

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **BUXTON INFANT SCHOOL**

Buxton

LEA area: Derbyshire

Unique reference number: 112522

Headteacher: Mrs R Hollis

Lead inspector: Mr A J Dobell

Dates of inspection: 7<sup>th</sup> - 9<sup>th</sup> June 2004

Inspection number: 264501

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:	4 - 7
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	168
School address:	Hardwick Square Buxton Derbyshire
Postcode:	SK17 6QB
Telephone number:	(01298) 22 499
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e-mail:	smile@buxton-inf.derbyshire.sch.uk
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs B Wilson
Date of previous inspection:	21 <sup>st</sup> September 1998

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This average-sized infant school draws its pupils mainly from the surrounding area. Pupils come from a wide range of backgrounds, but their socio-economic circumstances and attainment on entry to the Reception classes are below average overall. Most pupils come from white, western European backgrounds and no pupils speak English as an additional language.

At the time of the inspection, 168 pupils were on the school's roll. An average proportion of these pupils is on the school's register of special educational needs, and an average proportion has statements of special educational needs. The nature of special educational needs includes moderate and severe learning difficulties, social, emotional and behavioural difficulties and physical disability. An average proportion of pupils leaves and joins the school during the course of the year, but there is no evidence that this has an adverse effect on standards. The school makes good use of its surplus capacity by renting rooms to a private Nursery and other groups. In 2003, the school gained the Basic Skills Quality Mark and the Healthy Schools Award.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
10373	Mr A J Dobell	Lead inspector	English Mathematics Music Physical education
19374	Mrs W Sheehan	Lay inspector	
24031	Mrs I Idle	Team inspector	The Foundation Stage Geography History Religious education
21910	Mr G Longton	Team inspector	Special educational needs Science Information and communication technology Art and design Design and technology

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**This is a good school**, giving good value for money. Children enter the Reception classes with levels of understanding and learning skills which span a wide range but are below average overall. They make good progress and achieve well overall and reach at least the standards expected nationally by the end of Year 2 in most years. However, they do not achieve average standards in information and communication technology because, until recently, resources have been inadequate. The school has improved well since its previous inspection and the issues for action from that inspection have been addressed effectively.

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

- The headteacher, ably supported by her deputy, colleagues and the governing body, is providing very good leadership.
- Pupils achieve well overall as a result of good teaching.
- Most pupils behave well and have good attitudes to learning, but a minority have significant emotional and behavioural problems and, on occasions, their behaviour adversely affects the learning of others.
- The curriculum meets the needs of all pupils well, overall, and there are good opportunities for enrichment in activities outside lessons.
- The pace of some lessons and the level of challenge are not consistently high enough and pupils are not sufficiently encouraged to develop independent learning skills.
- Pupils are well cared for and benefit from good advice, support and guidance.
- Standards in information and communication technology are below average.
- Pupils' listening skills are not developed satisfactorily.
- The school has developed a very good partnership with parents and good links with the local community and other schools.

### 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	B	C	C
writing	B	C	B	B
mathematics	C	C	D	D

*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.*

**Achievement is good overall.** Standards have generally been average or above average since the school's previous inspection. Standards have declined in the last two years because more pupils with below average standards are joining the school. Children in the Reception Year are likely to reach the standard expected nationally in most areas of learning and to exceed them in communication, language and literacy and in mathematical development by the time they enter Year 1. This represents good achievement. The school expects pupils in Year 2 to achieve at least average standards in the national tests in 2004, and inspection evidence supports this. However, standards are below average in information and communication technology because the school has only recently become adequately resourced.

**Pupils' personal qualities are good overall.** Most pupils have good attitudes to learning and behave well, but on occasions, a small number do not behave well and can adversely affect the learning of others.

**Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory.** Their social and cultural development are good and their spiritual and moral development are satisfactory. Attendance matches the national average.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The quality of education provided by the school is good.** Teaching and learning are good overall, and the quality of teaching ranges from satisfactory to very good. During the inspection, the quality of teaching was good or very good in seven lessons out of ten. In the best lessons, imaginative teaching engages pupils' interest so that they put considerable effort into their work. In the minority of lessons where learning is only satisfactory, teaching is accurate, but lacks challenge and sparkle. The use of assessment to promote achievement has improved well since the school's previous inspection and is now good.

The school's curriculum is of good quality overall and there are good opportunities for enrichment in activities such as visits and visitors. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well and so achieve well, although the school has yet to resolve fully the poor behaviour of a few pupils. The school cares well for its pupils and ensures that they work in a safe and secure learning environment. There are very good links with parents and good links with the community and other schools.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

The headteacher is fully committed to continuing improvement and is providing very good leadership. As a result, the school has improved well since it was inspected previously. The headteacher receives good support from her colleagues and the governing body. Subjects are managed well overall and this is a good improvement since the previous inspection. The school has good systems for evaluating its effectiveness and for taking appropriate action. Governors are well involved in the school and have a good understanding of its strengths and areas for development. They ensure that the school meets its legal obligations.

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

Parents have positive views of the school overall. For example, one parent commented at the meeting that there is now 'a buzz about the place'. Parents particularly value the quality of the information that they receive. They have concerns about the behaviour of a few pupils and the inspection team understands these. They acknowledge that rare instances of bullying are taken seriously and dealt with effectively. Some question the range of activities, but inspectors judged these to be good. Pupils enjoy school but are also concerned about the behaviour of a few.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- Develop strategies to manage the behaviour of the few pupils who, on occasions, adversely affect the learning of others.

- Improve the pace of some lessons in order to provide challenge for all pupils and give pupils more opportunities to develop skills as independent learners.
- Improve standards in information and communication technology.
- Develop pupils' listening skills so that time is not wasted because teachers need to remind them to pay attention.

## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

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

Overall, pupils achieve well and make good progress. Standards declined slightly in the national tests at the end of Year 2 in 2003, but there is clear evidence that they are likely to improve to reach at least the national average in 2004. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well and make good progress. Standards are now average in English, mathematics, geography, history and religious education by the end of Year 2. They are above average in science, but below average in information and communication technology.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well throughout the school.
- Standards in information and communication technology are below average.
- Pupils with special educational needs achieve well.
- Achievement is enhanced by some rich learning experiences.

#### Commentary

1. In the national tests at the end of Year 2 in 2003, standards were average in reading, above average in writing, but below average in mathematics. Only in writing were standards higher than at the previous inspection and, in mathematics, they were lower. This was because the proportion of pupils gaining the higher levels of 2A and 3 was markedly lower than the national average.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	16.2 (16.5)	15.7 (17.8)
writing	15.3 (14.2)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	15.9 (16.9)	16.3 (16.5)

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

2. The school's predictions and evidence from the inspection suggest that standards will improve in the national tests in 2004. They are likely to reach at least average standards. In particular, an above average proportion of pupils is likely to attain the higher Level 3 in each subject. This would be a good improvement on 2003 and is the result of strategies introduced by the school to raise standards. There was a focus on English in the school year 2002-03 and this has resulted in improved standards in reading and writing, although standards in listening, whilst improving, remain below average. A focus on mathematics during the present school year has also raised standards. The dip in results occurred because an increasing number of pupils with below-average standards have joined the school, including some who join during the school year from disadvantaged backgrounds. The initiatives introduced by the school to combat this dip in standards mean that current standards are now broadly similar to those found in English and mathematics when the school was inspected previously, and have improved in science.

3. Children enter the Reception classes with standards and learning skills which span a wide range but are below average overall. They make good progress and achieve well, particularly those who spend three terms in the Reception classes. They achieve particularly well in communication, language and literacy and mathematical development and are likely to exceed the standards expected nationally in these areas of learning by the time that they enter Year 1. In the other areas of learning – personal, social and emotional development, knowledge and understanding of the world, creative development and physical development – they are likely to achieve average standards. This represents good progress and achievement. However, children are not given enough opportunities to make choices and work independently and in pairs and small groups. This holds back their development.
4. Pupils continue to achieve well and make good progress overall in Years 1 and 2. They reach average standards in English, mathematics, geography, history and religious education and above-average standards in science. This is because there is a good concentration on experimental and investigative work which motivates pupils well and gives them a good level of knowledge and understanding. In English and mathematics, an above-average proportion of pupils is reaching above-average standards and the school is in a good position to raise standards further in these subjects. In geography, history and religious education, relatively little work is recorded and pupils are missing opportunities to practise and develop their writing skills. In religious education, for example, pupils are more likely to be asked to draw a picture of the story than to write a short account of it.
5. Information and communication technology is the one subject in which pupils do not achieve well. Standards in this subject are now below average and this is a deterioration since the previous inspection. This is because information and communication technology has only recently become a focus for development. The computer suite is very new and, at this stage, only has six computers although more are planned for. There are also plans to obtain two computer-driven interactive whiteboards. Overall, pupils do not use information and communication technology sufficiently to support their learning in subjects such as science and mathematics, and so do not have enough opportunities to practise their skills. The curriculum in information and communication technology is now based on national guidelines, and, given its plans to upgrade its resources further, the school is in a secure position to improve pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding.
6. There are good arrangements in place to manage the learning of pupils with special educational needs. As a result, they make good progress and achieve well, and there are examples of these pupils reaching average standards. However, for a small number, significant emotional and behavioural difficulties adversely affect their progress and achievement in some lessons and prevent them from reaching the standards of which they are capable.
7. Recently, pupils' achievement in the creative arts has been enhanced by special projects. Pupils have been given good opportunities to develop creativity, for example in a 'Mother Nature' project which has produced some displays of good quality, and in a project with the local Museum and Library Service on 'Getting to grips with objects'. A visiting artist created links with drama and story-telling. There has been imaginative work with lanterns and shadow puppets. An artist in residence is beginning to develop sculpture work with pupils in Year 1. This rich provision is increasing pupils' achievement, particularly in art and design and design and technology, and plans are in place to develop it further.

8. The headteacher, with the good support of her colleagues, is raising standards and pupils' attainment systematically. During this school year, there has been a focus on improving the achievement of higher-attaining pupils and this has been successful. Now, the school plans to raise the achievement of average pupils. Another interesting initiative is making a member of staff responsible for raising boys' attainment. This has not yet been in place long enough to have made a significant impact, but some interesting ideas are being trailed and their progress is being monitored. This structured and systematic approach is putting the school in a good position to improve standards and pupils' achievement further.

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

The attitudes and behaviour of the majority of pupils are good. The personal development of pupils and relationships between pupils are generally good. Attendance is satisfactory and punctuality is good. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Most pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning are good, as are relationships.
- A small but significant number of pupils have difficulty in controlling their behaviour.
- Attendance, whilst satisfactory, is not as good as at the time of the previous inspection; in contrast, punctuality has improved.
- Pupils feel well involved in the school community and learn well about their own and other cultures.
- Pupils with special educational needs have good attitudes to learning overall.

### **Commentary**

9. The school has continued to promote good attitudes and behaviour for the majority of pupils, as stated in the report from the previous inspection. Most pupils have good attitudes to learning, co-operate well and listen appropriately, and this contributes to their good achievement. In a Year 2 literacy lesson, for example, pupils displayed a very good level of concentration and responded enthusiastically to the challenging tasks. They co-operated well and respected each other's ideas as well as showing initiative. Most pupils are keen to learn and try not to allow the poor behaviour of a small minority in some lessons to distract them from their work. Some pupils' listening skills are not well developed, and this is particularly noticeable during whole-class teaching sessions. In most lessons, pupils move sensibly from whole-class activities to individual tasks. However, the attention-seeking of a small minority of pupils sometimes disrupts the work of others. Overall, the behaviour of the majority of pupils is good and they understand that their actions affect others and accept responsibility for them. In discussion, Year 2 pupils felt that they could discuss any bullying concerns with an adult and they knew they would be dealt with appropriately. This illustrates the good relationships which exist between pupils and between pupils and adults.
10. A small but significant number of pupils (both boys and girls), clearly identified by the school, have difficulty in controlling their own behaviour. Both parents and pupils express

concern about the behaviour of these pupils. These pupils, who on occasions can be very badly behaved, constantly tax teachers' skills in managing behaviour and, on occasions, slow the pace of learning for others in the class or cause disruptions to lessons. Following staff training on behaviour management, a new whole-school strategy was introduced in September 2003, and this ensures a consistent approach amongst teachers. Teachers display clear positive behaviour management strategies to manage these pupils. However, these strategies achieve varying success. In some lessons, teaching assistants are not available to help teachers to manage these pupils. As a result, the pace of some lessons is slowed. The school has in place a range of strategies to support these pupils, including a nurturing group called the 'Sunshine Group' and a 'Rainbow Room' available for pupils who need moments of calm to help them cope with their frustrations and behaviour problems. These strategies are effective and the behaviour of identified pupils is carefully monitored as a consequence of these strategies. However, these facilities are only in use for part of the week.

11. Attendance data shows that the school has had an increased amount of both authorised and unauthorised absences since the previous inspection. The school has already recognised the need to monitor absences more closely and is planning to introduce a 'first-day contact' system of monitoring in the near future. The school has introduced a range of initiatives to improve punctuality and these have been successful. The changing of the times of the school day to help parents with pupils at both the infant and junior schools has already been agreed through appropriate consultation procedures so as to improve punctuality further.
12. Pupils' social skills are well developed so that the majority play harmoniously and learn to tolerate others. Through studies in religious education lessons, for example, pupils learn how to become a 'better friend'. They sing at a local home for the elderly and this helps them to understand more about their local community. Through topics in geography, music, art and design and religious education, for example, and through visits and visitors, pupils are developing a good understanding of their own and other cultures. Pupils' spiritual and moral development is satisfactorily promoted in assemblies and opportunities in lessons. Pupils' work is celebrated in class and assemblies, and this improves their self-esteem effectively. Children in the Foundation Stage are likely to reach the standards expected nationally in their personal, social and emotional development by the end of the Reception Year.
13. The majority of pupils with special educational needs have good attitudes to school and are very well integrated within the school community. The level of support and encouragement that they receive has a significant effect on their self-esteem and on their achievement. They are confident to ask for assistance and appreciate that it will be readily available. However, in some classes a few of these pupils behave poorly. The good strategies that the school has put into place and the assistance given by specialist support groups has resulted in some improvements, but these pupils still find it very difficult to conform and to co-operate with their teachers and other pupils in the class.

## Attendance

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

Authorised absence	
School data	4.6
National data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	
School data	0.5
National data	0.4

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

**Ethnic background of pupils**

**Exclusions in the last school year**

Categories used in the Annual School Census	Number of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	164	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	1	0	0
Chinese	1	0	0
Any other ethnic group	1	0	0

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

**QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL**

The school is providing an education of good quality. Teaching is good overall and, as a result, pupils achieve well and make good progress. There is good provision for pupils with special educational needs and they achieve well. The quality of the school’s curriculum is good overall and there are good opportunities for enrichment out of class. Pupils are well cared for and feel safe and secure in the school.

**Teaching and learning**

The quality of teaching and learning is good overall throughout the school and there are good systems in place to assess pupils’ work and to manage their future learning.

**Main strengths and weaknesses**

- In very good and some good lessons, imaginative teaching and interesting learning activities engage pupils’ interest and challenge them so that they try hard and achieve well.
- Pupils’ skills as independent learners are insufficiently developed.
- Assessment systems have improved markedly since the school was inspected previously.
- Pupils with special educational needs are supported well.
- Teaching assistants support learning well in the classes where they are available.

**Commentary**

**Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 31 lessons**

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0 (0%)	6 (19%)	16 (52%)	9 (29%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

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

14. In very good lessons, pupils’ learning is very effective because their attention is thoroughly engaged and they put a good deal of effort into their work. For example, in a very good religious education lesson in Year 2, the teacher’s charismatic telling of the

story of the Prodigal Son resulted in a very high level of interest and sustained concentration. Pupils were keen to contribute to discussions at different points in the story and predict what might happen next. The lesson contributed very effectively to their spiritual and moral development. Similarly, in a very good mathematical development lesson in a Reception class, the teacher's very positive approach and her very skilful use of her hands resulted in very careful listening from the class. Very good practical activities reinforced learning effectively, and the children's standards were above average. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall in the Reception classes and in Years 1 and 2.

15. However, in lessons that are only satisfactory, the pace of learning is more pedestrian so that some pupils lose interest and do not concentrate well. In too many of these lessons, learning is over-directed by the teacher and pupils are not given opportunities to make choices or to plan their work. One effect of this is that they have few opportunities to learn from their own mistakes. This lack of sufficient opportunities to make choices exists throughout the school. As a result, pupils do not develop skills as independent learners or learn how to manage their own learning sufficiently.
16. Over the last two years, the school's systems for assessing and tracking pupils' progress have improved markedly. They are now good and this is a significant improvement since the previous inspection. Systems for tracking pupils' learning are now in place for English and mathematics and, in other subjects, progress is assessed after each unit of work. Information from these assessments is being used increasingly effectively to set targets for future learning for individual pupils and groups. Information from the tracking of pupils' progress in the Reception Year is now being used to help to plan programmes of learning in Years 1 and 2. This increasingly effective use of information is putting the school into a good position to plan learning more effectively and so to raise standards.
17. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well and so achieve well. Their individual education plans are written jointly by their class teacher and the special educational needs co-ordinator who decides if specialist support is required. Teachers share the targets that are set with pupils so that they understand what they are learning and why, and can measure the progress that they are making towards their targets. The school appreciates that, for these pupils, it is essential to learn in short steps so that they can appreciate the progress that they are making, and teachers are adept at managing learning in this way so that pupils can appreciate that they are improving and achieving well. Teachers and teaching assistants work hard with pupils who have special educational needs. They make good use of outside agencies, especially to support pupils who have significant emotional and behavioural problems. As a result of this effective support, pupils with special educational needs are making good progress and are achieving well.
18. Teaching assistants are an important part of the staff team. They are effective in the lessons to which they are allocated, either supporting individual pupils with particular needs or, more often, a group of pupils. However, they are relatively few in number. For example, support assistants are not attached fully to the Reception classes. When classes have the support of an assistant for only part of the time, but not the whole time, learning is less continuous, and so is less effective.
19. Since her appointment, the headteacher has developed teaching and learning well. Because of this, the school is now in a good position to raise standards further.

## **The curriculum**

The curriculum provided in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory. For pupils in Years 1 and 2, the curriculum is of good quality and is substantially enriched by a good range of visits and visitors. It meets the needs of pupils with special educational needs well. The school's accommodation is satisfactory and there are satisfactory resources in most subjects.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The curriculum offered in the Foundation Stage now covers all the areas of learning.
- Good curriculum development since the previous inspection has contributed to the improved standards in the school.
- Schemes of work are in place for all subjects, including personal, health and social education and design and technology.
- Resources for information and communication technology are unsatisfactory.
- The number of support assistants in school is limited and this has an adverse impact on the progress that pupils make.

## **Commentary**

20. There has been significant improvement in the curricular provision in both the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2 since the previous inspection. All the areas of learning for children in the Reception classes are now specifically planned for, and the school has moved, in the last two years, from a topic-based curriculum to one that is clearly subject-based in Years 1 and 2. The curriculum meets the requirements of the National Curriculum and the locally-agreed syllabus for religious education.
21. The curriculum is enriched well by a range of visits within the locality and many visitors support pupils' learning in school. For example, the impact of this enrichment was clearly seen in a project called 'Getting to grips with objects' with Buxton Museum and Library Service. The initial stimulus was looking at Peruvian tapestries and the children decided to make their own Buxtonian wall-hanging by looking at local buildings and creating a wall-hanging made of foam and fabrics, showing local landmarks. A storyteller worked with pupils to help them to tell stories based on images and textures. They expressed their ideas through miming places in the landscape and also made 'story bundles'. Each child made their own fabric landscape texture patch that was joined to make a very large wall-hanging and a story cape. The children proudly displayed their work at the museum.
22. Policies and schemes of work are in place for all subjects, including personal, health and social education and design and technology. Personal, health and social education is now timetabled and taught in all classes. Although there has been some improvement in resources for information and communication technology, these are still unsatisfactory. The computer suite is too small, there are not sufficient computers for whole-class work, and more access points are needed for the network.
23. Opportunities are limited for developing speaking and listening through role-play in the Foundation Stage as there are no full-time support assistants in these classes. This is having an adverse effect both on children's speaking and listening skills and on their personal and social development.

24. Overall, the curriculum has improved well since the previous inspection and is now firmly based in national guidelines. Pupils are well prepared, overall, for the next stage of their education.

### **Care, guidance and support**

The school makes good provision for pupils' care, welfare, health and safety. It provides good support and guidance for pupils' academic and personal development. The staff clearly know individual pupils very well. The school involves pupils satisfactorily by seeking their views.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The procedures in place to meet the academic, personal and emotional needs of individual pupils are good. Pupils trust their teachers and know they can turn to them for help.
- The school presents a safe and healthy environment and arrangements for child protection are well established.
- There are good arrangements for pupils joining the school, which enable them to settle in quickly. Transfer arrangements at the end of Year 2 enable pupils to move smoothly into their junior school.
- There is no school council so that pupils have no formalised means of expressing their views.

### **Commentary**

25. The school is very caring and concerned for its pupils' welfare. Pastoral support is seen as a very important aspect of the school's work. Staff know their pupils very well and have established good relationships with them. This means that pupils are confident to go to an adult with any concerns. This, along with effective monitoring of pupils' academic progress, enables pupils' needs to be well supported. The school also works well with other agencies to ensure that pupils have extra support where needed. For example, the work of the Derbyshire behaviour support team, linked to the school's new 'Rainbow Room', is helping those pupils who have behaviour problems or short attention spans. Pupils enjoy a good level of care and support and this has a positive effect on their academic achievement and personal development.
26. There is particularly good emphasis on health and safety throughout the school. The caretaker is conscientious and vigilant in her duties and is very clear about potential risks and how to avoid them. She and her team ensure that pupils learn in a clean and attractive environment. The school has received an award for supporting healthy eating in school; for example, fruit and water are provided for pupils during the day. There is an appropriately trained and qualified named person for child protection and all staff are fully aware of the school's procedures.
27. Parents and children joining the school in the Reception classes are given good opportunities to visit the school beforehand to meet their teachers and support staff. This year, the headteacher has arranged for staff to visit them at home before they start in the school. This is a significant improvement on previous practice. In Year 2, pupils have many opportunities to visit their junior school and to get to know their teachers before they transfer there. As a result, they move confidently to their next school, and, for most pupils, the transition is smooth and painless.

28. The school as yet has no formal mechanisms for seeking pupils' views although the headteacher plans to give pupils more of a voice in what happens in school through the setting up of a school council. However, all adults know pupils well and informal discussions mean that pupils' views are well known and are taken into account when future plans are made.

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

The school's partnership with parents is very good and has improved since the previous inspection. Links with other schools and the community are good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Parents have positive views of the school.
- Information, meetings for parents and opportunities for parents to be involved in their children's learning are very good and help parents well to be part of the learning partnership.
- Parents' views are valued and acted upon as part of the school's self-evaluation.
- Links with other schools and the surrounding community are good.

### **Commentary**

29. An analysis of the returns of parents' questionnaires shows that **all** parents agree that:
- Teaching is good.
  - Their child is treated fairly.
  - The school encourages pupils to become mature and independent.
  - The school seeks their views and takes notice of them.
30. These positive views reflect parents' confidence in the school and inspection findings support all of these positive views. Parental support has a positive effect on attainment and progress. Parents' main concerns were about behaviour and bullying. The inspection found that their concerns about the behaviour of a small minority of pupils were justified. Inspectors agree with the parents' view that rare instances of bullying are treated seriously by the school and handled well. The school has many strategies to support and improve the behaviour of pupils identified as having behavioural difficulties. These are gradually having a positive effect, but occasional problems remain with the behaviour of a few pupils. In September, parents received full information on the revised behaviour management strategies to help them to understand and support the school's approach.
31. The quality of the documentation that the school provides for parents is very good. Pupils' annual reports include appropriately detailed information about their progress and areas for improvement. The well-written prospectus provides clear and helpful information. Newsletters are sent out regularly and provide useful information on events and activities. The weekly class topic information sheets are a particularly valuable method of including parents in the learning partnership. These include useful suggestions on how they can support their children's learning. Workshops are held frequently to help parents to understand further the learning process of their child, a 'Talking about Learning' workshop being the most recent. Many parents support their children's learning by listening to them read both at home and during a weekly opportunity in school. The school secretary provides a friendly and approachable link between parents and school. The parent-teacher association has raised substantial funds and regularly organises events to support improvements to the school's learning environment. For example, parents are currently raising funds to improve facilities in the playgrounds.

32. The school is constantly seeking to involve parents and carries out its own questionnaire to ascertain parents' views and, through constant self-evaluation, is always seeking ways to improve the partnership with parents further. Following a recent parental survey, the school has sent parents a full summary of the results and an account of the actions that the school proposes to take as a result of their comments and suggestions. This reflects the headteacher's emphasis on ensuring a close partnership. In addition the headteacher holds regular drop-in sessions for any parents and these are timed to meet the needs of parents who work. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are involved well in discussions and planning so that they are able to support their children's learning.
33. Good links, both pastoral and academic, are developing well with the junior school to which most pupils transfer. These links include visits for plays, sports day and to meet their new teachers and help to ensure that pupils settle into their next school smoothly. Community links are good and visits in the local community extend pupils' learning opportunities well. For example, pupils have enjoyed a visit to the Pavilion Gardens. In addition, visitors to the school enrich pupils' learning well.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Leadership and management are good overall. The headteacher is providing very good leadership. The leadership of other staff is good, as is management. The governance of the school is good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The headteacher's very good leadership is enabling the school to improve systematically.
- Other staff fulfil their leadership roles well.
- Governors are involved effectively in the life of the school and have a good understanding of its strengths and potential for development.
- The management of the school is good.
- Parents are pleased that the school is now more open and with the very good quality of the information that they receive.

### **Commentary**

34. At the time of the inspection, the headteacher had been in post for just over two years. On taking up her appointment, she spent a term evaluating the situation, and then created a strategy for improving and developing the school. This involved taking initiatives over a wide area and was based on the headteacher's vision for the school. Essentially, this is for the school to have high expectations for pupils' achievement and personal development. She was determined to raise standards and to increase the involvement of her colleagues in the leadership and management of the school. Her strategies are beginning to have a good degree of success. The decline in standards up to 2003 has been reversed and, as a result of the initiatives that she has introduced, for example the new reading scheme, the school is now in a good position to raise standards further.
35. The headteacher has an impressive grasp of strategy. She is able to plan short-term initiatives within the context of longer-term planning so that the school moves forward in a structured and systematic way. The headteacher was determined to improve teaching and learning in English during the first year and mathematics in the second. As a result of this, the school is likely to achieve better results in the national tests at the end of Year 2 in 2004 and is in a good position to raise standards further in future years. There are

some imaginative initiatives in place. For example, a 'boys' co-ordinator' has been appointed to try to raise the attainment of boys and is developing strategies to address this. This initiative has not been in place long enough to have had a significant impact, but there are some encouraging signs of progress.

36. There has been a redistribution of responsibilities in the last two years. All subjects now have a person responsible for them and the leadership of subjects is now good overall. For example, special educational needs is now managed well. The subject leader works closely with all staff to ensure that pupils with special educational needs are given effective support. As a result, their achievement and rate of progress are good. A positive climate for learning ensures that all pupils are fully included in all that the school offers. Care is taken to ensure that the professional development of staff is linked to the areas which are current priorities for school improvement. To support this, a senior management team has been created. This is in the early stages of development but has the potential to be a major force in moving the school forward. For example, it includes a special projects co-ordinator who has already organised projects in creative arts which have given pupils rich curricular experiences.
37. Governors are an important part of the team. Their good contribution to the leadership and management of the school is rooted in their clear understanding of its day-to-day work. Governors have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and potential for development and are able to debate these cogently. They realise that they can bring different perspectives to discussions about the school's development because they come from a range of backgrounds, and they are keen to make this contribution. Governors are appropriately involved in the strategic management of the school and play an effective part in creating its vision and sense of purpose. They ensure that the school fulfils its statutory duties.
38. The school is managed well on a day-to-day basis. Its routines are straightforward and ensure that time and resources are used well. The school has developed good systems for monitoring and evaluating its performance and for taking action in the light of the information it receives from these systems. The school improvement plan is a useful working document which successfully places short-term priorities within a longer-term context for development. It results from wide-ranging discussions to which all can contribute. Finances are managed effectively on a day-to-day basis by the school secretary. The school has had financial difficulties because its insurance policy was found not to cover the financing of a member of staff on long-term sick leave. This has resulted in an overspend, but the school has clear plans to return to a balanced budget. The principles of best value are applied satisfactorily.

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

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	435,777	Balance from previous year	-13,775
Total expenditure	426,270	Balance carried forward to the next	-4,250
Expenditure per pupil	2,422		

39. The school's income includes some £15,000 from payments for facilities rented to other groups. This is good management. The school's expenditure per pupil is below average.

40. As a result of the headteacher's very effective leadership and the good support that she has received from her colleagues and the governing body, the school has improved well since it was inspected previously. Teaching and learning are now more soundly based in effective schemes of work and these are helping to reverse the decline in standards caused by a change in the pattern of the school's intake. Standards are now broadly similar to those found when the school was inspected previously. Parents are particularly pleased that they are now very well informed about the school's activities and their children's progress. They feel that the school is now more open and welcoming. The headteacher has created an impressive unity of purpose in the school which means that it is in a good position to improve further. Given pupils' good achievement, the effective teaching and care that pupils receive, the good attitudes that the large majority of pupils develop, and its low unit costs, the school gives good value for money.

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

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

41. Children enter the Reception classes with overall standards that are below those expected for their age. They join the Reception classes from a range of nurseries and other pre-school provision. The teaching in one class is shared by two teachers, but one teacher was absent during the inspection. The majority of children who enter this class in September settle well because staff provide a secure learning environment and children form good relationships with all adults. However, some of the younger children who join the school in January, in the second Reception class, are still very immature. They find it hard to stay on a learning activity for more than a few minutes and to work together with other children.
42. The way in which activities are provided in both the classes does not help children to develop independence. They have limited opportunities to choose their own materials or to have free choice of which activity they wish to undertake. Ongoing provision is not readily available when children finish their focused tasks so that they can choose a new activity. Children do not develop their imaginative play sufficiently through role-play in the 'garden centre' or the 'post office'. There are no full-time teaching assistants in these classes and this limits the adult interaction available to children to enable them to be imaginative and to learn the skills of working together independently in small groups. Learning through role-play was an issue at the previous inspection and has still not been fully addressed.
43. Teaching is good overall and children make good progress and achieve well, with very good progress seen in reading and writing and in their mathematical development. Planning is thorough and is matched closely to the Foundation Stage curriculum. Systems for the assessment of children's achievement are good and link closely to the planning of future learning. This, together with daily ongoing assessment, is recorded in detail in the Foundation Stage records. The thoroughness of this process guides teaching effectively and helps children to achieve well. There has been good improvement in the curriculum provided, planning, and assessment, since the previous inspection. The Foundation Stage is now led and managed well.

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

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

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

- Children develop good relationships with adults and this promotes good standards of behaviour.
- Children have limited opportunities to develop their independent skills.
- Many children do not listen and this is affecting the progress that they make.

#### **Commentary**

44. Most children are on course to reach the nationally expected level in this area of learning due to the good teaching that they receive. This represents good achievement. Children form good relationships with adults and the majority behave well. Children have limited opportunities to become independent learners as the provision in both Reception classes does not encourage them to access their own materials or develop the skills needed to work together through role-play. The younger children, who only joined the school in January, do not stay on a learning activity for long when working independently and constantly interrupt the group working with the teacher. This lack of maturity is adversely affecting the progress of other children.
45. Older children work well in their independent groups and concentrate on a learning activity for an appropriate period of time. They listen both to the teacher and to each other well in whole-class discussions. In this class, where the teaching is very good, children show keen interest, respond well, behave sensibly, and are confident to share their work with others. The younger children are less mature and do not work well together. Many of them do not listen carefully and therefore do not know what they have to do. In a mathematics activity, for example, they snatched materials, did not share and did not fully achieve the task set, as they had not listened to the teacher's instructions. These children are beginning to understand the need to take turns in team games in their physical development lessons.

## **COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Good teaching and planning help children to develop reading and writing skills well.
- Teachers and teaching staff use their time very well to support learning when working with small groups.
- Opportunities to develop speaking and listening skills are not fully utilised, as role-play is not sufficiently developed.
- Parents support the development of children's reading well.

### **Commentary**

46. Most children are on course to exceed the nationally expected level in this area of learning because the teaching that they receive is good. Children achieve very well in this area of learning. Activities are carefully planned to match the needs of all children and all adults know the children very well. Children are well supported by teachers and support staff when working in small groups for reading and writing. Although much of the writing is phonetically spelt, the words are clear to read and sentences make sense. They are beginning to use spaces between their words and many know that a sentence starts with a capital letter and ends with a full stop. However, the children are not given encouragement to write their full name, and this would provide them with greater challenge and give them pride in their work. Younger children make good attempts with their writing but, when working independently, do not have word cards or simple word lists to help them so that their attainment and progress is slowed.
47. Many children are confident readers and use picture clues well to help them to recognise more complex words. They are keen to talk about what they think will happen next, handle books well, and often choose a book when other work is finished. There is good dialogue between teachers and parents through reading diaries that are taken home daily.

Spelling lists are taken home regularly and parents are aware of individual children's targets in reading and writing. On one day each week, parents join their children at the start of the day to share books and, during the inspection, this opportunity was supported very well.

48. There are insufficient opportunities for children to work in small groups in order to develop their speaking and listening skills. The lack of focus on role-play activities does not help children to develop imaginative language as they pretend to be the shop-keeper or customer in the 'garden centre'. Limited adult interaction in this area is not helping them to develop their speaking and listening skills well.

## **MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision for mathematical development is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- A range of practical activities supports children's mathematical development well.
- A lack of additional support materials hinders younger children's progress in ordering numbers.
- Good use is made of assessment in lessons to check children's knowledge and understanding.

### **Commentary**

49. The quality of teaching is good in this area of learning. Teachers use a wide range of practical activities to reinforce children's understanding of ordering numbers and identifying ordinal numbers from first to eighth. For example, older children used toys to show the position of one toy in a row, identified the position, and described this correctly within the row. Younger children ordered items and numbers to 10 successfully when some of the sequence was missing. They also identified what the missing numbers were and the correct space for them in a line of objects. Children understood 'one more than' and 'one less than' a given number and used numbers above 10 with a good degree of confidence. Some younger children identified the smallest and largest number when ordering random numbers to 10 but would have achieved this more quickly with line cards and number squares to help them.
50. Very focused questioning enabled the teacher to identify those children who had grasped the concept of ordinal numbers quickly. Questions were well matched to individual children's ability so that they were confident to respond. The majority of children show a good understanding of number to 10 and above, and many are already exceeding the level expected when they enter Year 1. This is very good achievement.

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

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Good teaching extends children's skills, knowledge and understanding well.
- There are good first-hand opportunities provided for children to extend their early scientific knowledge and understanding.
- Children have a sound knowledge of familiar Bible stories and these are linked well to other curriculum areas.

### **Commentary**

51. Children make good progress in this area of learning and achieve well because the quality of teaching is good. Most are on course to reach the standards expected nationally in the early learning goals by the end of their Reception Year. During the inspection, children had good opportunities to explore the outdoor areas around the school in their search for 'mini-beasts'. They knew that living things changed and developed over time and that they should be treated with care and respect. Very good questioning by the teacher challenged them to think of consequences in nature; for example, they thought about 'what will happen when the seeds of the dandelion blow away?'. Questions such as this help them to develop early prediction skills in science. They demonstrated a good understanding of where to find 'mini-beasts' and recognised slugs, snails, beetles and woodlice.
52. An analysis of their previous work shows that children have a sound understanding when predicting what will happen when water is heated, and they record their findings accurately when testing objects to find out if they will sink or float. Teachers make good use of the local Pavilion Gardens to give children opportunities to observe creatures that live in or near the water. They extend this understanding further when they learn about the animals in Noah's Ark and begin to identify the differences between males and females. This story has also been linked effectively to their work on doubles in mathematics. They have a good understanding of some familiar Bible stories.

## **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision for physical development is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Opportunities for extending outdoor play provision have improved, though the resources are shared with the private Nursery based within the school building.
- All children have good opportunities to use the hall for three lessons each week.
- The youngest children do not always change for their lessons in the hall.
- Many of these children do not listen and this affects the progress they make.

### **Commentary**

53. Children are likely to achieve the standards expected nationally in this area of learning by the end of the Reception Year. This represents good achievement. Although limited evidence was available in this area of learning, three small outside areas are available

for physical activities. A good range of resources is shared with a private Nursery, and there are daily opportunities for children to use these facilities. It is not possible for children to move easily between the indoor and outdoor provision as there is no direct access from the Reception classrooms. It is difficult to change this as there are restrictions on altering the school building.

54. Children have good opportunities to develop their physical skills by working in the hall. Older children used the apparatus very well. Younger children only changed their footwear in preparation for their lesson. The time they took to achieve this was too long and they need to understand the importance of being able to change properly and quickly to maximise the time available to develop their physical skills. This is not preparing them well for the challenges they will meet in Year 1.
55. In a satisfactory lesson, children showed a sound awareness of space but did not listen sufficiently carefully to the teacher's clear instructions. For example, this meant that movements that were intended to be made while standing often became movements round the hall. Children responded well when using 'The Bean Game' to warm up. They know what is expected and their movements were good. They jumped, hopped, jogged and ran when instructed to do so and used space quite well. They are just beginning to understand the nature of team games and took turns well but did not always follow instructions because they did not listen carefully enough. This lesson lacked pace and challenge and, as a result, a small number of children did not behave well.

## **CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

Provision for creative development is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children have regular opportunities to develop their observational skills.
- Children are introduced, at an early stage, to the work of other artists.
- Good use is made of information and communication technology to create patterns in the style of Kandinsky.
- Musical instruments are held correctly and used sensibly when children create their own music.

### **Commentary**

56. Children reach the standards expected nationally in this area of learning by the end of the Reception Year as a result of good teaching. Achievement is good. Displays show that children are developing good skills in observational drawings of real flowers before they represent them in paint. They mix and use appropriate colours carefully, and their work shows good small-movement skills. Good teaching stimulates their interest and they enjoy looking at the work of other artists. Children had previously created very good paintings in the style of Monet, using their fingers and thick paint to create a bold texture. During the inspection, children looked at the work of Kandinsky. They used wide felt brushes well to create a background wash of coloured inks before adding lines and shapes to create their pattern. The results showed that they had looked very carefully at the artist's work and the teacher had carefully explained the order in which to create this before they had started their own work. A teaching assistant supported other children very well to create clay tiles, again in the style of Kandinsky. They had the choice of

adding pieces to create a pattern or cutting into the clay. Another group who worked well independently achieved very vivid patch patterns, using ready-mixed paint.

57. The two computers in the classroom are used well to extend pupils' information and communication technology skills in art. Children stay on the computers for extended periods of time exploring a paint programme and have good skills when using the mouse. They create lines and shapes with ease. They select their own colours and use the 'fill tool' well to create their patterns, again in the style of the artist.
58. Children have good opportunities to use musical instruments. They know how to hold them properly and how to create a good sound. Good opportunities were given by the teacher for children to listen to the sounds created by a range of instruments. Children used these musical sounds well, along with sounds created by using their hands and voices, to compose an effective piece of music representing the story of Noah and his Ark.

## **SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGE 1**

### **ENGLISH**

Provision in English is **good**.

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

- Pupils achieve well because teaching is good.
- By the end of Year 2, pupils generally read and write well. They speak clearly and express their views confidently, but listening skills are less well developed.
- There are insufficient opportunities for pupils to practise different types of writing in subjects such as geography, history and religious education.

#### **Commentary**

59. Over the last five years, standards in reading and writing, as measured in the national tests at the end of Year 2, have been generally above average although they declined overall in the last two years. In most years, levels of knowledge and learning skills are below average when children enter the Reception classes, so these results represent good achievement during the three years that pupils spend in the school. This results from good teaching. During the inspection, the quality of teaching and learning was good in four of the five lessons observed, and very good in the fifth. Standards dipped slightly in 2003 in reading, but are likely to improve again in 2004, not least because of the successful introduction of a new reading scheme. This is good achievement because this year group includes an above-average proportion of pupils with special educational needs. Pupils are now achieving average standards in English.
60. By the end of Year 2, the reading of higher-attaining pupils is above average. They read fluently and with good understanding and have good phonic skills to read unfamiliar words. This is because of good teaching of phonics in Years 1 and 2. Average pupils read competently with occasional hesitations, but have the ability to identify the different sounds in unfamiliar words, and so to gradually read them. Lower-attaining pupils read with little expression and some hesitations, but, again, mostly have the skills to sound out the different syllables in unfamiliar words and to build up the sounds into the correct word.

In the national tests in 2004, an above-average proportion of pupils is likely to achieve the national expectation of Level 2, and the higher Level 3.

61. An analysis of pupils' work over the year shows that pupils in Year 2 have had good opportunities to write for different purposes, for example creative, descriptive and instructional writing. There are good examples of poetry on display in one Year 2 classroom. During the inspection, pupils in one Year 2 class were all able to create titles for their writing featuring alliteration, for example, 'Miss Green the Gardener' and 'Master Patch the Pirate'. Their work shows good improvement over the year for pupils at different stages of learning. Handwriting has improved well, becoming clearer and more neatly formed. Spelling is generally accurate, including some difficult words such as 'beautiful'. Words which are occasionally incorrectly spelled by higher-attaining pupils, and rather more frequently by average- and lower-attaining pupils, are still recognisable. Lower-attaining pupils tend to complete relatively small amounts of writing and this holds back their achievement. However, achievement is good overall, and pupils' work is carefully marked, with frequent suggestions to help pupils to improve their work. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well and achieve well, sometimes reaching average standards.
62. Overall, standards in speaking are above average. Most pupils speak confidently and reasonably fluently and are well able to express their views and explain their thinking. They are keen to answer questions and to contribute to discussions. However, listening skills are less well developed and are below average. Pupils find it difficult to listen for extended periods and learning time is lost when teachers have to remind them to pay attention. This can be the result of pupils being asked to sit for too long on the carpet so that they become uncomfortable and fidgety. The short concentration spans of a few pupils can adversely affect the learning of others.
63. The quality of teaching is good across the school. There are good systems for tracking pupils' progress and assessment information is generally used well to plan learning for different groups of pupils. This is a marked improvement since the previous inspection. Lessons are well planned and teachers have a secure appreciation of the National Literacy Strategy. Time and resources are generally used well and, in the best lessons, imaginative teaching methods fully engage pupils' interest and enthusiasm, and they achieve very well.
64. The subject is led and managed well. The subject leader has clear strategies for raising standards and these are gradually becoming effective. An interesting initiative is to make a member of staff responsible for developing speaking and listening. However, she has not yet had this responsibility long enough to have a significant impact. The school is in a good position to raise standards further.

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

65. Speaking skills are developed well in other subjects when pupils are given regular opportunities to discuss and respond to questions. Visitors to the school also provide opportunities for discussion. Reading skills are developed well in other subjects, but

limited recording in subjects such as geography, history and religious education mean that opportunities to develop writing in other subjects are missed.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards in mathematics worsened after the school's previous inspection but are now average again because the school identified the need to focus on the subject during this school year.
- The quality of teaching and learning was good in two-thirds of the lessons observed.
- Most pupils work with a good level of accuracy.

### **Commentary**

66. At the time of the previous inspection, standards in mathematics were average at the end of Year 2. However, standards, as measured in the national tests at the end of Year 2, were below average in 2003. Attainment was also below that achieved in schools which draw their pupils from similar backgrounds. In 2003, the proportion of pupils attaining the higher levels of 2A and 3 was markedly below the national average.
67. The school recognised that this was a problem and has focused on teaching and learning in mathematics during this school year. As a result, this decline in standards has been reversed. The school's predictions and evidence from the inspection show that pupils are likely to achieve average standards in the national tests at the end of Year 2 in 2004, with an above average proportion of pupils attaining the higher Level 3. This is a good improvement over the past year, particularly as this year group includes an above-average proportion of pupils with special educational needs. Pupils are now achieving well. This is the result of good leadership and management. An analysis of pupils' work shows that higher-attaining and average pupils work with a good level of accuracy. Lower-attaining pupils are prone to patches of inaccuracy and tend not to complete their work.
68. The quality of teaching and learning was good in two-thirds of the lessons observed during the inspection. In good lessons, clear explanations, coupled with imaginative teaching methods, engaged pupils' interest well so that they worked with a good level of interest and concentration. There are examples of work being too easy for higher-attaining pupils and extension work not being available to challenge them further. This depresses their achievement. In the satisfactory lesson, the steady pace and excessive time spent sitting on the carpet resulted in a few pupils becoming restless and distracted. This reduced the time available for individual work. As a result, a number did not complete the task set. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly and thoroughly and this helps to identify areas of learning which are not secure so that the planning of future learning can take account of these. Procedures for tracking pupils' progress have improved this year and are now good. The information from these assessments will put the school in a good position to raise standards further.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

69. There are examples of numeracy skills being practised in other subjects such as science and design and technology. Numeracy is developed well in these subjects. However, information and communication technology is not used effectively to support learning in mathematics.

## **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards are above average at the end of Year 2.
- Achievement is good across the school, reflecting good progress from year to year. The school very effectively develops pupils' skills of scientific investigation and understanding of scientific methods.
- The quality of teaching is good.
- Pupils enjoy science lessons. The good attitudes of the majority of pupils have a positive effect on achievement.
- Leadership and management are very good.
- Information and communication technology is not yet used to its full potential to support pupils' learning.

### **Commentary**

70. In 2003, teachers' assessments showed that by the end of Year 2, pupils' attainment was above the national average. Although the present year group includes a significant number of pupils with special educational needs, inspection evidence indicates that the present Year 2 pupils are likely to reach similar standards. Planning for science is now based on the latest national guidelines and there is good emphasis on investigative and experimental work. This is a good improvement since the previous inspection and leads to good achievement across the school.
71. The quality of teaching is good and leads to good learning. Teachers have a good knowledge of the subject, and much attention is given to making sure that pupils are clear about what they are expected to do and what will help them to learn, because there are very effective learning objectives for each lesson. Teachers are enthusiastic and the majority of pupils respond well to this. Those pupils with behavioural problems are very well managed by their teachers overall, who are well supported by teaching assistants, when they are available.
72. All staff promote listening and speaking skills in science lessons, providing opportunities for pupils to have discussions with each other and with staff when they try to explain their findings and express their ideas. The marking of work is particularly helpful and constructive. Teachers are developing the use of scientific vocabulary very well and making effective use of mathematical skills to support learning. Pupils often present their results in tables and graphs. For example, pupils in Year 1 plot the growth of their sunflowers and show their results in graph form.
73. Pupils enjoy practical work and are keen to investigate. For example, pupils in Year 1 investigated different ways of making sounds. After identifying different sounds on a tape, they worked co-operatively in groups, investigating how different instruments make different sounds. In this lesson, there was sufficient adult help, including a parent

volunteer, to enable pupils to achieve well. This meant that all pupils benefited from the extra attention and learning was good. By the end of the afternoon, all pupils proudly took home a simple musical instrument they had made, thus making a good link with their work in design and technology.

74. The leadership and management of the subject are very good. The subject manager monitors the impact of teaching and learning across the school. Assessment is used well to track pupils' progress. Resources are satisfactory and used well by staff and pupils. The subject manager is already aware of the need to use information and communication technology more to support pupils' learning, as this aspect of teaching and learning is underdeveloped. As a result, opportunities to widen pupils' learning experiences and reinforce their knowledge and understanding are missed.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The provision of resources in the subject has improved since the previous inspection, but remains unsatisfactory.
- The subject has only recently become a focus of attention.
- Pupils' skills are below those expected nationally.

### **Commentary**

75. During the inspection, it was clear that information and communication technology has only recently become a focus of attention because standards at the end of Year 2 are below average. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. Although teachers and support assistants have received some training in computer skills, teaching of full classes in the new suite with only six computers is very difficult, though teachers tried hard to give pupils equal opportunities to improve their skills. For example, in a Year 2 lesson, pupils looked through encyclopaedias to find information while others used computers for the same task. They changed places halfway through the lesson, but this did not give them sufficient time to complete the task. In lessons, teachers make use of listening posts when groups of pupils listen to stories together, which helps them to develop their reading skills. The school makes good use of videos to make learning interesting.
76. During this school year, parents and staff have worked hard to begin providing a computer suite where eventually full classes will be able to learn computer skills together. The suite has been tastefully decorated and carpeted. There are now six computers in the suite and six more are planned for. Two interactive whiteboards and training for teachers to use them are also planned.
77. Due to the absence of the subject manager during the inspection, it was difficult to assess the impact of leadership and management in information and communication technology since the previous inspection. However, in the last two years, there has been a complete reorganisation of the curriculum. This is now based on the latest national guidelines. Recent improvements to resources plus plans to provide interactive whiteboards for the further development of information and communication technology indicate that the school now realises the importance of the subject. The school is now

trying hard to provide its pupils with opportunities to make rapid progress in the near future.

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

78. Although there are computers in classrooms, they are not used very often in other subjects except in art and design when some pupils use computer programs well to paint shapes and patterns. Until pupils' skills improve, information and communication technology will remain underused in other subjects.

## **HUMANITIES**

79. Geography was sampled and no judgement is made on standards or provision. History and religious education were inspected thoroughly and are reported on below.
80. Teachers use the local environment well to extend pupils' knowledge of the world around them. They make simple maps of their journey from home to school, clearly showing the local landmarks that they pass. Pupils have successfully completed a traffic survey when considering how they can make their local area safer. They have also developed an understanding of the wider world by following the travels of Barnaby Bear to a range of places, including India and North America. There are good examples of work in geography supporting learning in mathematics, for example by representing information in graphical form. An analysis of pupils' work in books and work on display suggest that standards are average at the end of Year 2.

## **HISTORY**

Provision in history is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils show a sound understanding of the differences between the past and the present.
- Good teaching holds pupils' interest well and they achieve well.
- Limited recording is not helping pupils to develop their writing skills.
- The leadership of the subject is good.

### **Commentary**

81. Pupils talk confidently about life in Victorian times and know that this was 100 years ago. They use photographs well to identify how people travelled in that period and compare this well with travel today. Pupils show a good understanding of historical developments. They imagine well what they think life was like in the 1960s and identify their own birth dates and that of their teacher correctly on a timeline showing 100 years. They enjoy working as young historians when identifying questions to ask older people about life and events in the 1960s and write very relevant questions. However, their view of houses at that time 'being built of fabric and sticks' was an interesting concept.
82. History is taught well. Pupils' interest is engaged well and they are keen to learn. Good questioning extends their thinking skills and they are able to apply previous learning well when considering their new work. In both the lessons seen, achievement was good. Standards are average by the end of Year 2. However, in a very good lesson observed

in Year 1, pupils were reaching above average standards as a result of very good teaching.

83. The sample of work seen showed that pupils have too few opportunities to record their work. Although there are good links to art in the many illustrations seen, this is not helping pupils to extend their writing skills in history.
84. Leadership in history is good. The subject leader is keenly interested in, and enthusiastic about, her subject. Assessment is now in place at the end of each unit of work and is linked closely to the lesson objectives. Visits are an important part of pupils' learning experience, and their work on the Victorians, for example, was enriched by a visit to the Heritage Centre at Macclesfield where they took part in life in a Victorian school, experiencing Victorian toys and a Victorian Christmas. Improvements since the previous inspection include a new scheme of work, better assessment, and the timetabling of the subject for all classes instead of it being part of a topic-led curriculum.

### **Religious education**

Provision for religious education is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There is good use of visits and visitors.
- Pupils have a sound knowledge of a range of Bible stories.
- Pupils have limited opportunities to extend their writing skills in religious education.
- The subject leadership is improving and is now good.

### **Commentary**

85. Standards are average overall by the end of Year 2, but there are examples of above-average standards being reached as a result of very good teaching. Pupils' achievement is good. Pupils have opportunities to visit local churches, and church ministers support their learning by visiting school to talk about being church leaders and the jobs that they do. One vicar took a mock marriage service in school whilst another explained what happens when a baby is christened and demonstrated this well to all the pupils. These activities resulted in a good level of understanding.
86. Pupils show a sound understanding of a range of Bible stories. In addition to lessons, class assemblies support their learning in religious education well. Year 1 pupils listened well to the story of 'Joseph and his Technicolour Dream Coat'. They considered the feelings of the brothers carefully when Jacob treats Joseph as his favourite son. They know that the brothers are not telling the truth when they take the blood-stained coat to show Jacob. Pupils know that this story comes from the Bible and is in the Old Testament. Older pupils in Year 2 listened well to the story of the Prodigal Son. The teacher used the music of Pachelbel's Canon well to give them time to reflect on the feelings of the father and son in the story. They were able to suggest how the story might continue and sequenced the events correctly. Very good teaching in this lesson held pupils' interest very well. They were very keen to respond to questions, they co-operated well and respected the views of others. The quality of teaching is good overall. Personal, health and social education supports pupils' learning well in religious education and helps them to identify messages within the stories and relate these to their own experiences.

87. In the previous inspection, pupils were not recording in writing much of their work in this subject and this has not improved. Much of their work is illustrations and is extending art skills, but pupils are not given sufficient opportunities to extend their writing skills. There is limited evidence in the sample seen of the study of other faiths and cultures.
88. A new subject leader is responsible for the co-ordination of this subject. She has a sound overview of the subject as she monitors planning. Since the previous inspection, a new locally-agreed syllabus is in place and this, together with the nationally-agreed scheme, has provided more challenge for pupils in this subject. Staff feel more confident now that there is a clear, structured approach in place and this is improving teaching and learning in the subject. Subject leadership is improving and is now good.

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

Art and design, design and technology, music and physical education were sampled and no judgement is made on provision or standards.

89. It was only possible to observe one lesson in **art and design**. Pupils in Year 1 thoroughly enjoyed an introductory lesson on sculpture. They were thrilled by the objects brought into school by a visiting artist who had travelled to India and made sculptures of things she had photographed there. With very good help from the class teacher, a teaching assistant and three parents, pupils worked in small groups to examine and discuss the various objects on view, moving round the groups to have a wide experience of different materials and methods of working. This was good preparation for future lessons when pupils will eventually make sculptures of their own.
90. Elsewhere in the school, there is a good range of work on display which shows that pupils acquire good skills. For example, work in the style of Monet is very good and pupils were proud to show which painting belonged to them. This pride in their work is boosting their self-esteem well.
91. One lesson was observed in **design and technology**. Pupils in Year 2 were starting a series of lessons to design, make and evaluate a moving vehicle. They enjoyed looking at pictures and models of cars and other moving vehicles before trying to construct one of their own, using a good selection of construction materials. The school takes every opportunity to involve parents to support learning in this area. For example, in a lesson on preparing a fruit salad, ten parents helped pupils to prepare the food while another twenty came to evaluate the finished product. All pupils enjoyed the extra attention which their parents provided. This raised their self-esteem and pride in their work effectively.
92. One lesson was observed in **music**. In this lesson, the quality of teaching and learning was good overall. Pupils in Year 2 created musical scores of a few bars in which different percussion instruments were represented by different symbols. Pupils were then able to play these 'graphic scores' with impressive accuracy. Whole-school singing in assemblies is satisfactory and pupils have good opportunities to hear music of different types, including music from other ethnic communities, for example African drumming. Pupils have opportunities for performance in Christmas and harvest celebrations and to sing to the public, for example, round the town's Christmas tree.
93. In **physical education**, pupils have opportunities to use large and small apparatus and to dance each week. Pupils in Year 2 are encouraged to develop their own games,

basing them on their previous learning. There is a mixed soccer club for pupils in Years 1 and 2 and there are occasional opportunities for pupils to experience other games such as short tennis. Pupils enjoy visits by dance groups which extend their understanding of the scope and range of dance well.

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

94. This area of learning was sampled, and no judgement is made on provision or standards. Personal, social and health education is now an integral part of the curriculum. A new policy and scheme of work is in place and this subject is timetabled for all classes. This is a good improvement since the previous inspection. Policies are also in place for drugs and sex education and staff and governors are currently reviewing the resources for these. Pupils in Year 1 have 'My Caring Books' and evidence in the work sample shows that they discuss and record issues such as feelings, good and bad choices and likes and dislikes about school.
95. In the one lesson seen during the inspection, pupils considered tasks they were trusted to do at home. They co-operated well in discussions, supported each other and respected each other's ideas. Good relationships with the teacher and good use of adult support helped them to achieve well as they thought through the implications of responsibilities, giving them an early understanding of citizenship.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

### *Inspection judgement*

### *Grade*

<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>3</b>
Attendance	4
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	4

<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	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	4
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	2
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).*