

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **BOVINGDON PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Bovingdon, Hemel Hempstead

LEA area: Hertfordshire

Unique reference number: 131188

Headteacher: Mr Martin Mangan

Lead inspector: Selwyn Ward

Dates of inspection: 25<sup>th</sup> – 28<sup>th</sup> April 2005

Inspection number: 266468

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  
Gender of pupils: Mixed  
Number on roll: 449

School address: High Street  
Bovingdon  
Hemel Hempstead  
Hertfordshire  
Postcode: HP3 0HL

Telephone number: 01442 406545  
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Email address: head.bovingdon@thegrid.org.uk

Appropriate authority: The governing body  
Name of chair of Mrs Stella Andrews  
governors:

Date of previous 22<sup>nd</sup> March 1999  
inspection:

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Bovingdon Primary is a large school in a suburban village near Hemel Hempstead. It caters for boys and girls aged 3 to 11. All but a small number of pupils are white and of British background. There are no children at an early stage of learning English as an additional language. Although pupils come from a wide range of social backgrounds, they generally come from advantaged homes. This is reflected in the low number known to be eligible for free school meals. The number of pupils with special educational needs is below average, as is the number who have a statement of special educational need. The specific learning needs covered include moderate learning difficulties and dyslexia. Children join the school with a wide range of abilities but, taken overall, they are of above average attainment when they start school. The school has won several awards for achievement, arts and sports. It has Investors In People and it has been involved in innovative work pioneering different ways of ensuring that teachers are given enough time to plan their lessons.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
9271	Selwyn Ward	Lead inspector	
1979 8	Jane O'Keefe	Lay inspector	
3314 8	Linda Bristow	Team inspector	English; history; geography; religious education; special educational needs
3081 4	Elizabeth Coley	Team inspector	Mathematics; information and communication technology (ICT); art and design; music; personal, social and health education
2328 8	Marianne Harris	Team inspector	<i>Foundation Stage</i> ; science; design and technology; physical education

The inspection contractor was:

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**Bovingdon Primary is an outstanding school.** Standards are high and pupils achieve very well as a result of the very good teaching. The headteacher and leadership team have been extremely effective in establishing a broad and innovative curriculum and an exceptional ethos where pupils are keen to work hard and do their best. The school provides excellent value for money.

The school's main strengths are

- The teaching is very good and pupils of all abilities achieve very well
- The leadership and management of the school are excellent
- Pupils behave very well and are exceptionally keen to work hard and do their best
- Innovative work in using specialist teachers and teaching assistants has helped to enrich the curriculum and raise standards
- There are very good arrangements for the care and welfare of the pupils

**There has been excellent improvement since the last inspection.** Standards have risen, as have the quality of teaching and virtually every aspect of provision. All of the weaknesses identified in the last report have been very successfully tackled, so that they are now among the many strengths of the school.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

*Key: A\* – very high (top 5% of schools); A – well above average; B – above average; C – average; D – below average; E – well below average; E\* – very low (bottom 5% of schools). Similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 2.*

Inspectors judge pupils' achievement by looking at the progress they make over their time in school as well as how well they do in lessons. **Achievement is very good.** This is true for pupils of all abilities, including the most able and those with special educational needs. Children are generally above average when they join the school. They do very well in their time in the nursery and reception years so that, by the start of Year 1, the vast majority exceed the learning goals that are expected of children of this age. Year 2 test scores in 2004 were above average in reading and mathematics and well above average in writing. Current standards are well above average in English and above average in mathematics. They are well above average in science and information and communication technology (ICT) and above average in art and religious education, which were the other subjects that were inspected in full. Test scores in Year 6 have been well above average in most years, although they were not as high in 2004. Standards are currently well above average in English, mathematics, science, ICT and art. Standards in religious education are above those expected in the locally agreed syllabus.

**Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are very good.** Pupils behave and get on very well with one another. They are proud of their school and of the responsibilities that they are able to take on. Even the youngest children quickly learn to settle to work without fuss, and pupils' excellent attitudes and enthusiasm contribute to the high standards that they achieve. Attendance and punctuality are very good.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The quality of education provided is very good.** Innovative use of teaching assistants and specialist part-time teachers has enabled the school to offer pupils an excellent range of learning opportunities in Years 4 to 6 and to make particularly effective use in lessons of its extensive resources. The accommodation is very good. Pupils benefit from very good care, guidance and support and they are confident that their views are strongly valued. Parents are exceptionally supportive of the school and of their children's education. They benefit from very clear information about the school and about how well their children are doing. Links with other schools and with the wider community are very good.

**Teaching and learning are very good.** Lessons are consistently very well planned based on accurate assessments of what it is that pupils need to focus on to make the best progress in their learning. Teachers have very good subject expertise and make very effective use of ICT to enhance their teaching. Time is mostly used very well, with pupils set strict time limits for activities so that they work hard and get a lot done. Sometimes, however, particularly in Years 1 and 2, pupils are expected to sit for too long on the carpet while they listen to their teacher. In most cases, work is carefully matched to pupils' different abilities, so that it offers an appropriately high level of challenge to all, including the most able. Teaching assistants work in close and very effective partnership with teachers, particularly to support pupils who need extra help. Teachers are successful in fully involving pupils in assessing for themselves how well they understand what is being taught. Marking, and the individual learning targets that each pupil has, together give every child a clear indication of what they need to do to improve their work.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**The quality of leadership and management is excellent.** The headteacher has been highly successful in building an extremely effective staff team, so that the leadership and management of almost every subject and aspect of the school is of consistently high quality. There has been innovation in bringing additional resources into the school, for example, to pioneer ideas for providing time during the school week when teachers can be released from classroom teaching to plan their lessons, and the school has succeeded in using this as an opportunity to significantly enrich the curriculum. School self-evaluation is exceptionally well developed, with detailed and accurate analyses and reviews in place in every subject and in respect of every aspect of provision. This has helped the school to respond very effectively to the dip in last year's test scores by putting in place measures, such as booster classes, to raise standards of achievement. Governance is very good. Governors are very supportive of the school and have a very clear understanding of the school's many strengths, while being conscious of the need to strive for continuous improvement.

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

Parents and pupils express exceptionally favourable views of almost everything about the school. Many parents wrote on their questionnaires that they considered this to be an excellent school. Pupils, too, take a considerable pride in their school.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

There are no major areas for improvement. Areas where provision is currently good, rather than very good or excellent, have already been accurately identified by the school as part of its self-evaluation and improvement strategies are already included in the school's planning.

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

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

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

Standards are well above average. Pupils' achievement is very good.

#### **Main strengths**

- Standards are high
- Pupils of all abilities achieve very well as a result of the consistently high quality of teaching

#### **Commentary**

1. Inspectors judge pupils' achievement by looking at the progress they make over their time in school as well as how well they do in lessons. Children are generally above average when they join Bovingdon Primary and the high quality of teaching ensures that they make consistently good and very good progress in all subjects as they move through the school. This is true for both boys and girls, and for those of all abilities. The challenging work set in lessons ensures that the most able do very well, while less able pupils and those with special educational needs also achieve very well because they are given very effective learning support from teachers and teaching assistants.
2. Children in the nursery and reception years benefit from exceptionally well-planned teaching from staff, who work particularly effectively as a team. As a result, almost all of the children in the nursery and reception years are on target to attain all of the learning goals that are expected for children by the start of Year 1, with a high proportion likely to exceed this standard.
3. The tables below show the average points scores attained in the Year 2 and Year 6 tests in 2004 (with the 2003 scores in brackets). One point represents roughly one term's progress, so the tables show, for example, that, in Year 6, pupils last year were around two terms ahead of pupils nationally in science. In common with other schools in the area, Bovingdon Primary was last year part of a trial study into a different system of testing in Year 2. The comparisons for Year 2 scores in 2004 are therefore with other schools nationally that were part of the same trial, rather than with all schools.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	16.7 (16.8)	15.8 (15.7)
writing	16.2 (14.8)	14.6 (14.6)
mathematics	16.9 (17.3)	16.2 (16.3)

*There were 58 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

4. Results in the Year 2 teacher assessed tests last year were above average in reading and mathematics. In writing, they were well above average. Year 2 test scores have been above average in each of the years since the last inspection. Standards seen during the inspection were similar, with pupils also demonstrating very well developed speaking and listening skills. Standards in science and ICT are well above average. In art and religious education, which were the other subjects inspected in full, standards by the end of Year 2 are above average.
5. Test scores in Year 6 have been well above average in all subjects in most of the years since the last inspection. They were not as high in 2004, with results dipping particularly in mathematics, where results were merely in line with the national average. Nonetheless,

these results still represented good progress in relation to how well the pupils did when they were in Year 2. The school made a number of changes this year to further raise standards, including the introduction of extra classes to boost pupils' attainment, and these have been very effective. As a result, current standards at the end of Year 6 are well above average in English, mathematics, science, ICT and art. Standards in religious education are above those expected in the locally agreed syllabus.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	27.6 (28.6)	26.9 (26.8)
mathematics	27.6 (28.9)	27.0 (26.8)
science	30.6 (31.6)	28.6 (28.6)

*There were 38 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

- Standards are considerably higher than they were at the time of the last inspection. Pupils are also achieving better. Whereas there were previously subjects, such as ICT, in which pupils underachieved, achievement is at least good in all subjects and it is very good in most subjects and overall.

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

Pupils have excellent attitudes to school and behave very well. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. Attendance is very good.

**Main strengths**

- Pupils have excellent attitudes to school and their work
- Relationships throughout the school are excellent
- Pupils behave very well
- The school provides very well for pupils spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
- Attendance and punctuality are very good

**Commentary**

- Pupils are very proud of their school. They show excellent attitudes to their work, clearly enjoy their lessons and are very keen to do well. In lessons, they concentrate well, even when they are expected to sit passively on the carpet for quite long periods. From the start of the nursery year, children quickly learn the school's orderly routines, and this helps them to settle to work quickly and without fuss. Throughout the school, pupils are keen to please their teachers, and many hands go up when a question is asked. Pupils listen well to their teachers and each other and confidently discuss their work with visitors. Pupils are very articulate, friendly and courteous and take a pride in the responsibilities given to them, such as being members of the exceptionally well-run and effective school council. Participation in the very good range of extracurricular clubs is high. Pupils' excellent attitudes to school and to their learning make a strong contribution to their achievement.
- Behaviour is very good in lessons, around the school and at playtimes. Pupils play together very well, and those who may be feeling lonely or upset are supported very well by their peers and the *Playground Squad* of helpers. Relationships are outstanding between pupils; who all treat each other with much respect as well as taking pleasure in each other's successes. There is a very strong sense of being part of a community within the school. Both parents and pupils say that bullying is not a problem and they are confident that any minor incidents that may occur are dealt with quickly and appropriately by staff. No pupils have been excluded from the school over the past year.

9. The school provides very well for pupils spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, with much effort having gone into improving spiritual and cultural provision since the last inspection. Spiritual development is promoted very effectively through the careful planning, both of assemblies and lessons, such as in personal, health and social education. The extensive award system is highly valued by pupils and helps to raise their self-esteem. Praise is used well in lessons, and this encourages and motivates pupils. Pupils clearly understand the difference between right and wrong and are given many opportunities to discuss moral issues in lessons, assemblies and personal, health and social education lessons. The good range of outings and residential trips the school provides help pupils to work together effectively and value each other's efforts. Pupils' cultural development is fostered very well through examining a variety of beliefs and cultures in lessons and through events such as the multicultural days, when visitors from a wide range of ethnic and religious backgrounds come into school to talk to and work with pupils.

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

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	3.5	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.*

10. Attendance levels have improved since the last inspection and are now well above the national average. This is due to staff constantly striving to improve levels by carefully monitoring individual pupils' attendance and responding quickly to unexplained absences. Punctuality is also very good, and parents play their part well in supporting their children's education by ensuring that they arrive on time in the mornings. Pupils' very good attendance and punctuality contribute to their very good achievement because they help ensure that few lessons are missed.

**QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL**

The quality of education provided by the school is very good. The teaching is very good. The curriculum is excellent. There are very good links with parents, other schools and the local community. Arrangements for the care and welfare of pupils are very good.

**Teaching and learning**

Teaching and learning are very good. Assessment is very good.

**Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teachers make very effective use of assessment information to plan their lessons
- Work is challenging because it very well matched to pupils' abilities
- The close partnership between teachers and teaching assistants ensures that pupils with special educational needs benefit from very effective support
- Pupils are strongly involved in assessing their own and each other's work
- Teachers use ICT very effectively in lessons to help make them more interesting and exciting
- Sometimes pupils are expected to sit for too long on the carpet while they listen to the teacher

**Commentary**

**Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 55 lessons**

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
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3 (5%)	23 (42%)	22 (40%)	6 (11%)	1 (2%)	0	0
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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.

11. Perceptive and accurate monitoring of teaching and learning by the headteacher and other staff with leadership responsibilities has helped to raise the quality of teaching. There is now three times as much very good and excellent teaching as there was at the time of the last inspection. All pupils benefit from a consistent diet of at least good teaching, although the proportion of lessons that are very good or better is notably higher in Years 3 to 6 than it is in Years 1 and 2. Teaching is very good throughout the nursery and reception years.
12. All lessons are very well planned, with teachers making very effective use of their accurate assessments of what it is that their pupils need to focus on in order to make the best progress in their learning. In many lessons, teachers keep a close track on individual pupils' understanding, for example, through the use of whiteboards on which children record their answers and hold them up for the teacher to see. Where pupils are having difficulties in understanding, lessons are adapted to ensure the children are all learning. In this way, work is almost always matched well to the different abilities of the pupils in the class so that it offers appropriate challenge to all, including those who need more help and those who are most able.
13. Relationships are very good. The teachers and support staff know and get on well with their pupils, and pupils in turn like their teachers and the adults in the school and are keen to work hard because they are eager to please them. Pupils' learning is boosted through working together, for example, in discussing their ideas in pairs with their *talking partners*.
14. Class teachers have very good subject expertise, and pupils' learning is further enhanced through the use of some subject specialists to provide some of the teaching in Years 4 to 6. ICT is used very effectively throughout the school. Every classroom from Years 2 to 6 has an interactive whiteboard linking a computer and data projector, and these resources are consistently very well used by all staff as a result of the school's very effective programme of training and expert support for teachers. The use of ICT in this way helps to make the lessons interesting and fun for the pupils.
15. Most lessons have a brisk pace, making the fullest use of the teaching time. Pupils are set strict time limits for activities in lessons. As a result, they work hard and get a lot done. Sometimes, however, particularly in Years 1 and 2, pupils are expected to sit for too long on the carpet while they listen quite passively to their teacher. Because pupils have exceptionally positive attitudes, their attention does not usually wane, but they do not achieve as highly in these lessons as in those where they are set more varied activities.
16. Teaching assistants work in close and very effective partnership with teachers. Their support enables less able pupils and those with special educational needs to make similarly very good progress to others in the class. Teaching assistants with their own specialist skills also provide very effective support to teachers in preparing teaching materials, including interactive whiteboard presentations, managing resources, and teaching art to pupils in Years 4 to 6 while providing time for planning for class teachers.
17. Pupils' knowledge of their own learning makes a very significant contribution to their achievement. Throughout the school, pupils are routinely involved in assessing their own and each other's work. Their individual learning targets help to focus them on what they need to do to do better and marking gives them clear guidance on how to improve their work.

## The curriculum

Curriculum provision is excellent. There is a very good range of clubs and other out-of-school activities. Resources and accommodation are very good and the school has been highly innovative in its use and deployment of support staff.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Computer facilities are excellent and they are exceptionally well used
- Weekly lessons taught by specialists have helped to broaden and enrich the curriculum in Years 4 to 6
- Classrooms are spacious, although the lack of covered walkways means that, when it rains, younger pupils can get wet moving to use facilities in the former junior school building
- Pupils take part enthusiastically in a wide range of extracurricular clubs

### **Commentary**

18. The curriculum is excellent. All *National Curriculum* requirements are met and the curriculum shortcomings identified in the last report have all been very successfully tackled, so that the areas that were previously weak are now among the many strengths of the school. This is particularly the case with ICT. The school currently has extensive ICT facilities, including a computer suite in which entire classes can be taught with each pupil having access to an individual computer, and interactive whiteboards in every classroom from Year 2 to Year 6. These facilities are exceptionally well used because the school has ensured that all teachers have been trained so that they have the knowledge and confidence to make full use of the technology and because teaching assistants with specialist skills provide them with very effective support, including help with the preparation of presentations to be used in lessons.
19. Bovingdon Primary has been among those pioneering work in developing means of freeing time for teachers to plan during the school day in preparation for the Government reforms due to be introduced next year. To this end, the school has established a block of lessons each week for each class in Years 4 to 6 where part-time specialist teachers and skilled teaching assistants take over the class to teach French, music and art while the class teacher completes other work. This has proved a great success because the quality of this extra provision for pupils is high. Other initiatives include the organisation of the school's very good teaching resources into a central location managed very effectively for teachers by a teaching assistant. The school continually evaluates the effectiveness of its provision. It has, for example, identified that, because they are doing so well in their development of ICT skills, pupils are capable of tackling several elements of the ICT curriculum earlier than is usual. With much of the Year 6 ICT curriculum covered in earlier years, the school is introducing additional challenging activities, including website design and digital movie making, in Year 6 so that there continues to be good challenge for the pupils. The school has been careful to check with neighbouring secondary schools to ensure that these additions to the curriculum do not duplicate work that will be covered when the pupils move on up to Year 7.
20. The school benefits from very good accommodation. Classrooms are spacious and there are additional teaching areas for small groups and for music tuition, a good playground area and a swimming pool for summer use. Bovingdon Primary has the advantage of sharing its site with a public library. This adjoins the school and means that every child has a weekly opportunity to visit and use the library with their class. As a result, children develop good library skills and have access to a much wider range of books than is usually available to schools. The school was formed from the amalgamation of separate infant and junior schools. Although the school functions extremely effectively now as a single all-through primary school, these origins are still evident from the separate infant and junior buildings. In inclement weather, this means that pupils in Years 1 and 2, or in the nursery or reception

class, who need to come across to the junior building, for example to visit the library or the ICT suite, risk getting wet because there is no covered walkway connecting the buildings.

21. Pupils benefit from a very good range of clubs and other out-of-school activities that help to enrich the curriculum. The participation rate is high and pupils express particular enthusiasm for the extracurricular provision that is on offer to them.

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

The school takes very good care of its pupils. There are very good arrangements for health and safety and for child protection. There are very good procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' individual progress. Arrangements for seeking and valuing pupils' views are excellent.

### **Main strengths**

- Staff have a very caring approach and relationships with pupils are excellent
- The outstanding school council gives pupils a strong voice in the school
- Procedures for health and safety and child protection are very efficient
- Very good monitoring and support help pupils to progress
- The induction of new pupils works very well

### **Commentary**

22. Arrangements for the care and welfare of pupils, their induction and for taking account of their views are all significantly improved on the good systems described in the last report. The school takes very good care of its pupils, who feel very secure and well looked after. When one pupil was asked why he would recommend this school to others he said *"because you are guaranteed to be happy here."* Relationships between staff and pupils are very good. This strongly supports pupils' general well-being and is much appreciated by parents. The school council is extremely well run and gives pupils outstanding opportunities to have their say on their school. It is highly respected by pupils who take great pride in their involvement with it. The small executive committee of pupils in Years 5 and 6 give up much of their free time to run the weekly meetings and prepare agendas and minutes, as well as other tasks around the school. As a result, all pupils are able to have their say on the school and how they feel it could be improved. In turn, their views are treated with much respect by staff, who respond positively to their suggestions wherever feasible.
23. Pupils know where to go and who to see if hurt, unwell or in need of someone to talk to, and efficient general welfare procedures are in place. Both the headteacher and another teacher are designated to deal with any child protection issues. Local guidelines are followed and all staff are trained and aware of the procedures should a concern about a pupil arise. Despite the lack of a site manager at the time of the inspection, very effective arrangements are in place for ensuring the health and safety of all in the school. Mishaps occurring during the inspection week, including the discovery of a gas leak, were dealt with quickly and efficiently, with absolute priority being given to children's welfare. All necessary risk assessments take place and the governors and headteacher conduct very thorough termly safety checks of the premises. There are very good arrangements in place to look after the needs of pupils with serious allergies and other medical conditions.
24. The school's very thorough assessment procedures ensure that pupils' personal and academic progress is monitored and supported very well. Targets are set and reviewed regularly for all pupils and agreed with parents at consultation meetings. This helps pupils to clearly understand what they need to do next in order to improve. For those pupils with special educational needs, very effective use is made of assessment information in drawing up and monitoring progress against each child's individual education plan, and setting and reviewing their personal targets.
25. Entry into the school in the nursery is very well managed and induction for the small minority who join the school partway through their primary education is handled well as the pupils quickly settle into the life of the school. Before children start in the nursery, they are given good opportunities to see the school and to meet staff and other children.

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

Parents are very happy with the care and education their children receive. Partnerships with parents are very good. Parents are very supportive of the school. Links with the local community and other schools are very good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Parents are very happy with what the school provides
- Parents are extremely supportive of the school and there is an excellent school association
- There are very good links with the local community
- The school works very closely with other schools in the locality
- Some reports contain education jargon that may be difficult for some parents to understand

### **Commentary**

26. Parents are very happy with the care and education their children receive at Bovingdon Primary and the school's partnership with parents is very good. Parents receive very useful information through contacts with staff and regular informative newsletters. The school's brochure and governor's annual report to parents are well written and fully meet all legal requirements. Useful, bookable, weekly "parent surgeries" are provided for parents who may have a concern about their child's education or welfare. At the time of the last inspection, pupil's annual reports did not meet all legal requirements. Since then, in full consultation with parents, these have been re-designed and now give good information on how well pupils are progressing and what they need to do next in order to improve. In some, however, too much educational jargon is used when describing the work that pupils have covered.
27. The school continually seeks parents' views through the use of regular questionnaires. These views are valued, with questionnaire results carefully checked and responded to. Attendance by parents at consultation meetings and class assemblies is high. Parents are very supportive and appreciative of the school. The school association is excellent. Numerous fundraising and social events have been arranged and these are very well supported by both parents and the local community. The considerable funds raised have helped to purchase many useful extra resources for the school. Most parents are very supportive of the school's arrangements for homework, which are understood by all and, unusually, very much appreciated by pupils who say the work is "*challenging and just the right amount*".
28. The school is very much at the heart of its local community. Pupils frequently use the shared local library on its site and the choir performs at the local garden centre and for the elderly. Major fundraising events are attended by many local people and supported very well by local businesses. Good use is made of the local area for visits, such as to the local prison to view an exhibition on Anne Frank. The school works closely and successfully with other schools in the locality and many of their teachers visit to observe the good practice in areas such as the nursery and reception years and take part in joint training sessions on other curriculum areas. The school also liaises closely with secondary schools in the area to support teacher training, and many work experience students are welcomed into the school. Staff also work closely with those in other schools to ensure that the transition to secondary schools is a positive experience for all pupils.

### **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Leadership and management are excellent. The leadership of the headteacher is excellent, as is that of other key staff. Management is excellent. Governance is very good and all legal requirements are fully met.

### **Main strengths**

- The headteacher has been extraordinarily effective in building a committed and highly effective staff team
- Exciting innovations have been introduced to enliven the curriculum and meet new requirements

- There are exceptionally well-developed systems for analysing the effectiveness of every subject and aspect of the school
- Governors are very supportive of the school and recognise the need for continuing improvement

### **Commentary**

29. The leadership and management of the headteacher are outstanding. He has very successfully created a team that works together extremely well, taking responsibility for school improvement and in implementing change. He has ensured that his key staff take responsibility for introducing improvements and makes sure that they have the skills, knowledge and time to monitor these. There is a strong commitment to providing training for all staff so that their skills can be updated, and this commitment extends to initial teacher training, with several trainee teachers welcomed into the school each year. All staff are expected to take up the opportunities provided for more training. As a result, support staff, are very well trained, and many take on considerable extra responsibilities that ensure the smooth running of the school on a day-to-day basis. Data is accurately and perceptively analysed so that every child is supported in achieving their best. Teaching and learning are similarly monitored, with improvements brought about through sensitive but rigorous handling of areas for development.
30. The leadership and management of special educational needs is very good. Paperwork is well organised and up-to-date. The special educational needs co-ordinator attends regular meetings with colleagues from other schools as well as keeping up-to-date with current national and local initiatives.
31. School self-evaluation is very well established throughout the school. All staff are involved in planning for improvement and each subject is very well led and managed. Staff are very knowledgeable about their particular subject and take a lead in implementing improvements. All subject leaders speak enthusiastically about their role and have an accurate picture of what strengths are evident and where there are areas for improvement. As a result, staff work very well together, confident that their colleagues will give them very good support. The leadership of key staff is excellent because it is of a consistently high quality throughout the leadership team and among all staff with management responsibilities.
32. The governors do a very good job. They are very knowledgeable about the school and are enthusiastic about its strengths. They also appreciate the need to avoid complacency by building on the school's strengths in the continuing quest for further improvement. Governors are very supportive of all of the staff and work hard to ensure that the school is a happy community that actively encourages all to be included in activities. They have succeeded in ensuring that all legal requirements are fully met.
33. The most notable aspect of leadership and management is the work the school has pioneered on "workforce reform". In anticipation of Government reforms due to be introduced next year, this involves giving teachers time in the school day to plan and assess work; time that has to be out of the classroom. The school has worked very hard to find ways of implementing this and has come up with some creative and innovative ideas. Specialist teachers and teaching assistants have been employed to take classes, giving teachers the time they need. Pupils are very enthusiastic about this. The music specialist provides very good opportunities for pupils to experience a wide range of musical activities and pupils are very enthusiastic about learning. Specialist teaching assistants for art provide exciting opportunities for pupils to practise their skills and experiment with new ones. French teaching is particularly welcomed and pupils in the older classes learn to speak French with confidence and enjoyment.

**Financial information for the year April 2004 to March 2005**

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	1,207,870
Total expenditure	1,232,945
Expenditure per pupil	2,942

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	160,262
Balance carried forward to the next	135,187

34. Finances are very well managed and the school has built a significant reserve. This is the result of money that has been granted to the school to introduce the necessary changes required to reform the working arrangements of teachers. The money has been very well used and some remains. The school has planned to utilise this in the current and future years to ensure that the innovations can be maintained.
35. The quality of leadership and management was high at the time of the last inspection, six years ago. Since that time, there has been very good maintenance of this high quality.

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

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

36. When children join the school, they are generally above average ability. During their time in the nursery and reception classes they make very good progress in all areas of learning and, by the time they join Year 1, almost all of the children are likely to reach the expected goals for children's learning, and many are set to exceed them. This is because the *Foundation Stage* (nursery and reception classes) is very well led and managed. The teaching team, including support staff, work very well together and make sure that all pupils achieve very well. Tasks and activities are well planned and made interesting so that the children are very keen to learn. Planning is very thorough and carried out in teaching teams. All of the *Foundation Stage* staff decide on broad topics and then plan in year teams so that children experience work that is relevant to their age and stage of development. Assessment is equally as thorough and is used very effectively to plan relevant tasks.
37. Teaching and learning in the *Foundation Stage* are very good. All children are encouraged to achieve very well. Children with special educational needs are supported very well so that they make very good progress, and those children who are more able have work that challenges and encourages them to think for themselves and achieve their best. Provision throughout the nursery and reception classes is very well monitored to make sure that it is of a consistently high quality. Parents are welcomed into the school and many help on a regular basis. There has been very good improvement since the last inspection. Strengths that were identified last time have been maintained and improvements made to the quality of teaching and learning. The accommodation is good, but the lack of a covered walkway between the classrooms and other areas of the school, such as the ICT suite, means that children get wet if it is raining. Resources are very good and are used very effectively to help the children make very good progress.

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

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

#### **Main strengths**

- Teachers have very high expectations of children's behaviour
- Children are encouraged to choose activities independently
- Children settle quickly to school routines and work together very well

#### **Commentary**

38. Children make very good progress in this area of learning because teachers have such high expectations of children behaving well and concentrating in lessons. The very well-established induction procedures mean that children have the opportunity to visit the school before they join. Parents are welcomed in and children settle very quickly to school routines. They arrive at school happily and, in both the nursery and reception classes, sit down at activities and concentrate for long periods of time, chatting happily within their group. Teachers provide a good balance of activities between those that are led by an adult and those that children can choose for themselves. Consequently, children concentrate and persevere at tasks because they are interested in their learning and are very keen to participate in lessons. Behaviour is very good, with children getting along together very well.

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

Provision in communication, language and literacy is very good.

#### **Main strengths**

- Children quickly learn early reading and writing skills
- Teachers expect the children to be fully involved in lessons
- Role-play activities are very well planned

## **Commentary**

39. Children make very good progress in their language and literacy skills because teaching is of a high quality. In both the nursery and reception classes, children have access to a wide range of good quality books so that early reading skills are promoted effectively. Children learn to enjoy reading and soon become confident when handling books. In the reception classes, children are very good at retelling stories and talk about a variety of texts with confidence. The children listen attentively to the staff and to each other. In discussions, they enjoy making good contributions and like to share their ideas with each other. Writing skills are systematically taught and children are encouraged to write their own stories. Children learn the sounds that letters make and use this knowledge in their writing. By the end of the reception year, most of the children can identify sounds within a word, as well as those at the beginning and at the end. Role-play opportunities are very well planned so that children in all classes have the chance to make up their own stories and act out their experiences.

## **Mathematical development**

Provision in mathematical development is very good.

### **Main strengths**

- Children learn to count confidently to ten and beyond
- There are many activities that encourage the exploration of mathematical ideas
- Children enjoy learning

## **Commentary**

40. Mathematical development is very well taught and children make very good progress. Children in the nursery learn to count to ten and sing rhymes and songs to support their learning. By the time they reach the end of the reception year, most children can count beyond twenty and understand what these numbers mean. They can estimate the number of marbles in a jar and make reasonable guesses based on their knowledge of numbers. In other, well-planned, activities, children explore mathematical ideas, such as *bigger* and *smaller than*, and confidently apply this knowledge to other areas of their work. Teachers have high expectations of all of the children joining in and enjoying activities. Children are given time to think about their answers. In a very good mathematics session in a reception class, the children had time to talk to each other about how many marbles there were in the jar, and when the teacher decided that it was too easy and increased the number, the children enjoyed their success when their estimates were close to being correct.

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

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

### **Main strengths**

- There are many opportunities for the children to learn early ICT skills
- Children design and build their models with confidence
- Children learn a lot about the natural world

## **Commentary**

41. Activities are very well planned for this area of learning so that children achieve very well. Very good use is made of the available computers so that children are confident when using relevant programs to explore mathematical ideas. When using the very good resources for designing and constructing models, children are very keen to talk about what they are doing and suggest ideas of how things might be improved. In discussions, children are encouraged to talk about their experiences and learn about things that happened in the past and those that they hope will happen in the future. Children's scientific knowledge is promoted very well. They plant seeds and watch them grow, discussing what is needed for the plants to thrive. They look carefully at the natural world and children in the nursery made model bees, discussing why these insects are important to us, and how bees make

honey. In the reception classes, children learn about the life cycle of a frog and eagerly talk about how a tadpole becomes a frog, and the time it takes for the change to take place.

### **Physical development**

Provision in physical development is very good.

#### **Main strengths**

- There are many well-planned activities to help children become well coordinated
- Children enjoy playing outside with large equipment
- The school hall is used well so that children learn to move safely

#### **Commentary**

42. Teaching and learning are very good and ensure that children make very good progress. Children concentrate well and enjoy the well-planned activities provided. Children are confident when completing jigsaw puzzles and demonstrate very good hand/eye coordination. The outside area is used very well so that children learn to use wheeled toys confidently and with increasing control. Small tools are also used well so that children can cut accurately and safely. Some lessons are planned for the large school hall and this is particularly effective as children learn to move to music and use the large space effectively. The nursery children particularly enjoyed making up their own games in the hall, learning to throw and catch as well as aim at large pieces of apparatus.

### **Creative development**

Provision in creative development is very good.

#### **Main strengths**

- There are many opportunities for children to experiment with paint and colours
- Children enjoy learning

#### **Commentary**

43. Children make very good progress in this area of learning because teaching and learning is very good. Activities are very well planned so that children learn skills systematically and are given many opportunities to practise what they have learnt. Children paint enthusiastically and explore what colour appears when two colours are mixed together. They confidently use a wide variety of resources to make pictures and models and they talk enthusiastically about their work. When the nursery children made model bees, they enjoyed teasing the adults by pretending they were real bees and making the correct sounds. The adults responded positively by pretending to be frightened, giving the children the opportunity to explain how to act when bees were around. The children sing enthusiastically and practise their musical skills by playing a variety of instruments that are readily available in class.

## SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 & 2

### ENGLISH

Provision in English is very good.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils have very good speaking and listening skills
- Assessment and monitoring are used very effectively
- Planning, lesson preparation and organisation of resources are very good
- All pupils are fully included in all aspects of lessons
- In a few lessons, time is not managed as effectively as it could be

#### Commentary

44. At the time of the last inspection, standards in English at the end of Years 2 and 6 were judged to be above the national average. Standards in English are now well above average. This represents good improvement since the last inspection. Work seen and lessons observed show that pupils are well above average in speaking and listening and writing and above average in reading. Pupils achieve very well in lessons, and over time because teachers know them well and plan accordingly. More able pupils are set challenging work and those with special educational needs are supported very effectively by skilled teaching assistants.
45. Teaching is very good. Teachers have very good subject knowledge. They plan and prepare lessons thoroughly and use resources very effectively. Teachers have high expectations of all pupils and get on very well with them. Consequently, pupils have positive attitudes and behave very well, not only in lessons but around the school. In a few lessons, however, particularly in Years 1 and 2, time is not so well managed and children spend too much time at the start of the lesson sitting on the carpet. This results in some whole-class discussions at the end of the lesson being rushed, and missed opportunities for pupils to consolidate what they have learnt.
46. The curriculum is very well planned, using the appropriate materials from the *National Literacy Strategy* to help teachers provide experiences that are appropriate to the age and ability of the pupils. It ensures that pupils' learning effectively builds on what they already know, understand and can do. Assessment is very thorough and on-going, and enables teachers to monitor pupils' learning efficiently. Good use is made of individual targets so that pupils know which aspects of their writing need close attention. These are then used as a focus for marking, which is generally very effective in moving the pupils on. Reading and writing are regularly assessed, and thorough records are kept. For example, each pupil has an assessment book, which is updated each half term. Pupils are also encouraged to evaluate their own work and think of ways they can improve.
47. Most pupils are highly articulate and very good opportunities are created for speaking and listening skills to be used successfully. Pupils use rich, descriptive language in both oral and written work. In a Year 5 lesson, the pupils were discussing "persuasive" language, using radio advertising as an example. Pupils worked in groups to produce their own radio advertisement. In a short time, the groups had developed their ideas and all were eager to demonstrate. One group had produced an advertisement to sell Dalek products and had used word play for their catch phrase "*exterminate high prices*" (in staccato Dalek voices). The pupils enjoyed watching each group perform and were clearly disappointed when the lesson ended. Throughout the school, pupils have *talking partners*, quickly sharing ideas with the child sitting next to them. This helps them to think about and rehearse their ideas. It has proved extremely effective, particularly for those pupils who are less confident in contributing in whole-class settings.

48. Pupils read aloud confidently and demonstrate appropriate strategies for tackling unknown words. When teachers read to pupils they do so with great enthusiasm and pupils clearly enjoy listening to these stories. The school is fortunate to have the public library attached to it and all classes have designated time in the library each week. Pupils have quickly become familiar with library routines and are confident with procedures, for example borrowing and returning books and locating books using the library classification system.
49. The quality of leadership and management is very good and has resulted in very good overall provision. Resources are very effectively managed, readily available and are of a high quality. The subject leaders keep up-to-date with local and national initiatives and disseminate these to all staff through staff meetings and training days. Assessment and monitoring procedures are well established and are very effective in accelerating pupils' learning and ensuring the high quality of teachers' planning.

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

50. There are many opportunities for pupils to write at length and for a range of different purposes in other subjects. In history, for example, pupils have created Tudor menus and written their own accounts of the Great Fire of London. Technology is used widely to support literacy in other subjects and skills like word processing and the use of the internet for research enhance pupils' literacy skills as well as their standard of presentation. In all lessons, pupils have many opportunities to talk and listen to the teacher, teaching assistant and to each other. This approach helps them to develop as confident, articulate speakers.

### **FRENCH**

*French was sampled.*

51. French is taught once a week to all pupils in Years 4 to 6. In the one lesson observed, Year 6 pupils made very good progress in developing and using their French vocabulary because of the teacher's very clear modelling of French pronunciation. The pupils worked through several different oral and written activities, each of which reinforced their learning. As a result, the pupils developed increasing confidence in their use of the language so that they were beginning to apply what they were being taught in the lesson in other situations. For example, although the lesson focused on vocabulary used in buying fruit at market, one girl seeking to borrow a ruler from another posed her request as "*Je voudrais un regle, s'il vous plait*".

### **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is very good.

#### **Main strengths**

- Standards are well above average by the end of Year 6
- The high quality of teaching enables pupils to achieve very well
- The staff have high expectations and continually challenge pupils to do their best
- The use of mathematics across the curriculum is very good

#### **Commentary**

52. Standards in mathematics have been high over recent years, although there was a dip in the results of national tests taken at the end of Year 6 in 2004. However, current standards seen during the inspection indicate that there has been an improvement back to their previous levels. By the end of Year 2, standards are above average and they are well above average by the end of Year 6. The school analyses national test results rigorously and quickly remedies any weaknesses. Procedures were put in place to improve on last year's results, for example, through introducing booster classes,

setting in Year 6 for mathematics and more carefully checking the progress of pupils. The evidence of this inspection shows that these strategies have worked well.

53. Achievement is very good. However, achievement is not quite as good in Years 1 and 2 as it is in Years 3 to 6 because pupils have too few opportunities to handle mathematical data, by representing them in their own graphs and charts, and to interpret or evaluate their findings. Overall, pupils achieve very well because lessons present topics in small progressive steps, each step consolidating previous learning. For example, in a Year 4 lesson on mental strategies, pupils' understanding was developed first by using strategies for adding on or subtracting 9 and then adding on or subtracting 19, 29, etc. Then pupils were introduced to the strategies for adding on or subtracting 11. These small steps within the lesson helped pupils to sharpen up their mental skills with increasing confidence. Pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs, achieve appropriately for their ability because work is matched to individual pupils' needs and, throughout lessons, they are given very good support from teachers and teaching assistants.
54. Teaching and learning are very good. Staff have high expectations of work and behaviour and all pupils are clear about what is expected of them. Lessons are suitably challenging and pupils respond very well. Very good questioning and the very effective use of *talking partners* develop pupils' understanding. The confident use of ICT by teachers interests pupils and captures their imagination, creating a very good learning environment. For example, in a Year 6 lesson on problem solving, the visual and colourful presentation of the problems on the interactive whiteboard gave motivation and confidence to those who initially found this topic more difficult. Most lessons are conducted at a brisk pace, but, in the younger classes, the pace sometimes slows down and pupils lose focus because they are on the carpet for too long listening to the teacher when they are ready to get on with the task set. Several instances were seen where good opportunities were given to pupils to assess for themselves what they felt they had learned, informing both staff and pupils of what needs to be learned next.
55. Leadership and management are very good. There is very effective use of self-evaluation and an informed response to it. Teaching and learning are very well monitored. Both resources and accommodation are very good and make a very strong contribution to pupils' achievement. Improvement since the last inspection has been good. Standards and the quality of teaching have risen, learning intentions in lessons are now clearly set out, and staff have higher expectations about the presentation of pupils' work.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

56. Mathematical skills are developed very well in other subjects, for example science, where pupils in Year 6 can turn a chart into a line graph accurately. In Year 4 science, pupils use their recording and estimating skills very well when undertaking investigations. In a Year 2 display of work, pupils had sorted materials accurately according to their properties and a bar chart about the class birthdays had been produced in ICT. In Year 3, the tessellation of two-dimensional shapes and rotating patterns were on display, and Year 5 pupils had produced a stunning display of black and white symmetry patterns.

### **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is very good.

#### **Main strengths**

- Pupils of all abilities achieve very well and reach standards that are well above average
- Teachers have very high expectations and set challenging tasks
- Lessons are made interesting because teachers make very effective use of resources, including ICT

#### **Commentary**

57. Test results in science have consistently been well above average in the recent past, and these results are reflected in the work seen in school. By the end of Year 2, pupils understand about a wide range of scientific ideas and explain clearly what they are trying to

find out. By the end of Year 6, pupils have made very good progress and plan various investigations, recording their findings in a variety of ways and drawing conclusions from their experiments. Pupils of all abilities achieve very well because they are expected to work hard and persevere at tasks. Pupils with special educational needs are very well supported in class and fully included in lessons. The most able pupils are given work that challenges them to think and use their knowledge in many situations. For example, the most able pupils in a Year 6 lesson were given a box of random articles and were asked to make a circuit using suitable materials. The pupils applied their knowledge of insulators and conductors to successfully build their own circuit.

58. Teaching and learning are very good. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and use resources very well so that pupils are interested in lessons. The use of the interactive white board is of particular note. In a very good Year 5 lesson, for example, pupils watched an animation of how plants are pollinated. This caught their imagination and meant that all were able to join in with the class discussion on which plants are pollinated by the wind, and which by small insects. In all of the lessons seen, teachers had high expectations of all pupils joining in with discussions and working hard. Marking is of a very high quality and pupils know exactly what they have to do in order to improve their work. By the end of Year 6, pupils are assessing for themselves what they have learnt in the lesson, and identifying what they need to learn next. This is particularly effective in involving pupils in their own learning so that they are keen and eager to achieve their best.
59. The subject is led and managed very effectively. The strengths and areas for development have been carefully evaluated and effective strategies put in place so that high standards can be maintained. The strategy of couching every lesson objective as a question is particularly effective, as pupils know that, by the end of the lesson, they will have found out the answer. The resources are very good and used very well so that pupils are interested and enthusiastic about learning. There has been very good improvement since the last inspection. Every aspect of science, from teaching and learning to standards, has improved significantly.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

Provision in information and communication technology (ICT) is very good.

### **Main strengths**

- Standards are well above national expectations
- Staff expertise is very good
- Excellent resources make a very effective contribution to pupils' achievement
- The use of ICT across the curriculum is outstanding

### **Commentary**

60. Standards are well above those expected nationally by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 and pupils achieve very well. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make very good progress. Since the last inspection, the school has developed ICT exceptionally well, and standards of achievement have risen very sharply. Pupils not only receive the support of their own class teachers and teaching assistants, but a specialist ICT technician is present in most lessons to support pupils and staff and demonstrate how skills can be improved. There are enough computers for pupils to work individually, and this has made a significant difference to the rate of recent progress.
61. The quality of teaching and learning is very good throughout the school. Teachers are very confident in their own knowledge and pupils know that their questions will be answered. Teachers' planning is excellent; they give many opportunities for pupils to develop their basic computer skills. By Year 2, all pupils can enter, retrieve and store their work competently and use their imagination very well when using different fonts and colours to

enhance their work. In a Year 2 lesson, pupils learned how to give repeated instructions so that the turtle could be programmed to draw a square or hexagon, the latter challenging the more able pupils very well. Teachers constantly encourage pupils to use the correct technical language. Very good open questioning encourages the pupils to explain what they are doing, and many opportunities are taken for checking how much the pupils have learned by involving them in giving instructions to the teacher.

62. Leadership and management are very good. The scheme of work has recently been revised to take into account the high standards that are being achieved, and the school offers a much broader curriculum than is normally the case. For example, pupils in Year 6 are being given the opportunity to use digital video cameras. Monitoring the quality of teaching and learning is a regular feature of the school programme, and pupil interviews are carried out to gain a view of pupils' perceptions of the subject. In-service training for staff is given frequently by the technical support manager. Pupils clearly enjoy this subject and they take a pride in their achievements.

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

63. Teachers make excellent links between ICT and other subjects. One lesson each week is timetabled to give opportunities for ICT to be used in other subjects. Pupils keep very good records in their workbooks of what they have learned across the curriculum using ICT, and there were some very good displays around the school during the inspection that illustrated the quality of this work. Year 5 pupils have used *Powerpoint™* to present information about the Ancient Greeks and they have used a publishing program to produce pamphlets explaining how light, sound, temperature and pulse-rate sensors are used. Pupils in Year 4 used stamps and repeating patterns to create Egyptian pictures and a sari pattern. In Year 1, pupils have used a paint program to create autumn pictures and pupils in Year 2 created pictures in the style of Mondrian and Kandinsky.

### **HUMANITIES**

*Religious education was inspected in full and is reported below. Geography and history were sampled.*

64. **Geography** work seen in pupils' books, together with displays in classrooms and around the school, indicate above average standards. Very good use has been made of the local area to enhance knowledge and bring the subject to life. In the one lesson seen, Year 3 pupils were looking at aerial photographs of Bovingdon. The teacher's well focused use of open questioning helped to develop pupils' understanding of the difference between physical and human features in the village.
65. Work sampled and aspects of **history** delivered in other subjects, for example ICT, indicate above average standards. In the one lesson seen, pupils in Year 4 were learning about the Ancient Egyptians. Effective use of the internet, together with some artefacts, helped the pupils to develop a good understanding of aspects of life in Ancient Egypt, although, on this occasion, too much time was spent in colouring in pictures to the exclusion of the written task that the teacher had set.

### **Religious education**

Provision in religious education is good.

### **Main strengths**

- Teachers have good subject knowledge
- Planning, preparation and organisation of resources is good
- Pupils are able to work independently and co-operatively
- Teachers use a range of styles to convey their message

## Commentary

66. At the time of the last inspection, the teaching of religious education was highlighted as an issue for improvement. Standards at the end of Year 6 were below those expected in the locally agreed syllabus and achievement was judged to be unsatisfactory. Standards in religious education are now above average throughout the school, which represents very good improvement since the last inspection.
67. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers have good subject knowledge and lessons are well planned and prepared. Effective use is made of technology, particularly interactive white boards, to enhance lessons and engage pupils, and work seen in books and lessons observed show that pupils are interested and curious to learn about religions. In a Year 6 lesson, the teacher presented stunning pictures of world phenomena to illustrate the Creation story. This really captured the pupils' imagination and they gasped in awe. In a Year 3 lesson, the teacher used a 'talking book' of the *Good Samaritan* story to engage the pupils and this formed a sound basis for further discussion and writing. Teachers make strong links to pupils' own experiences, for example, discussing with *talking partners* a time when something similar may have happened to them. Activities are varied and include the use of drama to encourage pupils to think more deeply about what they have learned. Pupils make connections between rules in religions and rules in everyday life. Younger pupils discuss events in stories and begin to make links with their own lives, while older pupils draw morals from the stories they study. Pupils are encouraged to show respect for adults' and for each other's views.
68. Pupils have produced some very good artwork to illustrate world religions. For example, pupils in Year 4 produced a very good display to illustrate their understanding of Sikhism, and pupils in Year 1 made cards to illustrate the Jewish festival of Hanukah. Good use has been made of the local area for visits, particularly the Elstree Synagogue and local church. The local vicar visits the school on a regular basis and frequently leads assemblies.
69. The leadership and management of the subject are good, although currently the leadership of the subject is in a stage of transition, with the new subject leader only taking on the role this term. Nonetheless, the issues arising from the previous inspection have been successfully tackled so that pupils now have a thorough understanding of Christianity and have experienced aspects of other world faiths.

## CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

*Art and design was inspected in full and is reported below. Design and technology, music and physical education were sampled.*

70. There were no **design and technology** lessons seen during the inspection. Teachers follow published guidelines for teaching and ensure that pupils learn the skills necessary to be confident when making and evaluating their work. Pupils in the younger classes make puppets and sew them together, discussing how they could be improved. In the older classes, pupils have made biscuits, and in Year 6, they have made slippers. Pupils evaluate their work and decide where improvements could be made.
71. Two **music** lessons were seen. In both lessons, pupils achieved very well through developing their performance skills. In the Year 2 lesson, pupils responded well to a choral speaking exercise based on the sound effects connected with a storm, and made good progress in their listening skills in order to work effectively together as a team. Year 6 pupils were using boomwhackers to successfully accompany a backing track of the theme to the *Batman* television series. At the end of the lesson, pupils identified where improvements could be made. There is a well-established choir and a recently formed orchestra. They

regularly perform in assembly. Instrumental lessons are available on a range of instruments, and all pupils in Year 2 learn to play the recorder.

72. Just one **physical education** was seen and therefore no overall judgements can be made about the subject. In the lesson seen, Year 2 pupils were very keen to learn and all participated fully in the tasks. Pupils learnt to dance in time to the music and moved their bodies in a stormy fashion. All aspects of physical education are covered during the school year, and standards of swimming are particularly good. All pupils, from the nursery upwards, swim in the school's pool and all are confident in the water.

### **Art and design**

Provision in art and design is very good.

#### **Main strengths**

- Standards are high
- Very good provision is made for teaching art to Years 4 – 6 and, as a result, pupils achieve very well
- Very good quality displays can be seen around the school

#### **Commentary**

73. Standards in art and design are above average by the end of Year 2 and well above average by the end of Year 6. The quality of the displays around the school is high. Pupils clearly take a great deal of pride in their work and they achieve very well. They emulate the style of famous artists and their results are very successful. For example, pupils in Year 6 created pictures in the style of the Newlyn artists, which typically had no perspective.
74. Achievement is better in Years 4 to 6 than in Years 1 to 3. This is because pupils receive an extra lesson in art each week taught by two very enthusiastic teaching assistants. Their demonstrations and expertise have helped to improve the development of pupils' skills, and pupils look forward to this weekly lesson with great anticipation. It is to the school's credit that this innovative timetabling has not only raised pupils' achievements and given them a much broader range of experiences, but has also enabled class teachers to have some much valued planning time in line with Government recommendations.
75. The quality of teaching and learning is very good overall. Teachers' expectations are very high and work shows originality and imagination. Lessons are very well planned and organised with clear learning objectives communicated at the beginning of the lesson. Very effective guidance and support are given on an individual basis once pupils are working independently. Each lesson builds very effectively on pupils' previous learning. For example, in a Year 5 lesson, pupils were drawing thumbnail sketches from photographs that they had taken the previous week with a digital camera. They used viewfinders to help them to focus on the section they wanted to sketch and the majority of pupils were pleased with their results. Assessment by pupils was a feature of every lesson, and they expressed very articulately where they thought improvements could be made.
76. Leadership and management are very good. Art lessons are observed regularly and work and planning are monitored across the school. A variety of art projects are organised and pupils are given the opportunity of working with a wide range of materials and techniques. All pupils have sketchbooks, which are frequently marked and assessed against national expectations. Art and design makes a very good contribution to pupils' multicultural development. For example, in a Year 4 lesson, pupils listened to Cherokee music while designing 'dream catchers'. Many Cherokee Indian artefacts surrounded them in the art room, and their stimulus for the project was the legend of the dream catcher, which they

had clearly understood and interpreted very well. There has been good improvement in the subject since the last inspection.

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

*Personal, social and health education was sampled. Citizenship is not taught as a separate subject but elements of citizenship are included in personal, social and health education lessons.*

77. Pupils have **personal, social and health education** lessons and a weekly *circle time* session, where pupils sit in a circle and take it in turns to talk about issues. Inspectors saw one lesson and two *circle time* sessions. In the lesson observed, which was satisfactory, pupils suggested different words to describe people's behaviour, and they responded well to a miming activity, using some expressive body language. Their views and contributions were valued and respected by the teacher, but pupils were not challenged enough or extended sufficiently in their learning through questioning. In the *circle time* sessions, pupils were asked to consider what it was that they were good at, and then think about what they needed to do to improve. Overall, these sessions made a good contribution to the development of pupils' self-esteem.
78. Sex education is taught as part of science and personal, social and health education, and the school nurse supports this part of the curriculum. Parents are invited to a meeting to view the teaching materials that are to be used. Drugs and alcohol education is also taught through science and personal, social and health education. Pupils have designed posters to promote healthy eating. The school council gives very good opportunities to promote citizenship, and pupils' ideas and suggestions are valued highly by the school.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>1</b>
How inclusive the school is	1
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	1
Value for money provided by the school	1
<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>2</b>
Pupils' achievement	2
<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>	<b>2</b>
Attendance	2
Attitudes	1
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>	<b>2</b>
The quality of teaching	2
How well pupils learn	2
The quality of assessment	2
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	1
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	2
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	1
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>1</b>
The governance of the school	2
The leadership of the headteacher	1
The leadership of other key staff	1
The effectiveness of management	1

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