

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **BEECHWOOD PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Runcorn, Cheshire

LEA area: Halton

Unique reference number: 111175

Headteacher: Mrs L Finn

Lead inspector: Paula Allison

Dates of inspection: 7<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup> March 2005

Inspection number: 266399

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:	104
School address:	Grasmere Drive Beechwood Runcorn Cheshire
Postcode:	WA7 2TT
Telephone number:	01928 560479
Fax number:	01928 574813
Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr D Knight
Date of previous inspection:	18 <sup>th</sup> January 1999

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This is a small community school with 104 boys and girls aged four to eleven on roll. Pupils are taught in four mixed-age classes. The school is smaller than it was at the last inspection, as a result of a local education authority strategy for coping with a reduction of children in the area. The school is situated in the residential area of Beechwood, near Runcorn, and serves the local area. However, half of the pupils come from a distance, often from more socially deprived areas of Runcorn. Therefore the socio-economic circumstances of families vary greatly, but are broadly average overall. Free school meal eligibility is five per cent, which is below average. The percentage of pupils joining the school during the school year is broadly average, but can vary from year to year. For example, there have been numbers of pupils joining the older classes in the last few years. Attainment on entry varies quite considerably from year to year, but is broadly average overall.

The school has 10 children in the Foundation Stage, who are taught in a mixed reception and Year 1 class. All pupils are of white British ethnic background. There are currently no pupils for whom English is not the home language. Around 30 per cent of pupils have been identified as having special educational needs, which is above the national average. Three of these have statements of educational need. Most of the special educational needs are moderate or specific learning difficulties, but a few have social, emotional and behavioural difficulties.

There has been an almost complete turnover of teaching staff since the last inspection, including a new headteacher and deputy headteacher. The school has had a turbulent few years, with threats of closure and redundancies, school refurbishment, changes in staffing and some long-term staff absences. The school gained the Artsmark in 2003 and a Healthy School Award in 2004.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
21420	Paula Allison	Lead inspector	English Religious education Geography History English as an additional language
19698	David Hirons	Lay inspector	
17877	Christine Ingham	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Art and design Design and technology Special educational needs
25352	Geraldine Taujanskas	Team inspector	Foundation Stage Science Music Physical education

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**This is a good school** providing a good quality of education for its pupils. Pupils make good progress in lessons and achieve well during their time in the school. The school is well led and managed and gives good value for money.

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

- The headteacher provides purposeful leadership; in a short time the deputy headteacher has had a very positive impact on the school's development.
- There is a strong team of staff who challenge, care for and support pupils very well.
- In 2004 standards in Year 2 and Year 6 were well above average and well above those of similar schools.
- Although the curriculum for the under fives is well planned, children are not always sufficiently supported in their learning; they do not achieve as well as others in the school.
- Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are above average; pupils and teachers use ICT well to enhance teaching and learning.
- Pupils enjoy school and work hard.
- Links with parents are very good; parents support the school very well.
- The quality of pupils' handwriting and presentation of their work is not as good as it could be.

Improvement since the last inspection has been good. All issues from the last inspection have been addressed, with particularly good improvements made to ICT, assessment, school development planning and links with parents. Improvements have also been made to the curriculum and to teachers' planning, which have had a positive impact on achievement. Refurbishment of the school building has made the school into a pleasant place to learn.

The school has been through an unsettled period, with many changes in staffing. The school is now much more stable, has improved well and has the potential to move forward even further in the coming years.

### 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	D	A	A
mathematics	A	C	C	C
science	A	C	A	A*

*Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average (A\* very high) Similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 2.*

**Achievement is good.** In common with all small schools, standards tend to fluctuate from year to year, as the performance of one or two pupils makes a significant impact on overall results. However, pupils achieve well from their starting point. In the 2004 national tests, standards in Year 6 were well above average in English and science and average in mathematics. Compared with similar schools, pupils had made very good progress from what they had attained in Year 2. Currently pupils are on course to reach average standards, but this represents good achievement from their prior attainment levels.

In 2004, standards in Year 2 in reading, writing and mathematics were well above average overall and well above those in similar schools. Currently pupils in Year 2 are also on course to reach

average standards, but this will be good achievement from their starting point. Attainment on entry to the reception class varies considerably from year to year. Currently children in the reception class achieve satisfactorily and most are on course to reach the goals children are expected reach by the end of reception, although there are some weaknesses in personal, social and emotional development. Standards in other subjects inspected are broadly in line with expectations. However, standards in ICT are particularly high and are above what is expected. Pupils use ICT skills well to support their learning in other subjects. Although pupils are now achieving much better in writing, their handwriting is not as good as it could be. Nor do they present their work well.

**Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are good.** Attendance is good. Pupils' attitudes are very good. They are attentive and responsive in lessons. They are keen to learn and work hard on the tasks that they have been given to do. Behaviour is good. Provision for pupils' personal development is good.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The quality of education provided by the school is good. The quality of teaching is good.** All teaching is at least satisfactory; much of it is good; a high percentage is very good or excellent. There are particular strengths in the Year 5/6 class. Teachers plan very effectively for the range of pupils in their classes, so pupils of all ages and abilities work at an appropriate level and make good progress. Teachers use a range of teaching methods and use resources, especially ICT, effectively. As a result, pupils are interested and apply themselves well. Teaching in the reception year is good, but learning is only satisfactory, as children are not always effectively supported. Assessment is good and much improved from the last inspection.

The curriculum is good. It is well planned and a wide range of enrichment activities and experiences is provided. Pupils are cared for very well. Health and safety procedures are rigorous. The school's partnership with parents is very good.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**Leadership and management are good.** The headteacher provides strong leadership and a clear sense of purpose. She is very ably supported by the deputy head, who has very effectively led curriculum developments and helped to raise expectations. After an unsettled period, there is now a strong team of effective and hard-working teachers and support staff, who are all keen to move the school forward. Governors are committed to the school and support its development well. The school complies with statutory requirements.

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

Parents are very supportive of the school and have positive views of it. They are particularly happy with the progress their children make, the quality of the teaching, the high expectations of staff and the good range of activities provided. A few parents do not feel comfortable with approaching the school, but this is not the view of the vast majority of parents and the inspection team could not substantiate these few concerns. Pupils are happy with their school. They particularly like being with their friends and feel their teachers are kind and give them interesting things to do. School trips are liked very much.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- Improve pupils' handwriting and the quality of the way in which pupils present their work
- Ensure the under fives in the reception class are more effectively supported in their learning.

## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

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

Achievement is good in Years 1 and 2 and in Years 3 to 6. Achievement in the reception year is satisfactory. Standards in Year 2 and Year 6 are average.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well from their starting points
- Standards in tests last year were well above average and better than those in similar schools
- Standards are currently average, but this represents good achievement for these pupils
- Standards in ICT and design and technology are particularly high
- Achievement in the reception year is satisfactory and could be better than this
- Handwriting and presentation skills are weak

#### Commentary

1. In common with most small schools, standards tend to fluctuate from year to year. With such small numbers in a year group, the performance of one or two pupils can have a very significant impact on the overall results. Also the percentage of pupils with special educational needs is high in some classes and this has an impact on the overall standards. Overall however, standards are on an upward trend and were particularly high last year in the 2004 national tests.
2. Pupils achieve well, given their prior attainment levels. Achievement is better than it was at the last inspection. The high expectations of the headteacher, the enthusiasm of the deputy headteacher and improvements to teachers' planning have all helped to ensure that pupils are challenged and achieve consistently well through most of the school. Boys can seem to be achieving less well than girls, especially in Years 1 and 2, but this is mainly because of more boys having special educational needs than girls. Parents are very happy with the progress their children make in school.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	28.5 (26.3)	26.9 (26.8)
mathematics	27.0 (27.0)	27.0 (26.8)
science	31.0 (29.0)	28.6 (28.6)

*There were 12 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

3. Standards in Year 6 national tests in 2004 in English and science were well above average; in mathematics standards were average. Virtually all pupils reached the expected levels in all subjects, and in English and science a high percentage reached levels higher than this. The school's own targets were achieved or exceeded, except in mathematics where a few pupils did not reach the higher levels expected of them. These were good results in terms of standards, but more significantly they showed that these pupils had made very good progress from Year 2. The value added was well above that in similar schools and reflected some very good achievement. Currently pupils in Year 6 are working at expected levels and are on course to attain average standards. However, this will represent good achievement, given the prior attainment levels of this particular year group. The school has set challenging targets



and, with the very good quality of teaching in the Year 5/6 class, they look set to achieve them.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	16.5 (15.8)	15.8 (15.7)
writing	16.3 (13.3)	14.6 (14.6)
mathematics	18.5 (14.2)	16.2 (16.3)

*There were 12 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

4. Standards in Year 2 national tests in 2004 in reading were above average; in writing and mathematics they were well above average. Standards compared very well with those attained by pupils in similar schools. Again, virtually all pupils reached the expected levels and a high percentage reached levels above this. These standards were a marked improvement from previous years and from the last inspection. The trend of improvement here is above the national trend. Currently pupils are working at expected levels and, as only a few are likely to reach higher levels, standards overall are on course to be average. This is still good achievement, given the starting point of this particular year group.
5. Although achievement in writing has improved, pupils they do not achieve as fluent a style of handwriting as might be expected. It is also noticeable that in other subjects, such as science, presentation skills are weak.
6. Attainment on entry to the school varies quite considerably from one year to the next and there are often a number of children with weak language and social skills. But overall, attainment on entry is broadly average. Children in the Foundation Stage are taught in a mixed reception and Year 1 class, which can cause some difficulties in terms of planning. Currently limitations in adult support mean that the reception children in the class, although achieving satisfactorily, could actually make more progress. Most children are on course to reach the goals children are expected to reach by the end of reception. There are some weaknesses, however, in personal, social and emotional development.
7. Standards in other subjects are broadly in line with what is expected. However, standards in ICT and design and technology are above what is expected. These are strengths of the school. The standards in ICT are a considerable improvement from the last inspection, when achievement was unsatisfactory and standards were below average. The school has put a lot of effort into provision for ICT and has been very successful. Now all teachers are confident and use ICT to enhance their teaching. Pupils gain skills and use ICT across the curriculum to support their learning.
8. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress and achieve well over time because of the good provision and the school's commitment to meeting the needs of each individual pupil. The good teaching, guidance and support from adults enable these pupils to succeed in their learning and also boost their self-esteem. Pupils do well in meeting their targets in their individual education plans, although their attainment remains low. Staff take great care to differentiate between pupils with learning needs and those with behavioural difficulties and ensure that all of them achieve well. As a result of better planning of work and higher expectations, more able pupils are well challenged and they achieve well.

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

Pupils' attitudes are very good and behaviour is good. Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good. Attendance and punctuality are good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils are keen to learn and enjoy all aspects of school life
- Attendance is well above national average
- Pupils' personal development is good and contributes well to a pleasant learning environment
- Provision for pupils' cultural development has improved considerably since the last inspection
- The behaviour of a minority of pupils can occasionally have a negative effect on learning in lessons

### **Commentary**

9. A number of children enter the reception class with weak social and personal skills. They usually make good progress in developing these skills during the reception year. However, currently there is insufficient support for these children and many have not yet learnt to share, take turns or co-operate with each other. They are not all on course to reach the expected goals in personal, social and emotional development that children are expected to reach by the end of the reception year.
10. This is not usually the case and in the rest of the school attitudes are very good. In lessons, pupils are attentive and quickly become involved in their tasks. They are responsive, asking and answering questions and volunteering opinions. They want to do well and they are motivated by teachers' encouragement and praise. Pupils' good attendance at the variety of extra-curricular clubs illustrates their enthusiasm for school life.
11. The school has clear guidelines to promote good behaviour and adults have high expectations of how the pupils should behave. These help pupils to behave well, both in lessons and around school, and have a clear understanding of the difference between right and wrong. There were no exclusions during the year prior to the inspection. Most pupils behave responsibly at all times and the school has a calm atmosphere, conducive to learning. There have been considerable improvements in behaviour and attitudes since the last inspection, mainly due to the higher expectations of the leadership of the school and the more consistent approach to promoting good behaviour. However, there are a few pupils, often those with special educational needs, who find it difficult to concentrate and behave like the others. This is very well managed by teachers, but occasionally it can impact negatively on the learning in lessons.
12. Most pupils with special educational needs have very positive attitudes towards learning because the staff ensure they can access activities by either giving additional adult support, providing resources or adapting the learning. The pupils develop a positive image and show confidence in class. Sympathetic but consistent methods of support help these pupils to overcome their anxieties. The staff respond to pupils with social and behavioural problems very calmly and sensitively and they have good relationships with pupils which helps pupils to develop an understanding of what is acceptable.
13. The school recognises that most pupils always behave well and work hard and have recently introduced a system of sending letters home each half term highlighting pupils' achievements and efforts. This provides a good opportunity for parents to share in their child's success at school. The vast majority of parents, through the questionnaire and parents' meeting, expressed the view that their children behaved well in school.

14. Provision for pupils' personal development is good. Religious education and personal, social, health and citizenship education lessons make a positive contribution to pupils' personal development. The school has worked hard and successfully to promote pupils' cultural development, which was a weakness in the last inspection. Excellence weeks, including multicultural and music days, have been very effective in enhancing pupils' learning in both cultural and social development. The recent whole school topic on Africa has captured the imagination of pupils and all who are involved with the school, including parents. An extended number of after-school clubs, particularly in sport, give pupils the chance to work as a team and to play against other schools within the local community, thus developing social skills further.
15. The school has some very good systems for promoting and monitoring pupils' attendance and punctuality. Parents co-operate well with the school in ensuring that their children attend regularly and punctually. Consequently pupils' attendance is well above average and this has a positive impact on pupils' learning.

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

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	4.3	School data	0.0
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.*

**QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL**

The quality of education provided by the school is good. Teaching and learning and the curriculum are good. Pupils are very well cared for and the partnership with parents is very good.

**Teaching and learning**

The quality of teaching is good. The quality of learning is good in Years 1 and 2 and in Years 3 to 6; it is satisfactory in the reception year. Assessment is good.

**Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teachers plan very effectively for the range of pupils in their classes, enabling them all to make progress
- Teachers use resources imaginatively; pupils are interested in lessons and apply themselves well
- Skills of literacy and numeracy are taught very well
- Learning in the reception class is not well supported
- Teachers successfully use information from assessment in their planning, but do not as yet sufficiently involve pupils themselves in evaluating their own learning

**Commentary**

**Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 21 lessons**

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
2	7	9	3	0	0	0

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

16. All the teaching in the school is at least satisfactory; much of it is good and a high percentage is very good or excellent. There are particular strengths in the quality and effectiveness of teaching in the Year 5/6 class. The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection. The leadership of the school has effectively monitored and supported teaching and this has had a positive impact on consistency through the school. There is now a higher quality of teaching through the school; there are higher expectations and much more effective planning. This has had a considerable impact on the achievement of pupils. Teachers are enthusiastic and they work hard to bring the best to their pupils. They support each other and create a purposeful learning environment. Parents are very confident with the quality of teaching their children receive and pupils themselves are happy in their classes.
17. Teaching for the reception children is good, but the learning does not always match this because of a lack of adult support. The teacher plans carefully and provides an appropriate range of activities for the children. She teaches very well during class sessions, ensuring that all the children are involved. However, she often lacks the support she needs in order to enable all children to get the most from the activities provided. This is particularly the case currently when there are a number of children who have not yet learnt to work independently or co-operatively.
18. All teachers plan their lessons very effectively. They have a wide range of ages and abilities in their classes and they cope with these not inconsiderable demands very well. Planning is meticulous and takes into account individual needs. Teachers tailor the work they give pupils to do so that it matches their attainment levels. As a result, all pupils are able to work at an appropriate level, with the right amount of support and challenge, and they make good progress in lessons. Planning with learning objectives has been a focus for the school and the result is lessons with a clear purpose based on what pupils are to learn.
19. All pupils are included in lessons, often by very skilful and effective questioning which allows individual pupils to take part in class discussions. Pupils with special educational needs receive very good support from teachers and support staff. In lessons, questions are often targeted to ensure the less confident pupils can participate and help them to feel included in class activities. Pupils also receive very good support in group working time and this is one of the main factors that help pupils to achieve. Pupils greatly benefit from the additional support from the special needs teaching assistant. The support is of a very high standard and has a significant influence on pupils' responses to the task.
20. The skills of literacy and numeracy are taught very well. Teachers have a secure knowledge of the skills needed and a clear understanding of how pupils learn. They plan their lessons very effectively, making sure that there are opportunities for all pupils to contribute and explain their thinking. This helps pupils to consolidate their learning and be ready to move onto the next step. Tasks are carefully explained and are just at the right level to ensure that pupils can get on and the teacher is free to carry out some focused work with one group. When they are available, teachers also use adults well to support groups and individuals and help their learning.
21. Teachers use resources very well to make lessons relevant and interesting and, as a result, pupils are responsive and apply themselves well. Teachers are particularly good at using ICT to enhance their teaching. They have gained a confidence in using interactive whiteboards that is impressive and certainly adds much to the teaching and learning. They use these on a daily basis to help them convey ideas and involve pupils in making things happen. They also use them to add a dimension to lessons that would not otherwise be there. In a religious education lesson in the youngest class, the teacher used digital photographs from an actual baptism in order to involve pupils in the Christian event. Meanwhile in a literacy lesson in the oldest class, the teacher used a video clip to encourage pupils to involve themselves in characterisation.

22. Assessment is good and is much improved from the last inspection, when it was a key issue. Teachers carefully assess what pupils have achieved and use this information in their planning. This is a major reason why their planning is so effective. Pupils are confident that teachers show them how to make their work better. The marking of work is effective, as it not only gives pupils encouragement, but also some idea about how to improve. Learning objectives for lessons are shared with pupils, but they are not yet very 'child friendly', so that pupils can identify with them. Neither are they used at the end of lessons for pupils to evaluate what they have learnt. The school is aware that this is the next stage in the assessment process.

### **The curriculum**

The school provides a good curriculum which meets the needs of all pupils. The range of opportunities to enrich the pupils' learning is very good. The accommodation and resources are good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Curriculum development and innovation are very good
- Enrichment of the curriculum is provided by visits, visitors and innovations
- Pupils with special educational needs receive a good quality of education
- The refurbished school building enhances the learning environment
- There are weaknesses in the organisation and management of the reception class curriculum

### **Commentary**

23. The curriculum meets the requirements of the National Curriculum in all respects and promotes the school's efforts to improve achievement. The school is committed to continuous curriculum innovation and development. Staff have worked together, with effective guidance from the headteacher and deputy headteacher, to develop an innovative curriculum. There is a strong commitment to ensuring the curriculum is structured, but strongly reflects the principles of 'excellence and enjoyment'.
24. Much thought has been given to developing the curriculum to promote pupils' thinking skills and a high emphasis on learning through real situations when possible. A good example involved pupils applying for the post as the school website manager by writing a genuine application for a real position. The school seeks to provide 'Education with Character' and many initiatives show this is developing. These include 'Excellence Weeks' involving the whole school. The very good range of work on display reflects the success of the Multicultural Theme Week. There is a high level of commitment from subject co-ordinators to support the implementation of innovations in their own subjects. Teachers have recently reviewed curricular provision and looked for ways to link subjects together to promote meaningful learning experiences for the pupils. The commitment to develop ICT across subjects is a strength of the curriculum.
25. The school plans successfully to meet the needs of pupils in mixed-age classes. The headteacher and staff are totally committed to ensuring all pupils have access to the curriculum provided, including those with special educational needs. This is evident in the full integration of pupils in classroom activities. Planning very carefully takes account of their individual needs and teachers prepare activities relevant to their stage of learning. In addition resources to engage the interest of pupils with special educational needs have been purchased.
26. Currently the curriculum for the reception year children is not as good as it is in the rest of the school. Because of a small number of children in the reception year, the school has had to make a mixed class of reception children and Year 1 pupils. A lot of thought has gone into

how to organise the curriculum for this situation and the teacher has worked very hard to ensure that what she has planned meets the needs of the different ages and abilities. Potentially the curriculum is good, but the teacher does not have adequate support to implement it fully, so children do not always get the best from it.

27. The good planning for exciting and interesting learning opportunities, such as out-of-school visits and visits by experts to work with the pupils, adds richness to the curriculum. There are many opportunities for pupils to perform and develop their creative skills through the arts and drama.
28. The school is now housed in a recently refurbished building which meets the needs of the curriculum. The infant area has a soft play outside area to enhance outdoor activity. Since the last inspection the provision of an ICT suite, interactive whiteboards and an increased range of software has improved the curriculum and had a positive impact on pupils' achievement. The school is well maintained and attractive displays show the wide range of enrichment activities.

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

The care, guidance and support for pupils are good. The provision for pupils' health and safety is very good. Involvement of pupils in the work of the school is good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Health and safety procedures are rigorous and all staff are vigilant in their care of pupils
- The good and trusting relationships, inherent throughout the school, enable staff and pupils to work well together
- The monitoring and evaluation procedures for tracking pupils' achievements are good
- The school council works effectively in promoting pupils' views to staff
- Induction arrangements for children into reception are good

### **Commentary**

29. The strong and caring relationships between all staff in school provide an ethos in which pupils are well cared for, valued and supported. As a result, pupils feel secure, are eager to attend and are very keen to learn. Pupils confirm in their questionnaires their willingness to seek advice when experiencing difficulties.
30. Child protection procedures are secure. Information relating to the school's policies and procedures and the named, designated person are clearly indicated in the handbook available to all staff. The procedures for monitoring and recording health and safety are rigorously applied. The direct involvement and particular expertise of the governing body ensure the safety, health and welfare for the whole school community. The high profile given to health and safety, for example during the current refurbishment of the roof, enables the school to function safely and with minimum disruption.
31. Teachers know and value pupils and respond well to their personal and academic needs. All staff routinely record, monitor and share information relating to pupils' personal and academic progress. This good practice enables appropriate and timely intervention to be provided for those who are experiencing problems, or those who require additional support with their learning. Analysis of pupils' and parents' questionnaires, and discussions with parents, confirm these positive aspects of the good care and support pupils receive, enabling them to achieve their best.
32. The induction arrangements for children entering reception are good. The 'open school' policy, in particular, enables parents to ensure their children have settled easily and calmly at the start of their school day. Parents are very appreciative of this caring and considerate provision

afforded by all staff. The headteacher and staff make significant efforts to ensure pupils with special educational needs have the guidance and support they need. Their requirements are very carefully assessed and shared with all the staff concerned to ensure these needs are met. The headteacher frequently monitors the quality of the provision and amendments are made when required. Pupils with special educational needs are fully integrated into all school activities.

33. The school council provides an effective voice for all pupils in school. It is directly involved with the Healthy Schools' Award programme, now in the final phase of achieving Full Award status. This ensures all pupils have a voice in areas such as the lunchtime menu, and the 'Tasty Tuck' initiative which provides a healthy nutritional snack for pupils during the morning break. During the inspection, school council members were preparing for their attendance at a regional schools' conference involving some 22 schools, at which the Mayor is to be a guest speaker. Further involvement with external agencies brings many additional benefits for pupils and ensures the council plays an active and valuable part in the life and development of the school.

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

Links with parents are very good. Links with other schools and the community are good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Information to parents is detailed and regular, enabling parents to have a very good understanding of the progress their children are making and events taking place in school and immediate community
- Parents are very supportive of the work of the school, the progress their children are making and their ability to share in their children's education
- The school works effectively with other schools to enhance learning and pupils' personal development opportunities

### **Commentary**

34. The school has worked very effectively to address the weakness in communication identified in the previous inspection report. The quality of information is now very good and provides parents with very detailed knowledge of the progress their children are making, areas in which they can improve and how they can assist with their learning. The parents' workshops, in particular, enabled them to gain a better understanding of some of the work their children were undertaking, for example in literacy and numeracy.
35. Staff have very close contact with parents of pupils with special educational needs on an informal level. In addition, parents are involved in the pupils' twice-yearly reviews. Staff are fully committed to working together with parents and sharing responsibilities. Parents are kept well informed of pupils' progress and when any difficulties are experienced. Parents value the good support the school provides.
36. The school newsletter, 'Partnership News', is a very detailed, bright and lively bulletin containing a plethora of helpful and useful information to parents and carers. It ensures they are very well informed about events taking place in school and within the immediate community. In addition, the improved use of the parents' notice board and introduction of bulletin boards placed within each classroom ensure there is immediate access to a very wide range of helpful information and advice. The school's website has undergone a significant overhaul and now provides an up-to-date range of information for parents and those seeking information when choosing a school for their children. The 'open door' policy enables all parents to gain immediate access to the headteacher at the start and end of the school day.

37. The school makes good use of the immediate and wider community in support of learning and pupils' personal development. Good links with other local primary schools and a special school enable pupils to work collaboratively to enhance personal and social development. Their enthusiastic involvement with local and international charitable organisations and the generous donations made enable them to brighten the lives of others, less fortunate than themselves. This enhances their personal, social and moral development.
38. The good links with a local secondary school and technology college enable pupils to enhance and extend their learning opportunities such as in technology and modern foreign languages.
39. Inspection evidence strongly supports the very positive views held by the vast majority of parents. Inspectors found no evidence to support the negative views of a small number of parents.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Leadership and management are good. The leadership of the headteacher is very good. The leadership of key staff is good. Governance is good. The management of the school is good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The headteacher provides strong leadership and the deputy headteacher very ably supports her
- A strong team of effective and hard-working teachers and support staff is keen to move the school forward
- Governors are committed to the school and support its development well
- School development planning is now providing much clearer sense of direction for immediate improvements, but strategic planning beyond the current year is limited

### **Commentary**

40. The headteacher provides strong leadership, with a clear sense of direction and purpose. She has been determined over the last few years, and against all odds, to make improvements that would enable all pupils to achieve well. Her influence and high expectations are what lie behind the way the school has moved forward and developed. Since his appointment last year, the deputy headteacher has very ably supported the headteacher and has made a very positive impression on the school. He has very effectively led curriculum developments and improvements to the quality of teaching. Although some of the teachers are new to the role, co-ordinators have a clear focus and manage their subjects well.
41. After an unsettled period of staff absences and changes, there has now been built up a strong team of effective and hard-working teachers and support staff, all of whom are keen to move the school forward. They work well together and have effectively implemented changes that have improved the quality of education and raised achievement. Relationships are positive and this creates a good quality environment for pupils. One of the pupils said of the staff room "I don't know what goes on in there, but there is a lot of laughing".
42. The headteacher has responsibility for special needs and is very committed to this role. Her leadership is effective and seeks to achieve the very best for these pupils. The management of pupils with special educational needs is good because it is integral to the school's aims and delivered through good teamwork. Much time is given to monitoring pupils' developments and each half term the headteacher holds discussions with class teachers to assess pupils' progress and plan future support. Intervention groups are closely monitored to evaluate their impact on pupils' progress and achievement. Teachers are very well supported by training and guidance.



43. Governors are committed to the school and know a lot about its work. They have a clear understanding of the strengths of the school and the way it needs to go forward. They have a lot of confidence in the headteacher and have supported her and the rest of the staff very well. They bring a range of expertise and interests to the role of governor; for example, it is governors who have brought about the very high standards in health and safety. Through a difficult time, they have remained loyal to the school and determined that it should continue to provide a high quality of education for the locality.
44. The school is well managed. It is a school that knows where it wants to go and is not afraid to ask for help in getting there. In recent years the school has welcomed and valued support and advice from the local education authority and has, as a result, been able to develop areas that were once weaknesses. Self-evaluation is rigorous and honest. The monitoring and support of teaching are well established and there is a strong commitment to the professional development of all staff. School development planning is now providing much clearer direction than at the last inspection. The current school development plan is ambitious for a small school, but does reflect the drive to develop in a range of different ways. More strategic planning beyond the current year is limited.
45. Financial planning is secure. A budget deficit has been worked through and now finances are on a much stronger footing, despite difficulties caused by staff absences. The way in which the finances are managed helps the school to achieve its current educational priorities, for example the investment in interactive whiteboards for classrooms. However, again more strategic financial planning beyond the current year is limited. Expenditure per pupil is a little higher than average, but is similar to other small schools. Given the achievement of pupils, the quality of the education provided by the school and the confidence of parents, the school is giving good value for money.

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

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	306,304	Balance from previous year	4,611
Total expenditure	272,899	Balance carried forward to the next	38,016
Expenditure per pupil	2,574		

*The large balance carried over to the current year was a planned underspend agreed with the local education authority, partly to protect staffing costs and partly to cover the ongoing investment in security fencing around the school.*

## **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 satisfactory overall, and has maintained this standard since the previous inspection. Children are achieving satisfactorily and are on course to reach the goals that children are expected to reach by the end of the reception year in all areas of learning except in personal, social and emotional development, where there are weaknesses.

A substantial amount of re-organisation has taken place since the previous inspection. The reception unit is bright and welcoming, and is now housed in a semi-open plan classroom with a secure outdoor area accessed directly from the classroom. Staff have worked hard to organise facilities and resources for the new outdoor area.

Staff ensure good role models for the children to follow. Relationships are good. Planning is detailed, covering both the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 curriculum. However, the planned work is not always covered sufficiently well. The reception class teacher works extremely hard to offer all children their curriculum entitlement, but has to deliver two distinct curriculum stages within each lesson. This means that reception class children are sometimes left working without adult guidance for too long while older children in Year 1 are taught more formal lessons. Support staff are timetabled for half the week in the mixed reception and Year 1 class, but not always at the best times for the class to benefit. Assessment is good. A useful system of recording and checking children's progress is now firmly in place and updated termly. This places the teacher in a position to evaluate whether children are making sufficient progress.

It is not possible to make an overall judgement about provision in **creative development** and **physical development**, because not enough of the curriculum was seen. Nevertheless, children achieve satisfactorily. Children experience lots of interesting ways of using paints. For example, children mix colours to create paintings the style of a famous painter. They twist, fold and curl brightly coloured paper to make three-dimensional pictures. The reception children have music lessons every week with the pupils in Year 1. Children use the outdoor area regularly and improve physical skills using large toys and bikes. They build, with blocks and bricks, both large and small structures.

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

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

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

- Staff provide good role models for children of courtesy and respect
- Sufficient staff are not always available to help children to learn to take turns and share

#### **Commentary**

46. Children are confident and interested and enjoy the activities provided for them. They are encouraged to be independent through the choices they make. However, children still rely heavily on the teacher to sort out problems for them. They concentrate for reasonable lengths of time and enjoy giving their views in the larger groups. Some children are on course to reach the goals they are expected to reach in this area, but a number of them are not likely to do this.
47. Teaching provides a calm and welcoming environment in which children clearly feel secure and valued. For example, children are greeted warmly on arrival. The teacher is patient and

explains instructions clearly, so children understand what to do. Staff speak to each other and children in a calm, friendly and respectful manner. This encourages children to do likewise. However, a few children are not learning quickly enough how to behave well. For example, sometimes they do not follow the teacher's instructions to wait for a turn to speak, and shout out. This disrupts everyone's learning.

48. Sometimes insufficient adults are available in the class to support the reception children in their learning. The children have insufficient opportunity to engage in discussion with staff and learn more quickly. For example, in an activity to build a bridge, some children were unco-operative and refused to share, but the teacher was engaged in direct teaching of the Year 1 group and did not have the chance to observe and intervene. The behaviour of a few of the younger children is difficult to manage and staff are not on hand to modify this and ensure all children can learn equally well.

## **COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The teacher provides stimulating introductions to sessions that excite and motivate children to learn
- Speaking and listening skills are given a high priority
- The reception classroom provides a good quality environment with lots of print and labels for children to recognise, so reinforcing their learning

### **Commentary**

49. Children enjoy discussions and are confident in giving their views generally in both large and small groups. The teacher helps children to give their views with careful questions and time to answer. They follow stories enthusiastically and understand the structure of a traditional tale, sorting out pictures to retell the story of Goldilocks. Children are learning the letter sounds, and practising identifying words with the same sound in planned activities. They practise forming letters and begin to write independently. Books show children have written letters to Santa and they write their news, sometimes with adult support, such as "I got a new scooter".
50. Teaching is good. Lively introductions to lessons help children to focus and concentrate well. The teacher uses the interactive whiteboard effectively to help children identify initial letter sounds in words. Large colourful displays help to reinforce children's learning, for example, a 'sound' display for 'd'. Follow-up activities are well planned and organised with lively activities, but lack of adult support means children sometimes start to bicker about resources, and they do not solve these problems effectively. This diminishes learning. Other planned activities support language development effectively, such as the role-play 'Vets' which has a reception desk with writing pad and diary.

## **MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children learn to use counting in many everyday activities
- Planned activities provide interesting opportunities to practise mathematical skills
- The lack of support staff means children miss some opportunities to develop their skills

## Commentary

51. Children begin to understand that numbers are used in everyday activities. They are encouraged to count the numbers of children present each day. This helps children to become familiar with the look and sound of numbers. Children practise writing numbers and adding two numbers together on activity sheets. Number songs and rhymes are used to help children learn, and as a result the children come to a better understanding of counting and numbers. Children look at length and compare longest and shortest. Exploratory play with sand and water helps children to learn about capacity in a practical and enjoyable way, as they fill and empty containers.
52. Teaching, which is good, provides soundly planned activities that develop a range of mathematical ideas. As a result children achieve satisfactorily. Teaching provides a stimulating environment in which children enjoy learning. Numbers feature prominently in colourful displays, such as the 'washing line' where children can rearrange numbers themselves. Larger numbers are also usefully shown on longer number lines, to familiarise children with further counting. Support staff are not always available in mathematics sessions, so some chances are missed to develop mathematical language further. For example, a really interesting activity with a programmable toy and large floor mat to develop positional language such as 'beside' and 'in front of' was very disorganised with children still arguing about seating arrangements until an adult was available to help.

## KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Planned topics help children to learn about things in the past
- Good use is made of role-play to help children understand the real world around them

## Commentary

53. Teaching is good. The teacher plans interesting activities, which children enjoy. Resources are used well to provide stimulating displays and ideas for learning. Children learn about the world around them through the travels of a small bear who accompanies staff and children in the things they do at home and on holiday. The display in the classroom on Africa helps children to think about other parts of the world. Children are introduced to the past through topics. For example, they read a story about the Great Fire of London. Some children clearly gained a lot from this and remembered the previous session well, asking "What about Samuel Pepys?" Children investigate materials and sort them into groups such as wood and plastic.
54. Achievement is satisfactory. Planned activities throughout the year in the reception class help children to learn more about the area in which they live. A range of role-play activities enables children to think about the shops and facilities nearby and act out how they use them. This enables children to broaden their real-life experiences and vocabulary well. Children use small world toys such as the doll's house and cars to extend their learning about the world around them.

## SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

### ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Literacy skills are taught very well
- Pupils enjoy reading and they have good skills
- Pupils write confidently in a range of formats, but handwriting is not taught consistently through the school
- The subject is very well led and managed

#### Commentary

55. Standards in English fluctuate quite dramatically from year to year, as the presence of a few pupils with weak language skills in a particular year group can have a significant impact on overall results. However, the overall trend is upward and standards in both Year 2 and Year 6 in last year's tests were above average and compared well with similar schools. Improved planning, more focused teaching of skills and higher expectations have led to pupils achieving better than they did at the last inspection. Standards are likely to be average this year, but this will be good achievement, given the prior attainment of the pupils in these year groups.
56. Standards in speaking and listening are broadly average. Most pupils are confident in taking part in discussions in a whole-class situation. They answer questions, explain their ideas and listen to others. They are not, even in the oldest classes, as confident in interacting in a small group without the support of an adult. A number of pupils enter the school with under-developed language skills and this has been an increasing concern for the school over the last few years. A lot of effort is made to encourage pupils to develop confident speaking and listening skills. For example, a recent initiative has been 'talking partners', where pupils are given the opportunity to discuss particular ideas with another pupil. This is working successfully and is giving pupils more confidence in interacting with others. An emphasis on role-play in the youngest classes is also working effectively, particularly where such activities are supported by an adult skilled in helping pupils develop their language.
57. Standards in reading are above average. Pupils enjoy reading and they respond well to text, especially in class groups. Phonic skills are taught well in Years 1 and 2 and pupils soon learn to use these to help them tackle words they are unfamiliar with. Guided reading, where a group of pupils read together and talk about the reading, is well organised and some very effective teaching and learning take place in these sessions. Parents support their children's reading well. Most regularly listen to reading at home when their children are first learning and this has a positive effect on pupils' attitudes and achievement. As they get older, pupils do not always take books home and sometimes when they do the books do not match their interests or skill levels. The school is currently looking into this and reviewing the range of books available.
58. Standards in writing are average. There have been improvements in the quality of teaching that have brought about better standards. Writing skills, such as spelling, are carefully taught in a structured way in Year 1 and 2, which gives pupils a secure foundation for later work. The quality of pupils' writing in Years 3 to 6 is good. Pupils are given the opportunity to write in a range of formats, such as letters, instructions and stories. They are shown how to use words and sentence structures in interesting and exciting ways. However, their handwriting is not as good as it could be and many pupils do not achieve a fluent handwriting style. The school has had a concern about boys' attitudes to writing and is implementing several strategies to address this. For example, a visual learning project has been started by the co-ordinator in

Years 5 and 6, using video material to interest and involve pupils and motivate them more towards putting their ideas down in writing. This is already having a positive impact on the quality and extent of boys' writing.

59. The teaching of English is very good and pupils make good progress in lessons. Teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of the subject and they plan very carefully for the range of ages and needs in their classes. They make lessons interesting and use ICT well to enhance their own teaching and the learning of pupils.
60. The subject is led and managed very well. There is a clear idea of strengths and weaknesses and a close eye is kept on progress being made by pupils through the school. The school has sought advice and support to address identified weaknesses and teachers have been very willing to make changes to their practice in order to improve achievement.

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

61. The school is keen to improve speaking and listening skills and teachers make the most of opportunities to use and develop these skills across the curriculum. For example, class and group discussions are planned into history and religious education lessons. Pupils use a wide range of reference books to support their topics, although they do not use the library for independent research as well as they could do. Opportunities for writing in different formats are used effectively in lessons such as history and geography. However, presentation skills in such subjects as science and mathematics are not as good as they could be.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils achieve well because of the very good teaching
- Pupils use their mathematical skills effectively to solve problems
- Work in Year 5/6 is at a high level of challenge
- Work is well planned to challenge all levels of ability, including pupils with special educational needs
- Teachers have very good relationships with their pupils and expect them to work hard
- The subject is very well led by a knowledgeable, enthusiastic and committed co-ordinator

### **Commentary**

62. Standards in Year 2 and Year 6 are average at present. Standards have fluctuated in mathematics because of the small cohorts in each year group. Standards are likely to be lower in 2005 than they were in 2004 and in the last report because there are more lower attaining pupils and pupils with special educational needs in Years 2 and 6. However, in the current Year 6, there is a group of higher attaining pupils who are likely to achieve well above the national averages. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 and in Years 3 and 4 achieve well and pupils in Years 5 and 6 achieve very well. Pupils with special educational needs, who are well supported by teachers and support staff, achieve as well as their classmates. This is the outcome of the very good teaching they receive in the challenging, vibrant and often exciting mathematics lessons.
63. Although the standards by the end of Year 6 are not as high as at the time of the last inspection, overall improvement in the subject is good because of the focus given to developing the pupils' mental agility skills and the commitment to developing pupils' abilities to use their knowledge of mathematics to solve problems.

64. Pupils' learning is very good because of the very good teaching. Good features of teaching are the teachers' secure mathematical knowledge and their skills in planning activities to appropriately and highly challenge all ability groups. In a Year 5/6 lesson focused on co-ordinates, lower attaining pupils worked very hard to plot co-ordinates in one quadrant using a computer program whilst the higher attaining pupils succeeded in working out the co-ordinates for complex shapes in four quadrants, requiring a high level of concentration and perseverance. The pupils respond with enthusiasm, enjoy their mathematics lessons and show much pride and satisfaction in their work. Group work is very well organised and managed and this ensures all pupils are fully engaged in their activities whilst working with the teacher or independently. Pupils in a very good Year 1/2 lesson were all totally engaged in five different activities solving practical money problems because they understood the task, had access to good resources and were highly motivated by the challenges.
65. The high emphasis given to problem solving has succeeded in developing the pupils' skills to be systematic, to identify the key information in the problem and to use their mental skills. A good example was seen in a Year 3/4 lesson when pupils were required to apply their knowledge of multiplication to determine the number of different two and four-legged animals from a given number of animal heads. This required a systematic approach and knowledge of multiplication facts. The teacher effectively questioned the pupils and encouraged them to use their existing knowledge, and this was successful in developing their understanding of the problem.
66. The very good leadership of the co-ordinator has made a significant impact on the quality of provision. Careful analysis of test results, scrutiny of pupils' work and monitoring of lessons have resulted in conscious efforts to raise standards. Examples include planning to meet the needs of all ability groups in each lesson, ensuring work in the higher levels is included in planning, implementing the Intensifying Support Programme to raise pupil achievement and introducing whole-school focused curricular targets. These developments, alongside good checking procedures to track pupils' progress and increasing use of ICT to support learning, have ensured teaching and the overall provision have improved.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

67. A discussion with the co-ordinator and a scrutiny of work reflect the commitment to develop mathematics across other subjects and capitalise on opportunities to use mathematics for genuine purposes. For example, pupils use measuring skills in the making process in design and technology and construct graphs and tables to record data in geography. Improved links with ICT are a strength in the subject and a regular feature of mathematics lessons.

### **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **good**.

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

- In recent years the school's results in the National Curriculum tests for pupils in Year 6 have been above average overall
- Teaching and learning are good and enable pupils to achieve well
- Pupils have positive attitudes towards their work
- The presentation of work is weak

#### **Commentary**

68. Standards are above average, with most pupils in Year 6 having a broad understanding of key scientific concepts such as evaporation and condensation, sound, and the properties of solids,

liquids and gases. There is good achievement, particularly in the important area of scientific investigation. This represents good progress since the school's last inspection.

69. Teaching is good. Introductions to lessons are lively and this helps pupils to focus and concentrate effectively. Clear explanations means pupils know what they should do and settle down to work quickly. Good use of technology enhances the lesson, such as the interactive whiteboard. Teaching assistants are used well to support learning with groups of pupils who learn more slowly. Work is marked regularly with some occasional comments related to improvement. However, this is not consistent across the school. The presentation of work is weak. Handwriting is scrappy and there is little consistency of approach both between and within classes. This devalues the work which pupils produce.
70. The co-ordinator is newly in post. She has produced an action plan and has a clear view of how to improve science further. The senior management team carries out monitoring on occasions, but the co-ordinator has not yet had sufficient opportunity to monitor teaching and learning in the subject. The clear and regular assessment arrangements mean that the school is able to successfully check the progress that pupils make.
71. Pupils show much enjoyment in their activities and have positive attitudes to their work. They work well together in pairs and small groups, and opportunities to do this make a positive contribution to their personal and social development. They show interest and curiosity in what they are doing. Scientific equipment and resources are handled with care and pupils are aware of the need for safety when carrying out their experiments. ICT is used effectively in lessons to help pupils learn.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- ICT is a strength in the school
- Standards are above average and pupils use a wide range of skills with confidence
- All aspects of ICT are now well covered
- Teachers' confidence and subject knowledge have been developed well by targeted training
- The curriculum provides a wide range of experiences for the pupils
- Pupils have good attitudes and are highly motivated

### **Commentary**

72. ICT is now a strength in the school. This reflects the very good improvement since the last inspection when standards were deemed to be unsatisfactory, National Curriculum requirements were not met and resources were outdated. Standards are now above average by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. A scheme of work is in place to fully meet National Curriculum requirements. Resources are very good and include a fully-equipped ICT suite which is used to good effect.
73. Work in pupils' files, on disks and around the classroom illustrates the good achievement of pupils. In the ICT suite, Year 2 pupils were confident in 'logging on', and finding and researching information about animals by using both the index and keyword facilities. Most pupils are very confident when using the keyboards and controlling the mouse.
74. In individual discussions with Year 6 pupils and from a lesson observation there is significant evidence to show that work is of a good standard. Pupils have developed an extensive range of skills and use computers for many purposes. Examples included multimedia presentations based on the story *A Christmas Carol*, which were of a very high standard. The presentations



involved creating hyperlinks, importing information from the Internet and video clips. Discussions reflected the pupils' great enthusiasm for the subject, pride in demonstrating their presentations and a very confident approach to ICT. A pupil with special educational needs talked very confidently about the steps taken to produce the presentation and this success has greatly helped to develop her self-esteem.

75. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 are offered a good range of opportunities to use all aspects of ICT, including spreadsheets, databases, CD-ROMs and the Internet. Each pupil has a range of work saved in their files to reflect the wide use of ICT. Pupils increasingly improve their keyboard skills and word-processing skills are generally good. Year 3/4 pupils' files contain some good work on experimentation with fonts to present their work in different styles.
76. Teaching in ICT is good overall and it is very good in Year 5/6. Since the previous inspection the school has benefited from outside expertise in the subject and this has significantly developed the confidence and knowledge of teachers. Teachers have secure knowledge of ICT, which enables them to explain procedures clearly to pupils. Staff have clear expectations of the skills pupils will learn and use. Teachers have developed a high level of skill in using the interactive whiteboards and all teachers use these very effectively to support their teaching. This makes a valuable contribution to lessons as it allows pupils to be directly involved in demonstrating and explaining their ideas. This was demonstrated in a mathematics lesson when pupils used the interactive board to show how they solved their group co-ordinate problems.

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

77. Teachers consistently plan for the use of ICT in other subject areas and this is a strength of the provision. This means that pupils use the subject well as a tool for learning across the curriculum. ICT is used well to support and consolidate learning. For example, Year 3/4 pupils used a digital camera to photograph the stages of their experiment to identify foods which may damage their teeth. In almost all lessons seen, the classroom computers and laptops were in use by pupils in tasks linked to the lesson content. Co-ordinators of the other subjects ensure ICT is an integral part of the curriculum.

### **HUMANITIES**

Religious education is reported in full. History and geography were sampled.

#### **Religious education**

Provision in religious education is **good**.

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

- The subject is well planned through the school, so pupils build on their previous learning
- Pupils have the opportunity to reflect on their own values and beliefs
- The subject effectively promotes pupils' personal development

#### **Commentary**

78. Standards are in line with the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus and pupils achieve well. Pupils study several different faiths and they build on this knowledge from year to year. They begin to understand why faith is important to people and how it affects their daily lives. Provision for the subject has been improved since the last inspection. It is now planned more effectively through the school, so that pupils' learning builds on what has gone before. For example, Year 2 pupils are encouraged to think about stories from the Bible and begin to understand the significance of them in terms of how people behave. This gives a good

foundation for later learning about stories from other faiths and thinking what they mean to people.

79. Teaching is good. The clear guidelines in use in the school enable teachers to plan effectively and there is a consistency in the approach though the school. The subject is approached sensitively and pupils are given time for reflection during lessons. This enables them to make links between what they are learning and their own values and beliefs. Year 2 pupils have thought about why the prodigal son was selfish; Year 4 pupils have considered what makes a good friend and Year 6 pupils have reflected on the idea of prayer. Resources, such as religious artefacts, are now better and are used well to make lessons more meaningful. However, the school has no links with members of faith communities, apart from Christian. Teachers use ICT very effectively to widen pupils' experiences and to keep pupils interested. The teacher in the reception/Year 1 class brought a whole lesson to life by putting photographs of a christening that she had been a part of on the screen so that pupils could talk about the event.
80. The subject is well led and managed. A few years ago, the co-ordinator carried out an audit and made changes that ensured that teaching was better supported and there was more consistency through the school. The current emphasis on developing listening skills has had a positive impact on religious education, as pupils are given time to listen to each other and to reflect on their own ideas. This gives lessons an extra dimension that benefits pupils' personal development. When pupils in Years 3 and 4 were learning about the events surrounding the death of Jesus, they thought about issues such as guilt and shame. When pupils in Years 5 and 6 were looking at 'beautiful words' for Allah from the Qur'an, they considered some difficult concepts, such as 'Reconciler' and 'Purpose setter'.

## History

81. The curriculum for history is carefully planned to cope with the mixed-age classes and pupils experience a wide range of topics. Indications are that they have an appropriate curriculum and are reaching the expected standards. Pupils are interested in the subject and talk enthusiastically about the topics they have studied. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 learn about people from the past and look at how things have changed. In Years 3 and 4, they begin to get an idea of periods of time, such as the time of the Tudors. They look at the lives of people in different times and make comparisons, for example of the houses people live in. By Years 5 and 6, pupils are much more aware of the characteristics of different eras and know about the events that brought about changes, such as the development of railways in Victorian times. Pupils are developing adequate research skills, using a range of sources, such as books, pictures and CD-ROMs. They also visit historical places, ask questions and record their findings.

## Geography

82. A recent whole-school topic on Africa captured the imagination of all involved with the school and has promoted very well pupils' geographical knowledge and understanding. The quality of displays and the breadth of pupils' work are very impressive and indicate that pupils are being provided with an appropriate curriculum and are reaching at least the standards expected. Year 4 pupils have a good knowledge and understanding of place, as they describe life in a village in Ghana and compare this with life in their town. Year 6 pupils have developed some good geographical skills, illustrated in their use of data to compare rainfall and use of water in different countries and their ability to explain why things are as they are. A wide range of resources is used effectively and pupils are given first-hand experiences, such as visitors and visits to the local area.

## CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Design and technology is reported fully. Art and design, music and physical education were sampled.

### Design and technology

Provision in design technology is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' standards are above those expected and achievement is good
- The range of activities is good

### Commentary

83. Pupils are on course to attain standards above those expected by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. This represents good improvement since the last inspection, when they were deemed to be average. Standards have risen because of the increased emphasis given to the subject and discrete teaching. There is a coherent structure in place and guidance for teachers. Pupils' past work shows good examples of skills' development such as selecting different methods for joining materials, making linkages and strengthening a structure.
84. Pupils in the infants make a good start because they use a simple format to plan their design task. They begin to use labels and add increasing detail to their plans. On completion they explain how their work can be improved. Pupils make very good progress in their ability to evaluate their work. Year 6 pupils describe changes in materials, and how the product was assembled. They also identify what they have learnt, for example that the task was much more difficult than they first thought.
85. Pupils have confidence to use their own ideas which is reflected in the individuality of their work, particularly in the junior years. Younger pupils in Year 1/2 made very good attempts to use their own ideas as they made hand puppets.
86. Teaching is good. Teachers very effectively build on pupils' previous learning and have high expectations of pupils. All pupils are encouraged to use their initiative and take more responsibility for their learning. Teachers plan activities which are challenging and interesting to motivate pupils. Pupils in Year 3/4 explored different methods to make 'pop up' books. Investigating published 'pop up' books prior to their own design attempts improved the quality of their learning. An interesting task to design chairs helped these pupils to understand why chairs needed different designs to meet different purposes.

### Music

87. Pupils reach satisfactory standards in singing. It is likely that standards meet national expectations by the end of Year 2 and Year 6, because work is tightly planned to the school's new scheme of work. A part-time teacher is employed to teach all classes each week. She teaches singing to large groups of pupils each week and the other requirements of the National Curriculum across the school in class lessons.
88. The weekly curriculum is enhanced by a broad range of opportunities. Annual productions are staged, such as *Oliver* by all the junior pupils this year. Both infant and junior pupils give a performance at Christmas, either a concert or the Nativity play. The curriculum is further enhanced by visits and visitors. For example, during the 'Music Week' there were African drumming classes and chances to try out a range of African instruments. Musicians visit the

school to play on various occasions, such as a recent cello and piano duo. Pupils have the chance to learn keyboard or guitar in school in peripatetic lessons and the oldest pupils go to orchestral concerts.

89. The co-ordinator is knowledgeable and supportive. He carefully monitors each term's work in music lessons and assesses progress. Links with the nearby high school are being forged, which are helping to provide instrumental lessons for pupils.

### **Physical education**

90. The new co-ordinator has effectively developed the curriculum with new assessment systems and resources following an initial audit. New after-school clubs have been developed for pupils of all ages, but with the main focus of junior age pupils in football, tennis, hockey and cross-country running, among others. Parents are happy that their children have more choice and want the clubs to continue. With some ongoing release time from class teaching the co-ordinator is pursuing the Activemark Award which will help the school to reflect on its provision and improve it further.

### **Art and design**

91. No lessons were seen in art and design. A limited amount of pupils' work on display and a selection of photographs of previous work were insufficient to make judgements about standards or teaching. In the art display in the hall pupils had effectively used materials and colour to reflect African art linked to a multicultural theme week. Pupils' self-portraits using the techniques of the artist Paul Klee used orange colour tones effectively. There is evidence of good use of ICT in art.

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

92. Only one lesson was seen in this area and so no judgements are made about overall provision. The school gives a significant emphasis to the pupils' personal development, social and health education and each class has a lesson twice weekly. Circle time is also used when the need arises, for example to discuss an argument. The school meets statutory requirements for provision for sex and relationships education and drugs education. The school has put in place several strategies to encourage pupils to discuss any concerns they may have; these include a 'worry box' and a 'suggestions box'. The staff are promoting the concept of 'Pupil Voices' to reinforce pupils' understanding that their views are important. There is a high level of commitment to raising pupils' self-esteem. Such strategies have impacted on relationships and on the development of pupils' confidence. Pupils are also encouraged to help others; some pupils in Year 5 help staff in the Mothers and Toddlers Group to lay out the resources in the school hall. Pupils are made fully aware of healthy lifestyles through the introduction of 'Healthy School Days' and curriculum topics.

## 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	2
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 (ethos)</b>	<b>3</b>
Attendance	3
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>	<b>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	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3
<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>3</b>
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	3

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