

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **ASHBROW INFANT AND NURSERY SCHOOL**

Huddersfield

LEA area: Kirklees

Unique reference number: 107628

Headteacher: Mrs Dora Plant

Lead inspector: Mrs Lesley Clark

Dates of inspection: 6<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup> May 2005

Inspection number: 266321

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and Nursery  
School category: Community  
Age range of pupils: 3 – 7  
Gender of pupils: Mixed  
Number on roll: 162

School address: Ash Meadow Close  
Sheepridge  
Huddersfield  
West Yorkshire  
Postcode: HD2 1DY

Telephone number: 01484 223962  
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Appropriate authority: Governing Body  
Name of chair of governors: Mr Daniel Janes

Date of previous inspection: 6<sup>th</sup> May 2003

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This is a smaller than average sized infant school. An above average proportion of pupils (22 per cent) are learning English as an additional language, two of whom are asylum seekers or refugees. Pupils come from a very wide range of ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is 55 per cent, which is well above average. The school serves an extremely disadvantaged area both socially and economically. Children's attainment on entry is well below average. Eighty-seven pupils (54% per cent) are on the list of special educational needs, which is much higher than average. Eighteen pupils have statements of special educational needs, which is also extremely high compared to the average. Most of the pupils receiving additional help have specific or moderate learning difficulties, social, emotional and behavioural problems, speech impairment, visual impairment, physical difficulties or autism. The number of pupils joining or leaving the school other than at the usual times is very high. The school is part of the Sure Start Initiative. It is involved with Excellence in Cities and is an Early Excellence Centre. The school has a Resourced Provision Unit for 12 children with statements of special educational needs relating to speech and language impairment. In addition there is a Children's Centre which provides mixed part and full-time day-care provision for 0-5 years old, including education for funded three and four year olds, adult education and parents' courses. Nearly half the pupils have attended the Children's Centre before starting in the school's nursery. The Children's Centre is not included in this inspection.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
25431	Lesley Clark	Lead inspector	Foundation Stage Science Information and communication technology Music
8922	Brenda McIntosh	Lay inspector	
10269	David Figures	Team inspector	English Geography History Religious education
29686	Stefan Lord	Team inspector	Mathematics Art and design Design and technology Physical education Special educational needs English as an additional language
23390	Melvyn Blackband.	Team inspector	Speech and language resourced provision

The inspection contractor was:

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## **REPORT CONTENTS**

	Page
<b>PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS</b>	
<b>STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS</b>	<b>8</b>
Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities (ethos)	
<b>QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL</b>	<b>11</b>
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
<b>LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>OTHER SPECIFIED FEATURES</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECTS</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE</b>	
<b>SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGE 1</b>	
<b>PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS</b>	<b>31</b>

## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

The school provides a sound education and has some very strong features which enable its pupils to overcome many significant barriers to learning. The personal support given to pupils and their families is very good. The quality of teaching and learning is very strong in the Early Years Unit and satisfactory in the school as a whole. Standards are below average by the end of Year 2. The school is well led and soundly managed. It gives satisfactory value for money.

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

- The school makes outstanding provision for children in the Early Years Unit.
- Pupils with special educational needs or who are gifted and talented and those who are learning English as an additional language make good progress.
- Pupils in the Resource Provision Unit make good progress because they are well taught.
- The teaching and the curriculum are not focused closely enough on the learning needs of the pupils in Years 1 and 2.
- Attendance is far lower than it should be.
- Provision in information and communication technology (ICT) is not good enough to develop pupils' skills to a reasonable level.
- Good provision for pupils' personal development leads to high quality relationships and racial harmony.
- The leadership of the headteacher is good and partnerships with parents are very strong.
- The school provides a high quality learning environment both indoors and outside.

Improvement since the last inspection is good. The leadership has strengthened and good overall progress has been made in addressing the key tasks that related to underachievement. The management team checks teaching and pupils' learning rigorously and effectively and judicious organisation of staff ensures that most pupils benefit from high levels of adult support. Learning in Years 1 and 2 is now satisfactory as a result.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2002	2003	2004	2004
Reading	E	E*	E	B
Writing	E	E*	D	B
Mathematics	D	E*	D	A

*Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average, E\* - bottom five per cent nationally*

*Similar schools are those with similar percentages of pupils eligible for free school meals*

**Achievement is satisfactory** overall. Achievement is very good in the Early Years Unit. Children enter school with low level language skills. Much time is spent on teaching children to speak, listen and communicate in words. As a result, although the majority are unlikely to meet the expected national targets at the end of the reception year in communication, language and literacy, personal, social and emotional development, mathematical, physical and creative development and knowledge and understanding of the world, about a third of the children should. They make very good progress in all aspects of their learning. Achievement is satisfactory overall in Years 1 and 2 though pupils who have special educational needs or are gifted and talented, or who are at an early stage of learning English, achieve well. Standards in national tests vary according to the proportion of pupils each year who have significant special educational needs. In 2004, over 60 per cent of

children had learning difficulties. Standards of the present group of pupils Year 2 are below average overall and in listening, reading, writing, mathematics, science, ICT and religious education. They are average in physical education. No judgements could be made on standards in other subjects.

**Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good.** Their attitudes and behaviour are good. Attendance is well below average but the school has more barriers to learning than most other schools, which contribute significantly to this. Many of the absences are due to poor health and often arise in the winter months when many pupils are susceptible to various prolonged illnesses. The school works very hard to address the needs of its families to help pupils attend regularly. Punctuality has improved and is largely satisfactory for the majority of pupils.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall.** While teaching is very good and often excellent in the Early Years Unit, it is predominantly satisfactory in Years 1 and 2 with some good teaching on occasions. There is a small proportion of unsatisfactory teaching; however, the use of skilled support staff ensures that most pupils do not miss out. Insistence on high standards of behaviour throughout the school helps pupils to work hard. However, the teaching and the curriculum are far too formal for the learning needs of the majority of pupils in Years 1 and 2. Pupils with specific learning needs or who are learning English as an additional language or who are gifted and talented learn well because of intensive adult support but average and higher attainers tend to 'tread water'. The school recognises that pupils' learning in Years 1 and 2 would benefit from a similar approach to that used in the Early Years Unit with a complementary indoor and outdoor curriculum to develop pupils' capacity to learn and remember through stimulating, practical activities and intensive work in small groups to foster the key skills of literacy, numeracy and ICT to a high standard. The curriculum is satisfactory overall but enriched by a very good range of extra-curricular activities and other enrichment opportunities which take place during the school day. The school makes very good provision for pupils' care, welfare, health and safety. Support, advice and guidance are good overall and the school involves pupils well in its work and development. Accommodation and resources are very good and excellent in the Early Years Unit. The partnership with parents, the community and other schools is very good and benefits pupils' learning.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**Leadership and management are satisfactory overall.** The headteacher leads the school well and there are good features to the overall satisfactory management of the school. Governance is satisfactory and statutory requirements are met. Financial management is good.

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

Parents think that this is a very good school – a school that cares for all people – and that it does a great deal to help their children and their families. The pupils like coming to school and are very happy here.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- Focus the teaching and the curriculum more closely on the learning needs of pupils in Years 1 and 2 to help raise the achievement of all groups of pupils;
- Improve attendance;
- Improve provision in ICT.

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

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

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

The achievement of pupils is satisfactory overall. It is very good in the Early Years Unit and satisfactory in Years 1 and 2. Standards are below average at the end of the Foundation Stage and Year 2.

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

- Children achieve very well in the Early Years Unit.
- Pupils with special educational needs, who are gifted and talented or who are learning English as an additional language, make good progress.
- Standards in speaking, listening, reading writing, mathematics, science, ICT and religious education are below average by the end of Year 2.
- Pupils have limited opportunities in which to practise their ICT skills.

#### **Commentary**

1. Children's attainment in communication and language skills on entry to the Early Years Unit is very low. In all other respects, their attainment is well below average. Approximately half the children have attended the Children's Centre before entering the nursery; their skills, particularly their personal, social and emotional development, are better developed than those with no pre-school education. The children settle in extremely well in the Early Years Unit and make very good progress as they warm to the very well ordered learning opportunities and structured activities both indoors and outdoors. These offer a high degree of challenge and stimulation and children learn very well under the expert guidance of the members of staff who work there. As a result, they achieve very well. While about a third are likely to reach nationally expected levels the majority are less likely to meet the levels expected in personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy, mathematical, creative and physical development and in knowledge and understanding of the world.
2. Pupils achieve satisfactorily overall in Years 1 and 2 and significant groups of pupils – those with special educational needs, those with gifts and talents and those learning English as an additional language – make good progress. Standards are below average in the present Year 2.

#### ***Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 – average point scores in 2004***

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	14.1 (11.9)	15.8 (15.7)
Writing	13.6 (10.2)	14.6 (14.6)
Mathematics	15.7 (12.8)	16.2 (16.3)

*There were 30 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

3. This is a marginal improvement on standards over time which have been well below average. In part, this is a reflection of the composition of individual year groups, the high levels of mobility and the well below average attendance. Well over half the pupils in each year group have special educational needs or are learning English as an additional language. Approximately 3 to 5 per cent each year is identified as gifted or talented. The good provision



for these groups of pupils enables them to achieve well. However, approximately a third of pupils each year make very small gains in learning and therefore although their achievement is satisfactory overall there is room for improvement. They have, however, significant social and emotional problems which affect their learning which the school works hard to overcome. The current organisation of teaching and the curriculum is too formal to meet the learning needs of the many pupils who 'switch off' after ten minutes unless they have adult assistance to keep them on task. Pupils are given satisfactory opportunities to use their literacy and numeracy skills in activities which have meaning for them but ICT is not used extensively enough to help pupils develop their skills in other areas such as reading, writing and mathematics. Standards in physical education are average because pupils learn well when they are actively involved.

4. Boys and girls achieve equally well. The school's results in national tests compare favourably with those in schools with a similar proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals. Pupils learning English as an additional language achieve well. The local authority provides the school with detailed analysis of the attainment of the different ethnic groups. Statutory targets are challenging but perhaps optimistic with regard to higher achievers. With the good leadership evident in the development of a successful outdoor curriculum, and the planned changes to the way the curriculum and teaching are organised for these year groups, the school is well placed to improve on its current standards.

### **Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities (ethos)**

Pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to school are good. Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is also good. Attendance is well below average and for the majority of pupils punctuality is satisfactory.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Very good relationships help create a happy learning environment.
- In lessons there are too few opportunities for pupils to develop their confidence and independence further.
- Staff have high expectations of pupils' conduct throughout the school day; the school deals very effectively with all forms of harassment.
- Provision for pupils' spiritual moral and social development is good and leads to a high level of racial harmony.
- Pupils gain a good awareness of the cultural diversity of their own locality and modern British society.
- The school does all it can to raise attendance levels but they remain low.

### **Commentary**

5. Pupils clearly enjoy being in school. They are keen to participate in activities after school as well as those offered during the school day. Pupils like practical and outdoor activities and are keen to take part. Year 1 pupils were well motivated by their outdoor mathematics task on direction and showed a high level of co-operation in working out their trails. In some lessons, there are not enough opportunities for pupils to develop their confidence and independent skills sufficiently. Pupils are very well supported by adults but this sometimes prevents them from doing things for themselves. Many pupils lose concentration after a short time because they find it hard to sit still and listen for long periods unless they have adult assistance.
6. Pupils with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language have equally positive attitudes to learning and enjoy the experiences that the school offers. Staff in the Early Years Unit nurture pupils' personal and social development very well,

enabling them to form trusting relationships, co-operate, share and take turns. The children are happy to learn and eager to take part in the exciting activities offered to them.

7. The school gives a high priority to pupils' personal development. Relationships are very good throughout the school and this helps to create a very good learning environment. The school has a very positive atmosphere in which pupils feel safe and relaxed. Pupils generally behave well in lessons and around school and have a good awareness of what is right and wrong. There are a significant number of pupils with challenging behaviour and social and emotional problems. Staff manage them well through praise and encouragement and specific behaviour support plans. No pupils were excluded last year which is a good indication of the school's commitment to inclusion. Parents at the meeting prior to inspection strongly agreed that if any form of harassment or bullying occurs, it is taken most seriously and dealt with very effectively by staff.
8. Pupils get on with each other and play well together. They are polite and friendly to visitors. The atmosphere around the school at lunchtime is very positive and sociable. Outdoor activities are very well designed to promote social and physical development. There are a very good number of adults on hand to engage the pupils in purposeful play. The school involves pupils in various initiatives which boost their self-esteem and confidence. They are given opportunities to take on responsible jobs, all of which have to be applied for. For example, the playground committee helps to put away all the equipment after lunch. Peer massage takes place each day after lunch and this helps to settle pupils and put them in the right frame of mind for learning. Pupils co-operate very well with each other during these sessions.
9. A very positive ethos in school promotes spiritual development well and gives pupils a sense of purpose and pride in their work. Assemblies are well planned to give pupils an opportunity for reflection about moral and social issues that are relevant to them. For example, during the inspection an assembly helped pupils to see that everyone is special and has something to give and it costs nothing. There was a strong moral message 'to give the best of yourself'. Pupils gain a good understanding of the diversity and richness of other cultures that make up their own school community and British society. Racism is not tolerated and pupils of different backgrounds mix freely and easily at all times. Parents agree that the school promotes racial harmony well and all the different ethnic groups in school are catered for very well.

**Attendance in the latest complete reporting year 2003/04 (92.4%)**

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	6.0	School data	1.5
National data	5.1	National data	0.4

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

10. Attendance rates are low but the school has more barriers to learning than most other schools, which contribute significantly to this. This is a similar situation to that found in the last inspection. The school does all it can to promote regular attendance and punctuality. Most of the absences are due to poor health and often arise in the winter months when many pupils are susceptible to various prolonged illnesses. This leads to gaps in pupils' learning. The school goes to great lengths to ensure pupils receive a healthy diet to help build up their immune systems in an attempt to overcome this and so raise their attendance levels. Absences are rigorously monitored with first day absence calls and often home visits to ensure the children are safe. The unauthorised absence is due mainly to a small minority of pupils. Punctuality has improved and is largely satisfactory for the majority of pupils with a few regular persistent latecomers.

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

The school provides its pupils with a satisfactory quality of education. Teaching and learning, assessment and the curriculum are satisfactory in Years 1 and 2 and very good in the Early Years Unit. The partnerships with parents, community and other schools are very good. The school makes very good provision for pupils' care, welfare, health and safety. Support, advice and guidance are good.

### **Teaching and learning**

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. The assessment of pupils' work is satisfactory.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching and learning in the nursery and reception are very good.
- Assessment arrangements in the nursery and reception are very good and the information is used very well to plan children's learning.
- The behaviour of pupils is managed very well.
- Well-prepared classrooms create a positive and calm environment for learning.
- The content and style of some lessons in Years 1 and 2 are not always well suited to pupils' learning needs.

### **Commentary**

11. Children in the nursery and reception achieve very well because of the very good quality of the teaching they experience. This is to be seen in the exciting, stimulating learning environment where children have many opportunities to select their own resources and activities to extend their learning. Children learn very well because of the strong focus on developing language and communication, thus enabling children to become articulate and to voice their curiosity through asking questions. High levels of adult support enable those with special educational needs, significant learning difficulties or those learning English as an additional language to learn as well as those who have particular gifts and talents or are lower, average or higher attaining.
12. There are significant strengths in the teaching experienced by pupils in Years 1 and 2, the principal one of which is the very good management of pupils' behaviour, which at times is very challenging. This is achieved partly by the effective collaboration between the class teachers and the teaching assistants and the good use of the skills of volunteer helpers. This means that pupils (some of them identified as having additional needs in this area) who find it difficult to control their own behaviour are helped to do so and focus on the lesson. When pupils are working at their own tasks, most groups have an adult helper. Classrooms are set up to provide a calm atmosphere which helps pupils learn, at least initially, until some start to lose concentration. Good organisation and plentiful suitable apparatus enable pupils to learn because everybody knows what is coming next and are clear about what they have to do.
13. Lessons work best when they are carefully directed at what pupils need to learn next. In one successful lesson, for example, the teaching was focused on helping the pupils recognise the key words in questions asked, as part of understanding how to write an accurate answer. More specifically, the point was how to identify the key word ('what', 'who', 'where'?) which indicated how the answer was to be framed. Alongside this was much work on the pupils' essential skills. Good listening was rewarded. Answers to questions had to be clearly enunciated: no mumbled answers were allowed. The importance of carefully reading the text was repeatedly emphasised. "Don't be fooled by the pictures!" Pupils achieved well because the lesson was directed at what they needed, and organised so that a well-timed sequence of

activities retained their interest throughout. As a result, pupils were absorbed in their tasks and made good progress.

14. Not all lessons acknowledge the pupils' situation as well as this. In some cases this is seen when pupils are expected to stay on the mat in listening mode for too long. In one instance, a Year 1 group, where half the pupils had special educational needs including pupils with learning and behaviour difficulties, sat receiving instructions about the practical lesson to follow for nearly half an hour. Sometimes the organisation of the lesson does not adopt a pattern of short phases, frequently repeating, reinforcing, and reviewing, and developing the material in small steps through directed teacher input and focused task. On these occasions, when too much time is allocated to a task, groups led by an adult struggle to maintain concentration and independent groups are easily distracted, with neither using time to the best advantage. Sometimes, tasks do not take sufficient account of pupils' general capabilities: in one instance, a game intended to help pupils practise number skills did not work because their social skills were not well enough established to enable them to play games together.

### **Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 26 lessons**

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
2	4	7	11	2	0	0

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

15. In Years 1 and 2, assessment has concentrated in the first instance on English and mathematics. While the system puts the school in a good position to make progress, it is too newly implemented yet to be reflected in the standards attained by pupils. Similarly, assessments for other subjects, including science, are either new or in a trial stage, and are not yet significantly influencing standards.
16. The very effective assessment arrangements in the nursery and reception are based on the careful observation of children in a wide range of stimulating situations. Observations are carefully recorded in terms of the areas of learning and regularly analysed to ascertain the child's progress, and also the immediate and longer-term learning needs. These, discussed regularly by all the adults involved, lead to detailed planning and carefully focused strategies for ensuring each child is presented with opportunities to learn what needs to come next.

### **The curriculum**

The curriculum is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2 and it is very good in the Early Years Unit. The school provides a very good range of interesting and exciting activities to enrich pupils' learning. The school's accommodation and resources are very good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The curriculum for pupils in Years 1 and 2 is often too formal to meet the learning needs of many of the pupils.
- A wide range of activities promotes interest and enjoyment to enhance pupils' learning.
- The curriculum for children in the Early Years Unit helps them to achieve very well.
- ICT equipment is underused to improve pupils' skills and support learning in other subjects.
- Arrangements to meet the needs of pupils of different capabilities are good.
- The accommodation provides a very pleasant environment for learning both indoors and outdoors.

## Commentary

17. The curriculum meets fully all statutory requirements including those for the provision of sex and relationships education and awareness of the dangers of drugs. Since the last inspection the school has made satisfactory improvement in providing pupils with more opportunities to apply the skills that they have acquired in literacy and numeracy into other subjects. Topics link the learning between subjects well to broaden pupils' understanding. In Years 1 and 2, whole-class teaching sessions in literacy and numeracy lessons are often too formal to meet the learning needs of many pupils. Sometimes pupils are expected to sit for too long and as a result their concentration wanes. Pupils' personal, social and health and citizenship education is developed well with a strong emphasis on their well-being and learning how to keep safe and healthy.
18. The curriculum for children in the Early Years Unit is very good and very well planned to balance the choice of activities between indoors and outdoors. The accommodation and resources are excellent and have a significant impact on children's high achievement.
19. Pupils' learning is broadened and enriched by some very good opportunities for working with experts. For example, good use is made of visitors, such as theatre groups, artists and musicians, who have worked with the pupils to develop a variety of skills. The school gives all pupils the chance to take part in an interesting range of visits, including a family residential stay, that enriches the curriculum by providing further significant learning experiences. Activities outside the school day promote participation in the arts and physical activity. These experiences support pupils' personal development well, as they learn how to socialise with each other in situations away from the classroom. The 'Forest School', a recent initiative, takes learning out of doors at every available opportunity.
20. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. Individual education plans ensure that their work is relevant and interesting, enabling pupils to achieve well. The school identifies gifted and talented pupils and provision is good for them both in lessons and through the enrichment activities as part of the school's involvement in the Excellence in Cities initiative. The curriculum provided for pupils who speak English as an additional language is very good in the Early Years Unit and satisfactory in Years 1 and 2. The school celebrates different cultural festivals and pupils' home languages, and with the help of specialist support ensures that pupils are fully involved in all learning activities. The curriculum is enriched by parents telling stories in home languages to targeted groups of pupils.
21. Only one classroom has an interactive whiteboard, which is used satisfactorily as an aid to teaching and learning and to provide pupils with a range of visual and practical experiences. Pupils do not get enough opportunities, however, to use the ICT equipment to improve their skills and the use of ICT to support learning in other subjects is not sufficiently planned for.
22. Much has been spent to provide a high quality learning environment both indoors and outdoors. The accommodation is welcoming for children, parents, staff and visitors and it is maintained and cleaned to a high standard. Learning resources are of good quality overall and facilitate teaching and learning well. There are a good number of teachers and support staff who understand each other's roles and work effectively as a team to help pupils to learn.

## Care, guidance and support

The school makes very good provision for ensuring pupils' care, welfare, health and safety. It provides pupils with good support, advice and guidance overall. There are good arrangements in place to involve pupils in the school's work and development.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Health and safety procedures are rigorous and all staff are vigilant in their care of pupils.
- The atmosphere of warmth and calm creates a happy environment in which pupils are very well cared for so they can enjoy their learning.
- Teachers and other staff are very caring and sensitive to the children's personal and social needs.
- Pupils' views are listened to and taken seriously.

## **Commentary**

23. Pupils feel safe and secure and the very good attention paid to their care, welfare and safety allows them to concentrate on learning. All staff work hard to make the school a very welcoming place for pupils. Arrangements for health and safety are very good. Regular inspections of the building and equipment are undertaken and appropriate records are maintained. Daily routines are very well planned and pupils are carefully supervised when at work or at play.
24. The school is always ready to listen to pupils and their families and offers very good personal support as their needs arise. Staff deal successfully with a wide range of social and welfare issues. A notable feature of the school is the very positive atmosphere in which all pupils are valued as individuals. The good-natured approach of staff is instrumental in ensuring that pupils feel safe and happy and want to learn. Staff are very well informed in matters relating to child protection. Parents are pleased with the high level of care provided by the school.
25. The concern for pupils' well-being and their families is a priority. The school, parents and other agencies work effectively together to ensure things happen and that maximum help and guidance are obtained, for example the work done in trying to raise pupils' attendance levels. In this school, childhood is celebrated and everything is done to make sure pupils are happy and looked after in the way that gives them equal chances in life. The breakfast club is welcoming, and the friendly atmosphere as children arrive with their parents gives them confidence to settle quickly into school. It provides them with an excellent breakfast, encourages attendance and punctuality and develops their social skills very well. There are very good links with the Children's Centre which help prepare the children and their families well for the transition to the Early Years Unit.
26. The school acknowledges pupils' successes well by celebrating and rewarding those who have made gains in their academic and personal progress. Information about pupils' academic achievements is used satisfactorily to guide future learning. The systems for checking pupils' progress are too newly implemented to have had full effect on the standards attained.
27. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well in class so they take a full and active part in lessons. Although most of the targets on their individual education plans give staff a clear understanding of the specific areas of learning to focus upon, some would benefit from being broken down into smaller steps of learning so that progress can be better assessed. Pupils who speak English as an additional language are cared for and supported equally well to ensure that their needs are met.
28. Pupils are actively encouraged to contribute their ideas towards improving the school. Staff seek the pupils' views either in small groups or individually. There are opportunities for less confident pupils to develop their leadership skills through outdoor activities in the Forest School.

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

The partnership with parents is very good. Links with the community and other schools are very good and contribute extremely well to the pupils' learning. Educational and support programmes for parents, families and members of the community are very effective.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The involvement of parents and families is a very important factor behind the school's successes and pupils' improved achievement.
- The school provides extremely well thought out guidance for parents on how to help their children learn.
- Family learning and parenting courses have a significant effect on pupils' learning, raising achievement and promoting social inclusion in school.
- The very good links with the community and other schools enhance curricular opportunities for pupils.

### **Commentary**

29. The school places great emphasis on involving parents and families in school and in their children's learning. It is well regarded within the local education authority for the promotion of parental involvement and it is easy to see why. The role of the learning mentor and community development worker is very well integrated into the ways in which the school seeks to involve parents and families. Parents accompany school visits, support concerts and other school events and are very good fund raisers. Family days out and residential trips are very popular. A very good number of parents and volunteers make a regular commitment to help in the classrooms or with other specific tasks and activities. Before the inspection many parents turned up to the meeting to offer their very good support for the school. They were full of praise for everything it offers families and their children. Parents helped themselves to the breakfast which had been provided for them and were obviously welcome in school and at ease with staff. The school promotes family life and sets a good role model for parents on how they can look after their children at home.
30. The school communicates very effectively with parents through a very good range of information about the school, their children's progress and the curriculum. Annual reports for pupils in Years 1 and 2 provide a sound summary of pupils' achievements but, as in the last inspection, they are insufficiently clear about the standards of pupils' work in relation to what is expected for their age. Parents receive lots of information about the curriculum and guidance on how to support their children's learning. Parents find that the headteacher and staff are approachable and accessible at anytime for formal or informal discussions, and where there are concerns or problems these are swiftly dealt with. The school works hard at involving parents of those pupils who have special educational needs or learning English as an additional language. Home visits or telephone calls are made to keep parents fully informed about their child's progress if they are unable to attend meetings in school.
31. The school is involved in a local authority initiative to provide Family Learning and other courses for adults such as Positive Parenting, reading and craft. The courses are held either in school or in the Children's Centre on site. They are popular and very well attended by a wide range of parents and extremely successful in giving parents the opportunity to gain a better understanding of what their children are learning. Many of the other courses help parents gain a greater understanding of child development or give them an increased confidence in their contacts with school which often results in a readiness to become actively involved in school life. A programme of courses has been organised, which enable parents to

develop their own skills and make them feel good about themselves. This boosts their confidence, raises self-esteem and encourages positive attitudes towards school and their child's learning. During the inspection many parents attended a Woodland Workshop in the Forest School and learned basic map making skills in order to support their child's learning at home. Another group of parents began making masks for their children to take part a local festival. Parents appreciate the opportunity to learn and feel it provides them with a stimulus for conversation at home with their children.

32. The services of the Early Excellence Centre continue to make a significant difference to families' lives by providing effective support and reducing their isolation. The centre continues to be a well-used community resource that provides very well for a wide range of needs. The school makes very good use of local resources in terms of working with people and visiting places to bring learning alive for the pupils and provide meaningful first-hand experiences. The school works very closely with others within the local pyramid of schools, sharing curricular issues and staff expertise which help improve the quality of teaching and contribute well to pupils' learning. There is very good liaison with the junior school, especially between Years 2 and 3, which prepares the children very well for the move to the next phase of their education. The community is used very effectively to support pupils' learning of other cultures. Pupils gain a good understanding of their own cultural traditions and of the diversity and richness of other cultures that make up their own local community.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Leadership and management are sound. The headteacher's effective leadership has guided the school well in eliminating the underachievement that existed in 2003. The leadership of the senior managers and other key staff is satisfactory. Governance is satisfactory and all statutory requirements are met. Management systems are satisfactory overall.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The headteacher provides good leadership so creating a very effective climate for learning.
- The leadership and management of the Early Years Unit are very good.
- The inclusion of all learners is central to the school's vision; the school is effective in recognising and dismantling barriers to learning.
- Day-to-day management is good but some of the systems for evaluating the work of the school are too recent to be fully effective.
- In the past the responsibilities have fallen on the shoulders of a small group of governors.
- The school is very good at attracting substantial funds to help improve the quality of teaching and the learning environment.

### **Commentary**

33. The headteacher has led the school well since the last inspection and has been at the centre of the good improvement made in the last two years. Staff have been motivated well to help deal with the key issues of raising pupils' achievement. The senior management team is still developing but is already providing a more focused leadership. Its members are working well as a team and contributing satisfactorily to the running of the school and its development. The commitment from staff and governors to ensuring that pupils feel valued and develop positive self-esteem makes a valuable contribution to their improving achievement. The focus on developing pupils' skills in literacy and numeracy as highlighted in the last inspection has resulted in improved achievement but some aspects have remained underdeveloped – for example, the provision for ICT and its use to support learning in other subjects. However, the school has good plans in place to develop the use of ICT as an aid to teaching and learning and the purchase of further resources and training are organised.



34. The headteacher recognises and nurtures the talents in individual teachers and develops their leadership qualities very well. She has the courage and confidence in staff to transfer them into unfamiliar areas and provide the correct support to develop their skills very well. A good example of this has resulted in the excellent provision in the Early Years Unit arising from the very effective leadership and management of the co-ordinator.
35. One of the main strengths of the school is its strong ethos that places value on all individuals and underpins all its work. There is mutual respect and a strong emphasis on pupils' personal development that is crucial in raising the self-esteem of the pupils and giving them a good start in life. Diversity is celebrated and promoted at every opportunity. There is a good commitment to inclusion and equality of opportunity for all pupils which has been successful in raising the achievement of pupils from all backgrounds. The school reaches out in all directions to tap into many initiatives and local projects that help to improve the quality of pupils' learning and promote the school's reputation in the community and the local authority. Such involvement does much to contribute to the richness and diversity provided for the pupils. Leadership in terms of pastoral support for children and families is strong. Every child and family matters and the school strives very hard to assist them in care and welfare issues, which helps give them equality of opportunity for learning and life as a whole. The school places great emphasis on educating parents as well as children. Parents rightly comment that this is a school that cares for all people and where childhood is celebrated.
36. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good, and well led and managed. These pupils represent a much higher proportion of the school community than is usually seen and their needs are well catered for. There is effective liaison between staff in school and the school and outside agencies to make sure there is a co-ordinated approach to helping pupils achieve well. The provision for pupils with English as an additional language is also good and well led and managed. There are effective systems for monitoring pupils' progress in acquiring English. The information is used well to identify pupils who need additional support. Every effort is made to ensure that the limited specialist support available for these pupils is directed to have maximum effect. The proportion of pupils in the school speaking English as an additional language has risen significantly in the last two years.
37. Management is satisfactory overall. Teaching is rigorously monitored by the headteacher and senior staff, and is supported by professional development, with the result that teaching and learning in Years 1 and 2 are showing signs of improvement. The headteacher is in no doubt what needs to be done to spread the high quality of teaching and learning seen in the Early Years Unit into Years 1 and 2 to help raise achievement further. New management systems have been put into place to enable the school to evaluate and track the progress of pupils' progress and highlight areas for improvement but these are too recent to have had full effect. Subject co-ordination is satisfactory overall with some managers new to their role. The school evaluates the deployment of extra adult help, or additional learning support strategies for pupils in terms of their attainment and progress.
38. Governors are supportive of the work of the headteacher and the school. In the past the responsibilities have fallen on the shoulders of a small group of governors. Many of the governors are new and enthusiastic but their role and understanding of responsibilities are at an early stage of development. To increase the effectiveness of the governing body as a whole the chair of governors has put into place a programme of training and development to assist with this. Some governors are more experienced and have a clearer understanding of the strengths of the school and areas for improvement.

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

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	600472
Total expenditure	568324
Expenditure per pupil	3486

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	23519
Balance carried forward to the next	55667

39. Financial planning and management are good and complex because of the many different grants allocated for the range of provision. Funds are spent wisely to the benefit of all pupils. The budget is regularly monitored to ensure that spending levels are within agreed targets. Much of the surplus carry-forward was allocated to staffing costs and a balanced budget was set for 2004/05. The headteacher attracts significant funds successfully from various sources and initiatives, all of which are spent wisely to the benefit of the pupils. One example of this is how funds have been sought and used to develop a very attractive learning environment for pupils both indoors and outdoors. The expenditure per pupil appears high but includes funding for the Resourced Provision for the pupils with specific language and communication impairment.

### **OTHER SPECIFIED FEATURES**

#### **Speech and Language Resourced Provision**

Provision for pupils with speech and language impairment in the provision resourced by the local authority is **good**.

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

- Pupils with language difficulties are able to take a full part in lessons because their learning activities are well planned and suitably adapted.
- Assessment of pupils' attainment is very good and this helps teachers to plan very specific programmes to help pupils achieve well.
- The pupils are effectively supported by well-trained and knowledgeable teaching assistants.
- The use of symbols is relatively underdeveloped in teaching pupils how to combine words into phrases or sentences.
- The provision is well led and managed.

#### **Commentary**

40. Pupils enter the provision with low levels of language and comprehension. They make good relative progress and the majority of pupils are able to return to their local schools at the end of Year 2. The school's provision is enhanced by the allocation of substantial speech therapy services. The therapist provides very focused and accurate assessment of pupils' attainment on entry to the provision and maintains detailed records of their progress. The high quality of this continual assessment enables teachers to plan activities which are very well matched to the pupils' needs. This has a significant effect on pupils' achievement. By the end of Year 2 higher attaining pupils are approaching national expectations in speaking and listening and have made good progress in reading, writing and spelling.
41. Teaching of the pupils in the resourced language provision is good. The inclusion of pupils with language difficulties into mainstream classes has been successfully managed. This is because teachers are skilled at adapting the curriculum to take account of pupils' language needs. The pupils' planned work in each lesson is explicitly linked to language enrichment

activities. Teachers plan many opportunities for pupils to practise language skills within each subject. The class teachers are well supported by specialist staff in adapting learning objectives to take account of pupils with language difficulties. Pupils' individual education plans are securely based on cumulative daily records supported by specific focused assessment by the speech therapist. These plans are effectively used to establish small relevant learning steps for each pupil, which are reviewed and revised regularly. The high quality of this support enables the pupils to make good progress within the mainstream classes. The pupils respond well in lessons, confident that they will be well supported. For example, pupils in Year 1 enjoyed a literacy lesson on *Jack and the Beanstalk* because they were quietly but effectively supported throughout the briskly-paced activities of reading parts of the story, helping to act out scenes and answering questions about what was happening and what might happen next.

42. Teachers and other staff model phrases and sentences for the pupils and take every opportunity to extend the pupils' understanding. Work in mathematics, for instance, by Year 1 pupils was reinforced in a physical education lesson where the teacher led the pupils to practise movements to show 'bigger', 'smaller', 'on' and 'under'. Teachers make appropriate use of symbols to teach the pupils important words. The use of symbols is, however, relatively underdeveloped in teaching pupils how to combine words into phrases or sentences or in communicating requests or expressing choices, for instance of fruit or playtime drink. A further group of nursery age children with speech and language difficulties are supported appropriately through the 'I Can' charity which funds extra staff and resources.
43. The leadership and management of the provision are good. There is a clear development plan for the provision. The teacher in charge maintains a very efficient system of monitoring teachers' planning and recording and she manages a programme of careful observations of pupils' performance. The professional development of staff has been well organised. Arrangements for the transfer of pupils to other mainstream schools are good. Parents and the receiving school are fully involved in planning for the transition and the school has effective procedures to provide for the pupils' gradual integration into their new school. Specialist staff in the provision have developed effective links with parents.

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

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

Most children enter the Early Years Unit at the age of three and attend either mornings or afternoons. Their attainment on entry is well below average, overall, but very low in language skills. Children enter full-time education in the reception year either in September or January, depending on when their fifth birthday falls. This means that over half the children have only two terms in reception. Those children who have attended the Children's Centre get off to a flying start because their social and emotional development and their capacity to form relationships with people have been well developed. Those who have had no pre-school education start from a low base. High levels of adult support enable those with special educational needs, significant learning difficulties or those learning English as an additional language to achieve as well as those who are lower, average or higher attaining or who have particular gifts and talents.

The leadership of the Early Years Unit is very good. The co-ordinator sets an outstanding example through her teaching. In three years, the school has worked hard to improve provision which is now excellent for all year groups in the unit. The accommodation and resources are of very high quality and are used extremely well to promote children's development. Assessment of what children know and understand is used very well to ensure that children learn very effectively in all the areas of learning.

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

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

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

- Children's achievement is very good because of the high standard of teaching and very good support given to individual needs.

#### **Commentary**

44. Nursery children quickly settle into the school's routines and rapidly gain in confidence. Parents enjoy helping them to find their name to register and appreciate the unit's warm welcome. The carefully structured start to the day, when children choose their activities, gives a sense of familiar routine as does the unflagging assistance of all staff who cheerfully help children to learn how to interact with others, to share and to articulate their feelings constructively. The large numbers of children who have very limited social skills when they begin, discover the joy of working and playing alongside others. The children who join the nursery from the Children's Centre help to set a good example to those who are initially bewildered by the wealth of resources and play opportunities facing them.
45. Personal, social and emotional development is nurtured equally well in reception children who self-register by finding their name and then copying it onto a separate slip of paper to record their attendance. They learn to take charge of their own learning, selecting activities with increasing assurance and concentrating for longer periods of time, though many have a limited attention span. Children learn to treat each other with care and consideration through carefully managed times after lunch when, through massage, they learn the soothing nature of touching with kindness. Although at the end of the reception year just over half the children are still emotionally and socially immature for their age, tending to work and play alongside rather than with others, they nonetheless show increasing tolerance and awareness of the needs of other children. Over a third of children meet nationally expected standards by the start of Year 1.

## COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Provision in communication, language and literacy is **excellent**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve very well and although standards are below those expected at the end of the reception year overall, a third are likely to meet expected levels.
- The very good teaching, based on accurate assessments and observations of children's learning needs, helps children of different abilities to make very good progress.

### Commentary

46. Throughout the Early Years Unit, teachers use sign language to convey meaning to the large proportion of children who either have little or no vocabulary because of high levels of deprivation or learning difficulties or because they are at the early stages of learning English. Teaching is very carefully planned to provide as much visual back-up to the spoken word as possible and structured so as to invite response constantly through questioning and repeating basic vocabulary. In the nursery section, children learn to say which activity they prefer and to wave and say 'good bye', each in turn, as they go off to do their various tasks. Each activity area in the unit is provided with a guidance sheet for staff, detailing specific vocabulary to be used and the types of questions to ask to stimulate communication. Specific children are targeted throughout the day and observations kept to ensure that learning takes place. Any problems, therefore, are picked up instantly. Similarly, the co-ordinator observes adult interactions with children to check that the three key features of engagement, stimulation and sensitivity to individual needs are at the forefront. This ensures that teaching and learning are of very high quality. As a result, higher attainers write key words accurately and their attempts at more complex words such as 'caterpillar' and 'ladybird' are recognisable because of their good understanding of sounds in relation to meaning. Average attainers have a good grasp of initial letter sounds and begin to read very simple words. The large proportion of children with varied learning difficulties also progress very well: the majority know that print and pictures convey meaning. Overall achievement is very good as communication, language and literacy are developed through lively role-play interspersed with specific tasks and teaching points linked to stories.

## MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **excellent**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching and learning is excellent and children make great strides in their learning as a result.

### Commentary

47. From a very low base on entry, children learn that counting is fun and that their fingers can help them to understand quantity. Reception children count forwards and back from 20 vigorously, concentrating fully. Resources such as large-scale dice and individual number lines help children to recognise numbers in a fun way. Teachers' explanations are clear and precise and they make learning interesting. Questioning is of a high order and is precisely aimed at developing mathematical language as well as concepts. Those adults supporting children learning English as an additional language use the home language very effectively to help them understand. Activities are very well differentiated to suit different abilities. In an

excellent lesson, for example, the concepts of long and short formed the basis for lively activities involving long and short worms (both plastic and real!). This stimulated the language development of lower attainers and those with learning difficulties who eagerly matched the different lengths against a plastic measure. Average attainers were able to order short, middle and long worms. By the end of the short session, higher attainers who had made caterpillars by joining together different coloured segments in a pattern were able to transfer the sequence on to a template using a different number for each colour and to talk about the repeated pattern in terms of odd and even numbers. Although only a third of children are likely to meet the levels expected at the end of the reception year, they have all made extremely good progress in their understanding.

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

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The very wide range of indoor and outdoor activities and very good teaching enable children to learn very effectively.
- Standards are below average overall though children make very good progress.

### **Commentary**

48. Adults give children a great deal of help to find the words to describe what they observe and feel in the world around them. There was a real sense of excitement and wonder as children took turns to look at a newly hatched butterfly: "I can see it!" exclaimed one. A multi-sensory table with various textured substances on it is used very well to prompt vocabulary so that children can articulate their sensations. In the role-play areas, children pretended to go on holiday in a tent, travelling by bus. Their imaginary game was developed very well by the adults who played with them as they repeated words and used sign language to convey meaning. Both nursery and reception children were fascinated by the tiny plastic creatures trapped in large pieces of ice and while lower attainers assiduously poured water, higher attainers explained that they were trying to melt the ice. All adults talk, question and discuss, taking every opportunity to develop language. As a result, children learn to talk readily as they are actively engaged and enjoying themselves. The varied, stimulating, well-organised, well-staffed and well-resourced learning environment leads to children learning at a very good rate.

## **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in physical development is **excellent**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The excellent outdoor facilities combined with a very good curriculum and very good teaching enable children to achieve very well, though overall standards are below expected levels.

### **Commentary**

49. Very well planned activities promote children's interest and enjoyment and enable them to develop their physical skills very well. For example, children ran back and forth collecting tiny creatures hidden in the garden areas for which they were awarded 'medals' which created a lot of fun and excitement. The very good range of large wheeled toys and well-designed area where they can be ridden give children very good opportunities to practise their skills with the result that many ride and balance with great confidence. Indoors, the hall is used very well to promote physical development. Nursery age children delightedly raised and lowered the large

parachute and at the end when most ran under, adults dealt very sensitively with the few who were more wary. Reception children tried hard to move like caterpillars across the hall floor, though the majority found it hard to stretch and curl. Additional support from adults is very well targeted so that all groups of children get the maximum benefit out of the activities. There are ample opportunities for children to use scissors and other small equipment and so they become increasingly dextrous.

## **CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in creative development is **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The excellent resources are used very well to help children to achieve very well, though overall standards are below those expected nationally.

### **Commentary**

50. In creative development, children are provided with very good opportunities to explore different media. Like other activities in the Early Years Unit, a strong feature is the stimulation of children's curiosity and development of language to verbalise what they are doing. For example, on different days of the week different types of collage materials were offered to children to help them to learn the difference between words such as 'hard' and 'soft', 'rough' and 'smooth'. At the suggestion of a member of staff, a higher attaining reception child stroked a feather against her face to demonstrate to a nursery child that the texture was indeed soft. Outside, children painted a fence with water, commenting on how the water disappeared. Inside, children marvelled at the sparkly bits in the malleable material. These imaginative touches make each activity a new source of wonder to the children and spark off imaginative possibilities which staff record carefully in their observations of children's development. The very good teaching ensures that all groups of children learn very well.

## **SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGE 1**

### **ENGLISH**

Provision for English is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Though rising, overall standards are too low.
- Pupils with special educational needs, those learning English as an additional language and the highest attaining pupils achieve well.
- Some teaching does not respond well enough to the way pupils need to learn.

### **Commentary**

51. In recent years, the results pupils have obtained in the national tests have been unrelentingly low, although there are signs they are beginning to rise after a particularly low point in 2003. Nevertheless, in 2004, the pupils' results were well below average in reading and below average in writing against a benchmark which takes into account all schools. When the proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is considered, the 2004 results were above the average of schools in similar circumstances in both reading and writing.

52. The school expects similar results in 2005, although – at least in part because pupils' classroom work is carefully supported – the standard of work seen in the present Year 2 was

higher than this, more consistent with below-average results. This is because, although some pupils do better, for the most part the highest attaining pupils reach average standards, while others, including the high proportion of pupils who have special educational needs do not, in some cases falling short of this standard by a big margin.

53. Bearing in mind the low starting point of many pupils, their achievement overall, criticised at the time of the last inspection, is now satisfactory. Pupils with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language do well because of the high level of intensive support they receive and the intervention programmes the school has in place to help them. The highest attaining pupils also achieve well because of the way the classes are organised for English. In between there is a significant group of pupils whose achievement is less than it should be because, to a large extent, the teaching they experience is not well enough focused on their needs.
54. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. This is not to understate the good and sometimes very good qualities of the teaching. Teachers manage pupils' behaviour very effectively so that pupils, including those who have difficulty managing it for themselves, can participate fully in the activities. Classrooms are well organised, so that everybody, whether adult or pupil, knows what they have to do and can get on with it. In the best practice, seen for instance in a Year 2 group of higher attaining pupils, the teaching focuses tightly on what the pupils need to know next and moves forward in small steps, constantly repeating, reviewing and consolidating as the lesson proceeds. Pupils enjoy this approach because they know what they are learning and know they are making good progress. The target setting as adopted by some teachers gives pupils the opportunity to review what they have learned with a teacher and set out what is to be achieved next. This too is good practice, but it does not yet give the pupils a full enough role in setting targets for themselves. Neither is the time all together at the end of a lesson used as well as it should be to review what has been learned and identify what is to be learned in the next lesson.
55. Where teaching is less successful, though usually satisfactory in quality, it is because some of the characteristic needs of the pupils have not been so fully taken into account. For instance, the allocation of time within a lesson does not split the lesson into short phases in which the teacher's input and the pupils' activity alternate. Rather it tends to expect pupils whose attention span is short to concentrate (whether listening on the mat or engaged in a group or individual task) for long periods. Some guided activities involve some pupils in too much waiting while others have a turn. Sometimes pupils' opportunities for independent learning are not graduated well enough: sometimes their work is tightly controlled and sometimes the task is too open and they do not make good use of time as a result. In other instances the pupils need more help than they receive with structure and vocabulary to give them confidence to write.
56. The assessment arrangements for English are too newly established to allow an evaluation in terms of their influence on pupils' standards, but they are well considered and put the school in a good position to secure improved standards soon. Similarly, since the leader of the subject has been appointed within the last few months it also is too recent for an effect on standards to be seen. The absence of a library is a significant deficit from the point of view of the subject's otherwise good resources. Nevertheless, the subject has held its own since the last inspection and because of the recent developments, it is well placed to improve.

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

57. The mutual support of English and other subjects is satisfactory. Discussion, reading and writing are features of subjects such as history and religious education. On some occasions, as in some mathematics lessons in Years 1 and 2, pupils' underdeveloped listening and



speaking skills make it difficult for them to articulate what they are learning, which has the effect of reducing the rate at which they learn.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards are below the average at the end of Year 2.
- Pupils with special educational needs, those learning English as an additional language and the highest attaining pupils achieve well because of the good support they receive from teaching assistants.
- Some lessons lack pace and rigour.
- Systems for assessing pupils' progress are too recent to have had full effect.

### **Commentary**

58. Standards in Year 2 are below average. At the time of the previous report, standards at the end of Year 2 were judged to be average. Over the past few years standards have 'see-sawed' from poor to below average. The current Year 2 pupils are on course to broadly reflect the below average standards as in the 2004 national tests but because of the low starting point this represents satisfactory achievement overall.. Standards remain below average because a very high proportion of pupils in Year 2 have learning difficulties or other social and emotional barriers to learning. The below average standards reflect the pupils' low starting points rather than indicating major weaknesses in teaching. There is no significant difference between the achievement of boys and girls. Results compare favourably with those seen in similar schools.
59. All teachers face a high degree of challenge due to the high proportion (50 to 80 per cent) of pupils with learning difficulties in their classes. A common strength is the effective deployment of a range of support staff to target pupils with learning difficulties and those at an early stage of English language acquisition. The very good communication between the teachers and support staff makes a significant contribution to the pupils' learning and results in many achieving well, particularly those pupils with special educational needs and those at an early stage of language acquisition. Most pupils have good attitudes to learning and respond well to the support they are given and behave well. Following a weakness identified in the previous report, there has been greater emphasis on pupils learning number facts, for example combinations of numbers that make 10. Their confidence with using numbers is growing but many pupils still have difficulty with the language of mathematics used in number problems or investigations and this restricts the number of pupils set to reach a higher than average level.
60. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. Teaching quality varied from very good to unsatisfactory. Lessons are generally well organised and pupils are well managed with a strong emphasis on raising their confidence and self-esteem. However, in most lessons there is insufficient pace and rigour in the mental arithmetic session at the start of the lesson and when pupils are working in groups or independently, which limits the success of the teaching on pupils' learning. Too few opportunities are provided for pupils to explore different mental and written strategies for calculation and for them to verbalise their working to improve their skills. In the very good Year 1 lesson, in the Forest School, teaching and learning moved on at brisk pace which maintained pupils' concentration and interest and targeted questioning challenged their thinking so that they achieved very well. In the one unsatisfactory lesson the activity given to the higher attaining Year 2 pupils was beyond their mathematical skills, resulting in unsatisfactory progress.

61. The planning of lessons is satisfactory. Aims of what will be learned are often clearly outlined at the beginning of the lesson so that pupils are clear what they are going to do but it is not always made clear what is expected from them. The quality of marking is inconsistent; at its best, the teachers' marking gives a positive comment, but some work is unmarked. Useful assessment practices have been recently introduced to track pupils' progress. Target setting is at an early stage of development and pupils do not always have a clear understanding of exactly what they need to do to improve their work. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory and have helped eliminate the underachievement seen at the last inspection.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

62. Pupils are given satisfactory opportunities to use mathematics skills across the curriculum, an improvement since the last inspection. For example, Year 2 pupils used their measuring and calculation skills to record the rate of growth of the plants they are growing in science. Similarly, Year 1 pupils use the information they have collected on houses to produce pictograms showing the house types and colours of the doors. In art and design pupils have studied the work of Kandinsky and Mondrian and used their knowledge and understanding of two-dimensional shapes to produce computer-generated images in the style of the artists.

### **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

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

- By the end of Year 2, standards are below average.
- While the majority of pupils achieve well, a significant number of average attaining pupils make relatively slow progress compared to those with special educational needs or other barriers to learning.

#### **Commentary**

63. Overall achievement is satisfactory. The below average standards nonetheless indicate good achievement by the majority of pupils, particularly those with special educational needs, those learning English as an additional language and those with particular gifts or talents. The teaching has been well organised to ensure that higher attainers are taught together as a group and that different year groups in the same class receive the support they need. Average attainers tend to progress more slowly because other pupils with greater individual needs dominate staff's attention. Teachers' assessments of pupils' attainment in July 2004 were over-generous, for although with considerable adult assistance pupils perform well, they lack the maturity and skills to work independently. The subject is satisfactorily led and managed and there has been good improvement since the last inspection. There is no underachievement.
64. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. In the two lessons seen, teaching quality, and consequently pupils' learning, varied between satisfactory and good. Strengths included good management of behaviour, use of repetition to focus pupils' attention, very good resources to stimulate pupils' interest and good development of scientific vocabulary with suitably challenging activities for higher attainers. Where teaching and learning were less effective, pupils were required to sit and listen for longer than ten minutes. The level of questioning was too low for average attainers and required greater concentration than those with learning difficulties could manage. Pupils' overall level of maturity indicated that they needed more opportunities to find out for themselves through investigation and practical activities that would stimulate their curiosity to know and so remember what they had learnt. In a good lesson, the

teacher's sensitive timing, combined with very detailed planning for each age and ability group within the class, resulted in higher attainers using their literacy skills well to record in their nature diary how well the plants were growing. For example, a higher attaining pupil in Year 1 wrote: 'The sunflower is now 18cms high' while higher attainers in Year 2 recorded what had happened, and why, to the plants they had planted in sand, soil and water.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

Provision in information and communication technology (ICT) is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards are below those expected at the end of Year 2 and below those reported at the last inspection.
- The use of ICT in other subjects is unsatisfactory.

### **Commentary**

65. The good quality assessments of pupils' attainment in Years 1 and 2 indicate that while the majority are working within a broadly average level in most aspects of ICT, none exceed expected levels. Pupils' word-processing skills are below those normally seen and a significant proportion of pupils struggle to find the letters they need to type. Few can log on and while most can save their work some are unsure how to do so. Since the last inspection, the school has quite rightly focused its attention on developing pupils' skills in literacy and numeracy as a matter of urgency – hence the slight dip in standards in this subject. Since the last inspection, improvement has been satisfactory
66. While the use of the ICT suite is planned to complement work in literacy and numeracy in the mornings and other subjects in the afternoons, the way that teaching and learning are organised in these subjects means that it is often not used to the full. Pupils therefore have limited time in which to practise their skills and few opportunities to work independently. Computers in the classrooms are set up for individual use to help develop specific skills; this is successful at helping those with special educational needs to concentrate and to learn. In the one classroom with a computer linked to a large screen, this was used satisfactorily to involve pupils in demonstrations which they greatly enjoyed. The school has good plans in place to develop the use of ICT as an aid to teaching. The purchase of additional resources to meet the needs of both pupils and staff, and appropriate training, are also in hand. Leadership and management of ICT are satisfactory.
67. In the one lesson seen in ICT, teaching and learning were good. Twelve higher attaining Year 2 pupils worked in three groups to program a toy to move forwards and back, making full, half and quarter turns to reach specific destinations. The teaching was successful because pupils practised these moves physically at the start of the lesson, trying to sort out their left from their right. The lesson required them to work co-operatively which initially they found quite hard to do. The most able pupils attempted to program more than one move at a time with a fair degree of success. The technique of lots of physical activity combined with direction words written on slips of paper and placed on the floor maps as visual reminders was successful at helping pupils remember new vocabulary and instructions. An imaginative slant to the lesson gave a real purpose for learning as the pupils endeavoured to program the toy, named Jim, to visit different places in turn that appeared in the story they had just read.

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

68. This is unsatisfactory. While there is evidence of programs being used to develop pupils' skills in art, for example, generally ICT is underused to support learning in other subjects.

## HUMANITIES

No lessons were seen in **history** or **geography**. With limited work to scrutinise no judgements could be made about provision in these subjects.

69. In history, the books show a satisfactory coverage of history topics. With a little help, pupils could recount events and name personalities associated with the Great Fire of London. They remembered events from the story of the gunpowder plot, and knew that the reason for the plot was “because they did not go the King’s church”. They were less secure on recent geography work, however, having only a very uncertain recall of recent mapmaking work.

### Religious education

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Educational visits help pupils learn about religion.
- Pupils’ achievement is satisfactory though standards are below those to be expected of pupils the same age.

### Commentary

70. No religious education lessons were seen, but inspectors looked at pupils’ books and talked to pupils about recent work in the subject.
71. Pupils are strongest in what they have learned about religion but less secure in what they have learned from religion. They talk enthusiastically about their visit to the mosque, and have a good recall of what they learned there, referring appropriately to the Imam, to prayer and the Qur’an. They know that some children ‘go to a school upstairs’ where they learn about the Qur’an, which they know is written in Arabic and is read from right to left. The pupils are aware that there are different religions though they have difficulty naming them. They can recount elements of the Easter story, talking of the tomb and the boulder, but are not able to extend the discussion into areas of religious belief beyond the statement that “Jesus comes alive every Easter”.
72. The subject contributes well to pupils’ cultural development, particularly when the community celebrates festivals such as Eid with the school. Very good morning worship contributes to pupils’ understanding of religious education themes.
73. The leadership of the subject is satisfactory and in the secure hands of a competent co-ordinator, who is sensitive to the religious backgrounds of the pupils in the school. The subject did not receive a report when the school was inspected last time.

## CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Only two lessons were seen in art and design and no lessons were seen in design and technology or music. With limited work to scrutinise no judgements could be made about provision in these subjects. Statutory requirements are met.

74. In **art and design**, the work follows the national guidelines which ensure that pupils receive an appropriate curriculum. The planned range of media used by pupils includes pencil, paint, printing, textiles, clay and ICT, for example. To raise pupils’ self-esteem, examples of their work are very well displayed around the school. When pupils have achieved particularly well,

their work is placed in picture frames and hung in the corridors and hall which reflects the school's caring ethos. Pupils' painting skills are average, the same as at the previous inspection, but there is scope to develop pupils' observational and drawing skills further.

75. Work in art and design is linked to that taught in other subjects to make learning more interesting and meaningful. For example, after finding and studying mini-beasts in science, all pupils in Years 1 and 2 designed and made three-dimensional mini-beast ceramic tiles, showing appropriate techniques, for a large eye-catching display in the Forest School. This is an area of improvement from the previous inspection. Pupils study the work of famous artists, such as Van Gogh's 'Sunflowers', as a stimulus for their own work. However, there was little evidence on display to demonstrate that pupils are introduced to the work of non-European artists to develop their knowledge and understanding of art work in other cultures. Pupils in Year 2 demonstrated sound paint mixing skills; for example, using a set procedure they successfully mixed primary colours, plus white and black, to make a range of 'new' colours to give their work depth and texture. Pupils with poor fine motor skills and co-ordination are well supported by support assistants to ensure that they make good progress. The leadership and management of art and design are satisfactory.
76. In **design and technology**, photographic evidence shows that a suitable range of work is covered. For example, Year 2 pupils designed and made paper bridges on three-dimensional maps in connection with their work on *The Three Billy Goats Gruff*. They had clearly experimented with different techniques of folding paper. Photographs of the gingerbread men they had made looked of similarly good quality and there was evidence of some individual designs such as a pupil deciding to add more icing at the bottom to make a frill for the old woman's skirt. However, the long-term curricular plan indicates that design and technology does not feature strongly in pupils' learning throughout the year. Much of the work appears to be directed (each pupil has made the product in the same way) and so limits pupils' opportunities to design and evaluate. Leadership and management are satisfactory overall.
77. In **music** pupils learn an appropriate range of songs which they sing tunefully. Higher attainers vary dynamics and tone, for example singing a repeated word very softly, almost in a whisper, to a pulsating rhythm and then increasing the volume gradually to sing the melody. The subject is satisfactorily led and managed. The 'action plan' for music makes clear that a suitable scheme of work is in place. Educational visits and visitors to school broaden pupils' musical and cultural experience, giving them the opportunity, for example, to learn Asian dances and to learn about Indian musical instruments. In other lessons, pupils learn to respond rhythmically to music, combining drama with physical and musical development. The co-ordinator keeps an accurate record of each pupil's progress in acquiring knowledge, skills and understanding across the different areas of study.

## Physical education

Provision in physical education is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Effective leadership ensures that pupils experience all elements of physical education each week.
- Lessons are well planned to include physically challenging activities.
- On occasions pupils are not suitably dressed for physical activity.
- Pupils' positive attitudes contribute to the good progress they make.

## **Commentary**

78. Pupils attain average standards at the end of Year 2 and this is good achievement overall. The good leadership by the co-ordinator has been instrumental in ensuring that pupils experience all elements of the physical education curriculum (gymnastics, dance and games) each week through the introduction of a new scheme of work. This gives all teachers the confidence to teach the subject and ensures continuity and development of pupils' skills. This is an improvement since the last inspection. The physical education curriculum and involvement with the 'Activemark Gold' and Physical Education and School Sport (PESS) projects and the use of playworkers at break times all make a significant contribution to pupils' physical development and well-being. Assessment procedures to check pupils' progress are satisfactory.
79. The overall quality of teaching and learning is good. Teaching is characterised by teachers having a secure subject knowledge which helps them to plan lessons with physically challenging and enjoyable activities for all pupils. This was evident in a good Year 2 lesson when pupils learnt how to develop their dance skills through twisting, turning and leaping and then carefully linking their movements to 'bubbly' music. Teachers use questioning and intervention well to improve performance. This was demonstrated in a Year 1 games lesson, when the teacher challenged the pupils to throw and catch a ball ten times, without dropping it, and successful pupils demonstrated their techniques. In all lessons teachers make good use of resources but on occasion they do not insist on pupils changing into suitable clothing and footwear and this restricts some movements.
80. Pupils have positive attitudes to physical education and enjoy their lessons. Most pupils listen well, participate fully and sensibly, maintain interest and demonstrate good co-operation skills which lead to the good achievement of the majority of pupils, including those with special educational needs.

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

81. No lessons were observed in personal, social and health education so no judgement can be made on the overall quality of provision. The school places great importance upon developing pupils' personal and social development and teaching them how to keep safe and well. This makes a good contribution to the pupils' good behaviour and very positive relationships throughout the school. Pupils have well-planned opportunities to discuss such topics as the importance of friendships. There is a strong focus on healthy eating and the development of social skills through family dining. The co-ordinator is knowledgeable and leads the subject well.

## 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	3
Value for money provided by the school	4
<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>4</b>
Pupils' achievement	4
<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities (ethos)</b>	<b>2</b>
Attendance	6
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>	<b>4</b>
The quality of teaching	4
How well pupils learn	4
The quality of assessment	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	2
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2
<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>4</b>
The governance of the school	4
The leadership of the headteacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	4
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).*