

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **ASHWELL PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Baldock

LEA area: Hertfordshire

Unique reference number: 117084

Headteacher: Mr Cliff Jenkinson

Lead inspector: Mr D Shepherd

Dates of inspection: 15<sup>th</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup> November 2004

Inspection number: 266334

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: 3-11 years  
Gender of pupils: Mixed  
Number on roll: 208 pupils

School address: Silver Street  
Ashwell  
Baldock  
Hertfordshire  
Postcode: SG7 5QL

Telephone number: 01462 742297  
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Appropriate authority: The governing body  
Name of chair of governors: Mr Alan Church

Date of previous inspection: 8<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup> March 1999

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Ashwell is about the same size as other primary schools with 190 full-time pupils on roll. A further 36 part-time pupils attend the nursery. Nearly all pupils are of white United Kingdom heritage, five pupils are from other white backgrounds and three from Asian backgrounds. No pupil speaks English as an additional language. About five per cent of pupils is entitled to free school meals which is below the national average. This reflects the favourable backgrounds of the pupils. Twenty-five pupils are on the school's register for special educational needs, three of whom have a statement. This is below most schools. The main needs are speech and communication difficulties, social, emotional and behavioural difficulties, specific learning difficulties, moderate learning difficulties and autism. Pupils' attainment on entry is above average. Staff mobility is low. No teacher has left the school and one has joined during the past two years. The rate at which pupils join and leave the school during the year is low.

In 2001 and 2002, the school was awarded a School Achievement Award for improving standards. In 2004, the school was awarded the Basic Skills Quality Mark for teaching the skills of literacy and numeracy. During the same year, the school was awarded the Sport England Activemark for its provision of physical activities for pupils.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

| Members of the inspection team |                  |                | Subject responsibilities   |
|--------------------------------|------------------|----------------|--|
| 2905                           | David Shepherd   | Lead inspector | Mathematics, information and communication technology (ICT), geography, history, special educational needs |
| 11437                          | Anthony Anderson | Lay inspector  |  |
| 27899                          | Georgie Beasley  | Team inspector | Science, art and design, design and technology, personal, social and health education, Foundation Stage    |
| 31222                          | Sue Croft        | Team inspector | English, music, physical education, religious education  |

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**Ashwell provides a good education for its pupils and gives good value for money.**

Pupils achieve well and standards are well above average in a number of subjects. Teaching and learning are good. The school is well led and managed.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are

- Pupils achieve well in reading, writing, mathematics and science. Pupils with special educational needs achieve very well. The achievement of higher-attaining pupils is good
- Pupils receive good help from their teachers and teaching assistants and this helps them make good progress. However, they are not always provided with enough opportunities to develop their speaking skills
- Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good overall. However, a minority of pupils sometimes act immaturely and disrupt the learning of their classmates
- Pupils are provided with a varied curriculum that is enriched very effectively by a wide range of additional activities, including visits to places of interest and visitors to the school
- The school carries out much good work in checking how well it is doing. The outcomes of this work are used effectively to raise standards
- Links with parents, the community and other schools are very good

**The school has made good progress since the last inspection.** The key issue identified at that time about provision for more able pupils has been corrected. Standards are higher than they were then. Teaching and learning and leadership and management are all better than they were at the previous inspection.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

**Pupils' achievements are good.** Children start school with standards that are above average in their personal development, literacy and numeracy. They achieve well in the nursery and reception classes and reach standards that are above those expected for their age in all areas of learning by the time they start in Year 1. In their personal, social and emotional development, standards are well above average. Pupils continue to achieve well and, by the end of Year 2, reach standards that are well above average in reading, writing and mathematics. This was the case in the 2004 National Curriculum tests and these standards were confirmed by evidence from the inspection. The trend of improvement in reading, writing and mathematics is above that of other schools. Standards in speaking are not as high as those in other areas of English. Standards in science in 2004 were also well above average and pupils achieved well in this subject. Pupils achieve well in ICT and art and design and standards are above expected levels.

| Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with: | all schools |      |      | similar schools |
|---|-------------|------|------|-----------------|
|   | 2002        | 2003 | 2004 | 2004            |
| English   | A*          | A    | A    | B               |
| Mathematics   | A           | A    | A*   | A               |
| Science   | A           | B    | A    | A               |

*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.*

In the 2004 National Curriculum tests for pupils in Year 6, pupils' attainment in mathematics was in the top five per cent of schools nationally. When compared with similar schools, pupils' attainment in English in 2004 was lower than in other subjects because a number of higher-attaining boys did not reach the levels the school expected of them and this lowered the results as a consequence. The school has maintained its high standards overall over the past few years. Standards have improved in mathematics and science but declined slightly in English. Inspection findings suggest that pupils' achievement in Years 3 to 6 is good in English, mathematics, science and music. However, standards in speaking are not as high as they should be because pupils are not given enough opportunities to practise these skills. Achievement is very good in art and design and satisfactory in history. Pupils with special educational needs achieve very well and higher-attaining pupils achieve well.

**Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good.** Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good overall, although a minority of pupils act immaturely and disturb their classmates in lessons. Attendance and punctuality are very good.

#### **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

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

**Teaching and learning are good.** Teachers have good subject expertise and, along with teaching assistants, guide pupils very well in their work and this helps them to achieve well. Many activities are practical and this encourages pupils to learn well. Overall, not enough opportunities are provided for pupils to talk at length and adapt their thinking in the light of the views of others. Assessment procedures are good overall, although they have not been worked out systematically enough in a number of subjects. The curriculum is good and supplemented well by a very wide range of additional activities. The care, welfare and health and safety of pupils are satisfactory. Links with the community and other schools are very good.

#### **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**Leadership and management are good.** The headteacher provides good leadership as indicated by the improvements in standards and teaching. Subject leadership is good. The school checks its work well and corrects its weaknesses successfully. Governors are supportive of the school and governance is good.

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

Parents' and pupils' views of the school are very positive. Parents are very supportive of the school. Pupils speak very enthusiastically about school and enjoy what it provides.

#### **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

The most important things the school should do to improve are

- Improve standards in speaking
  - Improve the attitudes and behaviour of the minority of pupils who act immaturely
- and, to meet statutory requirements
- Provide a daily act of collective worship

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

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

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

Standards achieved in English, mathematics and science are well above average. Pupils' achievement is good throughout the school. Overall, standards are higher than they were at the last inspection.

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

- Pupils achieve well in reading, writing, mathematics and science. They achieve well in music throughout the school and in ICT in Years 1 and 2. Achievement in the Foundation Stage is good
- The achievement of pupils with special educational needs is very good. Higher-attaining pupils achieve well
- Standards in speaking are not as high as they should be

#### **Commentary**

##### **Foundation Stage**

1. Children start school with standards that are above those expected for this age. Through skilful teaching by teachers and teaching assistants, most achieve well and start Year 1 with standards that are above those children are expected to reach in all areas of learning. Standards in their personal, social and emotional development are particularly high.

##### **Key Stage 1**

2. In the 2004 National Curriculum tests for pupils in Year 2, standards in reading, writing and mathematics were well above average when compared with similar schools. Pupils achieve well in Years 1 and 2 because of consistently good teaching. Standards achieved by higher-attaining pupils in all three subjects were significantly higher than the national average. Over the past five years, standards in reading, writing and mathematics have risen faster than those nationally. Standards in science were well above average. In fact, they were in the top five per cent of schools nationally at the expected level with all pupils achieving that standard.

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

| Standards in: | School results | National results |
|---------------|----------------|------------------|
| Reading       | 18.1 (16.7)    | 15.8 (15.7)      |
| Writing       | 16.6 (15.0)    | 14.6 (14.6)      |
| Mathematics   | 18.2 (16.9)    | 16.2 (16.3)      |

*There were 28 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

3. Standards seen during the inspection support these results. By the end of Year 2, pupils achieve well and reach standards in reading, writing, mathematics and science that are well above those expected. This is because of the consistently good, and, sometimes, very good teaching they receive in Years 1 and 2. However, pupils do not achieve as well in speaking and achievement in this aspect is satisfactory. Pupils' achievement in ICT is good and standards in this subject are above expected levels. Standards in music are above expectations and pupils achieve well in this subject. Standards in art and design are above expectations.

##### **Key Stage 2**



4. In the 2004 National Curriculum tests for pupils in Year 6, standards in English, mathematics and science were well above average. This represents achievement since Year 2 that is well above average in each of these subjects. The school exceeded the targets overall that it set in English and mathematics for these pupils. However, it did not quite meet the target set for higher-attaining pupils in English because not enough boys reached that level. The school has maintained its high standards over the past five years.

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

| Standards in: | School results | National results |
|---------------|----------------|------------------|
| English       | 29.2.(29.9)    | 26.9.(26.8)      |
| Mathematics   | 30.5.(28.6)    | 27.0.(26.8)      |
| Science       | 31.4.(29.4)    | 28.6.(28.6)      |

*There were 19 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

5. Inspection findings confirm the results of the national tests. Standards in English, mathematics and science are well above expected levels and pupils achieve well. Standards in speaking are satisfactory. Standards in art and design are well above expected levels. Standards in music are above expectations and pupils' achievement is good. In ICT and history, pupils' achievement is satisfactory and standards are at expected levels.

**Whole school issues**

6. Pupils with special educational needs achieve very well and make very good progress throughout the school. Their attainment in literacy and numeracy is often comparable to that of their peers. This is because their achievements are monitored very closely by the school and work set for them is pitched at their levels of need and they receive very good help from their teachers and teaching assistants. Higher-attaining pupils, including the gifted and talented, achieve well overall and make good progress. Only occasionally do they not make enough progress and this is when teachers do not give them enough opportunities to use their initiative and work independently.

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

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good. Provision for pupils' personal development is good. Their moral, social and cultural development are good and spiritual development is satisfactory.. Pupils' attendance and punctuality are very good.

**Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Most pupils enjoy school, behave well and have positive attitudes. However, on a few occasions, a minority of pupils lose concentration, act immaturity and disturb lessons
- The school council promotes pupils' personal development well
- The efforts of the school and parents ensure that pupils' attendance are very good

**Commentary**

7. Most pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. They cooperate with each other well in lessons, including when working in groups. For example, in a physical education lesson, Year 2 pupils worked very well together as they were encouraged to practise their gymnastic skills in the large hall. Most pupils play well together in the playground. They have very good relationships with their teachers and other staff. On the other hand, there were a few examples observed during the inspection, mainly during assemblies, when the attitudes and behaviour of small groups of pupils were unsatisfactory. This was because they did not find the content of the assembly interesting enough to hold their concentration. Pupils echo these thoughts. They say they are very happy at school. They

feel that the behaviour of most children is good but that there are a few pupils who occasionally exhibit silly behaviour in the classroom and playground.

8. Pupils are provided with a wide range of opportunities to help promote their personal development. For example, some assist in setting out chairs in the hall, help younger pupils at lunchtime and playtimes and tidy up classrooms and the library area. In addition, the school council provides a useful forum to help pupils express their views about aspects of the school. Issues brought up at the school council are suggested to the school councillors during lessons in personal, social and health education. All pupils now feel they have a `voice` in school through this mechanism and this helps promote their personal development.
9. The provision for pupils' moral, social and cultural development is good. The moral and social development of pupils is promoted well. Many opportunities are provided for pupils to work and play together. Most pupils have a clear understanding of the difference between right and wrong. Visits to places of interest and team games help pupils very well to develop their social skills. Pupils are provided with good opportunities to learn about other cultures as well as their own. For example, lessons in religious education enable pupils to understand aspects of the ways of life and beliefs of others. For example, displays around school indicate that pupils have been learning about Hinduism and Sikhism. Lessons in art and design and music also provide opportunities for pupils to learn about aspects of other cultures, for example, the African drumming workshop that was held in school and the African music that was played at assemblies during the inspection. The school has a good range of artefacts from other cultures. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory. There was little spirituality evident during the assemblies observed during the inspection. Elements of spirituality are, however, in evidence through subjects such as music, history and art and design.
10. Overall, the school has maintained the good standards since the last inspection in this area of its work.

#### **Attendance**

11. The school monitors and promotes the attendance of pupils very well. Attendance is very good and is well above the national average. Pupils' punctuality is very good. Parents are very supportive of the school in helping to ensure that their children attend regularly and promptly.

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

| Authorised absence |     | Unauthorised absence |     |
|--------------------|-----|----------------------|-----|
| School data:       | 3.6 | School data :        | 0.1 |
| National data:     | 5.1 | National data:       | 0.4 |

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

#### **Exclusions**

12. There were no exclusions during the last reporting year.

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

The quality of education provided by the school is good. Teaching and learning are good. Assessment is good. The school provides a good curriculum for its pupils. Provision for additional activities, including visits to places of interest, is very good. The school looks

after its pupils satisfactorily but provides them with very good support and guidance. Links with parents, the community and other schools are very good.

### **Teaching and learning**

Teaching and learning are good. The assessment of pupils' work is good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teachers and teaching assistants provide pupils with very good help when they are stuck and this helps them learn effectively
- The expertise of teachers across the school is very good and they are deployed effectively to make best use of their skills and knowledge
- Pupils are given very good opportunities to learn by using practical apparatus and equipment. This helps them understand fully what is being taught
- Most activities are planned very well at the correct level for most pupils. However, on a few occasions, this is not the case for higher-attaining pupils
- Assessment of pupils' work in English, mathematics and science is very good and pupils know what they have to do next to improve. Assessment in other subjects is not as good
- Overall, not enough opportunities are provided to help pupils develop their skills in speaking
- Occasionally, some teachers do not correct the immature behaviour of a few pupils and this disrupts the flow in learning

## Commentary

13. During the inspection, over seven in ten lessons were judged to be at least good. Over one quarter were judged at least very good and one was outstanding. No lesson was judged unsatisfactory. All the teaching and learning in Year 6 were judged at least good. Teaching assistants are used very well throughout the school and this is a factor contributing to the consistently good teaching.

### *Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 45 lessons*

| Excellent | Very good | Good     | Satisfactory | Unsatisfactory | Poor   | Very Poor |
|-----------|-----------|----------|--------------|----------------|--------|-----------|
| 1 (2%)    | 12 (27 %) | 20 (44%) | 12 (27 %)    | 0 (0%)         | 0 (0%) | 0 (0%)    |

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

14. Pupils receive good help and guidance in their work. During whole-class teaching, teachers make sure that all pupils understand what they are going to learn and what they have to do. Very good help is given to pupils when they are working so that they are not stuck for long. This help is provided in a positive way by teachers and teaching assistants so that pupils are not afraid to ask for further help should they need to do so.
15. Many teachers have particular expertise in a number of subjects. These include literacy, numeracy, history, music, physical education and special educational needs. Through flexible deployment of teachers, this expertise is used to teach a number of classes. This is especially the case in music and special educational needs. Staff work effectively as a team and share ideas with each other. In these ways, teachers share their expertise with each other and this helps raise standards achieved by pupils.
16. Many of the activities planned for pupils are practical. This helps pupils understand clearly what is being taught. For example, pupils in Year 1 were taught how to count using cubes joined together. Pupils in Year 2 learned about quarters by cutting up a square into four equal pieces. Pupils learn using computers in a number of subjects, such as mathematics, literacy, history and art and design. Pupils have good opportunities to learn by visiting places of interest in a number of subjects, including geography and history.
17. Teachers prepare work for pupils that is matched to their levels of ability and need. This helps lower-attaining pupils learn very effectively and achieve very well. Higher-attaining pupils achieve well because work is well matched to their abilities on most occasions. On the few occasions when this is not the case, these pupils do not learn as well, often because they are not provided with enough opportunities to think hard, use their initiative and work independently.
18. Within this positive picture of teaching and learning, two weaknesses were noted. The first is a general weakness. Teachers do not always provide pupils with enough opportunities to develop their skills in speaking. For example, teachers' questions do not always encourage pupils to think hard and reply at length. Pupils do not have enough opportunities to engage in discussions that cause them to amend their views in the light of other views expressed by their classmates or teacher. A second weakness that occurs occasionally is that a few pupils, particularly in the younger classes, act immaturely and chat with each other. Sometimes teachers do not correct them well enough and their chat disturbs their learning and that of others in the class.
19. Teachers assess pupils' work well and set pupils learning targets to achieve in literacy and numeracy. These targets are included in their English and mathematics' books and are checked from time to time to see if pupils have reached them. Once this is the case, further

targets are set for them. These targets are linked closely to the yearly targets that have been set for them following the results of their performance in end-of-year national tests and assessments. This provides pupils with very good guidance to help them achieve well in these subjects. The school is aware that assessment in other subjects is not as well developed as it is for English, mathematics and science and plans to correct this as soon as possible. Teaching and learning have improved since the last inspection.

## **The curriculum**

The school provides a good curriculum. There are very good opportunities for enrichment through activities outside of lessons. Accommodation and resources are satisfactory. The match of teachers and support staff to the curriculum is good.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Links with other subjects give purpose and relevance to learning
- Visits to places of interest bring learning to life so pupils achieve well
- The organisation of the curriculum in the Foundation Stage is very good
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good
- The school uses its restricted accommodation well
- The school does not meet its statutory duty to hold a daily act of collective worship

## **Commentary**

20. The school provides a good curriculum and ensures all subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education are taught in interesting ways. This helps pupils to be interested and motivated to learn in most lessons. Teachers make sure links are made with other subjects and this helps pupils make useful connections between the learning in different lessons. For example, while studying a particular period in history, pupils make artefacts to help their learning in art and design. ICT is used effectively to help learning in all subjects. Improvement since the previous inspection is good.
21. Opportunities for pupils to take part in a wide range of activities in clubs at lunchtime and after school, during visits to places of interest linked to current topics and in sporting and musical events and activities enrich the curriculum very well. As a result, performance skills in music and sporting skills in physical education are practised well. Pupils talk avidly about the number of visits they have been on and their excitement in recalling the range of things they have learnt reflects their very good achievement as a result of these activities. The recent visit of a sculptor to support learning in art and design has resulted in some high quality sculptured faces being created out of building materials.
22. Adults in the Foundation Stage have recently put a new organisation into place to ensure a very good balance between activities led by adults and those that the children choose to do themselves. Children always have good opportunity to choose which activity to take part in, both indoors and out. They are not always given enough freedom to plan what they could do in these because their learning is sometimes too directed. On these occasions, children do not develop their independent learning skills as much as they could. Nonetheless, this organisation provides a very good structure for the children's learning and ensures they grow in confidence quickly and achieve very well in their personal development.
23. Pupils with special educational needs achieve very well because their work is closely monitored and new challenges set for them. In this way, these pupils make very good progress and many reach the nationally expected standards by the time they leave the school at the end of Year 6.
24. Pupils take part in an assembly for four days out of the five during the week. They do not always take part in an act of daily worship at these times or at any other time during the day. This is a statutory requirement that the school does not meet.
25. The accommodation is satisfactory overall. The school has chosen to organise its classes in year groups and this helps individual teachers plan for the pupils in their classes. This results in some large classes and, while there are a good number of teachers and teaching assistants to support learning, this organisation creates challenges for the school that it

overcomes well to ensure pupils' education is not disrupted. Pupils cope very well with the small amount of space in the playground and look forward to playing football again during the summer months when they can use the meadow. The space for children in the Foundation Stage to learn outside is small but the area is used well to help learning. Currently, there is no veranda to enable this to happen during less favourable weather but this is planned for construction shortly. There is a satisfactory number of resources for learning that teachers use effectively.

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

Provision for pupils' care, welfare, health and safety is satisfactory. The support, advice and guidance given to pupils are very good. The school acts on pupils' views well.

### **Main strengths**

- Staff know their pupils well
- The support and guidance given to pupils in literacy and numeracy is good. Pupils with special educational needs are guided very well in their work
- Good systems are in place to seek and act on pupils' views of the school

### **Commentary**

26. The school looks after its pupils satisfactorily. Staff know their children well and provide a high degree of care, welfare and pastoral support to individual pupils. Pupils know to whom to turn if they feel unwell or have any worries. Induction arrangements for pupils starting school are very good. First aid procedures for minor accidents are good. Procedures for child protection are good and staff have recently been updated in their knowledge of procedures. Regular fire drills are carried out. In addition, the school carries out thorough risk assessments for external visits out of school. The school is looking to improve in a number of aspects of site management.
27. Pupils' academic performance is assessed and monitored well. This information is used very effectively to help pupils improve through a system of target setting in literacy and numeracy. Once these targets have been reached, further targets are set and this helps pupils make good progress. The school has plans to assess pupils' achievements in other subjects against standards in the National Curriculum so that the progress they make in these subjects can be compared with national levels. Pupils with special educational needs receive very good help and guidance in their work. They have individual learning programmes and teachers check how well these pupils are progressing compared with the targets they are set. If needed, these programmes of work include academic as well as behavioural targets. As a result of this very good guidance, pupils with special educational needs make very good progress in their learning.
28. The school involves pupils well in its work. There is a `school council` that consists of two representatives from each class from Years 1 to 6. These representatives are chosen by their classmates and act as spokespeople to represent the views of their class to the headteacher about aspects of school. Lessons in personal, social and health education are used to brief the school councillors about what to discuss with the headteacher and they report back to their class what the headteacher's response to the issues they have raised has been. In other words, the school council helps to underpin the positive ethos of the school by providing all pupils with the opportunity to have a say about aspects of school life. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory.

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

The school has very good links with parents, other schools and the community.

### **Main strengths**

- The school involves parents very well in its work and provides them with good information about how well their children are progressing
- Links with the secondary school are very good, particularly at the time when pupils are due to transfer
- Very good use is made of visits to places of interest in the local community

### **Commentary**

29. Parents are very interested in school. This is exemplified by the high number who attended the parents' meeting and the high number of completed pre-inspection questionnaires. A majority of parents who returned the questionnaire indicates their strong support for the school and of its aims and objectives. Parents report that their children like school and that they are making good progress. Some parents expressed the view that the large Year 1 class is a particular concern and may slow down the progress that should be made by their children in that class. Inspectors found that the school makes very good use of the available space, teachers and other resources resulting in pupils in Year 1 making good progress and not being held back because of the large class.
30. A few parents help in classes and on external visits. Parents are very supportive of homework and have willingly signed the home/school agreement. Parents' attendance at school concerts, sports days and parents' evenings is usually very good.
31. The information provided by the school through the prospectus, the annual governors' report to parents and by regular newsletters is good. Annual reports to parents about the progress of their children are satisfactory and include targets for pupils' further development. The headteacher and staff are readily available to assist parents with any problems or concerns they may have about the progress of their children. The school is continually seeking ways to maintain the high quality of school/home links for the benefit of children and their parents.
32. The school makes very good use of the local environment to help pupils' learning. Visits have been made to local historical sites and the local museum. Local senior citizens also visit the school and recount to pupils what the village used to be like sixty or so years ago. Pupils listen enthralled on these occasions because the senior citizens remember relatives of pupils in the class, such as their grandparents and great grandparents! Year 4 pupils have visited Wimpole Hall when learning about the Victorians. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 have visited Hatfield Forest last term and Year 6 pupils have visited a safety demonstration provided by the local police.
33. The school has very good links with local primary schools. Competitive sporting fixtures are held against pupils from these schools. Links with the local secondary school to which most pupils transfer are very good. There is a variety of projects taking place between the two schools. Year 7 staff from the secondary school visit Ashwell to prepare Year 6 pupils fully prior to their transfer to secondary education.
34. The high standards reported at the last inspection have been maintained.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Leadership and management are good. The leadership of the headteacher and of subject co-ordinators is good. Management is good. Governance is good.



## Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher, ably supported by staff, provides effective leadership and management of the school
- Monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning are good overall. However, in some subjects, pupils' attainment is not compared with standards in the National Curriculum
- Governors make a valuable contribution to planning for the future. However, they have not checked that the school provides a daily act of collective worship
- Subject co-ordinators have a good overview of the strengths and weaknesses in their subjects

## Commentary

35. The headteacher maintains high standards at the school by improving provision in many areas. He is supported very well by his deputy headteacher who works effectively with him in the leadership and management of the school. As the senior teachers at the school, they have worked with other staff to develop a hard-working staff team that share a common purpose of raising standards. All staff contribute to the school development plan which is a comprehensive document outlining the priorities for the future development of the school.
36. Curriculum co-ordination is effective overall. Subject co-ordinators monitor well provision, teaching and pupils' work in their subjects. They act as advice centres in their subjects for the rest of the staff and produce annual monitoring reports that give details about the progress made by pupils and plans to raise standards in the future. One important area identified for future improvement is the monitoring of standards in subjects other than literacy and numeracy against the standards in the National Curriculum.
37. Governors are very supportive of the school and make a valuable contribution to planning for the future through the school development plan. They have a detailed knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and carry out their responsibilities conscientiously and effectively. They are closely involved in the control of finance and in strategic decisions about the school. They visit the school regularly and have well-established procedures for measuring its performance. However, they have not ensured that the school complies with the law in that it provides a daily act of collective worship.

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

| Income and expenditure (£) |         | Balances (£)                        |        |
|----------------------------|---------|-------------------------------------|--------|
| Total income               | 652,983 | Balance from previous year          | 31,624 |
| Total expenditure          | 680,734 | Balance carried forward to the next | 3,873  |
| Expenditure per pupil      | 2,826   |                                     |        |

38. Budgets are set satisfactorily under the guidance of the local educational authority. Financial management is good. The day-to-day management of the budget is carried out efficiently by the office staff. The school applies the principles of best value satisfactorily through such procedures as obtaining three quotes for work, but does not evaluate its provision through its impact on pupils' learning.

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

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

Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is good. Children start school in the nursery part-time to begin with and move to the reception full-time in the term that they reach five. This ensures a gradual progression through these early years and helps children settle quickly and get used to a full day in school. Induction arrangements are very good and parents are fully involved in providing the school with a good range of information to help teachers get to know children's needs quickly and to plan learning at the right level. Most children start with knowledge and skills above those usually found at this age. Achievement is good and, by the end of the reception year, nearly all children attain the goals they are expected to reach in all areas of learning. A large number exceed these. They achieve very well in their personal, social and emotional development and all exceed the goals. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Very good team work and a very good knowledge of the children ensure all adults make a very good contribution to children's learning. The atmosphere in the classroom is very well established because a common approach to teaching and learning is used by all Foundation Stage staff. This encourages children to get along together well. Leadership and management are good. Adults have recently implemented a different organisation to the day and this gives a very good structure to learning. There is a good balance between activities led by adults and those the children choose to do themselves. Assessment procedures are very good and the information from these is used very well to match learning to the needs of individuals, to target support and guidance and to structure questions for different ability groups. Improvement since the previous inspection is very good.

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

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

#### **Main strengths**

- Children are given very good opportunities to take responsibility and develop their independence
- Relationships are very good

#### **Commentary**

39. The children relish the chances that they get to take responsibility for small jobs around the classroom. They love taking turns to go round with the five minute notice and bell to let the others know it is time to finish off what they are doing and put things away. Children work together very well when sweeping up the sand or putting toys away. All children offer very good support to each other due to the gentle encouragement from all adults. When one child asked another for help finding her book bag, the others gently took her hand and off they went together to get the job done. Very good relationships and high expectations help the children to get along with each other well. As a result, children take turns willingly and share toys amicably, knowing they will all get a turn eventually. Teaching and learning in this area are very good and children achieve very well.

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

Provision in communication, language and literacy is good.

#### **Main strengths**

- Children have good opportunities to share books with adults and with each other

- Writing skills are good because adults plan interesting tasks that have a purpose and are linked to other areas of learning
- There are good opportunities for children to talk about what they have done

### Commentary

40. The daily snack time is used effectively to develop a range of communication skills. At this time, children have good opportunity to talk about what they have done so far that morning and to plan what they want to do next. As a result, children are confident talkers by the time they start in Year 1. Further opportunity to plan what they are to do in each activity is the next step to developing the children's thinking skills. Reading skills are well established through well-planned adult led activities and at times when the children choose a book to share with a friend. They 'read' the pictures accurately to tell each other stories, talk about the characters and what is happening, and many, especially those children who attend full-time, are beginning to recognise some words themselves. This is evident in their reading and writing when they use their knowledge of letters and sounds to work out how to read and write simple short words. Learning is always given a context and this keeps all children interested. For example, during the inspection the story, 'Owl Babies', was used effectively to develop the children's understanding of character, to write a simple story and to paint recognisable pictures of owls. Teaching and learning in this area are good and children achieve well.

### Mathematical development

Provision in mathematical development is good.

### Main strengths

- The children have good knowledge of numbers and counting
- Activities are practical and fun so all of the children take part willingly
- The children are presented with many good challenges that make them think

### Commentary

41. Adults plan many good opportunities for the children to count and use numbers in their play. As a result, nearly all already count confidently to twelve. During role-play in the library, the children confidently read the date stamp, knowing which number represents the day and year. 'What's the time Mr Wolf?' is used as a starting point for the children to get a sense of the passing of time. Regular challenges are set and this keeps the children engaged in their work and develops well their persistence and concentration. This was demonstrated when a small group of children were seeing how many beads they could thread in a minute. A good range of activities is planned over the year and these are usually linked to the current topic. This includes measuring and shape work activities that are ongoing in other areas, such as sand and water play. Linking areas of learning together adds purpose and meaning to tasks. Teaching and learning are good and children's achievement in mathematics is good.

### Example of outstanding practice

**'The Yellow Bucket Game' is a simple game that helped to develop a range of mathematical skills because it was fun and kept the children engrossed throughout.**

The children were excited about this game from the start because the adult introduced it with considerable suspense. An egg timer was used to time how long it took for the children to collect as many different yellow things as possible for the bucket. Off went the first two children, busily collecting as many things as they could in the time. Others were kept engaged by counting off the seconds as the sand ran through the timer. When time was up, the bucket was emptied and a very simple '*I wonder whether the instructions were followed correctly*' encouraged the children to make sure that all objects were yellow and different from each other.

The accepted objects were counted before the same children were challenged to put them back in the correct place before the sand ran through again. Nine were left and this was recorded on the white board along with their names before the next pair was challenged to repeat the game. Counting accurately to sixty, feeling the length of a minute, taking away and recording names and numbers were a few skills that were developed alongside the numerous personal development skills during this very simple activity.

### **Knowledge and understanding of the world**

Provision in knowledge and understanding of the world is good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Learning is linked under a topic heading and this helps children's learning well
- Occasionally, the emphasis is on the children learning too much knowledge rather than developing their learning skills
- Visits to places of interest bring learning to life.

### **Commentary**

42. During their time in the Foundation Stage, children learn a full range of information about the world in which they live. Learning is organised very well so that activities in one area are linked to another. Visits take place regularly and these help children to remember what they have learnt because their learning is linked closely to real life. Occasionally, too much emphasis is given to the children learning facts rather than developing skills. For example, during the inspection, the children learnt what nocturnal meant through their discussions and observations about a range of animals that sleep in the day and come out at night. There was a missed opportunity to compare the features of these animals and develop their observational skills further. Many children use the computer independently to listen to a favourite story or play a favourite game. Good opportunities are planned for the children to build and construct using a range of materials, giving thought to their finished models. Teaching and learning are good overall. These help children achieve well.

### **Physical development**

Provision in physical development is good.

### **Main strengths**

- A daily session in the hall provides very good opportunity to develop a range of physical skills
- The outside is used regularly to help develop the children's balancing, running, crawling and climbing skills
- Children's hand and finger manipulative skills are developed very well

### **Commentary**

43. Children are given very good opportunity to choose to take part in a daily physical development activity due to the creative way the day is organised. Activities in the hall are used to develop a range of skills including balancing, crawling and climbing on the apparatus, developing an awareness of space and moving in different ways at different speeds on the floor. This helps children develop an understanding of their own and others' safety. On occasions, their ideas are not used often enough to enable them to show off some of the other things they can do. When the weather is fine, activities are continued outdoors and this gives children a good sense of adventure as they tackle the obstacle course or ride around a track on tricycles. Drawing, writing and cutting skills are developed very well due to the wide range of making and writing activities that are organised throughout the day. As a result, nearly all children achieve well and have a suitable pencil grip, use brushes confidently to paint and scissors to cut around simple shapes accurately. Teaching and learning are good overall.

### **Creative development**

Provision in creative development is good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The children are very confident artists
- Role-play is used effectively to help develop the children's imaginations
- Occasionally, some activities are too structured and directed by adults

### **Commentary**

44. Children have very good opportunity to develop their artistic skills. Consequently, they mix colours with paint and are confident to express an opinion whether it is the colour they want in their paintings. Children have created a very colourful ribbon weaving in the fence

outside. During the inspection, they evaluated for themselves whether they had correctly threaded the ribbon over and under in the right places.

45. At times, learning is too structured and the children's ideas are not used enough to add to their learning. This limits the opportunity for them to respond in their own way to different stimuli, for example, when taking part in some musical activities and by planning which materials to use in their creative work. Imaginative play is developed well through role-play. Currently the role-play area is a bedroom and this links learning well with their topic, 'Time'. The children enjoy dressing up in pyjamas and slippers and pretending to go to bed, showing off their good habits of sharing a story at bedtime together before dropping off to sleep. Children achieve well in this area because the teaching and learning are good.

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

### **ENGLISH**

Provision in English is good.

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

- Pupils achieve well overall in reading and writing because the teaching is good. Standards in speaking are not as high as those in reading and writing
- Pupils with special educational needs achieve very well
- Good opportunities are provided for pupils to write in other subjects
- Pupils' achievement is checked systematically by the school and suitable plans are put in place to correct any weaknesses that are identified

#### **Commentary**

46. Overall, the achievement of pupils is good and standards are well above nationally expected levels. Higher-attaining pupils achieve well overall, but standards in boys' writing at the higher levels are not as high as their reading. The school is aware of this and has had a strong focus on writing over the past year and is trying to close the gap between boys' standards in reading and writing. Pupils with special educational needs achieve very well overall. Standards in speaking are not as high as reading and writing because pupils are not given enough opportunities to practise these skills.
47. The teaching of reading is systematic and effective and this leads to pupils learning well. Pupils enjoy reading throughout the school and they have plenty of opportunities to read using books from the school or class libraries. In Year 3, a small group of pupils was taught well how to find out information from non-fiction texts by using the contents page, index and glossary of a book. The information gained was put to practical use the following day when pupils were asked to write about teeth. Pupils achieved well in this task because they had been well prepared by their teacher the day before. Year 6 children talk confidently about their reading habits and express clearly their preferences in books and the reasons for them.
48. Over the past two years, the school has been concentrating with some success on improving writing. Pupils make good progress in this activity overall because every opportunity is taken to encourage them to consolidate and extend their writing skills in other subjects. This gives pupils more encouragement to write for different purposes in different contexts and this motivates them to write with enthusiasm and interest. Teachers plan the teaching of writing well. During the inspection for example, pupils in Year 1 were thinking about the setting for a story before writing what they saw and felt. By contrast, Year 6 pupils were analysing the witches' spell from Macbeth in preparation for writing their

own spells. Pupils have good opportunities for non-fiction writing. For example, they write letters and reports in a newspaper style.

49. The teaching of listening is good and of speaking is satisfactory. Pupils have good opportunities to listen and act on what they are hearing, but they do not have enough opportunities to speak at length. In the introduction to lessons, teachers ask questions that can be answered very briefly, sometimes with just one word. Some questions do not need an extended answer and do not give pupils sufficient opportunity to develop their thinking. In addition, teachers do not provide pupils with enough opportunities to develop an argument and amend their thinking when others make a different point, such as through class discussions and debates. Standards in listening are above expected levels and achievement is good. Standards in speaking are at expected levels and achievement is satisfactory.
50. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. Pupils know what they are to learn in each lesson and lessons are well planned. Introductions to lessons are clear. For example, in a Year 5 lesson, the teacher explained clearly how to write a complex sentence so that pupils felt confident in using complex sentences in their writing. Pupils listen carefully to their teachers and eagerly do what is asked of them. However, occasionally, introductions to lessons last too long and pupils lose interest. Pupils with special educational needs are taught very well and they make very good progress in their work.
51. Leadership and management are good overall. The subject co-ordinator analyses the results from assessments very well. These are recorded very well and enable the strengths and weaknesses of the subject to be analysed clearly. The school carries out termly assessments in writing and, from these, individual learning targets for pupils are set. These help pupils to know what they need to do to improve and this helps them achieve very well. Governors are kept well informed about the strengths and weaknesses in English by the subject co-ordinator. However, the school has not identified improvement in speaking as a weakness. Provision in English has improved since the last inspection.

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

52. The school provides pupils with good opportunities to practise and improve their skills in language and literacy in other subjects. Pupils write accounts of their investigations in science and of their learning in religious education and history. In a Year 2 lesson, pupils were learning how to use bullet points through work done on electricity. In Year 4, pupils were writing instructions on how to make chapattis that they had made as part of their work in religious education. Year 6 pupils have written accounts of different events that occurred during the Tudor period.

### **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is good.

#### **Main strengths**

- Pupils' achievement is good throughout the school and standards are well above expected levels
- Teachers and teaching assistants provide very good help for pupils and, as a result, they learn well
- The school monitors and uses its data very well and takes effective action to maintain very high standards

## Commentary

53. Inspection findings indicate that standards in all aspects of mathematics are well above expectations. Pupils start school with above average standards in mathematics. They achieve well throughout the school and leave with standards that are well above average. In fact, in the 2004 National Curriculum tests, standards compared with other schools were in the top five per cent of schools nationally. This is because the school analyses pupils' results very systematically and is successful in continually seeking ways of raising standards where they are not high enough. For example, the school has recently emphasised the need to raise standards of higher-attaining pupils. In last year's National Curriculum tests in Year 6, over two thirds of pupils successfully reached the higher level of attainment. The school has also emphasised improving the achievement of pupils with special educational needs and, in these same tests, nearly all of these pupils, although not reaching the nationally expected standards, attained very high standards given their abilities.
54. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers have high levels of expertise and teach the subject very effectively pitched at challenging levels for pupils of different levels of ability. For example, in a Year 6 lesson, the teacher asked the higher-attaining pupils to draw shapes from a given number of statements. On one occasion, they were asked to draw two lines that bisected each other at ninety degrees and then draw the resulting quadrilateral. They found this work difficult but, nonetheless, interesting and enjoyable. Most succeeded in their tasks. In Year 2, pupils, including lower-attaining pupils, were learning all about the number four. They counted up in fours, carried out tasks in four minutes and cut out quarters from a square piece of paper. Lower-attaining pupils found these activities difficult, but they completed them successfully because of the good help they received from their teacher and teaching assistant.
55. Many tasks planned for pupils include practical activities. In Year 1, sometimes pupils stand in a line and hold up numbers in the correct place. On other occasions, they act as frogs jumping over imaginary lilies on a pond as they count the jumps they make. They often use cubes or counters to help them count on and back. They regularly use whiteboards at the beginning of lessons to help them record answers to questions their teachers are asking. Pupils enjoy mathematics and listen attentively to their teachers and teaching assistants, who, in their turn, manage pupils' behaviour well.
56. Teachers mark and assess pupils' work very well. They set learning targets for pupils that are reviewed on a regular basis. These targets are linked to the yearly targets that have been set following their end-of-year national tests and assessments. These motivate pupils because they know what they need to do to improve and reach higher standards. Teaching is closely linked to the targets that have been set and pupils achieve well. Standards rise as a result.
57. Two weaknesses in the teaching were noted. On a few occasions, pupils were not given enough opportunities to use their initiative and work independently when they were capable of doing so. A few whole class teaching sessions lasted too long and some pupils lost their concentration. On these occasions, pupils did not achieve as much as they could.
58. Leadership and management of mathematics are good. Through systematic monitoring and evaluation of lessons, pupils' work and teachers' plans, the school knows the strengths and weaknesses in the teaching and standards in mathematics. Very good plans are put into place to improve provision and raise standards in the subject, and these are carried out successfully. Provision has improved since the last inspection.

## Mathematics across the curriculum

59. Mathematics is used well across the curriculum. The data projector and computers in the suite are used very effectively to teach aspects of mathematics. Pupils learn about the chronology of dates in history. In geography, they draw block graphs after carrying out a traffic survey in Ashwell. They learn how to use co-ordinates on maps to identify places or features of interest. In music, pupils count beats as they learn to play instruments.



## SCIENCE

Provision in science is good.

### Main strengths

- Pupils achieve very well in Years 3 to 6
- Lessons are practical so pupils are interested and motivated to learn
- There are good links with other subjects and this makes learning of particular interest to pupils
- Assessment procedures are very good
- Leadership of the subject is very good

### Commentary

60. Standards at the end of Years 2 and 6 are well above average. By the end of Year 2, all pupils get to a level expected of seven-year olds nationally and an average number do better than this. In Years 3 to 6, achievement is very good because a much higher proportion of pupils reach above average standards. This is very good improvement since the previous inspection when achievement of higher-attaining pupils was identified as requiring some improvement. Pupils with special educational needs achieve very well to reach average levels at the end of Years 2 and 6.
61. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers plan work to make sure pupils learn what they should and this often includes a practical task that helps to maintain pupils' interest and motivates them to learn. As a result, pupils are usually fully engaged in what they are doing and concentrate well. Sometimes in Year 1, activities require pupils to complete identical worksheets and when this records what pupils already know, learning is just satisfactory. When these are used to structure learning, pupils are guided well in the task and extend their ideas, for example, when considering the properties of materials and their use. Teaching and learning are very good in Years 3 to 6. Teachers ask a good range of questions to consistently challenge pupils to think about what is happening and why during their investigations. Due to the range of opportunities for pupils to explore and test out scientific questions, by Year 6 pupils design, plan and carry out their own investigations independently. This enables them to develop their investigative skills very well and to understand what they need to do to make their results reliable. Higher-attaining pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 interpret what they have found out and draw appropriate conclusions. This is because they record their results clearly in tables and graphs that make interpreting data easier. Higher-attaining pupils in Year 3 are building very well on their previous learning. The subject co-ordinator takes small groups of Year 3 pupils every week for science so that their learning can be extended. As a result, these pupils have successfully conducted a survey, recorded their findings in a table and drawn good conclusions to support their knowledge about the link between healthy eating and good health.
62. Leadership and management of science are very good and have brought about very good improvement since the previous inspection in the curriculum, assessment and teaching and learning. This has had a positive effect on standards and achievement. Pupils' progress is carefully checked to make sure pupils are doing as well as they should and the information is used well to challenge and support as necessary in lessons. There are good links with other subjects to give learning a purpose and make it more meaningful for pupils. Pupils' work is checked regularly and the information used to write an action plan that focuses suitably on raising standards and achievement.

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

Provision in ICT is good because of the much-improved curriculum, better planning and rising standards.

### **Main strengths**

- Teachers plan work well to help teach a range of subjects and pupils achieve well in their ICT skills as a result
- Standards in Year 1 are well above expected levels. Standards are above expected levels in Year 2
- Teachers plans and pupils' work are monitored well and any weaknesses identified as a result of this are corrected

### **Commentary**

63. Pupils in Year 1 achieve very well and standards are well above the levels expected. They are above expectations in Year 2. Elsewhere in the school, pupils achieve satisfactorily, and, by the end of Year 6, standards are at expected levels in some aspects of ICT. This is because teachers have only recently been following national guidelines for the teaching of ICT and pupils have been taught a curriculum that helps them make consistent progress in the subject. Older pupils have not been taught some aspects of ICT and hence their standards are lower as a consequence.
64. Teaching and learning are good, and, on occasions, very good. Teachers and teaching assistants help pupils well when they are stuck and this helps them learn well. This prevents pupils from worrying about their work when the computer does not do what they expect. At best, teachers ask pupils to think about what they need to do to carry on successfully with their work. By working calmly through problems, pupils learn to think carefully when they are using computers in order that they do what they wish them to do. This occurred during a Year 1 lesson when the teacher successfully asked one pupil to explain to one of her classmates what needed to be done to cut and paste a picture. This encouraged the pupil who was stuck to ask her friend again to help her when she became stuck a little later in the lesson and, in this way, she got on with her work well. Teachers make good use of the data projector and Internet when illustrating teaching points to the class. Pupils can see easily and clearly the points being made and this helps them when it is their turn to carry on with their work. Two weaknesses were noted in the teaching during the inspection. In one lesson, higher-attaining pupils were not set work that challenged them enough. In another lesson, a few pupils acted in an immature way and became too excitable and chatty.
65. Leadership and management are good. Pupils' work is analysed and teachers' plans are looked at. From this monitoring, the school identifies the strengths and weaknesses in standards and teaching. This is reported to governors and plans are devised to improve provision and standards in the subject. These are being successful because provision has improved since the last inspection and standards, particularly of the younger pupils, are higher than they were at that time.

## Information and communication technology across the curriculum

66. Teachers plan the use of computers well when teaching other subjects. During the inspection, lessons in mathematics, history and art and design were observed using computers. There is evidence in pupils' work that computers are also used in geography. In mathematics, pupils learn how to use calculators and music is played in assemblies using compact discs. The school has plans to extend the use of computers across the curriculum with the purchase of additional hardware that will be installed in classrooms.

## HUMANITIES

67. Not enough evidence was available to judge overall provision in **geography** and **history**. Pupils' work and teachers' plans were inspected, a discussion was held with a group of pupils and one with the subject co-ordinators. The school teaches the National Curriculum as required by law in these subjects. Pupils' work in history from Years 3 to 6 indicates that standards are at expected levels in these years. Not enough work was available to judge standards in history in Years 1 and 2 or in geography throughout the school. Teachers' plans indicate that pupils go on a number of visits to help them learn about geographical and historical topics. For example, they use visits around Ashwell to understand where places are located on maps and plans of the village. Pupils visit museums when learning about the past, for instance, they visit the museum in Ashwell and the British Museum. Pupils enjoy learning about other places at home and abroad, such as about features of Australia, Ghana and Chembakolli in southern India. They are fascinated to learn about past life in Ashwell when listening to an elderly resident. The subject co-ordinators monitor the strengths and weaknesses in standards and teaching from analysing pupils' work and teachers' plans. From these analyses, appropriate plans for further developments in the subjects have been devised. These include assessing pupils' work against standards in the National Curriculum.
68. No lesson was observed in **religious education** and evidence was therefore gathered through a discussion with the subject co-ordinator, an analysis of teachers' plans and by inspecting displays in classrooms. The displays indicated that a variety of other religions are studied across the school, many of them with links to other subjects, such as literacy, geography and art and design. For example, Year 6 pupils are studying Buddhism and, by looking at where the religion is practised, linking it with geography. The subject co-ordinator provides teachers with good advice about what to teach and which resources to use.

## CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

69. Only one lesson was observed in **art and design** and none in **design and technology** so no judgment was made about overall provision in these subjects. Inspectors looked at pupils' work, talked to them about what they had done and looked at teachers' planning. ICT is used effectively to support learning in both subjects. Standards in **art and design** are above average at the end of Year 2 and well above average at the end of Year 6. The range of work seen is very wide and supplemented very well by the weekly craft club. Pupils enjoy art and design and say it is their favourite subject. It is easy to see why. As one pupil put it, *'I like art because you can let your imagination run away with you'*. This reflects the freedom pupils get to express themselves through a range of media including collage, clay, paint, pastels, papier mache and fabrics. This very rich curriculum is provided due to the very good leadership and management of the subject. Too little evidence was available to make a judgment about standards, achievement, teaching and learning in **design and technology**. The Pandora's boxes in Year 5 and purses in Year 4 indicate that the curriculum is good. Pupils develop the appropriate skills to design, make and evaluate a

range of objects and models. They talked about the range of activities they covered. These included their moving vehicles and pictures and their cooking experiences in which they considered how to improve the taste and texture of the food they made.

70. One lesson was observed in **physical education** and therefore it is not possible to make judgements about pupils' achievements, the quality of teaching and learning and overall provision in the subject. A discussion was held with the subject co-ordinator and a discussion was also held with pupils. The school has been recently awarded the Sport England Activemark and this indicates good provision in the subject. A recent focus has been on dance and many staff are now more confident in teaching this aspect of the subject. The school provides pupils with good opportunities to learn a range of sports. Pupils talk enthusiastically about the subject and are appreciative of their new physical education equipment.

### **Music**

Provision in music is good.

### **Main strengths**

- Overall, pupils achieve well in music, especially in singing and percussion activities
- Very good opportunities are provided for pupils to learn to play musical instruments
- Non-specialist teachers are provided with good guidance to help them plan lessons

### **Commentary**

71. Pupils achieve well in music and standards are above expected levels throughout the school. Standards are higher in singing, performing and appreciating music than in composing. The subject co-ordinator is passionate about the subject and, as a result, standards remain high as they were in the last inspection.
72. Teaching and learning are good overall. The quality of teaching is good when the subject co-ordinator is teaching. Pupils enjoy these lessons and are motivated by her informal approach to teaching. For example, pupils report that, in some lessons, the subject co-ordinator sings instructions to them and they find this amusing and listen carefully as a result. In a Year 5 music lesson taught by the subject co-ordinator, standards were above expected levels because the level of challenge was high and all pupils were actively involved in the lesson. When other teachers teach music, the quality of teaching is often not as good as this because, as non-specialists, a number of teachers are not confident in teaching the subject.
73. Leadership and management are good. The subject co-ordinator has devoted a great deal of time to supporting non-specialist staff and has introduced a useful music scheme to help them in their teaching. All pupils are taught by the subject co-ordinator and receive a further music lesson taught by their class teacher. This is a sensible way of making best use of the specialist teaching available at the school. In addition to this, the subject co-ordinator introduces the music played during assemblies and this helps pupils to appreciate music from different cultures around the world.
74. A significant number of pupils have opportunities to learn to play a range of brass, woodwind and stringed instruments. A number of pupils learn to play the piano. The level of this provision is very good. Teachers use the pupils who are learning to play instruments well in their lessons to add variety to what is being taught. The school offers pupils a wide range of extra-curricular activities in music. Pupils talk enthusiastically about music clubs and the Christmas productions in which they have taken part. The school takes part in the Ashwell Music Festival during which music from around the world has been highlighted.

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

75. There is too little evidence to make a judgement about provision in **personal, social and health education and citizenship**. Inspectors looked at pupils' work and talked to pupils and their teachers. This indicates that standards are above average and pupils achieve well. Overall, the school provides a good programme to develop pupils' personal, social and health education. This is enriched through visits and visitors who add specific expertise and contribute well to raising pupils' awareness of social issues including drugs, smoking and sex and relationships education. These topics are dealt with sensitively and help pupils to become mature young people by the time they leave at the end of Year 6. Celebrations of achievements take place regularly and these help to raise the self-esteem of pupils. In recognition of its commitment to leading a healthy lifestyle, the school has been awarded the Sports England Activemark.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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