

# INSPECTION REPORT

**Fairfield Community Primary School**

South Wigston

LEA area: Leicestershire

Unique reference number: 116999

Headteacher: Mrs H. Osgood

Lead inspector: M A Mackay

Dates of inspection: 24<sup>th</sup> – 26<sup>th</sup> May 2004

Inspection number: 265906

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: Community  
Age range of pupils: 4 - 10  
Gender of pupils: Mixed  
Number on roll: 202

School address: Cheshire Drive  
South Wigston  
Leicestershire  
Postcode: LE18 4WA

Telephone number: 0116 2782424  
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Appropriate authority: Governing Body  
Name of chair of governors: Mrs L. Brittain

Date of previous inspection: 9<sup>th</sup> November 1998

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This average sized primary school is situated in the Leicester conurbation, just south of the city boundary. At the time of the inspection, the school had 202 pupils on roll between the ages of four and ten. The school serves the immediate area but also admits many of its pupils from two adjacent Education Action Zones. It is not part of either Zone and does not benefit from extra funding. The pupils come from a range of socio-economic backgrounds, but many come from areas of significant deprivation. The proportion of boys to girls varies significantly in different year groups. The school has two classes of mixed-age pupils: one class of Reception and Year 1 pupils and another of Year 1 and Year 2 pupils. The school admits pupils in the September of the year in which they are five. The children's attainment on entry to the school is below average. Virtually all of the pupils are from white ethnic backgrounds. There are no pupils for whom English is an additional language. Nine per cent of the pupils have special educational needs, which is lower than the national average for the size and type of school. Three pupils have statements of special educational need, which is just above the national average. The number of pupils who are in receipt of free school meals is below average, but the number of those believed to be eligible to receive them is significantly higher. The level of pupil mobility has increased in recent years. In the current Year 4, for example, nearly 40 per cent of the pupils did not start at the school in Year 1.

The school manages a community hall within its grounds, but most of what is currently provided there is funded and managed by outside agencies. It does, however, offer classes in numeracy for adults.

In the year 2000, the school received a Schools Achievement Award.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
23112	Mike Mackay	Lead inspector	English Information and communication technology Physical education
A09510	Christine Murray-Watson	Lay inspector	
16892	Julia Elsley	Team inspector	Foundation Stage Science Design and technology History Music
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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

**The school is fairly effective** and is improving quickly. It provides a satisfactory quality of education in challenging circumstances. Nearly all of the pupils achieve well because the teaching is good. The school has a strong ethos of inclusion, harmony and achievement because the pupils and adults at the school share a common understanding of *'The Fairfield Way.'* The school is well led, but there are some weaknesses in the balance of the curriculum among the foundation subjects that prevent the pupils from attaining as well as they could. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The governance and leadership of the school are good
- The teaching is good; particularly in the way the teachers encourage the pupils, engage their interest, and use the teaching assistants to support the pupils' learning
- The pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning are good
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good
- The recent curriculum initiatives in literacy and in ICT are significantly raising standards
- The curriculum lacks balance in some foundation subjects and does not adequately provide for the pupils' spiritual and cultural development
- The teachers' response to the pupils' work does not give the pupils sufficient insight into what they need to do to improve, nor does it encourage them to present work neatly

The school's improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory, but uneven. It has made very good progress in improving the provision for pupils with special educational needs, and provision for information and communication technology (ICT). It has not, however, made sufficient progress in music and religious education. Standards in Year 2 are lower than they were at the time of the last inspection, but the attainment on entry of a significant number of the pupils (and of many of those who are admitted during the school year) is lower than it was. The inspection evidence indicates that the school has already arrested the decline in standards and is poised to improve them. The new leadership has acted quickly to get the school onto an even keel and set a course for further rapid improvement.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

Key: A – well above average; B – above average; C – average; D – below average; E – well below average.

The **pupils are achieving well** in lessons and over time, particularly in literacy, mathematics, ICT and physical education. In all other subjects, achievement is at least satisfactory. Overall, the children's attainment when they enter the school is below average. The current Foundation Stage children achieve well, particularly in personal development and in speaking and listening, where most attain the expected goals. In recent years, the standards attained by pupils in the Year 2 national tests have declined. However, the inspection evidence is that the pupils in the current cohort are attaining average standards, and are achieving well in lessons. The pupils leave the school in the year before they sit the national tests for eleven-year-olds. The inspection evidence indicates that pupils attain at the expected levels by the end of Year 5. Information provided by the local high school on the pupils' attainment in the national tests at Year 6, supports the inspection evidence. The pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve well in most subjects because they are very well supported.

Overall, the pupils' personal qualities are good. Nearly all of the pupils have positive attitudes to learning, and behave well in lessons and around the school. The older pupils are mature for their age and can be trusted to behave sensibly without the need for close supervision. **Overall, pupils'**

**spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory.** However, their spiritual and cultural awareness is not as deep or as broad as it could be because the curriculum provides too few opportunities for their development.

### **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The quality of education at the school is satisfactory overall.** The teaching at the Foundation Stage is good, and often very good in the full reception class. The activities are well planned to provide a wide range of interesting learning opportunities across all six Areas of Learning. The teaching ensures that the children achieve well because it encourages them to persevere, and it engages their interest. As a result, the children concentrate well and work hard.

**Overall, the quality of teaching is good.** The pupils learn best in English, mathematics, science, ICT and physical education because the lessons are well planned and taught. In all of these subjects, the teaching is generally lively and interesting. The teachers are good at engaging the pupils' interest and at encouraging them to work hard. The teaching assistants make a significant contribution to the pupils' learning because they are skilled at intervening when the pupils need help. Because the pupils enjoy their lessons, and have good levels of self-esteem, they work hard and achieve well. The teaching in other subjects is never less than satisfactory, but weaknesses in the long-term planning of the curriculum make it difficult for the teachers to provide consistency of learning in some subjects, particularly in science in Years 1 and 2 and in religious education and music throughout the school. The school has recently set up a forum for pupils to allow them a greater voice in the school's affairs, and the potential to influence future developments at the school.

### **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**Overall, the leadership and management of the school are good.** The new headteacher provides a clear vision for the school's development. She has quickly identified what actions the school needs to take in order to secure further improvement, and she has swiftly implemented them. She gives a firm steer to curriculum innovation and has well-advanced plans to strengthen the role of the subject managers. The headteacher, senior teachers and middle managers have succeeded in building a strong team that has a common set of aims and a shared commitment to succeed. The governing body provides good governance. In particular, the governors with oversight of curriculum areas make a positive contribution to the work of the school. As a whole, the governors ensure that statutory requirements are met, and that the school has a useful strategic plan for its development.

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

Overall, the parents hold positive views on the work of the school. They support school events, such as concerts, and make a considerable contribution to the available learning resources through their support of the parents' and teachers' association. The pupils expressed satisfaction with the school. They appreciate the recent moves to give them a greater voice in some aspects of the school's development.

### **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED:**

The most important things the school needs to do in order to improve its provision are:

- Provide greater continuity of learning in science, religious education and the foundation subjects, particularly for classes with mixed year groups
- Use assessment more effectively to help the pupils to a better understanding of what they have achieved and how they can improve
- Enhance the spiritual and cultural dimensions of the curriculum, particularly through art and music
- Encourage and support the pupils to improve the way they present their work

## **PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS**

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

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

Most pupils achieve well in most subjects most of the time. Pupils attain average standards in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. Standards are rising.

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

- The children attain below average standards by the end of the Foundation Stage in all but two areas of learning, but they achieve well in four of them and satisfactorily in the others
- Standards in some aspects of ICT are above average
- Standards in physical education at the end of Year 5 are above average
- Relative to the other pupils, pupils in the mixed year classes achieve less well
- Pupils with special education needs achieve well at every stage of their education

#### **Commentary**

1. The levels of attainment among the children when they are admitted to the school are wide-ranging, but overall standards are below average. By the time they are ready to transfer to Year 1, most of them do not quite attain the Early Learning Goals expected of pupils' aged five, except in two of the Areas of Learning: physical development, and personal, social and emotional development. In these, the children attain average standards. Because the teaching is generally good, the pupils achieve well in most of Areas of Learning even if they do not quite attain average standards in them.
2. Most of the pupils at Year 2 attain average standards in English, mathematics, science, and, information and communication technology. They attain average standards in all other subjects except physical education, where standards are above average. They achieve well in all subjects except music and religious education. In the class of mixed Year 1 and Year 2 pupils, the pupils achieve less well in some other subjects too, particularly science, because the curriculum plan does not ensure continuity of learning experiences for them as well as it does for pupils in the other classes. The evidence of the inspection is that the hard work of the new headteacher, and other key staff, has arrested the declining standards in the national tests seen in recent years. The decline can be attributed to instabilities in staffing and to far-reaching changes in the levels of attainment of pupils being admitted to the school from outside the area that the school has traditionally served. The school's analysis of the test results for 2004, though not yet completed and validated, indicates that the number of pupils attaining average standards or above has improved significantly. For example, the number of pupils likely to attain standards above average in reading has almost doubled.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	14.8 (16.1)	15.7 (15.8)
Writing	14.2 (15.2)	14.6 (14.4)
Mathematics	15.9 (17.5)	16.3 (16.5)

*There were 36 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

3. There are no national test data for pupils at Years 3 to 5 because the pupils leave the school before they are eleven. The school, however, uses the optional tests set by the *Qualifications and Curriculum Authority*. The tests taken by the current Year 5 pupils indicate that they are on

target to attain at least average standards in the 2005 national tests. Information relayed to the school from the local high school about the attainment of their pupils in last year's national tests in Year 6, supports both the inspection findings *and* the data from the current Year 5 tests, indicating that the pupils attain average standards across the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. The pupils achieve well in lessons because the teaching is good and the learning tasks are well matched to their needs.

4. There are no significant differences in the achievement of boys or girls; both make good progress over time. Most of the pupils who have special educational needs achieve very well because the teachers quickly identify their needs and make good use of teaching assistants to support them, allowing them full access to the curriculum opportunities provided at the school. The achievements of the few pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds are similar to those of other pupils.
5. Among the factors, other than effective teaching, that account for the good levels of achievement among all groups of pupils is the quality of leadership of some middle management teachers. For example, the work of the co-ordinator for special educational needs has a significant impact upon the quality of education that the pupils receive. The subject leaders of English, mathematics and information and communication technology, too, have contributed to improved provision in ways that have helped the pupils to achieve well and, in some cases, attain at levels higher than the average for their age. The good provision in physical education, particularly in swimming and games, ensures that standards are above average and that pupils achieve particularly well in the subject. The main weakness in attainment and achievement at Years 3 to 5 is in music and art and design. Although standards in these subjects are broadly average, the pupils do not achieve as well as they might because the subjects do not make a big enough contribution to the pupils' spiritual and cultural development.
6. Since 2000 standards at the school in the Year 2 national tests have been in decline, but the evidence of the inspection and the unvalidated results of this year's national tests indicate that the school has successfully arrested the decline and begun to reverse the trend. There are no data for the national tests for the pupils at the end of Year 6 because the pupils leave the school before they sit the tests. However, the school tracks how well their ex-pupils do in the Key Stage 2 national tests. The results indicate that the pupils attain average standards and have maintained this level over a number of years.

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

The pupils display consistently good behaviour and positive attitudes to their learning. Their levels of attendance are in line with the average found in primary schools nationally, and exclusions are rare. The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory.

### **Strengths and weaknesses**

- The pupils are very good at collaborative work
- The pupils have positive attitudes to school activities
- The pupils behave well and establish good relationships

### **Commentary**

7. The pupils work together very well in pairs and in small groups. Their teachers encourage them to discuss aspects of their work when considering new ideas or tasks, and the pupils do this sensibly and productively. The willingness of the pupils to discuss their work, and the sensible way they go about it, contributes significantly to their achievement in lessons. Throughout the age groups, the pupils' powers of concentration are well developed. This is important in an open-plan environment, where there is potential for distraction from the interesting things going on in adjoining teaching areas.

8. Many of the pupils take advantage of the wide range of activities that take place within the school, both during the school day and after it. The school's extensive provision for clubs and sporting activities attract good numbers of the pupils, and provide both stimulation and evident enjoyment among the pupils involved. The activities are well organised. They contribute much to the pupils' personal and social development, teaching them the benefits of perseverance, of team spirit and of maintaining positive attitudes towards their own and others' success or otherwise in competitive sports. The school's provision for the pupils' spiritual and cultural development is unsatisfactory. The curriculum does not provide the pupils with a sufficiently wide range of experiences, especially in music and art. As a result, the pupils' knowledge, appreciation of their own, and other cultures are sketchy. The curriculum, therefore, does not prepare the pupils well for life in a culturally diverse society.
9. Although there are individuals within the school who find it difficult to sustain, at all times, the high standards of behaviour required of them, the great majority of the pupils do behave well, both in class and during break times. They respond politely to adults and show due care for each other's needs and wishes. The value that the teachers and other adults place on each child, and the good role models they provide, foster mutual respect and trust. At lunchtimes, for example, the older pupils may choose to stay indoors during some lunch hours, if they wish, provided they are sensibly occupied. Examples of this were seen when some pupils met in the library to play a popular card game involving good levels of logic and strategic thinking. The pupils, who were fully engaged by the game, played sensibly and with a sporting spirit without the need for close supervision by adults.

### Attendance

#### Attendance in the latest complete reporting year 2003

Authorised absence	
School data	5.6
National data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	
School data	0.1
National data	0.4

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

10. The pupils' attendance is broadly in line with the national median. There are few pupils who come late to school. Nearly all of the pupils are pleased to be at school and do their best to attend regularly.

### Exclusions

#### Ethnic background of pupils

#### Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
White – Irish
White – any other White background
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean
Mixed – White and Asian
Mixed – any other mixed background
Asian or Asian British – Indian
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani

No of pupils on roll
177
1
3
10
1
1
3
2

Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
1	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 quality of education is satisfactory. Strengths in the quality of teaching and learning are offset by weaknesses in assessment and a satisfactory curriculum.

### Teaching and learning

The teaching and the learning are good. However, the quality of the assessment of pupils' work is unsatisfactory.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers have a thorough knowledge and understanding of the literacy and numeracy strategies, and implement them well
- Teachers plan work thoroughly and use a wide range of strategies to interest the pupils and match the work they do to their needs
- Teachers successfully promote equality of opportunity and encourage pupils to work hard, concentrate and collaborate well
- The teachers deploy the learning assistants well
- The teaching promotes good behaviour among the pupils
- The teachers' response to pupils' written work does not provide the pupils with sufficient information or time to ensure that they understand what they need to do to improve their knowledge and skills
- The teachers do not always insist that the pupils present work neatly when it is important to do so

### Commentary

11. In the Foundation Stage, the best teaching was in lessons in the following Areas of Learning: personal, social and emotional social development, communication, language and literacy, mathematical development and physical development. In these areas, the planning is good and well implemented. The teachers and teaching assistants work closely together to support the children. They use adult intervention, in the form of questions, comments and suggestions, very skilfully to move the children's learning on. They prepare well thought-out learning activities that provide the children with good opportunities to work independently and collaboratively on tasks that are suitably challenging. A particular strength of the teaching is the use the teachers make of role-play activities. These help the children to relate what they learn to the wider world. The activities are provided in a safe and supportive environment that helps the children to develop confidence and pride in what they do.

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 35 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1 (2.8%)	10 (28.5%)	16 (45.7%)	8 (22.8%)	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.*

12. In Years 1 to 5, the best teaching was seen in English, mathematics, science, information and communication technology (ICT) and physical education. The teachers implement the literacy and numeracy strategies well, providing their pupils with a wide range of interesting learning activities that match their needs. In reading, for example, the teachers have responded to the need to raise the pupils' attainment by improving the way they guide pupils when they share texts with them. In an excellent lesson in Year 4, the teacher used a wide range of strategies very skilfully to help her pupils develop a very good understanding of a difficult text. In doing so she lifted their achievement well beyond what it had been at the beginning of the lesson. The learning in most of the core subjects is well matched to the pupils' needs. This encourages the

pupils to work hard and persevere with tasks because the level of challenge is just right. The teachers achieve this by carefully supporting pupils of different abilities and by modifying the tasks set for them. The teachers deploy the teaching assistants very well, enabling them to make a very good contribution to the pupils' learning. In particular, the assistants offer pupils with special educational needs high-quality help in meeting their learning targets. The result is that these pupils play a full part in lessons and derive much pride from what they achieve.

13. In nearly all lessons, the teachers are very successful in establishing good behaviour among the pupils. They achieve this partly through setting, and insisting upon, high standards, but also through providing good role models. The teachers are positive and enthusiastic in lessons, and this is communicated to the pupils who respond by working hard for their teachers. One of the most useful strategies that the teachers use to promote learning is *talking partners*. This is now well-established at the school as a way of getting the pupils to reflect upon their learning before they answer questions or make contributions to class discussions. In a very good Year 1 literacy lesson, for example, the teacher used the *talking partner* technique skilfully to help her pupils rehearse a previous reading of a pirate story, and to prepare themselves for some extended writing on the topic. In their discussions, the pupils learned much from each other and, as a consequence, made very positive and informative contributions to their discussion of the characters they had read about. Much of the best teaching helps the pupils to achieve well because it has high expectations of the pupils' willingness to work hard and concentrate well. In a Year 5 ICT lesson, for example, the pupils achieved very well because the teaching inspired the pupils with a desire to solve a genuine programming problem that had application in the real world beyond the classroom. In a Year 3 games lesson, the pupils achieved well, particularly the higher attaining ones, because the teacher demonstrated good skills and introduced suitably challenging tasks for them. Because the teaching is good overall, the pupils' learning is good. In particular, the pupils usually show a deep interest in what they are learning; they apply themselves well and show pride in their achievements. They also quickly learn the benefits of working collaboratively, and have become skilled at paired discussion work.
14. There are some weaknesses in the teaching. The most significant one is the quality of marking. Although the teachers generally provide encouraging comments on the pupils' written work, and correct the pupils' most important errors, they do not provide the pupils with either the time or the opportunity to respond to their comments properly. This has an impact on the quality of the pupils' learning because the pupils make similar mistakes in subsequent work and do not, therefore, make progress as quickly as they could. Furthermore, the teachers rarely discuss with their pupils what has been achieved and what the pupils need to do next to move closer to their goals. Although the learning objectives for lessons are shared very effectively with the pupils, the teachers do not make clear what the longer-term goals might be. In some lessons, particularly, though not exclusively, in Years 1 and 2, the teachers rely too heavily on worksheets as a means of getting their pupils to record their work. This affects the quality of the pupils' learning because it prevents the pupils from developing their own responses and their own ways of recording what they are learning. Moreover, the over use of worksheets does not encourage the pupils to think about how they present their work in terms of neatness and layout so that it communicates effectively.
15. There have been some significant improvements to the teaching in a number of subjects since the last inspection. The quality of teaching in ICT is very much better than it was. Most of the teachers are now confident in their teaching and make good use of computer skills across a range of other subjects to enhance the pupils' learning. There have been improvements, too, in the way aspects of literacy are taught, particularly the teaching of the higher-order reading skills, and in mathematics, where improvements to the teaching of mental mathematics are having a positive impact upon standards. In music, however, there has been little progress. As a result, standards, though satisfactory overall, are not improving.
16. Although there are some weaknesses in the effectiveness with which teachers use their assessments of pupils' work to help them improve, the school has satisfactory arrangements

for using the outcomes of statutory and other assessments to inform planning and set school and group targets for improvement. The new headteacher has moved swiftly to build upon what was already established at the school. She has, for example, introduced new measures that will allow teachers to track pupils' progress with greater accuracy. In one area, that of special educational needs, the use of assessment is very good and has made a significant contribution to the planning of work for them. The school is at an early stage of managing its assessment data to set and reviewing targets for individual pupils, and for using assessment profiles completed during the reception year to inform teaching in Year 1. In some areas, the school has used assessment data well to improve teaching. For example, analysis of test results in reading led to good training for staff in leading and managing shared and guided reading sessions. These have had immediate benefits in terms of higher standards, particularly among the higher attaining pupils.

## **The curriculum**

Taken overall, the school's curriculum provision is satisfactory. The requirements of the National Curriculum and the locally agreed syllabus are met through a satisfactory range of well-planned and interesting activities that match the pupils' needs. For the most part, the curriculum provides satisfactory opportunities for enhancing learning, and the range of extra-curricular activities is good. The school has sufficient learning resources and experienced teaching and support staff. The accommodation, though attractive, is only just satisfactory.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The curriculum for the pupils with SEN is very effective
- The curriculum promotes the pupils' participation in sport well
- The activities through which the curriculum is delivered are interesting and well planned
- The curriculum for religious education, art and music does not adequately contribute to the pupils' spiritual and cultural development
- The design of the accommodation places unnecessary demands on teachers and pupils

## **Commentary**

17. The Foundation Stage curriculum is well planned and ensures good coverage of all the appropriate areas of learning. The school has achieved a good balance of prescribed activities and provides many opportunities for the children to make choices in their learning in the indoor and outdoor activities. The children, therefore, achieve well and make good progress.
18. The current curriculum for Years 1 to 5 makes a strong contribution to the development of the pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. It also provides good opportunities for the pupils to develop and apply ICT skills. However, in spite of the fact that, in most of the non-core subjects, the school makes good use of national guidance, some areas of the curriculum such as music and art and design, do not provide a sufficiently wide set of learning experiences. In music, for example, there are too few opportunities for singing, and in art, too few opportunities for the pupils to experience three-dimensional work.
19. The school makes very effective provision for the pupils with special educational needs. The development of literacy and numeracy skills are a major focus of attention in the education of these pupils and are frequently the targets set in their individual education plans. The wider curriculum for pupils with special needs is taught in a way that ensures that they can "shine" in other areas too, such as art and physical education. The school makes good use of a range of specialists, including a consultant for learning impairment, and education psychologists, because it is very strongly committed to ensuring that the pupils' receive their entitlement to inclusion in all areas of school life. The school has a very flexible and responsive approach to the provision it makes for these pupils. The experienced co-ordinator and her support staff ensure that appropriate provision is made for each pupil. The class teachers know the pupils

very well and quickly identify needs as they rise. A good example of this was seen in a mixed numeracy lesson for pupils from Year 4 and Year 5, where the adults were very alert to assessing the progress of individual pupils and responding promptly to their need for support. This is a feature of the school's provision for the pupils' personal and academic development.

20. The range of extra-curricular sporting activities and visits outside school also make a useful contribution to the pupils' personal development. The pupils do well in inter-school sporting events, often against pupils from much bigger schools. The pupils in the dance club contribute to school productions and to assemblies. In one assembly, for example, six members of the dance club choreographed and performed a dance to a well-known piece of popular music. The school arranges facilities for pupils to participate in other activities that are provided by outside agencies. Some of these are very popular with the pupils, in particular the karate club.
21. The curriculum for ICT has improved significantly since the last inspection. It now provides better-planned activities to support learning across a range of subjects. Provision for the foundation subjects, although broadly satisfactory, lacks balance in some areas. The school is currently reviewing this in order to provide greater coherence in the way the steps in the learning are planned and delivered, particularly in relation to the work planned for the pupils in the classes of mixed year groups. Although the school's provision for art and design and music is satisfactory overall, the subjects do not make as useful a contribution to the pupils' spiritual and cultural development as they could. For example, in music, the school provides too few opportunities for the pupils to sing regularly or to use a range of tuned and untuned instruments to perform simple accompaniments to the songs and hymns that they do sing. Similarly, in art, the range of artists the pupils learn about is narrow and the pupils themselves, do not get to do much three-dimensional creative work with resistant materials.

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

The school makes satisfactory arrangements for the pupils' care, welfare, health and safety, including appropriate arrangements for child protection. The school enhances its support, advice and guidance for the pupils through the success it has in promoting good relationships among pupils and between adults and pupils.

### **Strengths and weaknesses**

- The teaching assistants are well deployed and make a significant contribution in the way they guide and support pupils
- The school provides very good support for pupils with special educational needs
- The teachers' marking and assessment procedures are not effective enough
- The newly formed school council is beginning to give the pupils a greater voice in the school's work and development

### **Commentary**

22. The teachers deploy the teaching assistants very well in support of the pupils' learning. The teaching assistants, therefore, make a significant contribution to the effectiveness of the teaching. For example, during the initial part of most lessons, when the teacher is introducing new topics and ideas, and is explaining learning tasks that the pupils are to do, the learning assistants are busy noting which pupils need extra support and guidance. When the pupils are working individually or in groups, the teaching assistants work closely with those pupils to ensure that they understand the work and can complete it. As a result, the pupils achieve well and feel proud of what they do. The pupils who have special educational needs are particularly well supported. The teachers and the teaching assistants are very alert to their needs. They pay particular attention to them, enabling them to play a full part in lessons. This is sometimes achieved by carefully modifying the learning tasks that the pupils undertake, and sometimes by providing close supervision, or encouragement and helpful comments.

23. The teachers and other staff have established a strong degree of trust with the pupils, particularly with the older ones. This means that the pupils can be allowed considerable freedom to act independently when this is appropriate. During the lunch break, for example, pupils were seen undertaking a range of activities, both in classrooms and on the playground, without the need for very close supervision. During one lunch hour, for example, eight pupils were involved in playing or watching a popular card game that involved skill in logical and strategic thinking. The pupils watched and played sensibly and with a high degree of good humour. Many of the older pupils act as *buddies* to the younger ones and support their play by teaching them new playground games. The pupils show confidence in approaching adults if help or support is needed. The great majority of the pupils who completed the pupil questionnaire confirmed that they trusted the adults at the school and could turn to them for help.
24. Although the individual support given in the classroom is good, the marking of work does not always provide the support and guidance the pupils need because it does not convey a clear sense of what individual pupils should do to improve. Whilst the teachers often make positive comments, they give too little specific guidance to help the pupils set targets for themselves. Similarly, the teachers' assessment of what the pupils know and can do in subjects other than English, mathematics and science is not specific enough to help the pupils move on in their learning at the best possible rate.

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

The school is well supported by the parent body, links with whom are good. The school's links with organisations within the local community are extensive and well established. The school's liaison with other local schools, including the local colleges from whom they receive support for some areas of the curriculum, is satisfactory.

### **Strengths and weaknesses**

- The new headteacher actively canvasses parents' views, and has already begun to engage with parents and carers in the development of the school
- The "Friends of Fairfield" is an active and productive group providing useful resources for learning, and good opportunities for social interaction
- The school enjoys a wide range of community links
- The school has good arrangements with the receiving schools for the transfer of its pupils at the end of Year 5

### **Commentary**

25. The "Friends of Fairfield" association works hard to raise valuable funds for the school and to offer practical support throughout the school year. Most recently, the monies raised have greatly enhanced the school's provision for ICT. Parents and grandparents offer valuable help during the school day, both in class and in support of educational visits off the school site.
26. The school has canvassed the views of its parents and its pupils and has begun to include their responses in its planning for school improvement. One recent initiative has been the re-establishment of the school council to give pupils a greater say in the work of the school. One of the most successful links with parents is the annual school production. The parents enjoy the spectacle and commend the pupils and staff for the high standards achieved in the public performances put on by the school.
27. As a community school, Fairfield School supports extensive links with local organisations, clubs and churches. The school premises, and the community building, which is on the school site, provide useful spaces for a wide range of social, sporting and educational activities, many of which involve the pupils of the school and their families. Members of the local group of churches come into school to help with religious education and collective worship, as well as

providing an after-school club – one of many offered to pupils throughout the school year. Once a fortnight, the pupils invite members of a group for the disabled to dine with them. Activities like this one help the pupils to develop a strong sense of the wider local community and how it functions.

28. The school has good links with the main receiving secondary school. In the year prior to leaving, the pupils make several visits to their new school, and additional provision is made to support the pupils with special educational needs at this time of change for them. The pupils, therefore, are well prepared for the next stage of their education. The school receives some help from local colleges with regard to curriculum expertise but this is not regular enough to have a significant impact upon the quality of education provided.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The headteacher has a clear and appropriate vision for the school's improvement, and the skills to realise it quickly
- The governors are effective in helping to shape the school's future
- The analysis of school performance is at an early stage of development
- There are weaknesses in the way the curriculum is managed, particularly for pupils in classes of mixed year groups
- The management of provision for special educational needs is very good, and that for English, science, mathematics, ICT and the Foundation Stage are good

### **Commentary**

29. Although the headteacher has been in post less than six months she has already developed a clear vision for the school's improvement, and shared it with the staff and governors. She made an immediate start on monitoring the school's performance, and has consulted staff about the outcomes. The result is a new and better-focused improvement plan for the school that builds on its strengths and addresses its weaknesses. The plan goes to the heart of school effectiveness in its emphasis on evaluating performance data, introducing systems for tracking the attainment of the pupils, and in the way it seeks to strengthen the role and influence of subject leaders. The headteacher has forged a highly professional and productive relationship with the deputy headteacher who has worked single-mindedly to help implement the school's new and ambitious plans for improvement. The school has, for some time, experienced significant instability in staffing due to resignations and absences. These have taken their toll on the management of the school, and on standards. The headteacher has recognised the impact of these circumstances; she has already succeeded in bringing the school onto an even keel and provided it with a clear sense of direction.
30. Though there are still some weaknesses in management, the headteacher has identified them and made a good start to putting them right. In particular, she has begun the process of establishing a thorough system for recording and using data about how each pupil is performing, in order to make teaching and provision more effective. She is building on the good work done by some subject leaders, particular those who lead the Areas of Learning at the Foundation Stage, and English and ICT at Years 1 to 5. The co-ordination of provision for special educational needs is particularly strong and has succeeded in radically improving its effectiveness. At the time of the last inspection, provision for both special educational needs and ICT were identified as weaknesses. The work done in these two areas has moved the school forward significantly. Other management areas are being strengthened, too. For example, the pupils have been given a greater voice in some aspects of the school's development, and the school's scheme for managing behaviour through its system of rewards and sanctions has been strengthened. The main weakness in management lies in the way the

curriculum for some subjects is organised in relation to securing continuity of learning, particularly among pupils who are taught in classes of mixed year groups. Although the headteacher and senior staff were aware of this before the inspection, they have not had sufficient time to address it.

31. The governors know the school well and provide it with good levels of support whilst maintaining a friendly but critical eye on its performance. The governors are particularly good at getting involved in the way subjects are managed and taught. Most of the governors oversee one or more curriculum areas, and make visits to the school to gather information so that they can make well-informed strategic decisions. In English, for example, the governor made a very positive and significant contribution to the implementation of the action plan for English when the subject leader was absent for six months. The governors have well-established committees that scrutinise the work of the school. They are careful to ensure that the school meets statutory requirements in all but one area. The governors have not yet determined clear guidelines and a policy that set out the limits on what the headteacher can spend or vire from one budget heading to another before consulting the governors.
32. Although standards need to improve, the current leadership and management are helping to secure good levels of achievement and positive attitudes to learning among the pupils. At the same time, they are systematically addressing areas for development in a way that is already beginning to raise standards. There is good evidence to suggest that the effect of the new leadership has begun to arrest the decline in standards that has occurred in recent years and, indeed, begun to reverse it. In the most recent national tests, for example, the school expects to double the number of pupils who attain above average standards in reading. Overall, therefore, the school provides satisfactory value for money.

### Financial information

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

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	434,761
Total expenditure	440,771
Expenditure per pupil	2,284

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	56,105
Balance carried forward to the next	50,095

33. The school uses its finances wisely. It has recently invested in a set of laptop computers and has ensured that its teachers and other adults are competent in their use. As a result, standards in ICT have already risen significantly, and in some areas, such as modelling and control, very significantly. The school has well-considered plans for spending capital funds on projects aimed at improving access to the school and at improving the design of the classrooms.

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

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

34. There is one reception class and a mixed Reception/Year 1 class. The attainment of the children fluctuates annually because the school admits a significant number of children from outside its immediate locality, and from a very wide range of social and economic backgrounds. The children's attainment on entry to the reception class is below average generally, and well below average in communication and language skills. Provision and the quality of teaching in the Foundation Stage are good in the reception class and satisfactory in the mixed Reception and Year 1 class.
35. In the current cohort, the children's attainment in personal, social and emotional development, and physical development is in line with age-related expectations. The children achieve well and make good progress. In communication, language and literacy, and mathematics skills, the children make good progress towards the national expected levels. In the areas of knowledge and understanding and creative development, the children make steady and consistent gains in their learning, but not all children are achieving as well as they could. Although the way the adults assess the attainment and progress of the children is satisfactory overall, they need to match their assessments more closely to the national guidance when making overall judgements on the levels of attainment their pupils achieve.

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

The provision in personal, social and emotional development is **good**.

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

- The children achieve well and make good progress
- The quality of teaching is good

#### **Commentary**

36. The children make a positive start to school life. Most of them are confident and enjoy school. This is because their teachers, and the teaching assistants, show a very caring and sensitive approach towards them, establishing good relationships that promote effective learning. The children quickly make new friends and work harmoniously alongside them, or share with them in 'role-play' and music activities. They learn to listen to each other, to take turns, to share fairly, and to abide by the established code of conduct. They achieve this because their teachers and the other adults provide firm and consistent role models. The children, therefore, know what is expected of them and express their feelings in appropriate ways. The good level of support provided by the staff ensures that there are no significant differences between the achievement of boys and girls, including those with special educational needs.
37. The school places a strong emphasis on the children's personal, social and emotional development. A strong feature of the teaching is the consistent way in which the adults provide opportunities for the children to make decisions for themselves while engaged in the many 'free-flow' in-door and out-door play activities. This encourages the children to make sensible choices, to take the initiative, to select the resources they need, and to develop personal tastes and preferences. As a result, the children sustain their self-initiated activities and persevere with them. This could be seen, for example, when the children were working in the classroom *post office* and *shoe shop*. The nature and quality of the adults' interaction with the children in the post office led to a group of children sustaining their activity well and learning how to

collaborate effectively to do so. The children were well motivated and eager to participate in their roles, and learned much from what they did.

38. Without the aid of an adult, the older reception class children prepared quickly and quietly for a physical education lesson in the hall. The way the teachers encourage the children to be independent, develops high levels of self-esteem among them, and gives them a sense of pride in their achievements. All of the children manage their own personal hygiene well. The teaching in this Area of Learning is good.

### **Communication, language and literacy**

The provision for communication, language and literacy is **good**.

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

- The children make clear gains in their early reading and writing skills
- Although they communicate well with each other and with adults, the children's ability to express themselves clearly, using context-specific language, is very limited, unless supported by the teaching

#### **Commentary**

39. The teachers and other adults in the classroom give the children good opportunities to listen to stories and to recall story lines through role-play activities. In the *shoe shop*, for example, one such activity was based on the story of the *'Elves and the Shoemaker'*. The planning for these activities indicates that this is a particular strength of the teaching, and that it is very well used in the other Areas of Learning. In a group session, an imaginatively prepared 'postcard' from the Elves captured the children's interest and helped them to become familiar with new vocabulary. The children eagerly express ideas, thoughts and feelings of their own in response to the well-chosen prompts from the adults. This is because the teaching focuses very clearly on the use of context-specific language; in relation to the postcard, for example, the phrases, 'look at the *signature*', '*Dear children*,' 'with *best wishes*,' 'look at the *stamp*,' were used well to extend the children's vocabulary. By making the language so specific, the teachers encourage the children to speak more clearly and at greater length. The teaching introduces children to mathematical language in the same way; important words are emphasised and repeated using practical equipment so that the children quickly grasp their meaning and use. Another good feature of the teaching is the sensitive way in which the adults correct the children's grammatical errors, ensuring that each child remains confident and has pride in his or her ability to communicate. However, despite this very good approach to the development of the children's communication and language skills, most children still attain well below what is expected for their age.
40. The teaching focuses well on early reading skills. The children listen attentively and respond confidently to questions on the texts they read with adults. The children know that pictures convey information about stories, and that text is read from left to right. They point to, and read, common words confidently. They know what an author is, and they identify the main characters in the stories read to them. The children recall and sequence story events in the correct order, and they are keen to offer comments about the illustrations in books. The children clearly enjoy books and handle them with care. They often share books with friends. On one occasion, a child who had a doll on his lap was busy re-telling the story to his 'baby' as he turned the pages of the book.
41. The teaching develops the children's early writing appropriately within the formal literacy sessions and through good role-play activities. As a result, most of the children achieve well even though they are unlikely to reach the expected levels by the end of the reception year. The children are beginning to form letters fairly accurately because the teaching places due emphasis on the correct way to form letters. The teaching offers most of the children good

opportunities to use large boards and pens to practise mark making, to form letter strings and to attempt writing. In this way, the children learn that various marks, letters and words convey meaning. The adults also teach the children how to hold a pencil correctly, how to space out words, how to attempt regular but unfamiliar words and how to write letters that are consistent in shape and size. A small proportion of the children write capitals at the beginning of their sentences; most can write their own name. The teaching in this Area of Learning is good.

## Mathematical development

The provision for mathematical development is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The children achieve well in their understanding of mathematics because the curriculum is well structured and based upon good opportunities for practical tasks

### Commentary

42. Most children confidently count to 10 and beyond. In a whole-class activity, observed in one of the lessons, the children remained well focused and involved when counting forwards and backwards in small steps using the numerals 1 to 10. The session was taught at a good pace, was rigorous, and well matched to the children's capacity to concentrate. A significant proportion of the children counted in 1s and a small number of them managed to count forward and backwards in 2s with the aid of the number line. All of them correctly recognised and named the numbers 1 to 10, and most wrote the numbers fairly accurately. The teacher introduced new learning very well, capturing the children's interest in a topic on *estimation* because she taught it in a lively, imaginative and creative way. The lesson successfully challenged the children to learn and use new mathematical terms. The children stated how many crayons they thought they would need and recorded the number on the board. The crayons were then used as a measuring unit to estimate the length of a child lying on the floor. The children could say that the number used was *'more'* or *'less'* than what they had estimated.
43. Most of the children recognise different shapes, such as, the *triangle, square, circle* and *rectangle* and also recognise the difference between *long* and *short* when using wooden bricks. The children are enthusiastic and keen to succeed because the teaching is good.

## Knowledge and understanding of the world

The provision for the children's knowledge and understanding of the world is broadly **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The children are taught basic computer skills well
- Some activities are not always suitably matched to the children's abilities

### Commentary

44. Most children are working towards the early learning goals, but it is likely that only a small proportion of the children will achieve them by the end of the reception year. The learning opportunities planned for the children in the mixed-age range class is a modified Year 1 curriculum, which is unsuitable for the stage of learning that the younger children are at. For example, in one activity, the children had to place on a map the different countries within the United Kingdom, and look in an atlas to see where Leicester is located. The follow-up activities were unexciting and did not promote much curiosity among the children for the world around them. In other activities, the children have opportunities to use the outdoor setting, but

the teaching for the mixed age class provides too few planned learning intentions for these sessions, whereas, in the reception class, the teaching promotes learning through well-structured and purposeful activities. These are planned around the use of sand trays, water trays, construction toys and models, as well as through useful interactive displays that encourage the children to explore, enquire and discover things for themselves. In these activities, the level of adult interaction is very good; the thought-provoking use of questions by the staff moves the learning forward at a good pace. For example, the reception class children had been looking at different ways of communicating with friends and family. They had been to the school office to look at the telephone and the fax machine, they had received cards from the 'Elves' and were busy writing back to them, and they were sending messages back and forth to the class teacher's husband and baby son, using email. This was a very exciting and imaginative approach to extending the children's curiosity of the world around them. Although there was no science work seen during the inspection, the evidence in the children's recorded work suggests that the children have appropriate experience of electrical objects, and learn about things that they can push and pull, and about objects that emit or reflect light.

45. The quality of the teaching overall in this Area of Learning is satisfactory. However, the school's approach to the development of the children's computer skills is good. As a result, the children confidently manipulate the mouse and follow instructions on the screen. They co-operate well and take turns to control the programs. For instance, they help each other to work on simple mathematical sorting games very well; consequently, they are achieving well in this area.

### **Physical development**

The provision for physical development is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The children achieve well and make good progress

### **Commentary**

46. The teaching promotes children's physical skills effectively through good access to both indoor and outdoor activities. The children quickly acquire and improve their range of fine and large movements because the teaching encourages them to use a good range of equipment to improve their skills. The children handle tools well, including scissors, and manage to construct things with due regard to safety. Most children enjoy setting themselves challenges; they show pleasure in their achievements when, for example, they try hard to improve how they throw and catch balls, or how they gain greater control of their tricycles. In these sessions, the children exhibit high levels of concentration and decision-making in relation their actions. Overall, the teaching is good. However, at the end of one of the hall sessions that involved vigorous exercise, the staff did not give the children time to cool down before returning to the classroom, nor did they sufficiently raise the children's awareness of the effect exercise has on the body.

### **Creative development**

The provision for creative development is broadly **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The current provision for the children's artistic development is too restricted
- Some planned musical activities are inappropriate in meeting the needs of the children, and teachers do not make enough use of song to support other areas of the curriculum
- The teaching makes good use of role-play activities to support learning

## Commentary

47. A few of the children are on course to achieve the early learning goals in creative development, but most are working at just below the level expected, and are not achieving as well as they might. Taken overall, their progress is just satisfactory. The planned provision over the course of this current year lacks the necessary stimuli to fully engage the children and support their creative learning. The artwork displayed is sometimes too teacher directed. In the mixed-age class, for example, the activities are often a modified approach to the planned Year 1 work, and the children do not have regular daily access to malleable materials such as play dough, clay and paints. In contrast, the children in the reception class get regular opportunities throughout the day to work creatively, through a series of structured activities that link to all the Areas of Learning. For example, their painting and drawing of portraits of the family were well linked to the literacy-focused activities, and their use of play dough linked well to work the children were doing on number sequences. The water play activities, too, had good links to the development of numeracy skills when they were used to make and count footprints outdoors.
48. Music does not have as high a profile within the provision for creative development as it should. During the inspection, the children in the mixed-age class had a half-hour session in the music studio, but although the planned learning was modified appropriately to take account of the younger children, it was not followed through adequately. The children all did the same task, which was planned at too high a level. In the reception classroom, the children have access to some musical instruments and have the opportunity to make music during their 'free-choice' activities. They also have the opportunity to listen to music in the reading area. However, the children did not sing during the course of the sessions observed, in either classroom, to support mathematical learning or literacy and language development.
49. Overall, the teaching is satisfactory. The main strength in the school's provision for creative learning is the way teachers use 'role-play' activity. The areas set aside for this are well equipped and attractively set out. As a result, they inspire the children's imaginative play. The planned activities centre on the children's everyday experiences; the materials provided allow the children to enrich their spoken English, their mathematical language, their writing, their creative development, and their knowledge and understanding of the world. For example, the children come quickly to understand the real-life function of post offices, and develop a good knowledge of the role of assistants in shoe shops. These activities allow the children to use and understand context-specific language in a natural way. The activities are very popular with the children in both classrooms. The teaching makes good use of them through high levels of adult interaction to extend the children's learning.

## SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

### ENGLISH

The provision for English is **good** overall.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Overall, the teaching is good; it is lively, varied, challenging and interesting
- Pupils work hard and achieve well in lessons, particularly in reading
- Pupils' speaking and listening skills are good
- The pupils do not always present their work neatly
- Pupils with special educational needs achieve very well in the basic skills of reading and writing
- The teachers do not make enough use of marking to help pupils to improve
- The teaching in Years 1 and 2 relies too heavily on worksheets
- The subject is well led

## Commentary

50. The pupils achieve well in all year groups. They attain average standards in reading and writing and above average standards in speaking and listening. They do so because the teaching is consistently good or better, and because the pupils are hard working and apply themselves well to the learning tasks. The pupils who have special education needs achieve very well because they are well supported in language activities. All of the pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds speak English as their first language. These pupils achieve as well as their peers.
51. Standards in speaking and listening are above the level expected for pupils in Year 2 and Year 5. The pupils listen carefully to their teachers and ask them thoughtful questions about work in progress. They are especially good at listening to each other's contributions, particularly when working with their '*talking partners*,' which they are required to do frequently in most lessons. These listening and talking sessions provide good opportunities for the pupils to think about their learning, consequently they speak clearly and with confidence when addressing each other or when making a contribution to class discussions. Furthermore, the pupils overcome the distractions inherent in the design of open plan teaching areas extremely well.
52. Standards in reading are average in Year 2 and Year 5. By Year 5, a significant proportion of the pupils read well. Most of the pupils read fluently, with reasonable accuracy, and use a range of ways to read difficult or unfamiliar words. They respond to fiction and non-fiction texts well because the teachers skilfully guide the pupils to effective methods for interrogating texts. As a result, the pupils successfully discuss how authors express their intentions through the different ways they portray character, setting and event, and through their distinctive use of language. In an excellent lesson in Year 4, the pupils achieved very well because the teaching very skilfully helped the pupils to use all their skills to unpick a challenging text.
53. Standards in writing are a little below average in Year 2 and average in Year 5. Pupils have a good knowledge of punctuation. They help each other to correct or improve their work because they recognise where there is a need for capital letters, full stops, commas, question marks and exclamation marks. A pupil in a mixed class of Year 1 and Year 2 pupils pointed out the need for three full stops to indicate that there was more to come in a piece of text. She used the correct term, *ellipsis*, with confidence, and her classmates understood what she meant. The pupils have a sound understanding of how words are built up from phonemes. This helps them to make credible attempts at spelling unfamiliar or irregular words. Much of their writing is lively and well constructed, particularly in the stories and poems they write. The pupils' work on persuasive writing shows a quickly developing understanding of how non-fiction writing is organised, and how language is used in particular ways to influence readers' opinions. The main weakness in the pupils' writing is in their presentation of written work. Some of it is not well set out, and the handwriting is often untidy.
54. The teaching in lessons is consistently good. The teachers know and understand the literacy framework well. They prepare interesting and challenging work for the pupils. The teachers have high expectations of their pupils' behaviour and effort, and they often succeed in lifting the pupils' achievement beyond what is usual. In more than one lesson, the teaching thoroughly challenged the pupils to use a full range of strategies for understanding texts. In a Year 4 lesson in guided reading, for example, the teacher very skilfully posed questions that helped the pupils to dig deeply into their understanding, sending them back, again and again, for ever closer readings of the text. As a result, the pupils' understanding far exceeded what they had got from their initial reading. The teachers are good at managing behaviour. Although the teachers insist that the pupils behave well, they rarely have to interrupt their teaching to do so because the work is well matched to the pupils' interests and needs. As a result, the teaching is particularly good at encouraging pupils to exceed their current level of achievement. Another strength of the teaching is the link it makes with ICT. This is a significant improvement on the state of affairs at the time of the last inspection. In one very good lesson in Year 2, for example,

the teaching made good use of a word processing program to support the learning of two groups of pupils. This helped the pupils to achieve results that pleased them, and enabled them to share what they had done with the rest of the class.

55. A significant strength of the teaching is the contribution made by the teaching assistants. They are well deployed to support pupils, particularly those with special educational needs and those who occasionally have problems understanding what they need to do. The teaching establishes good relationships with the pupils and encourages high levels of collaboration among them. The pupils, therefore, quickly develop positive attitudes to their work and to each other. The main weakness in the teaching lies in the use the teachers make of marking. Although they are always careful to make encouraging comments and to point out how a piece of work might be improved, they rarely give the pupils time to respond. Consequently, the same mistakes are made in later work, and the level of attainment does not rise as quickly as it might. A minor weakness is the over-use some teachers make of worksheets. When the pupils use these aids, their work is generally less well presented and less well developed than it is when teachers encourage and help their pupils to find their own ways of recording the work they do.
56. The leadership of the subject is good. Despite an interregnum in the leadership, when the post holder was absent for an extended period, the school maintained some of the momentum in its development programme. This was because the subject leader continued to develop action plans whilst she was away, and because the designated governor for literacy contributed to the ongoing work at school. One of the most recent initiatives was intended to improve the way guided reading sessions are taught. This was well implemented and gave rise to an excellent lesson in Year 4 in which the pupils achieved very well.

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

57. The teaching makes effective use of language and literacy in other subjects. It is particularly successful in promoting good speaking and listening. The teaching makes extensive use of *'talking partners'* in almost every subject. The pupils are frequently invited to spend a few seconds discussing issues or answers to questions with a partner before responding to questions, or making a contribution to discussions. As a result, the pupils have learned the value of listening carefully to one another. They have also learned that it helps them to articulate their responses more effectively. The pupils' contributions, therefore, are usually well made, clear and cogent. The teaching creates strong links with ICT, encouraging pupils to use technology in ways that makes their writing more effective in communicating their intentions. The links with the other subjects, though satisfactory, are not so well developed. This is due partly the teachers relying too heavily on prepared worksheets. It has the effect of limiting the opportunities the pupils have to develop their own ways of expressing themselves in writing.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The learning is well matched to the pupils' needs
- The pupils with special educational needs make good progress
- The approach to planning lessons is consistent across the classes
- The subject is well led, and teachers and teaching assistants are well supported

## Commentary

58. The pupils attain satisfactory standards and achieve well. The national test results for Year 2 in 2003 showed a dip in standards but this can be attributed to significant changes in the pupil intake.
59. Standards are now beginning to recover but have not yet reached the level seen at the time of the last inspection. The teachers are now tracking the progress of pupils very carefully and making a considerable effort to provide early support in order to maximize the pupils' potential for reaching standards in line with their ability. A few pupils reach higher levels, especially in their number work. The school now sets targets for individuals and cohorts of pupils. These targets are well reflected in the planning of work at different levels.
60. The improving standards are, in part, the result of good planning for the mental warm up activities. The pupils enjoy the challenge of briskly delivered questions, especially where they are differentiated to meet the needs of different abilities. The teaching is good overall because the activities are interesting and well managed. In the most successful lessons, the ones in which the pupils make the best progress, the activities are planned to allow classroom staff good opportunities to support the pupils as they work. A good example of this was seen in a class containing older pupils where the teaching assistants kept a close eye on the lower attaining pupils, identifying the additional help needed to allow them to meet the challenges of recognising tessellating shapes. In a class of Year 5 pupils, the teacher, while supporting pupils working individually, identified a difficulty encountered by a number of them. He promptly drew this to their attention and provided additional explanations that allowed the pupils to make further progress.
61. The plenary sessions in lessons are often well used by teachers to assess the pupils' knowledge and understanding. However, the way that the teachers mark the work of their pupils does not provide them with sufficient advice and guidance about what they have done well and what they need to practise further.
62. In Years 1 and 2, the teachers provide a range of interesting activities to consolidate and extend the pupils' understanding of place value and of the basic addition and subtraction facts. As the pupils' confidence develops, the speed with which they add numbers grows, and a few employ a wider range of strategies in their work, for example when quickly adding 9 or 11 to two-digit numbers.
63. The carefully planned unit of work on symmetry in Years 3 to 5 successfully develops the pupils' understanding of different lines of symmetry and helps the pupils to extend their knowledge of the properties of shapes. Among the strengths of the teaching and learning in this area is the range of practical work undertaken. This work engages the pupils and teaches them to co-operate well with each other to explore various shapes. The pupils behave well during these activities because relationships are good, the activities are very interesting, and the adults are very quick to provide the support needed to ensure all the pupils are included.
64. The teachers plan the curriculum carefully to take account of the mixed age classes. Each lesson is planned to ensure that the pupils are grouped appropriately and that activities match the needs of different groups, both in relation to their age and their abilities. The co-ordinator, with the other staff, has devised a very appropriate action plan for the coming year. The plan includes a programme for monitoring more often the teaching and the range, standard and presentation of the children's work.

## Mathematics across the curriculum

65. The pupils carry out mathematical investigations but these are largely done during the numeracy lessons. At times, the teachers plan work on graphs in conjunction with studies in

geography, but there is further scope for the teachers to encourage their pupils to apply mathematical skills more often in, for example, science investigations.

## SCIENCE

The provision for science is broadly **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The pupils' investigative skills are developed well, but their recording of observations could be improved
- The school has made good progress in supporting the pupils with special educational needs, and improving the staff's subject knowledge and expertise
- More progress could have been made on the long-term plans to ensure that there is continuity in learning within the mixed-aged range classes
- A positive start has been made by the co-ordinator to set greater challenges for the higher attaining pupils

### Commentary

66. The evidence from the inspection suggests that by the end of Year 2 and Year 5 most pupils will be attaining average standards. This matches the findings of the previous report. The teachers' assessments made at the end of Year 2 in 2003 show that the pupils are achieving average standards. The teachers' assessment of the pupils at Level 3 indicates that the pupils' attainment is well below average. The school's analysis of the weaknesses in the results reveals that they are due mainly to an imbalance in the coverage of the subject over the current two-year rolling programme. It provides too little continuity in learning, particularly for classes of mixed age groups. The subject leader recognises that steps need to be taken to improve the long term planning and that this review needs to be accelerated in order to raise standards quickly.
67. An examination of the pupils' recorded work and their responses in lessons shows that, overall, the children are making satisfactory progress. In a Year 2 lesson, the teacher presented a well-planned and well-resourced activity that enabled all of the pupils to have direct experience of exploring their sense of taste using a range of different foods. However, the higher attaining pupils could have been challenged more had the teacher created greater scope for them to record their ideas and opinions in their own way. They could also have been allowed more time to reflect on and discuss their findings before going on to the next experiment. A significant feature of most of the lessons, however, is the way that the teachers encourage the pupils to co-operate with each other, and the willingness of the pupils to work hard and help one another. A weakness in the teaching is the over-reliance teachers have on the use of worksheets. This limits the range of responses the pupils can make, and discourages them from thinking about how their work could be presented to communicate more effectively.
68. In Years 3, 4 and 5, the pupils have a clear understanding of the processes of *fair testing*; the overwhelming majority respond with enthusiasm to the activities planned. This is an improvement on the findings of the last inspection. The pupils respond well to their teachers' encouragement to share resources and take turns using the equipment. This ensures that the lessons are well paced and promote enquiry, exploration and discovery. The teaching offers good support to the pupils and helps them to take pride in what they achieve. However, there is insufficient time for the children to reflect on what they do, to discuss with partners purposefully, or to record independently their findings *before* discussion takes place at whole-class level; this happened in a lesson in which the pupils were finding out about the different strengths of a range of magnets. Few pupils made comprehensive contributions to this session. This was not the case in Year 5, however, because the very good teaching by the science co-ordinator included probing questions that allowed the pupils to think about the

reasons for the changes in pulse rates. The pupils had to carry out tests following their predictions, and then discuss their findings with the other members of their group, and record them, before going on to the next task. In this lesson, the teacher used the available time well and kept the pace of work brisk. Consequently, the pupils were routinely being challenged well and made very good progress. A small proportion of the children are now working at a higher level, and achieving very well.

69. Although the pupils enjoy their work and take pride in their growing knowledge and understanding, they do not, in general, present their work well; their handwriting is sometimes untidy and the work not well set out, and some of the work is left unfinished. The school is currently developing a new system for tracking the progress pupils make; as a result, the teachers are now in a better position to use this data to plan precisely what it is that the different groups of children need to do next in order to improve. The marking of work encourages the pupils and identifies areas for improvement, but, to be more effective, it needs to have a sharper focus on the next steps in learning, and to be shared with the pupils in ways that allow them to respond whilst the work is still fresh in their minds.

## INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision for information and communication technology (ICT) is **good** overall.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The pupils' attain above nationally expected standards in digital control
- The pupils achieve well, given the short time the school has had access to its new resources
- The quality of the teaching is good
- The school makes good use of its recently acquired resources
- The subject is well led and managed. The subject leader has helped to bring about significant improvements to the teaching and learning
- The school is developing effective links between English and ICT

### Commentary

70. In the short time since the school acquired its set of laptop computers for whole-class work, the pupils have begun to achieve well and attain average standards in most aspects of the subject. The pupils in Year 5 attain above average standards in control technology. Standards, therefore, in Years 3 to 5 are much higher than at the time of the last inspection. This is because the pupils have better access to computers, and because the quality of the teaching is much better than it was.
71. The Year 2 pupils use word processing programs effectively to manipulate text in order to make their writing more effective. They confidently manipulate text for a range of purposes: they change font styles, font sizes, and the colour of text. They delete words and substitute better ones. The pupils confidently discuss what they are doing, using a good range of appropriate terms well, such as *icon*, *cursor*, *italic*, *upper* and *lower case*, *delete*, and *highlight*. The pupils keep journals in which they record what they have learned. They make good use of these when they use them in succeeding lessons to refresh their memories on how they carried out certain processes. The pupils achieve well in lessons, making good progress in acquiring new skills and in consolidating others. The pupils use a range of other programs, such as paint programs, to support work in other subjects. They know how to open and close the programs, how to use their menu systems and how to save files.
72. In Year 5, the pupils attain standards generally in line with those expected nationally, but in control technology they attain standards higher than expected. They show considerable flair in creating the programs they use to control a set of digital traffic lights. In other work, they use ICT to monitor environmental conditions. For example, they use sensors to monitor and record

changes in the environment. They display data measured by the sensors and interpret it. They evaluate information sources and they use databases effectively. They know how to check for accuracy of results and they understand the concept of plausibility. The pupils, for example, search databases and graphs for errors, and correct them by deleting or changing incorrect data. Overall, by the end of Year 5, the pupils acquire a sound knowledge of ICT skills and processes across a range of topics. There are, however, some gaps in their knowledge and experience. They have insufficient knowledge, for example, of such areas as email, spreadsheets, and the Internet. These weaknesses are due almost wholly to the scarcity of resources available to the school until this year. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well because they are closely supported by their teachers and by well-trained teaching assistants.

73. The teaching is good overall. This is a remarkable achievement, given the low base from which most teachers began their training. The teachers are now much more confident than they were. They have sufficient knowledge to enable them to plan interesting and challenging lessons. Their skill in matching tasks to their pupils' needs is having a significant impact upon standards and upon the pupils' levels of achievement. The teachers make the lessons interesting by relating ICT skills to the pupils' work in other subjects. This motivates the pupils and encourages them to work hard. In a mixed class of Year 1 and Year 2 pupils, for example, the pupils were learning word processing skills in order to create a *Big Book* to use in their classroom. In a Year 3 lesson, the pupils edited a history text on the Vikings. They worked to make the language more interesting and to make the text a more effective piece of communication. In a Year 5 literacy lesson, the pupils worked on a leaflet to persuade readers to use a particular venue for outdoor adventure courses. Later, they intended to use a publishing program to produce the finished product. Because the teaching is good and the work is well matched to their interests, the pupils are enthusiastic about what they do. They work hard and achieve well.
74. The leadership is strong and has made a significant difference to the speed at which the school has been able to improve provision. The introduction of ICT journals and diaries has helped teachers to track their pupils' progress, and has helped the pupils to remember what they have learned, and to prepare for the next stage of learning.

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

75. The teachers now have useful guidelines that help them to promote a skills-based ICT curriculum that has developing links with other subjects. The links with literacy are extensive and support learning well. The school is beginning to provide more opportunities for the pupils to use ICT to support learning in other subjects, too, including mathematics and history. More use could be made of ICT in science, but the school, despite its recent acquisition of resources, is still short of the equipment it needs if it is to do a really effective job. The school is aware of this; it has plans to expand its resource base in order to overcome these weaknesses.

### **HUMANITIES**

76. The inspectors sampled the work in **history** that the pupils had recorded in their folders and displayed in their classrooms. They held discussions with some of the pupils and with the subject manager. It was only possible to observe the teaching and learning in one lesson. The available evidence indicates that the standards being attained at the school are broadly in line with what is expected of pupils by the end of Year 2. The progress the pupils make and their achievement are broadly satisfactory. In Years 1 and 2 the teaching places too much emphasis upon worksheets as a means by which the pupils record what they learn; much of it is cutting out and sticking sequences of pictures, or colouring in the pictures. This does not give the pupils sufficient opportunities to decide for themselves the best way to communicate what they know. Their work is often untidy. In Years 3 and 4, the teaching uses fewer

worksheets allowing the pupils better opportunities to use a wide range of information sources to develop historical enquiry skills. For example, the pupils research information in books and on the Internet, and record their work in a number of different ways. They have a sense of pride in what they achieve. This was evident in the work they had written independently when they recorded what they had learned about aspects of Tudor life, and about Henry V111 and his wives. These pupils are well on course to achieve average standards, and the more able pupils, above average standards. This is because the work that the teachers prepare for them is challenging and is more imaginative and creative in the way it encourages pupils to learn. However, some of the work seen at the top end of the school was below age-related expectation and the progress was unsatisfactory. This was because the pupils had had too few opportunities over the course of this year to pursue historical investigation. In the work that was done, the teaching relied too heavily upon worksheets. Discussions with the pupils indicated that the history they study lacks depth. As a result, their knowledge and understanding of the Victorian times was superficial. Although the planned curriculum is based upon the national Curriculum and the published guidelines, it is not planned well enough to ensure sufficient continuity in what they learn.

77. The planning for **religious education** is satisfactory overall, but the school has recognised that revisions to the curriculum are now appropriate, and the inspection evidence confirms this. The topics taught meet the requirements of the current locally agreed syllabus, but the school is waiting for the publication of the revised syllabus before attempting to overhaul its provision. It intends to broaden the curriculum and eliminate duplication of work in Year 5, particularly where the same topics are covered at the high school in Year 6. The school has already drawn up a useful action plan to ensure that the school's provision meets the revised syllabus. In the two lessons seen during the inspection, the pupils satisfactorily recognised the significance of some of the stories Jesus told his followers, such as the parable of the *Prodigal Son* and the *Good Shepherd*. The volume of recorded work was not sufficient to make a secure judgement about standards overall. However, in some classes in Years 3 to 5, what the pupils learn about aspects of Hinduism makes a useful contribution to the pupils' overall cultural knowledge and provides a link to work in geography. As it stands, the current provision makes an adequate contribution to the pupils' spiritual development but this strand is being reviewed because the school recognises that it could do better.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

Provision in geography is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teachers organize a series of interesting challenges for pupils
- Worksheets are overused

### **Commentary**

78. Two lessons were seen in Years 3 to 5 and a very brief observation was made in Year 1. The inspectors looked at the pupils' recorded work and the work that they had on display in the classrooms and corridors. It is likely that the pupils will attain the expected standard by the end of Year 5.
79. The school is currently re-examining its provision for the foundation subjects because class organisation varies from year to year and often includes classes of mixed age ranges. The teachers pay good attention to the provision of investigative work when, for example, they plan work on the local area and other locations. The pupils in Years 1 and 2 develop an appropriate awareness of different climates and the way people equip themselves for different conditions.

They use globes, atlases and maps to help them develop a satisfactory grasp of more distant parts of the world.

80. The older pupils were very interested in an investigation into how their local area could be better managed and improved. Although their spoken accounts were somewhat diffident, they had satisfactorily assembled a number of points that they wished to make; they showed some ability to structure an argument in order to take account of the different points of view held by the various interested parties. The teachers' sharply focused questioning and prompts helped the pupils to raise their achievement significantly.
81. The activities in the two lessons seen were interesting and well planned but, overall, the volume of recorded work is inadequate. It does not, therefore, represent a sufficiently informative record of the pupils' knowledge or skills. In some classes, the use of published worksheets reduces the opportunities that the pupils have to apply their literacy skills appropriately. It also restricts the pupils' freedom to express their ideas in more extended pieces of writing and in other forms such as diagrams, tables and drawings.

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

82. It was not possible for the inspectors to observe any lessons in **design and technology**, but they did sample the pupils' work and talk to some of the pupils. Since the last inspection the school has made satisfactory progress in improving its provision, particularly in the planning and design elements of the curriculum. The evidence suggests that the children are achieving well and making steady gains in their learning. The standards of attainment are in line with those expected of the pupils by the end of Year 2 and Year 5. In their discussions, the pupils showed interest and enthusiasm for the subject, and pride in what they achieved. They were unanimous that they would like to do more work in design and technology. The work sampled showed that the pupils are developing useful skills across a range of projects including designing and making moving pictures and different types of container, and working models of buggies. The pupils demonstrate that they can select appropriate materials for the designs they intend to use. There are areas that need further development. For example, the pupils do not get sufficient opportunity, after they have carried out evaluations of their work, to suggest and make modifications to their products. Some of the teaching over uses worksheets, limiting the pupils' options in terms of how they communicate their ideas. The teaching also places too little emphasis on how the pupils present what they make. However, this is less true of the teaching and learning in Year 5, which shows the teachers and pupils paying more attention to the way they record ideas and present what they make.
83. Since the last inspection, the school has made some headway in improving the **music** education it offers to the pupils. The school has provided training for teachers to improve their knowledge and understanding of the music curriculum. The co-ordinator has undertaken a review of the curriculum, but has not yet succeeded in ensuring that the teachers' plans and delivery of lessons provide enough continuity in what the pupils learn. The curriculum remains too narrow. For example, in the two short music sessions, the children did not sing, nor were they required to listen to and appraise any music. The children did have the opportunity to explore a range of instruments and make music together. There was little difference, however, in the quality of the performance between the two age groups. The children have one session of community singing a week, and do not regularly sing in assemblies. In the assembly observed during the inspection, the singing was satisfactory but lacked a degree of accuracy in pitch and rhythm. Discussion with the pupils revealed that they like music and wished that they did more.
84. The inspection evidence is insufficient to support an overall judgement on the standards achieved by the pupils across the whole school. However, a positive start has been made in the provision for individual pupils and small groups of them. They now have opportunities to learn to play recorders and flutes. In the lesson taught by a visiting specialist, the teaching

focused well on helping the pupils to develop competence in a range of technical skills to ensure that they achieved mastery of their instruments, and the basic rudiments of music such as, notation, note values and rhythm. The quality of the teaching was very good and the pupils were achieving well, despite having been learning for only a few months. They were confident performers, and obviously enjoyed their musical experiences. The school seeks to enhance learning in music by participating in musical events in the local area, by providing end of term concerts for parents, and by inviting visiting musicians to perform to the pupils.

## ART AND DESIGN

Provision in art and design is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in drawing are above average
- There is not sufficient time allocated to the subject to enable all areas to be covered in sufficient depth
- The subject does not make a sufficient contribution to the pupils' spiritual and cultural development

### Commentary

85. The inspectors saw two lessons in art and design. The standards the pupils attain match national expectations for the age range but are good in drawing. The pupils' observation skills are developing well. This was clearly seen in the self-portraits done by pupils in Year 2, and also in the way the pupils in Year 5 used tone effectively in their copies of an illustration from the musical "*Oliver*". The pupils in Year 3 produce carefully executed drawings of items linked to work in history.
86. The younger pupils use their work in history to practise drawing skills. In one lesson, for example, they drew charcoal sketches of Stevenson's steam locomotive "*The Rocket*". The teaching offers a satisfactory range of opportunities for the pupils to draw and paint. Whilst all the elements of art are taught, the time allocated to the subject overall does not allow sufficient time for many of the topics to be pursued at an appropriate depth. One such area is that of three-dimensional work which, while not entirely absent, does not feature sufficiently strongly in the curriculum. The lack of depth in the coverage of some aspects of art restricts the pupils' creativity. Equally, while pupils learn much about the work of artists such as Matisse, Picasso, and Hockney, they get insufficient exposure to a wider range of artists. These weaknesses limit the contribution art is making to the pupils' cultural development.
87. The teaching in the two lessons seen was good because the teachers provided interesting activities, briefed the pupils well, and succeeded in helping them to concentrate well enough to produce attractive work. The teachers make sure that the pupils use their sketchbooks well to make trial drawings, and to experiment with paint tones or textural patterns. This is proving increasingly valuable in promoting the pupils' visual awareness and willingness to experiment. The teachers prepare lessons thoroughly and provide a suitable range of resources so that pupils are able to make choices and use an appropriate range of materials. However, there are some restrictions at present due to shortages of some materials. For example, the watercolour paints in some classes are inadequate. The school is, however, in the process of remedying these deficiencies.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Provision in physical education is **good**.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- The standards are above average and the pupils achieve well
- Overall, the teaching is good
- The teaching encourages many pupils to extend their interest to activities outside normal lessons

## Commentary

88. Standards in games and swimming are good. There were no lessons scheduled for dance and gymnastics during the period of the inspection, so the inspection judgements are limited. By the end of Year 5 nearly all of the pupils are able to swim a full length of the swimming pool using a recognised style, which is the standard required at the end of Year 6. By the end of Year 2 and Year 5, the pupils attain good standards in games lessons. In a mixed class of Year 1 and 2 pupils, for example, the pupils were good at using racquets to control balls. They knew how to hold the racquet correctly for the best way to bounce and balance a ball. They demonstrated good control of their own bodies and a well-developed sense of space. The pupils knew about the effects that exercise has on their bodies and could describe clearly why it is important to prepare for vigorous work by doing warm-up activities. They also knew why it is important to do cooling-down activities.
89. By the end of Year 5, the pupils are proficient in a range of field sports including cricket, hockey and football. In Year 3, for example, the pupils attained good standards of ball control using their feet during a lesson on football. They demonstrated good dribbling skills and were able to stop the ball and turn with it, using a number of different manoeuvres. These pupils had a very good understanding of the impact of exercise on the body. They talked knowledgeably about the 'oxygen debt' caused by vigorous physical work, and the importance of blood flow to ensure the muscles worked properly. In a Year 5 lesson on cricket, the pupils showed that they could field, bowl and bat well. They demonstrated a good sense of team spirit, taking turns at each activity. They were keen to support one another by offering comments on how to improve the key skills. Overall, the pupils demonstrated that they understood the principles of team games in which striking, fielding and invading techniques play an essential part. In nearly every lesson, the pupils' achievement was high.
90. The quality of teaching and learning are good. The teachers plan their lessons well and are skilled at helping their pupils to evaluate what they do. They use an effective mix of demonstrations and questions to help the pupils improve their performances. The pace of lessons is generally good, and the level of challenge well matched to the needs of the pupils. In a Year 3 lesson, for example, the teacher demonstrated two difficult dribbling manoeuvres, and encouraged those pupils who were involved in football outside normal lessons to attempt to master them. Because the teaching was effective and encouraging, the pupils rose to the challenge and achieved well. Most of the teachers take care to remind pupils of the need for good preparation before vigorous exercise, and the need for cooling down activities afterwards. The teachers manage behaviour very well, and keep the pace of lessons brisk and the content challenging. They insist on good sportsmanship and remind the pupils to look out for their own and other's safety and well being. By doing so, the teaching ensures that physical education lessons make a significant contribution to the pupils' social development.
91. The pupils display good attitudes to learning. They work hard in their lessons because they are interested in them and because they enjoy the challenges the activities provide. The pupils listen carefully to their teachers and to each other. This helps them to acquire new skills quickly. In a number of lessons, in which team games were played, the 'Fairfield' team spirit was evident in the way in which the pupils competed, and in the effort they were prepared to put into learning new skills and firming up skills already partly mastered. The pupils with special educational needs participate fully in lessons because the teachers and teaching assistants support them very well, encouraging them to try all of the activities.

92. A good proportion of the pupils participate in sporting activities outside normal lessons. Many of them represent the school in inter-school events. The school teams acquit themselves well, often achieving success against teams from much bigger schools. The older pupils enjoy participating in outdoor adventure activities.
93. The curriculum for physical education is balanced and well planned. It provides for all of the strands in the subject, including outdoor adventure, involving activities such as canoeing, weir walking, rock climbing, and a number of other activities. The school has good resources and uses them well to promote and sustain the pupils' learning.

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

Provision in personal and social education is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The pupils achieve well, particularly in their trustworthiness, in their ability to collaborate, and in their willingness to listen to one another's views and opinions
- The provision of time for personal development sessions is good
- Teaching about living in communities is effective

### **Commentary**

94. The school makes good provision for the pupils to learn about and understand their rights and responsibilities within the school. The pupils know and respect the rules governing the community life of the school, and they strive well to become trusted and useful members of it. This is clearly demonstrated by the older pupils in their willingness to shoulder responsibility for routine tasks, for caring for the younger pupils, and for their ability to be trusted to occupy themselves usefully without close supervision – particularly at lunchtimes. In assemblies and at other times, some of the older pupils are asked to nominate pupils whom they believe have listened or contributed particularly well. In the weekly celebration assembly, the school demonstrates how much it values each pupil in the way it gives awards for effort, achievement, kindness to others, good work, and contributions to school life. Overall, the pupils demonstrate that they learn from what the school offers by the mature way in which they respond.
95. Recently, the school council has been revived, and the older pupils have begun to play a useful part in its deliberations. The pupils take the work of the council seriously and have high but realistic hopes of what it might achieve. Their participation is a useful introduction to citizenship. The pupils already make good use of the daily classroom sessions dedicated to reflection on personal and social issues. In these, they have learned to listen to the views and needs of other pupils and to support one another. The teachers use these sessions well to discuss the importance of abiding by codes of conduct. The pupils, therefore, quickly come to adopt the principles underpinning them and do their best to live by them. This helps to create a happy community in which there is a good degree of mutual trust among pupils, and between the pupils and their teachers and other adults on the staff.
96. The school is careful to instil in its pupils a regard for the wider community. It provides good opportunities for the pupils to serve other people. For example, it has a vigorous programme of charity work for national and international agencies, and it encourages local groups to use the school's facilities. For example, disabled citizens from a local support group visit the school twice a month to share lunch with the pupils. The pupils use these occasions well to get to know their visitors and to understand their needs.
97. The subject makes a useful contribution to aspects of the pupils' personal, moral, and social development. It encourages self-confidence and perseverance, trustworthiness and caring attitudes towards others.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>4</b>
How inclusive the school is	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	4
Value for money provided by the school	4
<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>4</b>
Pupils' achievement	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>4</b>
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	5
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	4
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	4
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	4
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	4
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	4
<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>3</b>
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	4

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