

# **INSPECTION REPORT**

## **ASHBY HILL TOP PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Ashby-de-la-Zouch

LEA area: Leicestershire

Unique reference number: 120051

Headteacher: Mrs Diana Saunders

Lead inspector: Mr George Crowther

Dates of inspection: 29<sup>th</sup> November – 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2004

Inspection number: 266322

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	246
School address:	Beaumont Avenue Ashby-de-la-Zouch Leicestershire
Postcode:	LE65 2NF
Telephone number:	01530 415736
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E-mail:	office@ashbyhilltop.co.uk
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr A Stant
Date of previous inspection:	8 <sup>th</sup> – 11 <sup>th</sup> February 1999

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Ashby Hill Top is an average-sized primary school for boys and girls who are 4-11 years old. It has 246 pupils organised in nine classes. The school is situated on the edge of Ashby-de-la-Zouch and draws about two-thirds of its pupils from the area immediately surrounding the school, the rest travelling from further a field. There is a strong demand for places and the school is significantly oversubscribed. It serves families from a wide range of social circumstances but, taken together, these are about the same as the national picture. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average. When children join the reception class, there is a wide range of ability but, overall, pupils' attainment is about the same as expected for their ages. Twenty pupils, a below-average proportion, have been identified as having special educational needs. These needs are largely moderate learning or behavioural difficulties. Five pupils, an above-average proportion, have a statement to outline more severe learning difficulties. The great majority of the pupils come from white British backgrounds. No pupil is at the early stages of learning English as an additional language. The school has Investors in People status, which recognises that it has particularly strong systems to support, train and develop its staff. In 2002, Ashby Hill Top gained a Schools Achievement Award for good results in national tests. The school has also gained Healthy Schools and ECO Schools awards.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
18814	George Crowther	Lead inspector	Foundation Stage, geography, history, music
34164	Julia Hammond	Lay inspector	
32367	Joanna Pike	Team inspector	English, art and design, physical education, religious education, special educational needs
32841	Mark Robinson	Team inspector	Mathematics, science, information and communication technology, design and technology

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**Ashby Hill Top is a very effective school** with several outstanding features. The school's very positive approach to nurturing each pupil's personal development and stimulating their learning is tangible in its day-to-day work. Together with very good teaching, this helps the pupils to achieve very well. Parents hold the school in exceptionally high regard. Relationships at all levels are excellent. Very good leadership promotes a very positive culture in which both teachers and children expect to do well. Very effective management is consistently focused on maintaining and improving upon the current high standards. The school provides very good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are

- Children get a very successful start to school in the reception class
- Pupils achieve very well in a wide range of activities in music, art, dance and drama and, in general, enrichment of the curriculum through activities outside lessons is outstanding
- Pupils have very good attitudes to learning and behave very well because the school places great emphasis on their personal and social development
- The quality of teaching is very good overall, but there are weaknesses in a few lessons
- The leadership of the headteacher, key staff and governors is very good, with high expectations for the quality of education the school should provide
- The care the school provides for pupils, and often their families, is exceptional

Since the school was inspected in 1999, improvement has been very good. Until 2004, the results of national tests for pupils in Years 2 and 6 were rising at a faster rate than the national trend. The weaker 2004 results for pupils in Year 6 are a reflection of that group of pupils rather than an indication that improvement has slackened. The school has dealt effectively with the two, minor issues from the previous inspection.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2002	2003	2004	2004
English	A	B	D	D
mathematics	A	A	C	C
science	A	C	B	B

*Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average*

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

The table shows that, until 2004, results in national tests were above, often well above average. The results of the group of pupils who took the tests in 2004 are not typical. The group included a higher proportion of pupils with special educational needs than is usual for the school. It is likely that the current Year 6 will gain at least above average results in the 2005 tests.

**Pupils' achievement is very good.** When children start school, overall attainment is normally about the same as expected for their ages. In the reception class, children achieve very well. A very good range of interesting activities and very effective teaching helps them to succeed. Most children are on track to reach, and a good number will exceed, the goals expected nationally by the time they join Year 1. In Years 1 and 2, the pupils achieve very well, owing to very good teaching and a well-planned curriculum. By the end of Year 2, standards in reading, writing and mathematics are well above average. Teaching in Years 3 to 6 builds successfully on this good foundation and enables the pupils to achieve very well and reach well above average standards in many subjects. In the current Year 6, standards are above average in English and mathematics and well above average in science. Pupils who have special educational needs do equally as well as other pupils.

**Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are fostered very well.** This leads to very positive attitudes to learning in most lessons and the confidence to persevere when tasks are challenging. Lots of opportunities to be successful, in a wide range of activities, breed an enthusiasm for school. Pupils are very well behaved. Excellent relationships create a very harmonious community. Attendance is good.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

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

**The quality of teaching is very good.** In the reception class, learning is exciting and children are taught very well because the activities are closely tailored to meet their needs. Staff have an excellent rapport with the children, which helps them to guide and support learning very effectively. Throughout the rest of the school, learning is very good in many lessons, and at least good in most, because teachers plan work very carefully, use imaginative strategies to capture and hold pupils' interest, and have high expectations of what pupils can achieve. Pupils are good learners who work hard and try their best with the tasks they are given. Teachers explain tasks very clearly and provide a very effective structure for pupils' learning. Excellent relationships ensure that teachers manage pupils' behaviour in a very positive way. Teachers use questioning skilfully to encourage curiosity and stimulate thinking, which gets the best out of the pupils. In a few lessons, group work is not managed effectively enough or tasks are not matched closely enough to pupils' needs, so they do not make the progress of which they are capable.

The curriculum is very well planned and provides a very good range of work, which is enriched by the excellent range and quality of activities outside lessons. Systems for assessing pupils' attainment and checking on their progress are very good at a whole-school level. At classroom level, whilst the use of assessment is good, there are inconsistencies in the use of individual targets and in teachers' marking. The school provides excellent care and support for its pupils and has created an outstanding partnership with its parents, other schools and the community. The school makes good use of accommodation in a building that has a number of unsatisfactory features.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**Leadership and management of the school are very good.** The headteacher provides very purposeful leadership for the school. She has a very clear set of values, based on each child achieving success, and these are clear to the whole school community. She values the school's tradition of seeking high standards in all aspects of its work and is successful in transmitting this to both staff and pupils. A very strong senior team of teachers provides an

effective lead in developing aspects of the school's work. The leadership of subjects is very good. Governors fulfil their role very effectively. They have considerable expertise, a very good knowledge of the school, and provide the right balance of support and challenge. Management of the school is very good. Staff make very good use of assessment data to identify and tackle aspects of the school's work that need to improve. Action is swift and effective. Staff are well supported in building their skills and many share their expertise with other schools. The day-to-day management of the school is handled very efficiently by the headteacher, the staff and the administrative team.

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

Parents have extremely positive views of the school and the great majority feel that their children are doing very well. They particularly appreciate the warm, friendly atmosphere. Pupils are very positive about their school, their teachers and the wide range of activities on offer.

### **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

The most important thing the school should do to build upon its current success is

- Ensure that the quality of teaching and learning in all lessons is as consistently very good as in the majority



## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

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

Pupils' achievement is very good. In the reception class, the children achieve very well because the curriculum is rich and stimulating and the teaching is very effective. Almost all the children are on track to reach the expected standards by the time they join Year 1, and many will exceed them. Pupils continue to make very good progress in Years 1 and 2 and they achieve very well. Standards in the current Year 2 are well above those expected for pupils' ages in reading, writing, mathematics and science. Very good teaching in Years 3 to 6 ensures that pupils build very successfully on their earlier learning and, by Year 6, achievement is very good. In the current Year 6, standards are above average in English and mathematics, and well above average in science. Standards are slightly lower this year because the group of pupils includes a higher proportion of those with special educational needs than is usual for the school. Standards in Year 5 are well above average. Pupils who have special educational needs achieve just as well as others.

#### Main strengths

- Children get a very successful start to school in the reception class
- Pupils achieve very well in English, mathematics and science because the quality of teaching in these subjects is very good
- Pupils' achievement in writing has improved recently
- Achievement in the expressive arts is very good and, by Year 6, many pupils reach high standards in art, music and dance
- Pupils' achievement and the standards they reach have improved since the last inspection

#### Commentary

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

1. Over the past four years, results in the Year 2 national tests have been improving at a faster rate than for most schools, and are now much better than those reported at the last inspection. In 2004, the results for reading, writing, mathematics and science were all well above average compared with schools nationally. In reading, mathematics and science, the results were better than those gained by pupils in *similar schools\**, and in writing they were much better.

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

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	17.5 (17.5)	15.8 (15.7)
writing	16.8 (16.6)	14.6 (14.6)
mathematics	17.7 (18.3)	16.2 (16.3)

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

2. Until 2004, results in the Year 6 national tests had also been improving at a faster rate than the national trend, and were typically above or well above average. The 2004 results were much lower than is usual for the school and lower than the school had predicted, being above average in science, average in mathematics, but below average in English. The school has made the inspection team aware of a number of factors that lowered the

performance of this group of pupils, mainly concerning special educational needs, and emotional difficulties that affected individual pupils, and the group, during their final year at Ashby Hill Top. These factors, along with evidence that quite a few pupils narrowly missed reaching a higher level in the tests, provide a convincing explanation for the lower results. Nonetheless, the school's analysis of the English results showed that quite a few pupils did not reach the higher level in writing when their teachers felt they should have done so. This resulted in some underachievement in writing, which the school is already tackling successfully.

3. Of greater concern to the inspection team were national comparative data suggesting that, since they took the Year 2 tests in 2000, the Year 6 pupils' progress had been poor in English and mathematics. These data do not match with the very good quality of education inspectors found in the school. An analysis of the school's own value-added data shows that, in science almost all pupils reached the level expected of them and quite a few exceeded it, in mathematics progress was about as expected, and in English a few pupils did not fulfill their potential. This is a much more positive picture than the national data suggests. Overall, the evidence indicates that, given the barriers faced by this group of pupils, achievement in the 2004 national tests was good, though not as good as in previous years.

***Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 – average point scores in 2004***

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	26.5 (28.3)	26.9 (26.8)
mathematics	27.5 (28.6)	27.0 (26.8)
science	29.8 (28.9)	28.6 (28.6)

*There were 37 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

4. Children start school with attainment that is average overall. The national test results, and the standard of work seen in pupils' books, represent very good achievement in English, mathematics and science. Very effective teaching in these subjects means that pupils make very good progress at each stage, building their knowledge, skills and understanding very well. In the expressive arts, particularly art, music and dance, the richness of the curriculum, excellent opportunities for pupils to develop their skills outside lessons, and high-quality teaching enable many pupils to reach very high standards. The very positive environment for learning, with high expectations of what pupils can achieve, plays a significant part in giving each child the confidence to be successful.

**Foundation Stage (reception class)**

5. Children make very good progress in the reception class. Excellent induction procedures ensure that the children are very positive and confident when they start school. The rich and interesting curriculum stimulates their learning and the high-quality teaching provides just the right mix of support and challenge to help the children get the most from the activities. As a result, the children are very keen and confident learners and very well prepared to join Year 1.

**Pupils in Year 1 and Year 2**

6. Pupils achieve very well in reading, owing to very effective teaching of the basic skills in using letter sounds and a range of clues to tackle unknown words. Teachers have an enthusiasm for stories and books that is passed on to the pupils, and parents provide very good support for reading at home. Achievement in writing is very good because pupils

write for a wide range of purposes, often related to their work in other subjects. Presentation and spelling sometimes lack care. In mathematics, pupils achieve very well because the teaching is challenging and lively, and so pupils enjoy their lessons. Standards in science and art are also well above those expected for pupils' ages. In all these subjects, the very good quality of teaching and a carefully-planned curriculum help pupils to do very well.

### **Pupils in Years 3 to 6**

7. Pupils extend their range of reading strategies very well and, by Year 6, most are fluent readers. In writing, pupils continue to develop their skills very well and standards have improved this year. By Year 6, pupils are producing some imaginative and well-crafted pieces. Pupils achieve very well in mathematics and science because lessons are challenging and teachers use an imaginative range of methods. In ICT, standards are better than expected for pupils' ages. In other subjects, the standard of pupils' work varies. In art, music and dance, standards are high. In geography and history, the work seen in some classes is not challenging enough, and focused more on learning facts than developing skills.

### **Pupils who have special educational needs**

8. The school welcomes all pupils, whatever their special educational needs, and makes sure they are involved fully in all aspects of school life. These pupils achieve as well as others because teachers plan their learning carefully, and make sure they are well supported. The school is totally committed to helping all pupils achieve their best in all aspects of their work. The detailed, but simple targets for pupils with special educational needs help them to progress very well.

9. At the previous inspection, pupils' achievement was good overall, and better in Years 3 to 6 than in Years 1 and 2. Pupils' achievement is now very good across the whole school, particularly in English, mathematics, science and the expressive arts, which is a marked improvement since the last inspection. The school is not complacent and recognises that there are some aspects of pupils' work and some subjects where it can strive for even higher standards.

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

Pupils' attitudes and values, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are very good. The school places a very strong emphasis on moral values, living as a community, and developing pupils' spiritual awareness. Pupils are very enthusiastic about school. Excellent relationships between pupils and with staff lead to very good learning and very good behaviour. The school encourages pupils to be independent and increasingly responsible, leading to a very high level of maturity by Year 6. Attendance is good and punctuality is very good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The pupils thoroughly enjoy being at school and their learning in lessons
- The school places great emphasis on respect for the individual, which enables each pupil to feel valued and to be confident in their learning
- Pupils' involvement in decisions about the school results in very good behaviour and promotes very positive and mature attitudes to work

- The school's high expectations and celebration of achievement result in pupils who are very keen and eager to learn
- There is some good cultural work and opportunities for valuing differences, but cultural understanding is not sufficiently developed across the curriculum

### **Commentary**

10. Pupils are very happy at Ashby Hill Top. Pupils in Year 6 say, "I'm very comfortable to be here" and "It's good to be here". Parents confirm that their children are very keen to come to school. Pupils thoroughly enjoy their learning in most lessons, particularly where standards are high, such as in art, music and dance. The excellent range and quality of activities outside lessons further fuels pupils' enthusiasm for learning. Pupils' happiness and high levels of self-confidence are rooted in the values of the school, which day-to-day emphasise that each child matters, and create a very positive environment for learning in which pupils know they can be successful. These values become the pupils' values and are central to the school's success and pupils' very good achievement.

11. The school's high expectations of the pupils and the celebration of achievement, as seen in well-presented displays of work and celebration assemblies, support very good learning. Success in areas such as music, dance and art, both in and out of school, is always praised. These high expectations extend into learning a wider range of important attributes. "I've learnt to care for other people," said one Year 6 pupil, while another highlighted the way residential trips provide pupils with new opportunities. "I learnt responsibility for myself from residential trips," said one Year 6 pupil. Such experiences play a large part in the excellent provision for pupils' social development.

12. Relationships throughout the school are exceptionally strong and supportive, allowing each child to learn successfully and to respect those learning around them. The pupils are very confident that there are adults who will support them saying, "Lots of teachers are easy to talk to." At the same time, they know that bullying is never tolerated. "Bullies are very well told off" they say, and the existence of a 'worry wallet', allowing pupils to raise issue and get help quickly if they need it, gives them confidence that such issues will be dealt with.

13. Pupils' behaviour is very good in lessons ensuring no teaching time is lost, even when sessions are broken up by moving round the school. For example, in a Year 5 citizenship lesson, the pupils settled immediately in an unexpected room and wasted no time in moving into the hall for a French session. Behaviour is also very good when pupils move around the school independently, and they are aware of others, as in holding doors for visitors. Lunchtime and playtime are calm and enjoyable – "We all get on well together". Pupils are also very well behaved on outings. Pupils are involved very effectively in decisions about the school environment and 'rules' through the school council, and play an active part in keeping up the school's high standards as an eco-friendly award winner.

14. The pupils have very good social and moral understanding. Friendship, caring for each other, and caring for those in the wider community are integral parts of the school's ethos. Cultural provision is good, and pupils are encouraged to celebrate differences and are given some knowledge of other cultures. Their cultural understanding, however, is not sufficiently developed throughout the curriculum.

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

Authorised absence	Unauthorised absence
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School data	4.5
National data	5.1

School data	0.0
National data	0.4

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

#### ***Ethnic background of pupils***

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
White – Irish
Mixed – any other mixed background
Asian or Asian British – Indian
No ethnic group recorded

#### ***Exclusions in the last school year***

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
194	9	
1		
5		
4		
22		

*The table gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded. In this case, one pupil, who has since left the school, was excluded on nine occasions. There have been no exclusions recently.*

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

The school provides a very good education for its pupils, with some outstanding features. Teaching is very good overall and often excellent. The curriculum is rich and relevant, with particular strengths in the reception class, for English, mathematics and science, and for the expressive arts. Activities that enrich the curriculum, such as clubs, visits and visitors, are excellent. Good systems are in place for assessing pupils' developing knowledge and skills, particularly in the reception class and for English, mathematics and science. The care the school provides for pupils, and often their families, is exceptional. The school has an outstanding partnership with parents, and first-rate links with other schools and the community.

### **Teaching and learning**

The quality of teaching and learning is very good. Any weaknesses are relatively minor and were only observed in a few lessons. The proportion of very good and excellent teaching has improved significantly since the last inspection.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The high quality of teaching for children in the reception class enables them to make a very confident and successful start to school
- Teachers plan lessons meticulously so learning is always purposeful and very well organised
- Teachers use a very good range of methods and strategies, which ensure that pupils enjoy their lessons and are fully involved in their work
- The pupils achieve very well in most lessons because they work hard and try their best with the tasks they are given
- The excellent relationships between teachers and their pupils result in the pupils being very confident and highly motivated to learn
- Assessment of pupils' attainment and progress is good, but teachers do not always make best use of this information to target the next steps in pupils' learning

### Commentary

#### *Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 37 lessons*

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
<b>7</b> (19%)	<b>13</b> (35%)	<b>11</b> (30%)	<b>6</b> (16%)			

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

15. Teaching for children in the reception class was excellent in almost all the lessons seen. Through exceptionally good team work, both the staff play a very important part in providing high-quality learning for the children. Activities are planned to the last detail to ensure that the content, balance and pace are just right. For example, a mathematics session began with a whole-class activity in which the children were fully involved in counting to 20 and back using a wide range of methods and resources. The activities that followed were a very good mix of ones that children could choose for themselves, such as exploring capacity in the water tray, and ones that the adults led, such as a game counting spots on ladybirds. When there are a variety of activities taking place at one time, the staff are very adept at stimulating the children's play and thinking by working alongside them, asking questions and guiding learning. They know how young children learn best and provide just the right balance of challenge and support. Underpinning all that happens in this classroom are the excellent relationships the staff have built with the children. The staff constantly and consistently praise the children for doing well, and share in their successes. They always listen to what the children have to say and value their views. As a result, the children have a high degree of trust in their teachers and the confidence to 'have a go' at the rich range of activities on offer.

16. Throughout the school, the foundation of much of the very good and excellent teaching seen is the time teachers spend planning their lessons. Clear plans give teachers the confidence to teach at a good pace, and in an interesting and methodical way. For example, a very good English lesson for Year 4/5 about play scripts included a very well planned variety of challenging activities, which kept all the pupils fully engaged in their learning. Whilst a group of pupils worked in the library researching information about Shakespeare, the rest turned a cartoon story into a play script, developing their understanding of this form of writing very effectively. Later, when the teacher read out the play scripts, the pupils were very keen to offer their ideas for improvement. A very well planned lesson resulted in the pupils getting a lot done. Similarly, in an excellent English lesson for Year 1, the teacher's plan set out very clearly the varied and interesting activities that would gradually build the pupils' skills in writing about events in their own lives. Following an exciting

game about letter sounds, the teacher read the book *Owl Babies*, getting the very most out of the text to develop the pupils' reading and writing skills. She then focused on the phrase, "I want my mummy when ..." to stimulate some very good writing from the pupils. Meticulous planning, and the teaching skills to get the maximum amount from the activities, ensured that the pupils' achievement was excellent. Teachers also have the skills to capitalise on incidental opportunities for learning, without detracting from the main purpose of the lesson.

17. One of the reasons why pupils learn so well is because teachers ensure there is a very good range of activities within a lesson. Most lessons start with a whole-class session, in which teachers are very skilled at quick-fire questioning, with paired and individual activities that really get the pupils thinking. For example, a Year 6 mathematics lesson began with rapid questions based on a multiplication grid. The teacher then gave the pupils number sequences to complete, such as 25 \_ \_ \_ \_ -65, which really made them think. Teachers explain new ideas very clearly and make sure that pupils understand the tasks they have to complete. This ensures that, in most lessons, pupils start their individual and group tasks confidently and eagerly. The pupils know the teachers' high expectations of getting on with their individual work and, as the tasks are invariably interesting, the rate of work in these sessions is usually very good. For example, in a very good Year 2 English lesson about writing conversations using speech marks, good support from the teacher and the teaching assistant enabled the pupils to work very well on their tasks and get a lot done. Most lessons end with a session that checks pupils' learning, and teachers are very adept at involving the pupils fully in these sessions so that new skills and understanding are consolidated.

18. The very good quality of teaching is matched by the pupils' very positive approach to their learning. The pupils are very keen to learn, they want to be involved, and they make a very good effort with the tasks they are given. For example, Year 3/4 pupils were enthused by an art lesson based on the work of William Morris. They contributed their knowledge eagerly when the teacher discussed other artists of the Victorian era, and they were quick to explain the differences between a designer and an artist. When the teacher showed the pupils how to make a stenciled print, they were fascinated, and went on to work very successfully to produce their own prints. Pupils generally work very well co-operatively because teachers expect them to do so, and the school values the social skills that are developed through working well with others. Pupils' ability to rise to a challenge was also seen in a very good music lesson for Year 5. The teacher posed a rapid series of musical challenges and, though the pupils did not always perform perfectly the first time, they persevered until they achieved success. In particular, a very difficult round was introduced, practised with mixed success, but eventually grasped by the pupils. The pride in achieving this success was clear on the pupils' faces. The interplay between pupils' enthusiasm and teachers' enthusiasm is, of course, indefinable. What is clear is that everyone is enthusiastic about learning, which plays a major part in pupils' very good achievement.

19. Both teachers and teaching assistants have built excellent relationships with their pupils, which support learning very effectively. This is largely because the staff have great respect for the children, and the children know it. The staff show their interest, concern and care in the way in which they treat the pupils, listening to their ideas, boosting their self-esteem, and sharing in their successes. Teachers and teaching assistants know each pupil very well, which helps them to respond to their needs. These extremely positive relationships enable teachers to manage and organise pupils' learning very effectively. They have a good range of positive strategies to ensure that pupils pay attention, get on with their work and, therefore, make as much progress as possible. There is a relaxed but purposeful atmosphere in lessons. Discipline is almost always positive, highlighting pupils who are doing the right thing so that others fall in line. Teaching assistants make a very good contribution to pupils' learning, working very well with individuals and groups.

20. Within a picture of very effective teaching, which has improved significantly since the last inspection, there were weaknesses in the few satisfactory lessons. On occasion, the tasks given to pupils, particularly when working individually or in groups, were too hard or too easy, which prevented the pupils from making the progress of which they were capable. In a few lessons, the individual work was not managed tightly enough, and so some pupils lost concentration and did not

complete as much work as possible. Although teachers have outstanding expertise in some subjects, such as seen in a dance lesson for Year 6, weaknesses in teachers' subject knowledge were evident in a few lessons and hampered them from extending pupils' learning sufficiently. These weaknesses should be set in the context of the very good practice in the school from which all teachers can learn.

21. As at the last inspection, systems for assessing pupils' attainment and checking on their progress are good. At a whole-school level, a very good range of testing and analysis of results ensures that teachers have clear information about pupils' attainment at a given point in time, particularly in English, mathematics and science. In the reception class, a comprehensive range of assessment is used very well to match work to the children's needs. In other classes, day-to-day assessment, and its use to plan the next steps in pupils' learning, is inconsistent. Teachers use targets to make clear to pupils what they need to learn next, but the pupils are not always clear what their targets are. Although teachers generally have a good understanding of pupils' existing attainment, and use this to plan appropriate tasks, in a few of the lessons seen, the work was not matched well enough to pupils' needs. Marking is generally thorough, often detailed, and offers lots of praise and encouragement. Only the best, however, identifies what pupils need to do next to improve their work, which was a weakness noted at the last inspection. In some cases, where teachers have indicated that something should be done again, pupils have not had the opportunity to do so.

## **The curriculum**

As at the last inspection, the school provides a very good curriculum, which it has done well to sustain. The excellent range of high-quality activities outside lessons contributes significantly to pupils' learning. Good resources support learning effectively. Very good use is made of the accommodation in a building that has a number of unsatisfactory features.

### **Main strengths**

- The curriculum for children in the reception class is excellent
- The curriculum for English, mathematics and science is very well planned and organised
- Opportunities for pupils to excel in the expressive arts (art, music, drama and dance) are outstanding and lead to high standards
- Provision for pupils who have special educational needs is very good
- Very good provision for pupils' personal, social and health education helps them grow in confidence and become mature members of the school community
- Pupils gain much from the excellent range of activities outside of lessons

### **Commentary**

22. Children get a very good start to school in the reception class because the curriculum is exceptionally rich and interesting. It is planned meticulously around the areas of learning recommended for children of this age. The teacher is very skilful in ensuring that each activity contributes to many aspects of children's learning. For example, when children are working in the Post Office, they may appear to be simply playing. In fact, they are developing a wide range of social, language, mathematical, and creative skills, as well as extending their understanding of the world around them. Activities are chosen to grab pupils' interest. When the teacher brought in some large lumps of ice, the children were fascinated to touch them, watch them melt and to play with them as though they were icebergs in an arctic landscape. The curriculum is packed full of exciting activities that really make the children want to learn.

23. Pupils achieve very well in English, mathematics and science because the curriculum is thought through very carefully to provide the best experiences. For example, specialist



teaching in these subjects in Years 4, 5 and 6 is successful because staff can teach to their strengths. A good example of this was a Year 6 science lesson in which pupils learnt a lot about forces because the teacher had the expertise to extend their thinking. Groups of pupils receive special support, for example the more able group that works with a secondary school teacher in an initiative called 'The brain machine'. Enrichment activities are planned into the teaching and there are very good links between subjects. The school has a long-standing tradition of a very rich curriculum for the expressive arts. For example, many pupils reach very high standards in music, playing an instrument, taking part in the orchestra, and participating in a wide range of performances both in and out of school. A weaker area, though satisfactory, is in geography and history where, in some classes, the work is focused too much on facts and too little on developing pupils' skills.

24. The school is very positive about, and successful in, meeting the learning needs of all pupils. Provision for those who have special educational needs is very good. Special needs are identified quickly, often before pupils start school, owing to very good links with families and pre-school providers. Planning the best activities and support for these pupils is very effective. Individual education plans are written in consultation with teachers, teaching assistants and pupils, with targets that are very specific and measurable. As a result, in almost all the lessons seen, pupils with special educational needs achieved very well. Parents of pupils who have special educational needs commented particularly that they are very pleased with the progress their children are making.

25. The school believes that pupils' capacity to learn is linked strongly to their sense of personal worth, and the extent to which they develop respect for themselves and others. Very good provision for personal, social and health education supports the school's values very effectively. Much of this provision is in the day-to-day life of the school, such as the way in which teachers encourage pupils to express their views confidently, or when teachers provide activities in which pupils can work together productively. The more visible curriculum consists of lessons when pupils discuss personal and social issues, or parts of the school's organisation, such as the school council or the mentor system in which the older pupils are paired with younger pupils. Pupils learn what affects the health of their bodies, including diet, medicines and staying safe in traffic. Older pupils learn about rights and democracy. For example, in a Year 4/5 lesson, pupils were encouraged to explore the notion of compromise. The pupils are also encouraged to care for their local environment by recycling materials and planting trees as part of the ECO-school project. In recognition of the work pupils have done, the school has received a Healthy Schools Award. The very good provision for pupils' personal and social development is a thread running through the work of the school, and it supports pupils' very good achievement in its widest sense.

26. Activities outside lessons are excellent and enrich the curriculum very effectively, particularly in the expressive arts. The choice is extensive, including ICT, art, and numerous musical and sporting clubs. The school has a twenty-strong orchestra, including a wide range of instruments, with visiting specialist teachers making a strong contribution. Frequent visits to places of interest, and residential visits, enhance work in school and make a wider contribution to pupils' personal and social development. Visitors to school, such as scientists and archaeologists, have helped to enrich the pupils' learning. The extra activities the school provides are, to a certain extent, the icing on the cake, but they do a lot to motivate pupils in all their work and make a strong contribution to pupils' very good achievement.

27. The school is very well staffed with an experienced and expert team of teachers and teaching assistants. Other support staff play a vital role in making sure visitors receive a friendly welcome and that the day-to-day administration of the school is carried out efficiently. Resources to support pupils' learning are generally good, and very good for ICT and music. The staff make best use of the accommodation, which is clean, well cared for and enhanced by attractive displays of pupils' work. Nonetheless, some aspects of the accommodation are unsatisfactory. The main building is adequate and the pupils are well used to working in the open-plan bases, even though groups of pupils passing through, for example to reach the ICT suite, can be distracting. The outdoor provision for the reception children has limitations because it doubles as the playground for Year 1 and 2, and the large access doors, when open, make the indoor area draughty. Teachers make the best of the 'temporary' buildings that house five classes. One of the buildings has no toilet facilities and so time for learning is lost when pupils have to walk outside to the toilet block, whatever the weather. The classrooms are also rather cramped and, even though staff have created small-group areas in cloakrooms, there are distinct limitations for practical work and for making the best use of the skills of teaching assistants. Outdoors, the hard play areas are only just large enough, but the grassed area is more generous. Weaknesses in the school's accommodation were also highlighted at the last inspection.

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

The school provides exceptionally well for the care, welfare, health and safety of all the pupils in an environment that is safe and attractive. Support, advice and guidance for pupils' personal development are very effective, and the involvement of pupils through seeking, valuing and acting on their views is very good. The school has improved still further on the high standards in this aspect of its work noted at the last inspection.

### **Main strengths**

- The very good ethos of the school and excellent relationships enable staff to care extremely effectively for pupils, ensuring they can get the most from their education
- The pupils are given very good encouragement in their personal development by high expectations and an increasingly well developed curriculum
- The school is very active in seeking and acting upon pupils' views, which builds very strong trust

### **Commentary**

28. As well as providing a very safe and caring environment, the school actively teaches the pupils how they can care for themselves and others. The school environment is of great importance to all who work there, and the pupils are actively involved in its care and upkeep. They keep it free from litter and damage. Regular risk assessments ensure that the school is a safe place, and practical measures are taken to make it an increasingly healthy place, such as the introduction of a 'walking bus', which encourages the children to walk to school rather than be driven. As a result, the school has awards for being an eco-friendly and healthy school.

29. Care of the pupils is very well monitored with clear policies in place, understood by all. Pupils and parents are very confident of a high level of support for practical and medical issues, as well as support from the staff when outside agencies are involved in helping individual pupils. The personal development of each pupil is very well guided and supported through the close relationship pupils and their families have with the staff, including the headteacher whose individual involvement makes a strong impact on the

personal development of the pupils. This is complemented effectively by the very good personal, social and health education curriculum, which is constantly under review. Guidance for pupils' academic development, based on checking up on their progress, is mostly very good, though in some lessons pupils are given too few opportunities to evaluate their own and each others' learning, as was noted at the last inspection. Pupils who have special educational needs are very well supported by teachers, teaching assistants, and the special needs' co-ordinator, working in close consultation with the parents. The school celebrates success of all kinds, encouraging a culture of confidence and expression in many things. The achievement of personal goals, as well as academic and sporting success, is readily recognised, which encourages the pupils to do their best in a number of different ways. Pupils joining the school find it easy to make friends and to take an active part in school life quickly.

30. Pupils feel that they are valued and listened to within the school. The school council includes pupils of all ages and they take decisions that affect the life of the school, such as the forthcoming introduction of a buddy system. There is an expectation that pupils will look after their own behaviour and be reliable, both within the school and when out on trips, which means that the pupils feel trusted. As a result, they feel that they have a responsible role to play within the school, which encourages them to be very enthusiastic in their attitude to all aspects of school life.

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

Links with parents, the community and other schools are excellent, and have continued to thrive since the last inspection.

#### **Main strengths**

- Parents are extremely supportive of the school and actively involved in their children's learning, which makes a very good contribution to children's achievement
- The school's strong links and great commitment to its community help to enrich pupils' experiences very effectively
- The school has highly successful links with the other schools and with the pre-school learning community

#### **Commentary**

31. The parents are enthusiastically supportive of the school, which is heavily oversubscribed, taking in many pupils from out of the local catchment area. They show passionate support for the school's values and particularly the way in which the school wants each child to achieve as much as possible. They feel the school works very well with parents through its 'open door' ethos and very good lines of communication. As one parent commented, "Expectations are high of the parents' role as partners to the school, something that sets excellent relationships". In particular, parents praise the school for the high standard of teaching, the outstanding care for the pupils, the sense of fairness which it instills in their children and, above all, the fact that it has made their children very happy to be at school. The school works very hard to involve all parents in their children's learning, from very good guidance on reading at home and very clear arrangements for homework, to special evenings in school when parents can find out about the curriculum. Reports to parents, outlining the progress their child is making, are of very good quality.

32. Sited in the middle of a residential area, the school has worked very hard to maintain excellent relationships with the immediate community. Awareness of issues about traffic at the beginning and end of the school day has led to the establishing of a 'walking bus', which encourages parents to drop their children some distance from the school rather than to clog up the local streets. As a sign of appreciation, the local neighbourhood association has given the school an allotment to cultivate. The school also plays a very full part in the wider community, such as providing musical entertainment for the Mothers Union and singing in the local church for harvest festival and at Christmas. Close involvement with local arts' and sports' initiatives, such as Leicestershire Arts, has given pupils opportunities to take part in activities such as county-wide music workshops and inter-county sporting competitions. The school is outward looking. It actively seeks to involve the pupils in the wider community because it knows that this will enrich their education.

33. Induction arrangements for children joining the reception class are excellent. Families are visited at home and children within their pre-school setting, as well as being invited into the school for some taster sessions before they begin. Describing the induction as fantastic, the parents say, "There are very good arrangements for pre-school induction. The practice half days and a visit at home from the teacher were very good." Almost all of the Year 6 pupils move to the same secondary school with which Ashby Hill Top has very strong links. The pupils have a week of work shared between the two schools as part of their induction and, therefore, feel confident about their next move. The school also has close and productive links with the local group of primary schools, which make a strong contribution to staff training.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The headteacher has very high expectations for the children, the staff and the school and promotes a culture in which everyone is expected to do their best
- Governors are well informed through their excellent links with subject leaders, and this enables them to play a significant role in strategic decisions
- Weaknesses are identified quickly and action taken because the school analyses assessment data very carefully
- The leadership of subjects is very effective, with clear priorities in place to improve achievement further
- Checking on the quality of teaching and learning, whilst effective, does not always identify weaknesses
- The school development plan is well structured, and all staff contribute to evaluating progress over the year

### **Commentary**

34. The headteacher provides very strong leadership. She has created a vision of a school, where everyone matters, and everyone strives towards high standards in all they

do. The school mission statement and school development plan echo this vision. The headteacher makes very effective use of strengths within the school, such as the expertise of the teachers in the expressive arts, to create an exciting curriculum, which helps all pupils to experience success. She has developed outstanding relationships with parents and the local community, which enrich the school further, and support the very good achievement of the pupils.

35. Governors share the headteacher's vision. They know the school's strengths and weaknesses very well. They make good use of their expertise, and are closely involved with the school. They visit the school regularly to check on the teaching and learning in their linked subject area. They are not afraid to ask challenging questions and, when necessary, to take difficult decisions. They insist that all developments must focus on raising achievement, and that reports are presented after implementation to show the impact of spending decisions. They look well ahead in their strategic planning. Governors know and carry out their statutory responsibilities.

36. The school has a very good system in place for tracking pupils' progress, and very thorough analysis of standards is carried out. This ensures that weaknesses are quickly identified and acted upon, such as the recent dip in the standards in writing. Appropriate strategies are now in place, and are already having a positive impact on pupils' achievement. However, the new target-setting policy and marking scheme are not being used consistently, and this is lessening their impact on pupils' achievement.

37. Leadership is shared, so that all teachers take responsibility for their aspects of the school development plan. Subject leaders know the strengths and weaknesses of their subject very well, and work very hard in raising standards further. They check on the quality of pupils' work and observe some teaching. However, their monitoring is not always thorough enough in picking up inconsistencies in the quality of teaching.

38. Professional development of all staff is highly valued and used effectively to improve expertise and raise standards. The appraisal system is very thorough, and links closely with the school development plan and professional development. Teachers are encouraged to be fully involved in whole-school improvement, as well as their own areas of responsibility, and this leads to a shared team effort. The headteacher ensures that all staff are offered a variety of opportunities to extend their knowledge and experience. Many staff gain from their work with other schools.

39. Day-to-day finance is managed very effectively. The school seeks best value, and compares its performance and spending to that of other schools, to identify potential areas where it can be more effective and efficient. The governors monitor spending closely. They ask questions and thoroughly investigate spending decisions to ensure that the limited budget is spent wisely to benefit the pupils.

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

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	596,654	Balance from previous year	9,331
Total expenditure	558,823	Balance carried forward to the next	37,831
Expenditure per pupil	2101		

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

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

40. Provision for children in the Foundation Stage (reception class) is very good, and the school has built very successfully on the good standards reported at the last inspection.

Fifteen children attend the class full time, with a further 24 due to start in January. There is a wide range of attainment amongst the children when they start school but, overall, it is close to that expected for their age. The current group is making very good progress and achievement is very good in all areas of their learning. By the end of the reception year, almost all of these children will reach, and many will exceed, the standards expected nationally.

41. In all areas of children's learning, the quality of teaching is very good, with many outstanding features. Meticulous planning, based on a very careful assessment of each child's existing skills and knowledge, ensures that activities are challenging and help children to take the next step in their learning. For example, a wealth of carefully-structured reading and writing activities builds and extends children's skills very rapidly so that, even at a fairly early stage in the year, the very good progress children have made is evident in their work and reading records. The activities are rich and varied, making best use of a range of well-prepared resources, so that each contributes to progress in many aspects of children's skills. For example, the 'Post Office' stimulated considerable learning. Children readily took on the role postman or shopkeeper, writing and delivering letters to friends in the class, sorting them by the sound of the first letter in the name, weighing and stamping parcels, taking part in conversations and sharing the jobs, all of which promoted a wide range of learning. Staff organise and guide children's learning very skilfully, so that the children get the very best from what is on offer. They provide just the right balance of challenge and support, which enables the children to be confident and adventurous learners. A good example of high-quality interaction was when staff worked alongside children who were observing large lumps of ice melting. The children's language and their understanding of what was happening were considerably enhanced by the teacher's input. Underlying all the work in this class are the excellent relationships between the staff and the children, and the seamless teamwork between the two adults. As a result, the very high expectations the staff have for children's achievement are realised.

42. Procedures for introducing children and their parents to school are excellent, which ensures children are quickly confident to start learning. Parents spoke highly of the home visits, the way in which staff visit children in their pre-school setting, and the very helpful visits to the classroom. This is a vital start to the excellent partnership with parents that is a broader feature of the school's work. The assessment of children's growing skills is very clear and detailed. This information is used very well to match work to children's needs. For example, the 'nurture group' provides an additional boost for a small group of children whose speaking and listening skills, and confidence, are not as strong as others. This helps them to get the most from the rest of the activities. The curriculum is exceptionally rich and stimulating. The sequence of activities for the term, and the day-to-day level of challenge provided for the children, are planned to the last detail, with many teacher-made resources that open up the best opportunities for learning. As a result, the children are usually fully engrossed in activities, and exceptionally well behaved, which enables the staff to concentrate on enriching the experiences. The meticulous organisation of the classroom creates the freedom for children to learn both independently and co-operatively.

43. Leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are very good. Although provision is already very strong, there is no complacency. Areas where children's learning can be strengthened still further have been identified and action has been taken. For example, the arrangements for outdoor play are not ideal because double doors open straight on to the play area, which sends gusts of cold air into the classroom. In addition,

the area is also used by other infant children at playtime. The school has plans to tackle this issue. The classroom is spacious for the current group of children, and staff capitalise on this very well to organise areas for learning.

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

Provision for children's personal, social and emotional development is very good.

#### **Main strengths**

- Children develop their curiosity, confidence and concentration very well because activities are interesting and exciting
- Adults are very positive about children's efforts and successes, which motivates them well
- Children learn to work together successfully and to respect others' feelings

#### **Commentary**

44. When children join the reception class, there is a wide range of attainment in this area of learning. Most of the children are confident and eager to learn, but a few have a short concentration span and find it difficult to work independently or share equipment. All activities include a strong emphasis on developing children's personal and social skills and the richness of the curriculum encourages children to be interested in learning. For example, children made a programmable toy move across a map and were fascinated by the way they could instruct it to travel a set distance. Sometimes it went too far! In another session, children filled various containers with red water – "We're making red milkshakes" – and learnt a lot about capacity. Learning is invariably fun, which builds children's motivation and concentration. Some sessions are specifically targeted at social skills, such as when children coloured picture cards, cut them out, and then, in twos, played a game of 'pairs'. The routines of the class, and the high expectations of the staff, help children to pay attention, to offer their contributions, to take on responsibility, and to co-operate with others. The staff take every opportunity to praise children when they do the right thing, which ensures that children do the right thing most of the time. Independence develops very well, in choosing activities during some parts of lessons, in changing for physical activity and in playing a part in keeping the classroom organised. All these carefully-orchestrated opportunities for fostering personal and social skills ensure that almost all of the children are on course to meet the expected standard by the end of the reception year, and many will exceed it.

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

Provision in communication, language and literacy is very good.

#### **Main strengths**

- Children achieve very well through a rich variety of activities that develop their skills
- Children listen attentively and express their ideas confidently
- Basic skills in reading and writing are taught very well

#### **Commentary**

45. Developing children's ability to express their ideas, and to use talk to support their learning, is part and parcel of all activities. In whole-class sessions, teaching places a strong emphasis on contributions from the children. For example, at the beginning of a mathematics session, lots of children had the opportunity to count and to say what they thought the answers to calculations would be. Staff listen carefully, model the correct use of language when necessary, and always praise children for having a go. The children know their ideas are valued, and so they are confident to contribute. Strategies such as 'planning partners', where children discuss in pairs the activities



they intend to do, further encourage purposeful talk. Where children work in pairs and groups, adults stimulate discussion well. For example, when children were painting their 'Starry Night' pictures, there was constant discussion about the colours used, the way in which children were using the brushes, and comparisons with the work of others. The early skills of reading are taught very well, with a strong emphasis on children learning letter sounds and recognising commonly-occurring words. A well-structured programme of reading at home and at school supports progress very effectively. The children thoroughly enjoy reading. Many of the children already read simple, repetitive text confidently and use a good range of skills to tackle unknown words. Early skills in writing also develop well because adults provide meaningful tasks. The 'Post Office' provided lots of opportunities for writing letters and cards. Many children can write words and, with support, a sentence – "Seals live in cold places" – and all are using writing in a range of situations. As a result of very good teaching, almost all of the children are on course to meet the standards expected at the end of the reception year, and a few will exceed them.

### **Mathematical development**

Provision in mathematical development is very good.

### **Main strengths**

- Basic skills are taught very methodically
- Challenging activities help children take the next step in their learning

### **Commentary**

46. A well-structured programme of whole-class sessions develops children's understanding of numbers, with counting on and counting back tasks, in a variety of situations, and then introducing children to simple addition and subtraction. The children participated enthusiastically in a very lively, interesting session seen, counting loud, counting in whispers and using a range of resources to consolidate their learning. Small group activities extend children's skills very effectively, such as when the teacher led a game involving counting spots on ladybirds. Many other activities also have a mathematical element. The development of skills in counting, ordering, money and weighing were part and parcel of work in the 'Post Office'. Children's understanding of shapes and measuring is developed very well through activities in the water tray or when using the construction materials. For example, the children made a house just big enough for a toy polar bear, which prompted considerable debate about size and shape. Almost all of the children are on course to meet the standards expected at the end of the reception year, and quite a few will exceed them.

*Provision in knowledge and understanding of the world, creative and physical development have not been judged as not all aspects of these areas of learning were seen during the inspection.*

47. Work seen during the inspection indicates that teaching and learning in **knowledge and understanding of the world** are very good. For example, an excellent lesson began with the children thinking about cold places and ice, and the teacher showing them lumps of ice she had made in her freezer. The activities that followed developed a wide range of skills, and the children were particularly fascinated by the 'icebergs' and the way in which they were melting. Children used a programmable toy, disguised as a penguin, which they learned how to program so that it would move as they commanded; they worked confidently on the class computers, showing good early skills in using the mouse; they used a range of construction kits imaginatively to make a home for a polar bear. The whole-class literacy session at the end of the lesson, when the teacher and the children jointly composed the sentence "Ice melts in to water", modelled early writing skills very successfully and consolidated learning. In all these activities, adults encourage children's ability to look closely and discuss what they find out.

48. Teaching encourages children's **creative development** very successfully. Work on display shows the good quality and range of children's art work, including their own free painting, very attractive paintings in the style of Mondrian, wax-resist pictures of Bonfire Night, and expressive paintings of 'A Starry Night'. A separate, well-resourced art area is a

great asset. No music session was seen, but planning shows that children have plenty of opportunities for listening to music, singing, and playing instruments. In a dance session, the children moved expressively to music, many showing skills much better than those expected for their age. The 'Post Office' was a very popular place to play, and showed how the children can play imaginatively. The roles children should adopt in this area are made very clear, and adults model the play and join in, which results in the children often being completely 'in role' as postman or shopkeeper. In one very lively session, there were many parcels to weigh and many letters to sort, with the children showing high levels of interaction.

49. Children's **physical development** is encouraged very well. A dance lesson seen moved at a cracking pace with a variety of music creating constant challenges for the children. The delicate movements of the children's 'snowflake' dance were particularly impressive. They showed a good awareness of space and worked well individually and in pairs. Outdoors, the facilities are fairly spacious but lacking in variety. For example, there is no fixed equipment for climbing and swinging that would develop children's larger muscles. Children were observed using a range of wheeled toys confidently. The children's ability to control tools such as scissors and pencils develops very well through drawing, making and constructing. The way in which many children's handwriting is developing shows that they have good control of pencils and other tools.

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

### **ENGLISH**

Provision in English is very good.

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

- Teachers use their very good subject knowledge to break learning into steps, which helps all pupils to achieve very well
- In Year 2, past national test results and current standards are well above average
- Very effective leadership and management ensure that weaknesses are identified and swift action taken
- The new marking and target setting system is still developing and is not always focused on the key learning points
- Pupils behave very well and are very keen to learn because they enjoy the exciting range of activities teachers provide

#### **Commentary**

50. Results in the Year 2 national tests have improved since the last inspection. In 2004, they were well above the national average in both reading and writing, and work seen in the current Year 2 is of a similar standard. The 2003 Year 6 results were above average, but the 2004 results were below average. The main reason for this fall is that the year group included a higher proportion of pupils with special educational needs than is usual for the school. Nonetheless, a significant number of pupils who were predicted to reach the higher Level 5 in writing failed to do so. In the current Year 6, standards in the work and lessons seen are above average.

51. Pupils' achievement in speaking and listening is very good because teachers encourage all pupils to ask questions and express their views. In a Year 6 lesson, the teacher gave pupils sufficient time to respond to her skilful questions, which led to one less able pupil explaining that, in his view, a person seen as an idol often led to a desire for people to try and imitate them. Pupils quickly gain confidence from the frequent and varied opportunities teachers give them to express their views. In a Year 1 lesson, pupils were extending the sentence, "I want my Mummy when...", and one girl suggested, "I want my

Daddy when my Mummy goes out". Staff, and other pupils, listen carefully to contributions, and respect varying points of view. This gives pupils the confidence to say what they think without inhibition.

52. Pupils make very good progress in reading because key skills are very well taught, and teachers and pupils really enjoy reading together. Teachers use their extensive expertise to select stimulating books and activities in lessons, and this fosters a love of reading. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 quickly develop a range of strategies for reading unfamiliar words, and many Year 2 pupils read fluently and with expression. In Years 3 to 6, pupils extend their range of strategies and, by Year 6, nearly all pupils are fluent readers. Pupils make good use of the library for research. A group of Year 4 and 5 pupils worked with a parent researching Shakespeare, and then presented their findings as a play. They were confident in explaining how to locate information – using the contents page, an index, and library catalogues. The school is very effective in promoting reading at home through its policy of parents and children reading together frequently. The reading record book ensures that the parents and teachers of younger pupils can keep each other informed about progress, and is one of the valuable ways in which the school builds its excellent links with parents.

53. The school has put in place a wide range of strategies to raise pupils' achievement in writing, particularly in Years 3 to 6, having detected a fall in standards in the 2004 Year 6 tests. These strategies are having a positive impact, and pupils' achievement is now very good. Pupils use a wide vocabulary to make their writing interesting. A Year 2 pupil wrote about a wolf – "I am going to swipe you with my claws and eat you up". Pupils use their very good understanding of letter sounds to help in spelling new words, but sometimes written work contains too many careless spelling mistakes. The very good content of children's written work is sometimes let down by presentation, for example with handwriting not consistently neat and legible. Pupils use capital letters and full stops with increasing accuracy. By Year 6, pupils have developed accurate punctuation. They use commas and speech marks with reasonable accuracy. Year 6 pupils' written work, however, contains too many spelling mistakes, and they do not regularly edit their work. Handwriting is not as consistent in style as it should be, and presentation is often untidy. Pupils very occasionally redraft their work, which results in improved handwriting and spelling, as well as improving the quality of their writing. Sometimes pupils use computers to redraft their work. Pupils make very good progress in using more complex writing. In a Year 6 lesson, pupils rose to the challenge and started their opening paragraph of a story with exciting sentences which captured the reader's interest. One boy wrote – "Charging towards his final destination, he crumpled in the sand". Across the school, pupils develop good understanding of a wide range of different sorts of writing. Pupils who have special needs achieve very well, because of the very effective support they receive from teachers and teaching assistants.

54. Teaching and learning are very good. Teachers have high expectations of behaviour and work, which result in pupils concentrating very hard in lessons. Most lessons link together lots of different, interesting activities to develop pupils' skills and understanding. In a Year 6 lesson, the teacher started with an enjoyable matching game to help pupils develop imaginative ways of using clauses in their writing. The rest of the lesson built very effectively on this. Pupils' interest was captivated and as a result they learnt very well. Relationships between teachers and pupils are extremely positive, and all pupils have a strong desire to learn. Tasks are made very clear to pupils, and teachers make very good

use of examples, which leads to pupils making very good progress in lessons. Occasionally, time is not as well used as it might be, with activities either being too short or too long. Teachers mark pupils' work very thoroughly, and often give specific pointers on how to improve. However, this does not always relate to the key point of the lesson, so pupils are not given relevant guidance on how to improve. Not all pupils are aware of their targets, and this lessens their impact on pupils' learning.

55. Leadership and management are very good overall. Leadership is committed and enthusiastic, with a determination to raise achievement. Good use is made of pupil tracking information to identify weaknesses. The recent drop in Year 6 results was quickly investigated, and improving writing has become a whole-school priority. The strategies to improve the standard of writing have been carefully monitored and further action taken where necessary. The new marking and target setting systems, however, are still being developed. Improvement since the previous inspection has been good.

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

56. Literacy skills are developed effectively in other subjects. In Years 3 to 6 in particular, teachers combine English lessons with work in geography and history, which creates good opportunities for pupils to read and write for a range of purposes. In dance lessons, pupils use technical vocabulary with confidence because the teacher gives them plenty of practice. In most of the lessons seen in subjects other than English, there was a good emphasis on developing pupils' literacy skills.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is very good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils achieve very well because the quality of teaching is very good
- Pupils are very keen to learn and they enjoy the challenges set for them in lessons
- Teaching assistants make a very important contribution to pupils' learning, often supporting individuals and small groups very effectively
- Leadership and management of the subject are very good, with a strong focus on raising standards still further
- Minor weaknesses in a few lessons are when activities are not matched well enough to pupils' needs or group activities are not managed effectively

### **Commentary**

57. Until 2004, the results in national tests at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 had been improving at a faster rate than most schools, and were higher than at the last inspection. In 2004, this trend continued in Year 2, with results well above the national average. Standards in the current Year 2 are also well above those expected for pupils' ages. In Year 6, the 2004 results dipped to average, largely because the year group contained a higher proportion of pupils with special educational needs than is usual for the school. The school's own information tracking these Year 6 pupils' progress shows that they did about as well as the school had predicted. Standards in the current Year 6 are better than those expected for pupils' ages, but not as high as in the past, and not as strong as in the current Year 5. Once again, the slightly lower standards than usual are owing to the group of

pupils rather than the quality of teaching. Overall, bearing in mind pupils' starting points in Year 1 and the usual standards in Year 6, achievement is very good.

58. Lessons are very well planned and carefully structured to ensure that pupils learn easily and quickly. For example, in a lesson for Year 4/5, the teacher reviewed the concept of the perimeter of shapes very clearly, discussed some examples with the whole class, and then provided individual work that checked and extended the pupils' understanding. As a result, all the pupils made good progress. Teachers provide a very good range of activities, usually starting with mental mathematics tasks to sharpen pupils' skills and challenge their thinking. A good example of this was seen in a Year 1 lesson when the teacher asked the pupils to find the missing number in calculations such as  $2 + \Delta = 10$ , which caused them some difficulty at first, but they grasped the idea in the end. In a Year 6 lesson, the mental activities began with tasks using a multiplication square and were followed by complicated number sequences the pupils had to complete. Such mental sessions invariably move at a good pace, and keep the pupils on their toes. Teachers have very good skills in using questions to make pupils think, and they target the questions effectively so that all pupils are involved. As a result, the pupils are stimulated with interesting and challenging activities, which enable them to achieve very well.

59. Individual and group activities are usually well matched to the pupils' needs. For example, in the Year 1 lesson, where most pupils were finding pairs of numbers that make 10, less able pupils worked on an activity finding pairs of numbers making 5 and had good support from the teacher. This enabled everyone to do well. In a few lessons, however, even though pupils were well challenged during the whole-class activity, the subsequent group activities were either too hard or too easy. Sometimes, the way in which the task was posed did not provide sufficient challenge for the more able pupils. As a result, some pupils did not make the progress of which they were capable. On occasion, the group work was not managed firmly enough to ensure that all the pupils were working productively. In most lessons, teaching assistants provide very good support for groups of pupils, and for individual pupils who have special educational needs. In the Year 6 lesson seen, a group of pupils worked with a teaching assistant in a quiet room, which enabled them to concentrate fully on the activity.

60. Pupils enjoy their mathematics lessons. They join in discussions and pose questions confidently because staff respond very positively to all contributions. All routines are well established and any inappropriate behaviour is usually corrected unobtrusively with an emphasis on reinforcing positive behaviour. This results in pupils being keen and productive. Pupils have particularly good skills in working in pairs and small groups, sharing ideas and equipment sensibly. Pupils' very good approach to learning supports their achievement very well.

61. Leadership and management of the subject are very good. Experienced leadership provides a very good model of teaching with a clear view of how standards can improve still further. Management has a good understanding of strengths and areas for development, based on careful checking of pupils' work, test results and the quality of teaching. The school improvement plan identifies suitable targets for improving achievement. Staff training is very good and, as a result, many staff have improved their skills. In Years 3 to 6, the school organises the pupils into groups according to their mathematical ability as shown in test data. This is a successful arrangement because teachers teach the subject in which they have most expertise. Learning targets are set for

individual pupils, but pupils are not always sufficiently aware of these. Resources for learning are good and well used by staff and pupils.

62. Improvement since the last inspection has been good because the quality of teaching has improved and, despite the dip in 2004, standards are generally higher. Provision for more able pupils has been strengthened with the introduction of initiatives to extend learning, such as 'The brain machine' in which 12 more able pupils receive extra lessons from a visiting secondary school teacher. Marking of pupils' work is more consistently used to provide feedback for improvement.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

63. Opportunities for pupils to use and develop their mathematical skills in other subjects are good and well planned in the curriculum. For example, pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 have recorded scientific results, which have then been transferred to databases and spreadsheets in ICT and a variety of graphs produced. Pupils measure accurately when making products in design and technology. Timelines have been produced as part of history in the Year 2 class.

## **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is very good.

### **Main strengths**

- Standards have improved since the last inspection and are now well above average
- Teaching is very good, and teachers' detailed plans and clear learning objectives provide for stimulating activities, which enable pupils to achieve very well
- Very good use is made of teaching assistants to support and extend pupils' learning
- Good links with mathematics and ICT help pupils to use and develop skills in these subjects
- Leadership and management of the subject are very good

### **Commentary**

64. In 2004, teachers' assessments of pupils' attainment at the end of Year 2 were well above the national average, and much improved since the last inspection. Standards in the current Year 2 are also much higher than those expected for pupils' ages. The results of the Year 6 2004 national tests were above average, better than 2003, but not as high as in previous years because the year group contained a larger proportion of pupils with special educational needs than is usual for the school. Standards in the current Year 6 are well above expectations and a little better than at the last inspection. Bearing in mind pupils' average attainment when they join Year 1, they make very good progress through the school and, by Year 6, achievement is very good.

65. Teachers' planning of lessons is very thorough, focused clearly on what the pupils will learn, with well-organised and often challenging activities. Teachers have very high expectations of pupils' work and behaviour and engage the pupils with imaginative demonstrations. For example, in a Year 1 lesson about light, pupils' attention was captivated by the teacher presenting them with a holdall bag from which were taken a variety of lights and objects associated with safety at night. In a Year 6 lesson about forces, pupils' interest was assured during a demonstration of opposing, equal forces by conducting a tug of war. Teachers show good subject knowledge as do teaching assistants, who make a very good contribution to pupils' learning. For example, a teaching assistant taught a group of Year 5 pupils, carrying out an experiment to see which material would provide the best sound proofing. A variety of materials were placed over a tape recorder emitting a piercing tone, while a sound sensor logged the sound level from a distance. The

data was then saved on a computer allowing another teacher in the ICT suite to engage the pupils in analysing the data, using the graphing facility in a spreadsheet. Although teaching has many very strong features, an occasional weakness is that the more able pupils are not challenged as much as they could be by giving them more opportunity to plan investigations independently.

66. Pupils are very enthusiastic about science, showing great interest in lessons. Pupils co-operate very well in pairs and small groups. For example, a group of Year 5 pupils was observed questioning the data they had measured because it did not fit their predictions. They discussed the factors which influenced the data and then decided to repeat the experiment, while taking greater care to ensure that these factors were controlled, thus making it a fair test. Teachers encourage comments and questions from pupils and all contributions receive a very positive response. Pupils' very positive attitudes to learning, encouraged by their teachers, support very good achievement.

67. Leadership and management of science are very good. A very clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the subject has led to detailed plans on how aspects will be improved. For example, the scheme of work has recently been modified so that science topics are now taught each year rather than over a two-year rolling programme. As part of the assessment procedures, an online testing program now helps to identify weaknesses in pupils' learning so they can be followed up. Priorities for development include improving the match of work to pupils' existing attainment, particularly for the more able.

68. Improvement since the last inspection has been good because many of the strong features recognised in the last report have been maintained and, as a result, standards have improved. The use of ICT in science has improved. Marking of pupils' work is more consistently used to guide improvement.

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

Provision in ICT is good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards in Year 6 are above national expectations
- Specialist teaching in Years 4, 5 and 6 makes a major contribution to pupils' achievement
- The subject is very well led and managed and has good resources
- Links with other subjects are very good
- Computers in classrooms are generally underused

### **Commentary**

69. By the end of Year 2, standards are in line with national expectations. By Year 6, standards are better than those expected for pupils' ages. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory by Year 2 and good by Year 6.

70. Pupils are confident, enthusiastic and well motivated when using computers and other technologies. Good teaching and good resources ensure that pupils work well both individual and in groups, making good progress. The teaching seen was always at least good and often very good. Lesson plans are very detailed, learning objectives are clear, and teachers' subject knowledge is good, and sometimes excellent. Teachers make good use of a large projected display to demonstrate relevant ICT skills to the pupils, but this means that the teacher's back is often towards the pupils making it more difficult to engage the class in discussion and more difficult to supervise behaviour. Activities have a

good pace, are interesting, well structured and link clearly to work in other subjects. Specialist teaching in Years 4, 5 and 6 makes a strong contribution to pupils' good achievement. Pupils of all abilities are appropriately challenged and achieve well in these lessons. For example, in a Year 5 lesson, whilst most pupils concentrated on using the SUM function in a spreadsheet to total the columns showing merits earned by each class, two more able pupils were further challenged to use the formula function to calculate the average.

71. Good use is made of teaching assistants. They often support pupils who have special educational needs and, when they do, these pupils make very good progress. Teaching assistants are confident in using ICT and are sometimes used to provide extra learning opportunities. For example, in a Year 6 lesson on control technology, most pupils were building control procedures that would enable the computer to activate a light and a siren in a lighthouse as the sunlight disappeared. A teaching assistant worked with one pair of pupils at a time to record their voices on two separate sound tracks. These two tracks were then merged to create a sound file, which their procedure would later call up for the lighthouse siren. The pupils made very good progress because of the support they were given.

72. Leadership of ICT is very good and progress in the subject is regularly reviewed and developed through the school improvement plan. Pupils' attainment in ICT is assessed accurately each year. Pupils are regularly involved in evaluating their own progress by keeping a record of what they can do. Improvement since the last inspection has been good. The school has a recently upgraded ICT suite, with a good range of software that covers most needs. Some classroom computers are also connected to the network allowing work begun in the suite to be followed up in class. On occasion, teachers use classroom computers well as an aid to lesson introductions, but in many of the lessons seen classroom computers were left unused.

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

73. ICT activities in the suite are very well linked with other subjects that take place in the classroom. This gives pupils' learning a real context. For example, younger pupils were observed using a simple graphics program to create festive scenes for a greetings card while, in the classroom, similar activities took place using art media such as paints, crayons and felt tips. The teacher engaged the pupils in a discussion on the advantages of using a computer to experiment with colours to create effects that can be undone easily. In both mathematics and science, ICT is used very well to extend learning.

#### **HUMANITIES**

74. Only one lesson was observed in each of geography and religious education, and no history lessons were seen, because the humanities were not a focus for this inspection. As a result, it is not possible to make judgements about overall provision in any of these subjects. Pupils' work from the current year was available, however, which allowed some judgements to be made about standards and the quality of the curriculum. Inspectors also examined teachers' planning and talked to teachers and pupils.

75. In geography and history, the school has chosen to organise the curriculum so that, in Years 3 to 6, the subjects are taught in alternate terms. This had an impact on gathering inspection evidence from pupils about standards, because they may not have studied the



subject recently. In addition, the subjects are usually taught alongside English to provide meaningful opportunities for writing for a variety of purposes and audiences. Whilst this is an imaginative way of making links between subjects, evidence from the work seen and discussions with pupils indicates that the skills of being a geographer or a historian – gathering and interpreting information about a place, or a time in history, through a variety of sources – are not being developed as well as the factual aspects of the subjects. As a result, the quality and quantity of work in these subjects does not match the high standards seen in English, mathematics and science.

76. In **geography**, pupils' past work shows that standards in the factual aspects of the subject are largely as expected for their ages, as found at the last inspection. Some elements of the work lack depth, particularly for the older pupils. In Years 1 and 2, pupils have compared their own lives and locality with those of a child living in an African village. For example, they have learned that, whilst their classrooms are indoors and the weather is often cold and wet, children in the Nigerian village learn outside and the weather is usually hot. An attractive display, including lots of photographs, shows the pupils' learning. Some of the comparisons made are rather simplistic, such as suggesting that people in Nigeria live in houses made from mud. In Years 5 and 6, good work about an environmental issue – whether or not to close Market Street to traffic – has involved the children in gathering a range of information about people's views and traffic flow, leading to good opportunities for argumentative writing that make a good contribution to pupils' literacy skills. The rest of the work centres around the school's link with a school in Chengdu, China, which the headteacher and other members of staff have visited, and whose headteacher has visited Hill Top. The close and growing links between the two schools gives a very rich context to this work. The work itself, however, focuses more on factual aspects of geography, such as the apparent differences between the two localities. Pupils are insufficiently involved in using their knowledge and understanding to suggest suitable geographical questions that would help them to investigate places and environments and develop their skills. This was clear when Year 6 pupils were asked to apply the skills they had learnt in finding out about Chengdu to another, contrasting world locality.

77. On the other hand, in an excellent Year 5 lesson, pupils thought about the jobs people do in Chengdu compared with those in Ashby. The teacher's meticulous planning included an outstanding range of activities, ensuring a brisk pace to the lesson, which kept the pupils fully absorbed in their work. They looked at first-hand sources of evidence from photographs and compared these with information sheets, which developed their geographical skills very well. The teacher used and developed pupils' ICT skills very effectively as part of the lesson. This observation contradicts the evidence from pupils' past work and indicates that there are opportunities to develop pupils' geographical skills.

78. In **history**, there was far less pupils' work available for scrutiny because it was not being studied this term by many of the classes. As a result, it is not possible to make judgements about the overall standard of pupils' work. In Year 1, pupils have thought about then and now by comparing going to the seaside in Victorian times with today, and handling the artefacts used in the past for washing clothes. Year 2 pupils have also explored the past through artefacts such as a gramophone and old telephone, as well as thinking about famous people and events from the past. Work in Year 3/4 about the Victorians is largely factually based, and too dependent on work sheets, though the exploration of pupils' family trees is very interesting and has clearly involved pupils in much

historical research. Year 6 pupils had a fairly tenuous grasp of work about the Tudors they had completed last year.

79. The school is currently reviewing the place of geography and history within the whole curriculum. The subjects are well supported by visits to places of interest, local field work and residential visits. Notes provided by subject leaders show a good grasp of strengths and areas for development, and an appropriate action plan as part of the school improvement plan. For history, this includes developing pupils' historical enquiry skills.

80. In **religious education**, it is not possible to judge standards from pupils' books because the school places most emphasis on discussion during lessons rather than on recorded work. Standards in the lesson for Year 4 and 5 pupils were above average. Pupils had very good knowledge about the Christmas story. They also knew the main sections in the Bible and how to find them. Pupils achieve very well when they are given the opportunity to put forward their views. They ask perceptive questions, which are not always responded to by the teacher. Year 2 pupils had learnt about Diwali, and written their own prayer about light. Their prayers showed very personal responses about themselves and others. One pupil had written, "Thank you that you love the world". The school has developed its own scheme of work which meets the requirements of the locally Agreed Syllabus and is enriched very well by the use of visitors, and visits to different places of worship.

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

81. The expressive arts (art, dance, drama and music) were a specific focus for this inspection because it is the school's view that pupils achieve particularly well in these aspects of the curriculum. Three music lessons were seen, along with brief observations of pupils' singing and their musical performances. Two dance lessons were observed, but this was the only aspect of physical education seen. In art, although only one lesson was observed, a very good range of pupils' work was available from which to make judgements about standards. The school provided a wealth of documentary information about pupils' achievements in the expressive arts. It has a reputation locally for high standards in this aspect of its work. Teachers' planning and the views of subject leaders were also taken into account. Although it is not possible to make judgements about overall provision in any of these subjects, the weight of evidence shows that many pupils achieve high standards in the expressive arts and that it is an outstanding feature of the school's work.

82. Standards in **art and design** are well above those expected for pupils' ages in both Year 2 and Year 6. Across the school, pupils achieve very well with drawing and painting skills because they are given frequent opportunities to practise. They experience working in a very good range of media and use computers to create pictures and designs. Pupils have a far better knowledge and understanding of artists than is normally found. For example, pupils in Years 3 and 4 named artists alive in Victorian times and explained their styles. They used stencil prints of simple fruit designs to develop attractive repeating patterns in the style of William Morris. The display of paintings by Year 3 and 5 pupils, inspired by the artist Seurat, is very effective. Pupils have made clever use of small dots of colour in various ways, including using bubble wrap to create exciting compositions. Good use is made of first-hand observation, such as the delicate, detailed drawing of a knapweed flower in a Year 6 pupil's sketch book. Pupils also learn about line and tone. Year 6 pupils are beginning to shade three-dimensional shapes accurately to show form.

83. Many pupils reach very high standards in **music**, and overall standards by the end of Year 6 are well above those expected for pupils' ages. For example, about 50 pupils learn a musical instrument, taught by visiting specialists, a far higher proportion than in most primary schools. The high standard reached by these pupils was illustrated when the twenty-strong orchestra played in assembly. Their performance was outstanding, with pupils showing a high level of musicianship. It is very rare in a primary school to find an orchestra of this quality and with such a variety of instruments. It is not surprising that younger pupils aspire to musical success. The standard of singing in whole-school assemblies is much better than normally heard.

84. Pupils have the opportunity to take part in a wide range of musical activities both in and out of school. All pupils achieve some success in playing the recorder, and the school plans to extend its 'music for all' philosophy through an ambitious project involving all Year 3 pupils learning to play the violin. A wide range of opportunities for singing and playing in musical groups provides considerable motivation for young musicians. These skills are often taken into the community, with pupils playing in festivals and performances. Within school, productions and musical evenings are much enjoyed by parents and friends. The school has built considerably on the standards reported at the last inspection.

85. In the lessons seen, the quality of teaching was very good in one and satisfactory in the other two. In a Year 1 lesson, whilst the pupils enjoyed the activities and made satisfactory progress in thinking about loud and soft sounds, the teaching depended too much on a video, which lessened the pupils' participation in musical activity. Year 2 pupils practised and performed a short piece using voices and a variety of instruments, and thought about the duration of notes. In both these lessons, opportunities were missed for pupils to appraise the work of others. Both of the lessons were carefully planned and the pupils' learning was very well organised, with a high level of enjoyment. A very good lesson for Year 5 moved at a rapid pace and included a number of challenging activities. A constant emphasis on consolidating pupils' musical skills, for example in their understanding of the duration of notes in standard notation, and extending them into new work ensured that the pupils made very good progress and reached standards well beyond those normally seen. A good example of the quality of the pupils' work was when they sang a round, including a difficult range of notes, which was very challenging at first but ultimately successful, owing to the excellent example and encouragement from the teacher. The involvement of all the pupils and their evident enjoyment of the lesson were outstanding features.

86. Leadership and management of the subject are very good and provide a strong impetus for the high standards seen. The subject leader has exceptional expertise, which led to her being awarded Music Teacher of the Year 2000 by Classic FM. The richness of musical activities contributes significantly to pupils' very good attitudes to school because they gain much enjoyment, motivation and satisfaction from being involved and successful. The school has a good variety of resources to support musical activities.

87. In **physical education**, the two dance lessons seen showed that pupils reach high standards in this aspect of the subject. Pupils achieved very well because of the expertise of the teacher. In a Year 6 lesson, pupils made very good progress with using shape, expression and different levels, in their individual dances. The quality of their work was greatly increased by the teacher's careful structuring of their learning. Pupils achieved well

with their group dances, but found the short time and complexity of their task challenging. Pupils have above average understanding of dance, and use technical vocabulary accurately when evaluating and talking about their own and others' work.

88. In **design and technology**, teachers' planning is based on a detailed scheme of work, which shows pupils receive an appropriate curriculum. In the one lesson seen, the quality of teaching was good. The pupils were engaged in an activity called an 'Enterprise', which is a strong feature of their design and technology work in Years 3 to 6. The pupils pretend to be workers in a company, designing a product, deciding on a name and logo, and then producing many copies of the product, which are sold at a festive event. The pupils worked collaboratively and industriously. Good links are exploited with mathematics as the pupils measure and cut materials, and keep a detailed balance sheet of costs and moneys raised. A team of pupils was inspecting the finished products for any defects and returning faulty work to the appropriate point of production.

89. In Years 1 and 2, pupils make shadow puppets with arms operated by sticks acting as simple levers. Elsewhere, bridge structures had been designed and constructed out of rolled up newspaper. Attention had been drawn to the strength of hollow tubes and of triangular structures, and real bridge designs and designers, such as Brunel, had been studied. Such a consistent approach to planning, designing, making and evaluating products results in finished work that is of a good standard and motivates the pupils in a purposeful and realistic task. Leadership and management of the subject are good, with a sound grasp of work that is taking place across the school. A wide range of materials and resources is available to support the pupils' learning.

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

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

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

### *Inspection judgement*

### *Grade*

<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>2</b>
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	2
Value for money provided by the school	2

<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>2</b>
Pupils' achievement	2

<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities (ethos)</b>	<b>2</b>
Attendance	3
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>	<b>2</b>
The quality of teaching	2
How well pupils learn	2
The quality of assessment	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	2
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	1
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	1
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	2
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	1
The quality of the school's links with the community	1
The school's links with other schools and colleges	1

<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>2</b>
The governance of the school	2
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	2
The effectiveness of management	2

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