5)	26.8 (26.7)
science	31.7 (30.0)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 15 children in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

- 3. Results of the National Curriculum tests for Year 6 children in 2003 show that the school's performance was:
- well above the national average in English;
- very high in comparison with national averages in mathematics and science;
- above average in English when compared with schools with similar prior attainment;
- very high in mathematics when compared with schools with similar prior attainment;
- well above in science when compared with schools with similar prior attainment.
- 4. The school's average points score for children at the end of Year 6 has been improving at a greater rate than nationally because of the good quality of education resulting from good leadership and management.
- 5. Inspection findings are that, by Year 6, children reach above average standards in English, mathematics and science. This is because teaching in Years 3 to 6 is good and children have positive attitudes to learning. These lead to good levels of achievement. Inspection findings differ from National Curriculum test results in mathematics and science because staff changes at the beginning of the year meant that children's progress then was slower than it is now. The headteacher and governors have now established a strong team of teachers so that overall progress has accelerated, with a positive impact on achievement. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are close to expectations by the time children are 11 years of age. Children's attainment in history is above that expected for 11 year olds because of the good provision in that subject.
- 6. Children with SEN achieve well in relation to their prior attainment because of the support they receive.

#### Children's attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Children's attitudes and behaviour are **good**. Their attendance and punctuality are **satisfactory**. The school promotes children's personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, **well**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Children's attitudes to school and their work are good.
- Personal development and relationships are good throughout the school.
- Attendance has improved since the last inspection.
- Isolated instances of misbehaviour occasionally hinder progress in lessons.

#### Commentary

7. Personal development and relationships are good. Spiritual, social, moral and cultural development is effectively provided through lessons, assemblies and the examples set by adults. Prayer, moral guidance, good manners and consideration form a natural part of everyday school life. In lessons, children display a good understanding of social and moral issues such as community responsibility and citizenship. They demonstrate this through raising money for charities such as Barnardo's. Children display a polite, pleasant and purposeful manner throughout the day. They

have positive attitudes to their work and to others in the school and they behave well at work and play. They are confident and articulate. Their good attitudes and behaviour have a positive impact on their progress and achievement. Children carry out responsibilities and duties, such as playing recorded music at school assemblies or returning registers in an alert and cheerful fashion. However, in one or two isolated instances, children's misbehaviour in class hampers their own learning and sometimes that of other children nearby. There have been no exclusions in recent years and there is no evidence of regular bullying or any other form of harassment.

#### **Attendance**

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

Authorised absence			
School data	6.0		
National data	5.4		

Unauthorised a	bsence
School data	0.0
National data	0.4

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

8. Last year attendance was below the national average. This was because a small but significant number of parents took their children on holiday during term time and there were a number of extended absences because of illness. However, the school has been successful in improving attendance through encouragement, and a system of awards and certificates. It is now satisfactory and most children are punctual, allowing for an uninterrupted start to the day. The school's procedures for recording and calculating unauthorised absences now meet requirements.

#### **Exclusions**

There were no exclusions in the last school year.

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

The quality of education provided by the school is **good**. The quality of teaching and learning, and of the curriculum, is **good**. The school cares for, guides and supports children **well** and has **effective** partnerships with parents and linked schools.

#### **Teaching and learning**

The quality of teaching is **good** throughout the school, an improvement since the previous inspection when teaching was satisfactory. This leads to a good quality of learning and achievement for all children. The use of assessment procedures to raise standards of attainment and improve children's achievement is **satisfactory** overall.

### Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Teachers' planning is good.
- Classroom assistants provide good support.
- Teachers generally provide a good level of challenge.
- There are useful assessment procedures for English and mathematics in Years 1 to 6.
- There are insufficient assessment procedures in non-core subjects in Years 1 to 6.
- Assessment procedures are underused in planning lessons for children in the Reception class except in communications, language and literacy and mathematical development.
- Teachers manage children well.

- 9. The quality of teaching is good overall and leads to a good quality of learning. As a result, children achieve well. Teachers use good assessment procedures in English and mathematics to identify what is done well and where there are weaknesses in children's understanding. This information is used effectively to plan lessons that build on children's prior knowledge and understanding and offer a good level of challenge. However, such assessment procedures are not in place for other subjects.
- 10. Teachers use effective teaching methods, such as a good level of questioning and discussion and good use of resources. For example, in a Year 1 history lesson, the teacher built an interesting introductory lesson around a 53-year-old teddy bear. This engaged children's interest and stimulated their learning. In a good science lesson in Year 2, the teacher encouraged children to try their own ideas out when lighting a bulb, thus encouraging independence in learning. However, although all children made good progress in their understanding of electricity and achieved well, higher attaining children could have been further challenged by being asked to explain what they saw.
- 11. Classroom assistants provide good quality support. Their work is a significant factor in the good achievement of children with SEN. They work well during all parts of the lesson, helping children to participate fully and benefit from the good quality of teaching. For example, at the start of lessons, they rephrase and repeat questions to ensure that the group of children they are working with fully understands the discussion. They offer good support to children during group work.
- 12. Teachers have high expectations of children's behaviour and are seldom disappointed. They foster children's positive attitudes well and this helps children to learn and achieve well in lessons. However, there are a very few children whose behaviour occasionally restricts their own progress and that of other children nearby. Teachers deal with these incidents quickly and effectively, successfully reducing their negative impact.

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 21 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0	2	14	5	0	0	0

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

#### The curriculum

The curriculum provides a **good** range of learning opportunities. There are **good** opportunities for enrichment, including extra-curricular provision. The quality of both accommodation and resources is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses:

- The curriculum offers a broad range of learning opportunities that enable all children to achieve well.
- Personal, social and health education (PSHE) is taught as a separate unit and is well planned to cover all of the aims of this programme of study.
- The curriculum is enriched by a range of extra-curricular activities and school visits.
- Provision for children with SEN is good.
- The accommodation is good.
- Resources are good for every subject and curricular area and support learning well.

- 13. The curriculum for the Foundation Stage provides a good range of opportunities, which support good achievement. This good quality curriculum continues for children in Years 1 to 6 and has a positive impact on their good achievement by the time they leave school. The experiences that it provides are a major factor in moulding the positive attitudes of children and their enjoyment of learning. Teachers ensure that the curriculum meets the needs of the different groups of children in the class, including those of different year groups. This helps to ensure that children build well on the work they have done previously. Year 6 children study transition units in the second half of the summer term. These help them to prepare for learning in the secondary school. All children are fully included in learning, irrespective of their gender, capabilities or background. Provision for children with SEN is good, and these children achieve well in relation to their prior attainment.
- 14. The school makes good provision for children's PSHE. Children learn about health, sex and substance issues during science lessons and from visitors such as the school nurse. Visits to places of interest also enrich the curriculum. The school provides a good range of activities outside normal school hours. There are clubs for sports such as football and netball, and junior children have the opportunity to take part in annual residential visits, during which they participate in a good number of activities, both sporting and academic.
- 15. The school has a good number of teachers and support staff. It makes good use of visiting specialist staff: for example, the visiting music and ICT teachers. Resources are good and make an important contribution to the standards that are achieved. The school has good accommodation. Each classroom leads off a central area that very conveniently accommodates the school library and provides space for teaching small groups of children. There is a good-sized hall for physical education and the adjoining parish community centre is available for use by the school as and when required. The school has good-sized hard surfaced and grassed playing fields that are useful for physical education as well as playtimes. The 'faith garden' provides a pleasant area for children's quiet contemplation. There is also a secure, safe, fenced play area for use by the younger children but this has the disadvantage of being a distance from the Reception class.

### Care, guidance and support

The provision for children's care, welfare, health and safety is **good**. That for support, advice and guidance based on monitoring is **satisfactory**, as is the involvement of children through seeking, valuing and acting on their views.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Members of staff are good role models.
- Good behaviour is supported by well-balanced praise and sanctions.
- Recording of children's progress is limited.
- There is no children's council or similar forum for children to formally express their views.

#### Commentary

- 16. The school's provision for health and safety is good. Child protection procedures are good and there are effective anti-bullying strategies. There are suitable procedures in the case of first aid being needed, or in the case of other emergencies. Visitors such as police, road safety officers and firefighters provide useful health and safety guidance for children. Recent improvements in carparking arrangements help to ensure the safety of children when being left at school or collected. The school is working towards a healthy school award to promote a healthy lifestyle for children.
- 17. The monitoring and support of children's personal development is good. Teachers are vigilant regarding children's personal, social and health needs and help to meet these through lessons and other activities. The well-understood system of awards and sanctions successfully encourages regular attendance, good behaviour and effort. The school enhances children's personal development through the good range of extra-curricular activities and, for older children, residential visits. The monitoring and support of children's academic progress is satisfactory. Teachers have a good knowledge of children's abilities and use assessment procedures in English and mathematics well to plan lessons. However, these systems are not as well developed in other subjects. Procedures for identifying and supporting children with SEN are good overall, but parents are not always involved enough in the preparation and review of individual education plans (IEPs).
- 18. Children have positive views of the school and those in the Year 5 and 6 class have the opportunity to express their views about the school in PSHE lessons. Opportunities are limited for other children. The school recognises these limitations and is in the process of forming a school council.

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

The school has **good** links with parents. Links with the local community are **very good**. There are **good** links with other schools and colleges.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses:

- The school keeps parents well informed.
- Parents are very pleased with the school.
- Parents of children with SEN are not consulted enough about their children's education.
- The school has mutually beneficial links with the local community.
- Local schools work well together.
- The school is successfully involved in teacher training initiatives.

- 19. The quality of information provided for parents is good. Parents have numerous formal and informal opportunities to speak to members of staff. A good range of initiatives such as family fun nights, pumpkin competitions and dress parades provide good opportunities for parents to become involved with the school and be involved with their children's education. The headteacher seeks parents' views when drawing up the school's improvement plan, but parents of children with SEN are not involved enough in drawing up and reviewing plans for their children's education.
- 20. Parents are very pleased with all that the school provides. They offer useful support through the very successful fund-raising activities of the Parents, Teachers' and Friends' Association, or through help with school maintenance and improvement projects. For example, the attractive mural in the dining room, painted by a parent, helps to create an interesting and pleasant environment. The school has mutually beneficial links with the parish church. Children take part in church services, including Harvest Festivals and Mothering Sunday services. This has a positive impact on their spiritual development, and on their social development by helping them to recognise that they have a part to play in the local community. The school has good links with a pre-school playgroup, and with a privately run Nursery to which it leases a classroom. The very good relationships that exist between the school and these groups help to provide a reassuring start to school life for the children concerned. The after-school club, managed by a committee of parents and the headteacher, provides secure childcare. The school also leases the hall to various community groups that helps to foster positive links.
- 21. The school is part of a group of other local primary schools. This group works well to provide facilities such as the provision of technical support and teaching in ICT. Visits from teachers from the local secondary schools and visits by pupils to these schools assist the smooth transfer. The school works well with a nearby college of higher education. Trainee teachers visit regularly and this offers benefits to both the school and the college.

#### **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Overall, leadership and management are **good**. The headteacher provides **very good** leadership. Leadership of other key staff is **satisfactory**. Governance is **good**. Management from the headteacher and key staff is **good**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses:

- The headteacher has clarity of vision, a sense of purpose and high aspirations.
- Governors are well informed and know the school's strengths and weaknesses.
- There is good teamwork and a high level of commitment from all who work in the school.
- Leadership of the curriculum and teaching by key staff is not fully developed.
- The school's commitment to inclusion is evident in the good staffing arrangements to support children of all abilities.
- The school improvement plan is easy to follow and is based firmly on self-evaluation.
- Financial management is good and money is spent prudently for the benefit of children.

- 22. Leadership of the school is good. The headteacher provides a good role model and is readily available to discuss any concerns. By establishing good relationships and teamwork among all who work in the school, and by making clear his high expectations of colleagues, the headteacher has brought the school to a strong position from which to make further improvement. Parents consider the school is well led and managed and are confident in the education their children receive. Staff and governors are consulted about any decisions and there is mutual respect and a team approach to school development and innovation. The headteacher makes sure that the school's systems remain flexible, so that responses to changes, such as fluctuations in numbers of children, are rapid and effective.
- 23. Management is good. An improvement since the last inspection is the use made of assessment in English and mathematics to judge its effectiveness. The headteacher carries out analysis of information and shares this with governors and staff so that all are aware of how well the school is doing. Areas of weakness are successfully tackled and this has been most effective in raising standards of the children by the end of Year 6. This information is a crucial part of the school's self-evaluation and enables it to know its strengths as well as its weaknesses. The school improvement plan is a useful vehicle for strategic planning. It is based on self-evaluation, so priorities are linked to identify needs. The proposed actions are carefully costed so that value for money can be evaluated. The monitoring of staff performance is well established. It has been effective in identifying areas for individual development. Subjects are, in the main, soundly led and managed although mathematics is well led. The school's systems for monitoring and evaluating teaching and learning are largely informal and, except in English and mathematics, assessment procedures are underused in planning.
- 24. The governors have a good knowledge of the school through the headteacher's reports, their own visits and their involvement in committees to monitor developments and standards in the school. They are highly supportive of the school and ensure good value for money in what the school does and in how it uses staff so that expenditure has a positive impact on standards. The governors, along with the headteacher, have been instrumental in establishing a strong staff team, and in organising the school in such a way as to make best use of resources to overcome difficulties such as mixed age classes. They ensure that the school meets all statutory requirements
- 25. The provision for children with SEN is satisfactorily led and managed. The co-ordinator, though new to the post, has already reviewed the provision for all children with these needs and drawn up further plans for their education. However, parents have been insufficiently involved in reviewing and formulating these plans.

# Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)			
Total income	273,038.00		
Total expenditure	255,454.00		
Expenditure per pupil	2,807.19		

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	42,577.00
Balance carried forward to next year	17,584.00

26. The school provides good value for money, a good improvement since the previous inspection. Financial planning and management are good, ensuring that the school budget is well used for designated purposes and to support the school's proprieties for development. There is a high carry forward figure, which is due to unforeseen income for children recently admitted to the school. The governors are well aware of this situation and have firm plans for spending this money for the benefit of children: for example by increasing the staffing levels in order to raise standards further.

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

#### AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

The provision for children in the Foundation Stage is **good**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Staff make children feel valued and ensure all are included in all activities.
- Relationships between staff and between staff and children are strong and supportive.
- Not enough use is made of assessment to track and record the children's progress across all areas of learning.
- Staff work successfully as a team for the benefit of children.
- There is a good balance of directed and independent activities.
- There are weaknesses in the accommodation for the Reception children, which constrain some aspects of their learning.

- 27. At the time of the inspection, there were 14 full time Reception children. They were taught with 16 Year 1 children. Their attainment when they start school spans the full range but is average overall. By the end of the Reception Year, the children attain the Early Learning Goals in all areas of learning, with many exceeding expectations in reading. Children are particularly well prepared for work within the National Curriculum in personal, social and emotional development and communication, language and literacy development. Their achievement overall is good.
- 28. Although there are times when the Reception children benefit from working alongside older children, their learning is enhanced when they work with staff for group or independent activities and when they have the opportunity to learn through structured play activities. The teaching is good and the children's school day is well planned. A weakness, however, is the insufficient use of assessment to enable staff to track children's progress and attainment, and to enable them to match work closely to the children's needs when planning lessons and activities. The school works closely with parents and a privately managed Nursery to ensure that the Reception children have a smooth start to their education. Because of the constraints of the positioning of the outdoor play area, children do not have enough access to large play equipment and the easy interchange of indoor and outdoor activities. Although staff make activities such as painting, sand and water available throughout the week, these are not continually available to the children throughout the day.
- 29. The leadership and management of the Reception are good. The teacher plans well and, because of this, lessons meet the needs of the Reception children with a clear distinction between the work of these children and those in Year 1. There is good management of staff who work well as a team for the benefit of all children, including those with SEN. Although there is no formal recording of children's achievement across all areas of learning, the teacher has a very good knowledge of individual children and their needs, and she plans accordingly. There are well-planned group targets for literacy and numeracy, which effectively identify areas of weakness and targets to be achieved. The quality of provision is similar to the last inspection. However, the new Foundation Stage curriculum has been successfully introduced. Accommodation has improved with the provision of a good outdoor play area but, because it is not immediately next to the classroom, its value as a resource that is continually available for teaching and learning purposes is limited. Nonetheless, staff make every effort to use this facility in good weather.

- 30. In the area of **personal, social and emotional development**, the children achieve well, and teaching is good. They benefit from working alongside Year 1 pupils, who set a good example through their own behaviour which the Reception children copy. They work well together. They talk to one another as they work and play, and form new friendships. This was particularly noticeable in role-play when children took part in buying fruit from the fruit stall. They queued sensibly, counted their money as they chose their fruit, and at all times were polite to the stallholder. Independent learning skills are very well promoted, and the children know the routines of the school well. The Reception children are confident and happy learners.
- 31. The children achieve well in **communication**, **language and literacy**, and the teaching is good. There is a good combination of activities that are led and directed by an adult, such as daily word building, shared reading, role-play and writing activities. Speaking and listening skills are well developed, and staff are effective in the way in which they pick up incidental opportunities to extend the children's vocabulary. For example, when listening to the story of 'The Lost Lambs', children empathized with the feelings of the lambs lost in the snow. They felt that the lambs would be 'shivering'. The teacher managed to bring the story alive and involve the children: there were sighs all round when the lost lambs were found. They listen to stories very well and this is because the teacher chooses wisely and, because of her skills in reading aloud, she holds the children's interest. The children have a good appreciation of books and understand that writing conveys meaning. They have their own reading books, which they take home regularly. A good number can link letters to sounds and are beginning to use this information to tackle unknown words, whilst others recognise simple words in books.
- 32. In terms of their **mathematical development**, the children achieve satisfactorily and the quality of teaching and learning is sound. A good variety of practical activities reinforce understanding of number effectively. The teacher uses counting games in starter sessions to encourage and remind the children of the order of numbers, and supports this learning through singing songs such as 'Five Currant Buns'. Most children are starting to use their number skills to solve simple problems when they go shopping at the class fruit stall. They count to 10 without hesitation and extend this to matching coins and finding totals up to 10.
- 33. In **knowledge and understanding of the world** and **physical development**, no teaching was observed so it is not possible to make an overall judgement on provision. However, the daily planning programme shows that they are planned for well. There are good opportunities for children to learn through first-hand experience, for example, during free-choice activities. The children's ICT skills are good. They show good physical skills in controlling the mouse when, for example, they take turns to dress and undress Teddy. They are adept in handling tools such as scissors and paintbrushes. They handle large toys with good co-ordination and an awareness of others. Physical education is taught most days in the hall and, weather permitting, in the playground area. In better weather there are opportunities to use the very attractive outside play area.
- 34. Teaching is good in **creative** development. Children are taught in small groups or are provided with a range of activities from which they can make their own choice. They have regular access to painting but these activities are not always freely available throughout the day. Some of their work supports other areas of learning well. For example, children make a train for a wall display using three-dimensional shapes, thus benefiting their mathematical development. There are sound opportunities for children to develop their musical abilities by singing simple songs.

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

#### **ENGLISH**

Provision in English is **good.** 

#### Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Standards in Year 6 are above average although there is scope in children's writing for the more frequent use of complex sentences.
- The quality of teaching and learning are good.
- The achievement of children in Years 3 to 6 is good.
- The marking of children's work is thorough and used well in setting targets for improvement.
- The monitoring and evaluation of the curriculum and of teaching are not sufficiently developed.
- Children have good attitudes to their work.
- The lack of a cross-curricular policy means that there are few planned opportunities for children to practise their literacy skills in other subjects.

- 35. By the time children are seven, they reach average standards of attainment. They make good progress in Years 3 to 6 and reach above average standards by the time they leave school at 11 years of age. As children start the Reception class with average standards in communications, language and literacy, this represents good achievement. In the national tests of both reading and writing for seven-year-olds in 2003, standards were below the national average for similar schools because not enough children reached higher levels. This was because a number of children were new to the school and there was a relatively high proportion of children with SEN. Children in the present Year 2 are making better progress. In the National Curriculum tests for 11-year-olds in English in 2003, results were well above the national average. This year, most children are on target to reach the expected level and many are working comfortably at higher levels. Over the last three years, girls have performed slightly better than boys, although no significant differences were noted during the inspection.
- 36. Progress in both speaking and listening is good. Teachers promote speaking and listening skills well in subjects across the curriculum. Children listen well in lessons and in assemblies and have a good attention span. They communicate well with each other and with their teachers and this facilitates their progress, particularly in the independent learning sessions of lessons. When interviewed, Year 6 children were very articulate in describing their recent work in English and in other subjects, explaining impressively what they most valued in their learning.
- 37. By the age of seven, most children read simple texts accurately, although those of below average attainment have difficulty with verbs in the past tense. They can remember a little about the plot and the main characters in books they have read recently but are not yet sure of the distinction between fiction and non-fiction. Homework makes a positive contribution to reading. All children regularly take books home to read and some of the older ones borrow books from public libraries. By the age of 11, children derive much pleasure from a wider range of reading. Their recall of what they have read is good and they confidently explain what they like most about the books of their favourite authors. They make good use of both the contents and index pages of non-fiction books to find the information they are looking for.
- 38. The standard of writing of children at the age of seven is average. Children of average and above average attainment in Year 2 make sound use of punctuation and their handwriting is clear, legible and accurate. By the age of 11, the standard of writing is good. Children write for a wide range of purposes and readers. For example, narratives and reports, comprehension exercises, biographies, writing expressing argument and opinion, responses to poetry and analysis of a play, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. They use an extended range of punctuation regularly and accurately,

and use paragraphs well. Children draft and redraft their stories, resulting in good standards of handwriting and accuracy. There has been an excellent response to the writing competitions and this has been another important factor in the achievement of higher standards.

- 39. The quality of teaching is good. This helps children to learn well as they develop their ideas and understanding. Lesson planning is very good. Teachers share the intended purposes of the lessons with the class and this helps to provide a framework for the ensuing activities. They have secure subject knowledge and this enables them to teach competently all the aspects of literacy. They successfully use varied methods in their teaching, derived from the National Literacy Strategy, which promote a full participation and sustained interest on the part of children. Teachers ask challenging questions to promote a high level of understanding and they always ensure that children learn the meaning of unfamiliar vocabulary. They mark children's work with considerable care and attention, indicating clearly areas for improvement and giving due praise and encouragement. This helps children to understand how well they are learning and what they need to do to improve. Occasionally, teachers do not make sure that children work quickly enough in the group sessions and children's progress sometimes slows at these times. Because of good teaching, children with SEN make good progress and achieve well. They receive good support and guidance from teachers and classroom assistants.
- 40. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Although the subject co-ordinator was appointed very recently, she has already identified the need for a greater quantity of non-fiction books in Years 1 to 3 in order to stimulate more interest in books and reading on the part of boys. She has analysed test data results to determine the areas for improvement in standards. However, the co-ordinator and the headteacher recognise that current strategies for monitoring and evaluation of teaching and the curriculum are unsatisfactory. The school has firm plans to deal with this issue.
- 41. There has been good improvement since the previous inspection. The standard of writing of children aged seven has risen from below average to average. The standard reached by children aged 11 has risen from below average to above average. The planning and redrafting of work is now evident in every year and is having a significant effect on improving the quality of writing. The range and quality of children's work, particularly in Years 5 and 6, show that teachers' expectations of children's abilities are higher than they were.

#### Language and literacy across the curriculum

42. Despite the lack of formal planning, the language and literacy skills of children make a positive contribution to their learning in most of the subjects that they are taught. Children soundly practise and extend their speaking and listening skills in other lessons as they respond to teachers' questions. Children are required to read in other subjects in order to gain information and understanding and are sometimes given opportunities to read aloud. They write in different styles and for different audiences in their notebooks, for example, when expressing arguments and opinions in their work on both history and geography. In these subjects, children also frequently make good use of their referencing and research skills to investigate the different areas of study.

#### **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in Mathematics is good.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Standards by the end of Year 6 have risen since the last inspection.
- The numeracy strategy is well developed.
- Planning takes account of the mixed ages and ability within each class.
- Teachers have good relationships with their children and expect them to work hard.
- On occasions, children sit too long on the carpet and the pace of lessons can be slow at times.
- Marking provides children with useful information about how to improve.
- · Teaching assistants give good support.

- 43. Standards of work are average in Year 2 and above average in Year 6. Children of all abilities, including those with SEN, achieve well overall. There has been a good degree of improvement since the previous inspection and standards have risen considerably by the time children leave school. In 2003, all children in Year 2 achieved the level expected for their age but no children exceeded this level. This year, an average number are on target to reach expected and higher levels. Children's overall performance in tests taken at the end of Year 6 in 2003 was above the national average with most children attaining the level expected for their age and two thirds of them attaining the higher level. The numbers taking the tests are small and care must be taken when making comparisons between this school's and other schools' results at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 because individual results have a large impact on the percentages reported. There is no marked difference between the achievement of boys and girls. Although achievement overall is good, in Years 1 and 2 it is only satisfactory and is an area for development. The headteacher is aware of this and has already drawn up and begun to implement an action plan to improve the situation. Children with SEN, who are well supported by teachers and support staff, make good progress and achieve well in relation to their prior attainment.
- 44. The quality of teaching is good. Teachers have a good understanding of teaching within the National Numeracy Strategy. As a result, children's skills have improved because of the greater emphasis on mental arithmetic and agility in manipulating numbers. Teachers plan well-structured lessons that help children of different ages and abilities, including higher attaining children, to make the progress of which they are capable. They provide good opportunities for children to apply their knowledge to problem solving using independent thought and practice and make learning interesting. However, on occasions, children sit for too long and they begin to lose interest, thus hindering their progress. The teachers' use of accurate mathematical vocabulary contributes well to children's learning. For example, children know that the decimal point 'moves' when they multiply by multiples of ten, and why it is incorrect to 'add a nought'.
- 45. Leadership and management are good and play a significant part in the school's success in this subject. Test results are analysed at staff meetings and the results of the analyses are used well to plan work for groups of children. There is a good action plan in place, which shows very good understanding of what is required in order to improve further, particularly in Year 2. There is very good use of assessment information so that the leader has a very clear picture of children's progress within and across the National Curriculum stages and the achievement of different ability groups. The marking of children's work encourages them and offers advice to help them to improve.

#### Mathematics across the curriculum

46. Children make satisfactory use of their skills in other subjects, in particular ICT and art. They use computer programs to practise their mathematical skills - for example by creating symmetrical patterns when studying African Textiles, or when practising and consolidating arithmetic skills. They construct different types of graphs to display clearly their findings from scientific investigations.

#### SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

# Main strengths and weaknesses:

- There are good opportunities for children to learn through scientific enquiry.
- Teachers' planning is good.
- Assessment procedures are underused in planning work for individuals and groups.
- Science makes a good contribution to children's PSHE.

- 47. By the end of Year 2, children reach average standards of attainment. Most children reach the expected level. By the end of Year 6, children's attainment is above average. Inspection findings are that most children are on target to reach the expected and higher levels. Teacher assessments at the end of Year 2 last year showed that the number reaching the expected level was very high in comparison to the national average, and that reaching higher levels was about the same. National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6 last year showed that children's performance was very high in comparison with all schools nationally and well above that of schools with similar prior attainment. The numbers taking the tests are small and care must be taken when making comparisons between this school's and other schools' results at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 because individual results have a large impact on the percentages reported. This year, however, progress was slower for children in Years 5 and 6 at the beginning of the year than it is now because of staffing changes. This situation has been resolved and children are once more making good progress. Children start Year 1 with a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of the world and, because of good teaching; standards improve at a good rate. This means that children's achievement is good. Boys and girls achieve equally well, as do children with SEN.
- Good improvement has been made since the last inspection when standards in science were judged to be average by the end of Year 6. Teaching is now good, leading to good quality learning. Teachers have a good understanding of what needs to be taught, and plan lessons during which children learn scientific facts well through investigation and experiment. For example, Year 2 children learned that electricity flows in a circuit as they worked out how to light a bulb using simple components. The teacher gave a minimum of instruction, thus allowing children to try out their own ideas. Year 4 children extended their understanding of the importance of a healthy diet during their investigations of the contents of packaged food. However, teaching does not always provide enough challenge for higher attaining infant children. Whilst all children are asked to observe and record and to try things out, they are not always asked to extend their thinking. This means that they do not cover enough of the skills and knowledge contained in the higher levels. Teachers set older children useful homework that encourages them to consolidate their knowledge. Children enjoy science and contribute enthusiastically to discussions. They eagerly take part in practical work, sharing equipment and ideas readily. This makes a positive contribution to their social, as well as scientific, development. Older children make satisfactory use of ICT in the subject. For example, Year 6 children talk of the concepts they have learned when using programs that simulate investigations.

49. Another key factor in the good level of improvement is the school's use of guidelines for teaching. At the time of the last inspection, there was insufficient detail in these. They now contain enough detail to help to ensure that children build on what they already know. Science provision makes a good contribution to children's social and health education as much of the work on health, including drugs education, and sex education takes place as part of the science curriculum. The subject is soundly led and managed. The results of National Curriculum tests are analysed, but there is little assessment of the progress that children are making throughout school. This means that there is insufficient information to plan work for individuals and groups of children.

#### INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision for ICT is satisfactory.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses:

- There are good resources.
- The school shares instruction and technical help with other schools in the area.

#### Commentary

- 50. By the end of Year 6, children's attainment is satisfactory. All children achieve soundly. Not enough ICT was seen to make judgements about attainment at the end of Year 2 or about teaching. However, discussions with older children show that they have used computers for a satisfactory range of purposes: drafting stories and presenting text attractively, creating images and exploring the cost of catering for a party. Year 6 children are confident when talking about their use of the Internet for research, for example, about Henry VIII.
- 51. A group of schools within the area is jointly funding the provision of technical support and instruction. This useful initiative helps to ensure that the computers are kept in working order and that the required skills are taught. Years 3 and 4 children made sound progress in learning to programme a floor robot because of satisfactory teaching. This lesson was well structured and the teacher made sure that all children had opportunities to programme the robot's movement.
- 52. The subject co-ordinator is new to the school and the post, having only been in post since the beginning of the term, so it is too early to make judgements about her leadership and management. However, she has already usefully carried out an assessment of current provision and has identified relevant areas for further development. There has been a sound degree of improvement since the previous inspection in that there is now a good number of computers and a well-used interactive whiteboard for teaching purposes. There are now guidelines for teaching that help to ensure that children's learning builds on what they already know. However, the school does not have effective assessment procedures for assessing children's progress. This means that there is insufficient information to plan work for individuals and groups of children.

#### Information and communication technology across the curriculum

53. Teachers satisfactorily use ICT across the curriculum. For example, children use text and graphics to create newspapers. They use practice programs to reinforce spelling and arithmetic skills. They talk enthusiastically about the use of science simulation programs they have used to extend their understanding of, for example, separating materials, and of using sensors to measure sound volume.

#### **HUMANITIES**

54. It is not possible to make judgements on the school's provision for **geography.** No lessons were seen during the inspection and only a limited amount of work was available for scrutiny because of a change of teachers. Therefore, it is not possible to judge standards, achievement, quality of teaching or provision overall. Lesson planning indicates full coverage of the National Curriculum, but the absence of assessment procedures makes it difficult to gauge standards and achievement.

#### **History**

Provision for history is **good.** 

### Main strengths and weaknesses:

- The standard of attainment at the age of 11 is above the national average.
- The quality of teaching is good and promotes good standards of achievement.
- Children take a keen interest in the subject and their response is good.
- There are no assessment procedures in history.
- 55. Although only two lessons of history were seen during the inspection, the evidence from these, together with a scrutiny of the work of children in each year, indicates that standards are average at the age of seven but above average at age 11. This means that achievement is good and that there has been good improvement since the previous inspection. The evidence also points to a good quality of teaching.
- 56. Long-term planning shows that children learn about a good range of historical topics, covering aspects of British, European and South American history. The planning for older pupils shows a good level of challenge. For example, they consider the similarities and differences between the Tudor monarchy and today's. Children in Years 1 and 2 learn how the past is different from the present through the study of events such as the Great Fire of London and the work of Florence Nightingale. In Years 3 to 6, children build well on their skills and knowledge through the study of topics such as the Ancient Greeks and Britain in Victorian times. The study of local history also makes a useful contribution to children's social and cultural development. Work scrutiny and discussions with children demonstrate that they take a keen interest in the subject and that their attitudes to the subject are very good.
- 57. The quality of teaching is good, leading to good achievement. Teachers plan interesting lessons that build well on children's interest and enthusiasm. For example, when learning about Henry VIII, children worked together well and sustained a good level of concentration. This led to a good quality of learning.
- 58. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. Although provision is good overall, there are no assessment procedures to provide information about how well children are performing.

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

- 59. The team was not able to make judgements about provision, including teaching, in art and design, design and technology or music because not enough lessons were seen in these subjects. Judgements are based on the small amount of teaching seen, an examination of children's work, teachers' planning and on discussions with children and teachers. The team observed three dance lessons, but none in other aspects of physical education, so it is not possible to make overall judgements about provision.
- 60. Both **art and design** and **design and technology** make a valuable contribution to the school curriculum. Displays are attractive and play an important role in the general ethos of the school. Children have thoughtfully explored colour, texture, pattern, line and tone in a variety of combinations and organisation. For example, after looking at the work of an artist such as Monet, children produced their own effective 'Hot and Cold' pictures using paint and pastel. Years 5 and 6 children have taken part in a Canal Sculpture Project: this gave them with a very good opportunity to work with a professional artist.
- 61. There were some examples of the children's work in design and technology; for example, moneyboxes made by Year 3, 4 and 5 children. These containers showed that the teacher had planned appropriately for the different age levels of the class. Children follow a design process that helps them to develop the required skills in design, making and evaluation. The previous inspection found that children made unsatisfactory progress in design and technology. There has been a sound degree of improvement. There are now guidelines for teaching that helps to ensure that the required curriculum is taught and that children build on previously learned skills. Children say that they enjoy the subject and talk confidently about it, for example, when explaining how they made their moneyboxes.
- 62. In **music**, Year 6 children talk confidently about the work they have been doing with the visiting specialist teacher. They enjoy these lessons and have composed and performed their own pieces using classroom instruments. Children have good opportunities to listen to a range of music, including European classical music before assembly and African songs in physical education. This means that music makes a positive contribution to their cultural development. Children enjoy singing during assembly, and are well practised in the words and actions of the song. There are no assessments of children's skills or progress in music. This means that there is insufficient information to plan work for individuals and groups of children.
- 63. In **physical education**, records show that standards of attainment in swimming are good and children achieve well. Most Year 6 children swim at least 25 metres and many manage more than this. They have good opportunities to take part in water safety activities. Children achieve well in dance because of the good quality of dance teaching, and their quality of movement is good. Teachers plan effectively and use resources well. In one good lesson, the teacher modified a recorded, commercially produced dance lesson well, so that it suited the needs of the children. Consequently, they made good progress in putting together a dance sequence representing a walk in the jungle. The lesson also made a positive contribution to the children's cultural development as they listened to the African songs used in the programme. Children enjoy dance lessons. Boys and girls participate fully and maintain a good level of physical activity during the lessons.
- 64. The curriculum is enriched well by extra-curricular activities such as football and netball clubs. Junior children take part in a good range of outdoor and adventurous activities such as canoeing and archery during residential visits. The school is fortunate in having a good-sized hall, playground and playing fields so that it can teach a full physical education curriculum. However, there are no assessments of children's skills or progress. This means that there is insufficient information to plan work for individuals and groups of children.

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

Provision for PSHE and citizenship is **good.** 

#### Main strengths and weaknesses:

- The school's curriculum helps to promote the PSHE of children in different ways.
- Children achieve well because of the good quality of teaching.
- Some of the work done makes a notable contribution to children's development in citizenship.

- 65. Provision for PSHE forms a very important part of the school's work. The outcomes of provision are clearly seen in the good relations between children, in their social development and in the respect that they demonstrate for each other's values and feelings. The subject is well planned and aspects of it that relate to healthy living taught in science lessons. Visitors from a range of support services provide useful health and safety guidance for everyday life.
- 66. The quality of teaching is good because of the teachers' understanding of the subject and how to teach it. They make sure that lessons are relevant to children's level of understanding. In a lesson for younger children, children's self-knowledge was enhanced as they learned about what makes individuals special. They also learned about the differences between people and their differing values. Older children devised suitable questions to ask village residents about developments over time in the local community. Children enjoyed the lesson, worked hard and it made a significant contribution to their understanding of citizenship.
- 67. The good quality of the work available for scrutiny shows that children take the subject seriously and make a good effort with tasks that they are set. The 'faith garden' within the school grounds provides a suitable space for children to engage in quiet reflection.

# PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Inspection judgement	Grade
The overall effectiveness of the school	3
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
Overall standards achieved	3
Children's achievement	3
Children's attitudes, values and other personal qualities	3
Attendance	4
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The quality of education provided by the school	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well children learn	3
The quality of assessment	4
How well the curriculum meets children needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	3
Children's care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for children	4
How well the school seeks and acts on children's views	4
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3
The leadership and management of the school	3
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	4
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).