

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **MILLFIELDS FIRST SCHOOL**

Bromsgrove

LEA area: Worcestershire

Unique reference number: 116663

Headteacher: Mrs Sarah Power

Lead inspector: Mr J Sorsby

Dates of inspection: 14<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup> March 2005

Inspection number: 266507

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

© Crown copyright 2005

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	First
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 to 9
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	198.5
School address:	Swift Close Bromsgrove Worcestershire
Postcode:	B61 7BS
Telephone number:	01527 831885
Fax number:	01527 576208
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Roger Morris
Date of previous inspection:	26 <sup>th</sup> April 1999

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Millfield First School is a smaller than average size primary school with 199 pupils from reception to Year 4. Two pupils are of a background other than white British or mixed British and both are fluent speakers of English. Pupils come from an unusually broad range of economic backgrounds, from homes where families are disadvantaged, through to very privileged homes, where parents are employed in a complete range of professions; overall their socio-economic status is below the national average. Many pupils travel long distances in order to be able to attend this school.

Approximately 18 per cent of pupils have special educational needs, which is about average. Most of these pupils have moderate or severe learning difficulties. 1.6 per cent of pupils, an average proportion, have a statement of special educational needs. Nine per cent of pupils joined or left the school at times other than normal in the last year, this is also about average. However, the distribution of pupils with special educational needs and of pupil mobility is not uniform in the school, and some year groups have significantly higher incidence of both than others. 16 per cent of the pupils who sat the national tests at the end of Year 2 in 2004 joined the school later than normal, and 33 per cent of the year group had special educational needs, one third of them having joined late. Because this is a relatively small school, these proportions can significantly influence test results. The overall proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, 16 per cent, is above average. Among those pupils who sat the 2004 national tests, this proportion was 22 per cent. Children's attainment on joining the school varies slightly year to year. Currently it is

below average overall, and well below average in communication, language and literacy and mathematical development.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
14042	J Sorsby	Lead inspector	
9837	R Walsh	Lay inspector	
27591	M Campbell	Team inspector	Areas of learning for children in the Foundation Stage Science Art and design Music
32747	K Faulkner	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Design and technology Physical education Provision for pupils with special educational needs
23273	R K Freeland	Team inspector	English Geography History Religious education

The inspection contractor was:

Penta International  
Upperton House  
The Avenue  
Eastbourne  
BN21 3YB

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be made initially to the contractor. The procedures are set out in the leaflet '*Complaining about Ofsted Inspections*', which is available from Ofsted Publications Centre (telephone 07002 637833) or Ofsted's website ([www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

# REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
<b>PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS</b>	
<b>STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS</b>	<b>8</b>
Standards achieved in subjects	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
<b>QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL</b>	<b>10</b>
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
<b>LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE</b>	
<b>SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2</b>	
<b>PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS</b>	<b>29</b>

# PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

## OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a **very effective school with many excellent features**. It provides **excellent value for money**. Pupils achieve very well and their standards rise from being below average when they join the school to being above expected levels by the end of Year 4. The school owes its success to very good teaching, pupils being very keen to learn and excellent leadership and management.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The whole school strives for excellence
- Pupils are highly motivated reflecting how highly the school values each one.
- The headteacher and governors provide excellent leadership and management
- Very good teaching accurately addresses the needs of each pupil
- The curriculum is innovative and, with the very good range of extra-curricular activities, matches the needs and interests of pupils very well.
- Pupils are very well cared for and parents play a strong role in their children's education.
- There are no significant areas of weakness.

The school was last inspected in April 1999 since when it has been transformed through excellent improvement. Standards have improved well in mathematics and science and very well in English, information and communications technology (ICT), religious education and art and design. Standards in music remain satisfactory. Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development have improved as has their rate of attendance and provision for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. All the key issues raised at that time have been successfully dealt with.

The quality of the education provided is much improved and the school's leadership and management, unsatisfactory at the time of the last inspection, is now excellent.

## STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

*Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average  
Similar schools are those with similar percentages of pupils eligible for free school meals*

**Pupils achieve very well.** Generally they join the school with standards that are below those expected for their age, and leave with standards that are above expectations. The precise standards on entry vary from year to year, and some years, there are significantly more pupils with special educational needs and inward pupil mobility is high, influencing the standards they reach.

Children now in Reception have achieved well and their standards are now average. Very good teaching has helped them develop the communications, language and literacy skills they need to support other learning.

Pupils continue to make very good progress and achieve very well in Years 1 and 2. Pupils now in Year 2 joined the school with standards that were below expectations. Standards in Year 2 in reading, writing and mathematics are above average. In 2004, standards in reading and mathematics were average because there were significantly more pupils with special educational



needs and a significant proportion of pupils joined the school too late to benefit fully from all it offers.

Pupils continue to make very good progress and achieve very well in Years 3 and 4. Pupils now in Year 4 joined the school with standards that were average. Current standards in Year 4 in English are well above average, while in mathematics they are above average.

**Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are very good.** Pupils behave very well. Attendance rates and punctuality are good. Pupils are highly motivated and have very good attitudes to school and to learning.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The school provides a very good quality of education; the quality of teaching and learning are very good.** Teachers' use of assessment data is excellent and ensures that lessons accurately meet the needs of all pupils including those with special educational needs, higher attaining pupils and the most gifted and talented. The support and guidance of pupils is very good and pupils have a very good understanding of their standards and targets and how to improve their work. Teachers skilfully motivate pupils and make lessons fun. Key features of the work of the school are the highly developed use of the "thinking wheel", which challenges pupils in all lessons to plan and understand their learning process and the exemplary use of support staff. Consequently pupils are keen to learn and behave very well. The very well designed and much improved curriculum further enhances pupils' interest in lessons and their enjoyment of learning. The curriculum is very well supported by the school's very close working relationship with parents, and by the very good quality of care provided to pupils. Learning resources are very good and the school's very good accommodation is very well used. Gifted and talented pupils are well provided for.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**The leadership and management of the school are excellent.** The headteacher, who joined the school after the last inspection, has brought exceptional clarity of vision, sense of purpose, high aspirations and skilful management to the work of the school. Her skills are particularly well complemented by the excellent work of the deputy head teacher, senior management team, governing body and by other staff with management responsibilities. Governors ensure that the school complies with and in many instances exceeds its statutory responsibilities. Monitoring, evaluation and planning are all skilfully carried out, with all staff and governors committed to ensuring that the school constantly improves its provision for pupils while ensuring their wellbeing and happiness.

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

Parents and pupils express great satisfaction with the school, and pupils confirm how much they enjoy attending.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

While the school continues to strive to improve pupils' standards and to enhance their achievement, there are no significant matters that require the school's attention.

# PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

## STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED IN SUBJECTS

Pupils achieve very well, especially in Years 1 to 4, and reach above-average standards.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in English by the end of Year 4 are well above average.
- Standards in mathematics, science and ICT by the end of Year 2 and Year 4 are above average.
- Standards in art and design are above average in Year 2 and well above average in Year 4.
- Pupils, with special educational needs, higher attaining pupils and gifted and talented pupils achieve very well.
- Children in reception achieve well.

#### Commentary

1. Children in reception make good progress and reach expected standards. All pupils in Years 1 to 4, including those with special educational needs, higher attaining and gifted and talented pupils achieve very well. Overall, standards rise from being below average at the start of reception to being average at the end of Reception, above average by the end of Year 2 and well above average in English and above average in mathematics by the end of Year 4.

2. For the past three or four years pupils' standards on entry to reception have been below those expected for their age, particularly in communication, language and literacy and their mathematical development. They achieve well because of the exciting and stimulating provision made for them, and most have reached the standards expected of pupils this age by the time they enter Year 1. Particularly strong teaching, based on thorough assessment of pupils' needs, ensures the children learn at a fast rate.

3. The following table demonstrates that pupils in Year 2 in 2004 achieved lower standards than pupils in Year 2 in 2003 in reading, writing and mathematics. Their standards in reading and mathematics were similar to the average for all schools, while in writing they were above average. They achieved well in reading and mathematics and very well in writing. In comparison with similar schools their standards were above average in reading and well above average in writing and mathematics indicating excellent achievement in writing and mathematics and very good achievement in reading compared with pupils from similar backgrounds. Significant variations in the composition of successive age groups results in variations of test results from year to year but the overall trend is upwards.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	15.9 (17.0)	15.8 (15.7)
Writing	15.6 (16.3)	14.6 (14.6)

Mathematics	16.6 (16.9)	16.2 (16.3)
-------------	-------------	-------------

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

4. Pupils now in Year 2, having joined reception with below average standards, are working at above average standards in reading, writing, mathematics, science, ICT, religious education and art and design. They have achieved very well in each of these subjects. In music, pupils achieve well and their standards are satisfactory.

5. Given their starting point, the very good achievement of the above average proportion of pupils with special educational needs and the high inward mobility of pupils, pupils now in Year 4 are achieving very well. Their standards on entry to reception were average. Very good teaching and learning, an innovative curriculum and exceptionally good use of assessment data to ensure that each lesson meets each pupils' needs, have resulted in them making very good progress and achieving very well overall. In English, their current standards are well above those expected for their age while in mathematics, science, ICT and religious education they are above expectations. Pupils' very good achievement in English is a particular strength of the school and is a consequence of the subject having been the focus of school development, teaching being very good and very well planned opportunities to practise English skills in other subjects. Pupils achieve particularly well in art and design and their standards are well above expectations. In music, achievement is good and pupils' standards are as expected for their age. Insufficient evidence was collected to judge standards or achievement in other subjects.

6. The very good achievement of pupils with special educational needs is the consequence of three factors that support pupils' learning well. Firstly, the techniques used to motivate pupils, such as the learning wheel, are particularly effective with pupils with special educational needs. Pupils in this school learn how to learn. Secondly, assessment data is used exceptionally well to ensure that teachers plan lessons that appropriately challenge each pupil, including those with special educational needs, ensuring that they can learn effectively in every lesson. Thirdly, teaching assistants are highly effective in their work, ensuring that all pupils receive appropriate support, enabling them to benefit fully from every lesson.

7. Higher attaining pupils and those who are gifted and talented do well because every aspect of the curriculum is analysed and extra, enrichment activities are planned to motivate and challenge pupils in the areas in which they are gifted and talented. Such enrichment currently includes art and physical education activities and higher level thinking and problem solving skills.

8. Overall, there has been very good improvement in pupils' achievement since the last inspection.

## **PUPILS' ATTITUDES, VALUES AND OTHER PERSONAL QUALITIES**

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good. The rate of attendance is good and punctuality is very good. The personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is very good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils are very self-confident, have high self-esteem and enjoy excellent relationships with each other and with staff.

- Pupils' are highly motivated and display very good attitudes to learning and to school.
- Pupils' behave very well in lessons and around the school

## Commentary

9. Underpinning the very good improvement in pupils' achievement has been good improvement in pupils' attitudes, behaviour and their rate of attendance. Very good improvement in provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development has resulted in similarly very good improvement in pupils' personal development. The school has been exceptionally successful in developing an ethos for learning and achievement while enhancing the harmonious relationships that exist.

10. The respect with which each member of the school community treats each other enhances pupils' self esteem and their desire to succeed. Every pupil is highly valued by the school, and every pupil knows it. In return every pupil shows great respect and is highly motivated.

11. Pupils behave very well in lessons and around the school because they understand the importance of their behaving well. Each has high expectations of every other, these being a reflection of the very high expectations they know that their teachers have of them. Very good behaviour is a natural outcome of the excellent relationships that exist. Effectively, everyone in a classroom knows why they are there, and gets on with their work.

12. All adults see the development of the whole child, and not just his or her academic development, as being of central importance. Consequently, because every opportunity is taken to provide for pupils' spiritual, moral social and cultural development, issues of moral or social significance are discussed in a mature fashion, giving pupils opportunities to develop their ideas. For example, deep discussions following the recent Asian tsunami led pupils to initiate fund raising to help relieve the suffering of the survivors. Closer to home, pupils participate in a school council and a separate eco-council, suggesting and developing means to improve the school and the attention it pays to the environment. They have raised money to improve areas of the playground and have been involved in developing and implementing the school's code of conduct. Groups of pupils have run mini-enterprises. One such group wrote their own business plan and carried it through, growing plants and potting them in plant pots painted with the school's logo. They raised £300 for the church roof appeal.

13. All these activities together with the moral guidance derived from assemblies and a strong emphasis on and appreciation of art, music, history, geography, religious education and literature results in the school producing well rounded young people who are very well prepared for the next stage of their education.

## Attendance

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

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data:	5.1	School data :	0.3
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.*

14. The attendance rate, which is better than the national average and is improving, is good. Pupils arrive very punctually. There have been no exclusions.

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides a very good quality education; teaching and learning are very good. The very well enriched curriculum is seen as an important key to enhancing pupils enjoyment of learning and hence to raising their standards. Its development and innovation are excellent and it exceeds statutory requirements. The collection of assessment data is very good and its use to respond to pupils' individual needs is excellent.

### TEACHING AND LEARNING

The quality of teaching and learning and arrangements for assessment are very good.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers' planning is excellent and is based on excellent use of assessment data to ensure that lessons meet the needs of each pupil.
- Teachers use an excellent range of teaching methods.
- Excellent use is made of highly skilled teaching assistants.
- In a small number of lessons seen, the pace was too slow.

#### Commentary

##### *Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 29 lessons*

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
5	13	7	4	0	0	0

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

15. As a result of improvements in the quality of teaching since the last inspection, pupils learn very well and their standards and achievement have improved markedly.

16. This is because the school has very successfully placed its emphasis on skills development, enabling pupils to learn and enhancing teachers' ability to teach. Pupils learn at a fast rate because they are active participants in the process rather than passive recipients of knowledge. The school has introduced and developed a process of learning known as the thinking wheel, which enables all pupils to understand the process they are going through. Lessons begin with a very clearly stated learning objective and a question and answer session that analyses what pupils already know about the subject or topic. This leads to a jointly developed step by step plan for the lesson or project which culminates in pupils reviewing what they have learned and whether they have achieved the objective. Pupils enjoy this method of learning as each lesson becomes something of an adventure in the acquisition of knowledge and skills. The school invests heavily in professional development, for example, in enabling teachers to gain the most for their pupils through the use of this teaching methodology. Other very successfully used teaching methods that complement the thinking wheel include role play, investigations and paired and small group learning.

17. Teachers' planning is exemplary. Enormous care is taken to ensure that a series of lessons on the same subject are seamless – each one building on the previous lesson and each reinforcing and developing pupils' knowledge in those areas in which they experienced most difficulty in the previous lesson. To this end teachers, very well supported by teaching assistants, record pupils successes and difficulties in each lesson. Subsequent lessons are then based on this information, ensuring that every pupil is supported and challenged appropriately. The challenge thus created, tailored to the needs of each pupil, is sufficient to ensure learning continues while not being so great that pupils become discouraged. Teachers are highly skilled at planning lessons that reinforce and develop learning across the curriculum. Hence, many lessons that are nominally of a particular subject help pupils learning in other subjects. For example, an excellent dance lesson also reinforced pupils' literacy skills through story telling.

18. Teaching assistants are very highly skilled and their skills are used exceptionally well. There is a true partnership with teachers. They are intimately involved in the planning and delivery of lessons and their efforts are specifically directed to supporting those pupils who require their help. Hence, all pupils are enabled to learn at an appropriate rate, including pupils with special educational needs, higher attaining pupils and those who are gifted and talented in particular areas of the curriculum. Teaching assistants also support teachers in a wide range of administrative matters, such as recording pupils' progress.

19. In the most successful lessons teachers use the range of skills at their disposal to produce lessons in which pupils made large gains in knowledge and skills. Relationships in these lessons were excellent and pupils and teachers were entirely "tuned in" to each other. Pupils enjoyed the lessons enormously and worked very hard with determination to succeed.

20. In a few lessons the pace of teaching and learning was too slow. Consequently the attention of a minority of pupils wandered and while behaviour was never less than satisfactory, less progress was made than in other lessons.

21. A variety of well thought out teaching strategies are used to support the learning of pupils with special educational needs. Specific programmes are planned and taught by well-qualified teaching assistants. The younger pupils have further opportunities to consolidate their phonetic knowledge in small group work. Other identified pupils participate in a specific movement program to improve their coordination and their ability to learn. Such is the commitment of the staff and pupils, that this group work takes place before school begins, giving these pupils a real boost to their confidence and self-esteem. All the pupils requiring additional support are set high expectations in lessons. Staff show respect to the pupils by fully including them in all parts of the lessons through specific questions or in the reporting back part of the lesson. The teachers carefully phrase questions and independent work is well matched to their capabilities and linked to learning targets. For example, this was observed in a mathematics lesson when the teaching assistant helped pupils to record the co-ordinates of places on a map that they had created, developing their understanding of the need for accuracy in map work.

## **THE CURRICULUM**

The school provides a very good curriculum for pupils in reception and in Years 1 to 4. It is enriched by very good additional activities. The accommodation and resources of the school support the curriculum very well.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The school uses innovative methods to ensure that all pupils have access to the curriculum, have ownership of their work and the process of learning, and that they are taught life enriching skills.
- The school has enlivened the curriculum with a full repertoire of visits and visitors.
- Best use is made of the very good accommodation and the outside areas to create a lively and stimulating environment.
- The support of the teaching assistants is outstanding.

## **Commentary**

22. The curriculum has improved very substantially since the last inspection stimulated by the appointment of the present headteacher. Its development has been central to improving the ethos of learning, to enhancing pupils' enjoyment of learning and hence to raising standards and improving achievement. Provision in all subjects inspected is good or better. The curriculum exceeds the requirements of the National Curriculum. The school also successfully implements the locally agreed religious education syllabus, within which the teaching of the key message of respect for each other is emphasised. The use and misuse of drugs are effectively covered in the context of the very good personal and social health education programmes. School governors have resolved not to teach sex education, but pupils receive sufficient guidance and knowledge for their age through their science lessons.

23. The school has taken the National Curriculum and the suggested schemes of work and very skilfully and comprehensively modified these to suit the needs and interests of its pupils. Because of the size of the school, many classes are of mixed age groups. A two year rolling programme has been introduced that enables all pupils in Years 1 to 4 to complete the schemes of work without repetition.

24. The school has adopted several innovative approaches to help deliver a high quality curriculum. In every lesson seen pupils knew clearly what they were learning and why and worked towards achieving their objectives. Pupils' clear understanding of the learning process is greatly enhanced by the use of the 'Thinking Wheel.' This initiative has had an excellent impact on the life and work of the school and on pupils' achievement. Above all it places the pupils at the centre of their own learning and encourages independent thinking. At this school the curriculum is holistic, connecting learning, how to learn and what to learn.

25. This very good curriculum is enriched with a broad array of visits, visitors and activities. For example, during reading week many visitors came into school to read to and with pupils. These visitors included parents, governors, people from the community, education officials and an industrialist from the CBI. The religious education syllabus develops its theme of respect for others and their religions through visits to places of worship including a synagogue, a temple and a church. After-school clubs and activities support the physical education programme and include a professional coach who visits the school regularly to help enhance boy's and girl's football skills.

26. Of particular merit is the strong emphasis on the teaching of English and pupils use their skills to practise their writing in other subjects. For example, Year 4 pupils effectively used their writing skills in science to draw up hypotheses and conclusions using good scientific vocabulary. ICT is also used well and practiced through other subjects of the

curriculum. Interactive whiteboards are used very well by both teachers and pupils and give an additional dimension to teaching and learning.

27. The very good planning for pupils with special educational needs ensures that they have full access to the curriculum and this enables them to make similar progress to other pupils in all lessons. In particular, arrangements in English and mathematics lessons are very effective and ensure that learning of basic skills is planned in smaller steps and closely linked to individual pupils' learning plans. Teaching assistants are clear about their role and support pupils' learning both in whole class teaching sessions and in independent learning tasks. The quality of their support is exemplary, for example, sitting on the floor with pupils during whole class sessions encouraging them to answer questions being asked by the teacher.

28. Teachers are very well supported by an outstanding team of support staff who are clear about their role and who support pupils' learning both in whole class teaching sessions and in independent learning tasks. The quality of their support is exemplary, for example, sitting on the floor with pupils during whole class sessions encouraging them to answer questions being asked by the teacher. This enables teaching to be more effective and to meet the needs of all pupils. The schools grounds are rich in colour and interest, playground markings, shelters, planting, seats and security are all child friendly and safe. The school building is not large but the very best use is made of the space and there are few shortcomings in the accommodation.

## **CARE, GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT**

The care welfare and safety of pupils is very good. The school makes very good provision for pupils' care, guidance and support. The involvement of pupils in the work of the school is also very good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils feel very well supported and cared for.
- The school actively seeks and values the views and opinions of its pupils.
- Induction arrangements for new pupils are comprehensive and very effective.

### **Commentary**

29. The school has thorough procedures for the care and safety of its pupils and follows local arrangements for child protection. The headteacher ensures that both teaching and support staff are regularly briefed and that any concerns are reported.

30. Staff know their pupils and their families well. For this reason, pupils respond very well to staff, have developed trusting relationships with them and feel very well supported. The school's ethos puts the pupils at the heart of the school and in turn provides them with a large degree of responsibility for their learning. This is demonstrated by the use of 'The Thinking Wheel', which is used as a teaching strategy throughout the school. Being visible and approachable is an integral part of the leadership and management style of the school. The headteacher is regularly in classrooms, greets parents and pupils in the playground at the start of school and is very visible around the school during lessons and at lunchtimes and helps the pupils feel confident in school.



31. Pupils' views about the school and their learning are actively sought through questionnaires and circle time (class discussion sessions). These activities have recently led to the starting up of an after-school art club. Through the school council pupils can also contribute their views on decisions that affect them, such as changes to school rules and the implementation of systems to support each other. The council has recently been involved in the establishment of a reading buddy system, the design of the new playground and the procurement of a 'friendship' bench. At present the council is looking for ways to improve the school's environment in eco-friendly ways.

32. The school has put in place very good induction procedures, which enable children to settle quickly into school routines when they join reception. These include the Early Years co-ordinator making visits to the local nurseries and family homes. New pupils are also invited into Millfields for induction sessions and to watch productions such as the Christmas play. All this ensures that staff know the new arrivals well before they commence reception and are able to support their different needs. There are also close links with parents, particularly the parents of children with special educational needs. The two-way sharing of information is a strong feature in the reception year and many parents help in class and are enabled to support their children at home through the advice given by teachers. Pupils joining later in their school life are also fully integrated very quickly.

## **PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS, OTHER SCHOOLS AND THE COMMUNITY**

The school's links with parents and the community are very good. Links with other schools and providers are very good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Parents support the school very well and have a strong commitment to their children's education.
- High quality educational programmes are available for parents and families.
- Community links and links with other schools enhance pupils' learning very well.

### **Commentary**

33. Parents are actively encouraged to participate in their children's education and the life of the school. A large number of parents help in school, providing time and expertise, and have recently helped build a new playground. They regularly help in lessons throughout the school and with improving individual pupils' reading skills. Parents are consulted through questionnaires, open meetings and curriculum evenings each term. The information gathered is used to provide inputs into important school policies and procedures, such as the new homework policy and the school's self evaluation audit. Parents take advantage of the many opportunities to celebrate the achievement of their children and to be involved in the school's work, such as class assemblies, open days, school plays and events organised by the parents' association. Reports for parents are very detailed and indicate targets for improvement; mathematics targets are also sent home each term to help parents engage in their children's learning. Monthly newsletters provide parents with well presented information on future events and activities in school.

34. The school runs a number of very high quality training courses for parents and families which are well supported. Most voluntary readers have attended an in school 'Better Reading Partners' programme and some have extended this activity, supported by the school, to gain a formal qualification. Family learning is also very important to the school

and six-week training courses in numeracy and literacy have been implemented for parents, enabling them to understand and use teaching strategies at home.

35. The school has developed very good links with other schools to benefit pupils' learning. For example, pupils participate in inter-school music and dance festivals. Other links are targeted at improving provision for pupils with specific talents. This extra provision covers a range of subjects including literacy, numeracy, physical education, art and design, music and ICT. Specialist teachers or expertise within the staff are used to help these talented pupils deepen their skills and knowledge. The staff have undertaken training to help them meet the needs of these pupils in lessons. Through the participation of the headteacher on a working party, improvements have been made on the way this and other schools help pupils transfer between schools including those who transfer at times other than usual. The school also hosts early-years partnership meetings to improve provision for younger children.

36. Very good links have been developed by the school with the local community, and these contribute very well to pupils' learning; for instance, the mini-enterprise project, where pupils made products for sale, was led by a local businessman. Older pupils also visit a local nursing home to perform music, and talk to and listen to residents. The school's very good links with other schools include head teachers and co-ordinators meeting together, and pupils enjoying various joint activities. The linked schools share training and good practice and have improved the local provision for the education of gifted and talented pupils. Recent links with a school in the Gambia is contributing well to pupils' multi-cultural learning and to geography.

37. Very good links have also been established with pre-school providers to ensure that children joining reception are quickly and efficiently integrated into the school.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

The leadership, management and governance of the school by the headteacher, governing body deputy head teacher, senior management team and other key staff are excellent.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Governors make a major contribution to the work of the school and are full partners in its development.
- The headteacher's systematic approach to school improvement successfully ensures that each pupil achieves to their maximum potential while enjoying school to the full.
- Management is excellent and enables all to contribute fully to the school achieving its goals.

### **Commentary**

38. The present headteacher joined the school after the last inspection. She is highly skilled and her effectiveness in developing the school, harnessing the considerable talents of the governing body and staff and producing a very strong management and leadership team has been exemplary. This has been the catalyst for the excellent improvements in the school since the last inspection, the wide range of innovative developments, and most significantly, for pupils' much improved achievement.

39. Much of the success of leadership and management can be attributed to the headteacher's confidence in her staff, willingness to delegate and commitment to helping

staff to develop their skills for the school's and their own benefit. The support she receives from the deputy headteacher, senior management team and other key staff is exemplary.

40. Every detail of the school has been carefully and systematically analysed, strengths built upon and weaknesses tackled. In so doing attention has been paid to why the school does what it does, whether there are alternative ways of tackling items, whether the chosen method is the most cost effective available, and whether it will sit well with the school's objective of raising standards and enjoying learning. One of the principal matters that has received detailed attention has been the school's teaching methodology, and through the introduction of the thinking wheel and the development of the curriculum, pupils' motivation has been enhanced, a love of learning has been instilled and teachers and teaching assistants skills have been developed. These improvements, supported as they are by a strong commitment to systematically structured staff development, have led directly to pupils' much improved achievement.

41. The exemplary management of the school has centred upon the headteacher's constant drive to help her staff to develop their skills, take responsibility for their areas of involvement, be innovative, challenge what the school does and why, and drive up standards. There is no ambiguity as to who is responsible for raising standards; everyone knows it is their personal responsibility. All members of staff are constantly and effectively involved in school self-evaluation. Everyone reviews results and plans and takes effective action. Everyone works as part of a very strong and entirely unified team – the work of the staff in the office and those who look after the buildings is equally highly valued because it contributes to the smooth running of the school and hence, its work towards achieving its and pupils' objectives.

42. The governing body has played a major role in the improvement of the school. Governors bring a wide range of skills and experience to bear on the committee's deliberations and work. The governing body led by an exceptionally skilled chairman plays a central role in challenging the work of the school to ensure that plans achieve their intended objectives. Financial planning and management receive equally stringent attention and the school consequently provides excellent value for money.

## Financial information

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

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	434810	Balance from previous year	21462
Total expenditure	429761	Balance carried forward to the next	26511
Expenditure per pupil	2323		

43. The special educational needs co-ordinator, with support from the headteacher, provides very good direction for teachers and teaching assistants. Efficient and effective systems ensure that individual education plans are appropriate and regularly reviewed: parents are fully involved and encouraged to contribute. Staff new to the school are given specific guidance to help them plan learning for the range of pupils in their class. The governor for special educational needs meets regularly with the co-ordinator and evaluates the effect of the provision.

44. Among the range of very significant aids to the school's success and to raising pupils achievement are the quality of teaching that challenges pupils so well, the innovative

curriculum that gains and retains their interest, their resultant maturity for their age, very good attitudes and behaviour, and the full and active involvement of their parents. All of these have come about because of the exemplary leadership and management of the school. Their quality has improved very significantly since the last inspection.

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

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

Children in the reception classes are given an exciting and stimulating start to their education. Overall provision is very good, an improvement from the last inspection when it was good. Over the last few years, children have been of below average attainment when they enter school in most areas of learning. They quickly adopt a positive attitude to learning and by the end of the summer term, most children will have reached the expected standards and a few will be working on the early stages of the National Curriculum. This is due to very good teaching in the Reception classes, where the judicious blend of child-initiated and teacher-directed activities support and challenge children of all abilities. Teaching is also better in quality than it was at the time of the last inspection. The enthusiastic and well-briefed teaching assistants add to the children's quality of experience and all staff work together as a strong team.

The curriculum is very well planned and children are given a wide range of experiences that are stimulating, interesting and of high quality. Efficient organisation enables children to make choices and to manage resources for themselves, which, in turn, nurtures independence. Assessment arrangements are thorough and build up a clear picture of each child's development enabling staff to plan and closely match activities skilfully to individual needs. As a result, all children achieve well, including those who have special educational needs, as they improve on their particularly weak communications, language and literacy skills. It is the weakness of these skills on entry to Reception that prevents children making very good overall progress. The leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are very good.

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

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children's achievement is good because of the many well-focused learning opportunities they are offered.
- Children quickly become familiar with routines, enjoy learning and are given many opportunities to make choices and develop their independence.
- Staff have high expectations of how children should behave and work.

### **Commentary**

45. This area of learning is appropriately given high priority when children start school. Very good teaching means that children achieve well, so by the time they enter Year 1, most children will have attained the goals that they are expected to reach. Staff succeed in ensuring that children develop patience, politeness and consideration and these attributes are reinforced in the other areas of learning. This ensures that expectations are reinforced

through the wide range of different activities on offer. Staff, and all other adults who come into the classroom, work hard to ensure that children learn to share their toys and listen to adults and other children. For example, they know they have to take turns when playing in the Vet's surgery or the farmhouse kitchen, whether treating an ill animal or preparing a meal. Relationships are very good in the reception classes because adults set good examples for children to follow and so children feel respected and valued. This contributes very well to their social development.

46. Children understand the need to change activities and are given lots of opportunity to make independent choices. Children know how to change for physical activity and they understand the need to tidy their coats and shoes in the cloakroom. They demonstrate an increasing ability to concentrate and sustain their interest for long periods because they are thoroughly engaged in a variety of exciting activities, such as when they constructed an enormous crow and scarecrows to link with their farm visit. They all willingly take part at tidy up time, because they have learnt that working together makes the task easier.

## **COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The exciting and varied activities provided promote children's reading, writing and talking very well.
- The quality of teaching is very good, especially the teaching of basic skills.

### **Commentary**

47. Teachers and teaching assistants give a high priority to extending children's language skills and this enables children to achieve well in this area of learning. Most children will have reached the required goals by the time they leave the reception classes and some will have surpassed them. This is because of very good teaching and the wide range of stimulating and challenging opportunities provided.

48. Working in small groups provides good opportunities for children to talk and to listen to others. Children are also given many opportunities to speak as staff interact with them individually whilst they work at chosen activities, which helps those who are reluctant or lack confidence to speak. For example, some children had to explain how they had made a large model crow and others of higher ability were asked about the meaning of punctuation marks when reading a storybook. All staff use questions effectively to encourage children to extend their vocabulary and improve their confidence in speaking. Children initiate and develop their own conversations whilst, for example, using the inter-active whiteboard or describing a variety of fresh vegetables.

49. Teachers use fun activities to help children learn the phonics which will help them begin to read and write. Many children already recognise individual letters and use these in recognisable form in their writing. Basic writing skills are well taught and children see the purpose of writing because activities are often linked to work in other areas of learning, such as writing a prescription in the vet's surgery or writing a caption to accompany a picture. To promote the development of early reading skills, the classroom is rich in print, labels and work children have undertaken on stories such as 'The little Red Hen' and 'Three

Little Pigs'. The children benefit from a wide range of fiction and non-fiction books and clearly enjoy the stories the teachers read to them, such as 'Elmer the Elephant'.

## **MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Very good teaching provides stimulating opportunities for all children to develop mathematical understanding.
- Thoughtful use of resources helps to promote learning.

### **Commentary**

50. The teachers provide an exciting and relevant range of practical activities to develop children's basic skills and extend their mathematical understanding. They cleverly link mathematics with other activities. For example, they use number songs and rhymes which give the children good opportunities to count forwards and backwards and this is then reinforced using number fans. Higher ability children are given more demanding tasks whilst youngest children are well supported by the teaching assistant. As a result of this very good teaching, children achieve well and are on course to meet their expected goals by the end of the year.

51. The good range of attractive resources stimulates learning well. The role-play areas currently function as a vet's surgery and a farmhouse kitchen and children love to count animals, making sure their beds are well matched to their sizes or serve out the right number of portions to customers. One group of children worked with shorter and longer scarves, socks and pencils whilst others used a variety of fresh vegetables to compare lengths. Children enjoy the challenge of various counting games on the computer and interactive whiteboard. Work is well matched to ability groupings and smaller learning steps are given to some children.

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

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children learn very well through activities which are stimulating, exciting and fun.

### **Commentary**

52. Children enter school aware of the world around them and the teachers successfully build on this foundation. Teaching motivates children by providing thought-provoking experiences. For example, children visit a farm and handle lambs, touch calves and try their hands at a milking model. They grow seeds in the classroom and begin to understand what is needed for healthy growth. Children are beginning to know about eating healthily and that their snack fruit is good for them. All activities are well suited to the needs of the children

and those with more advanced knowledge and understanding are well challenged. Teaching is very well complimented by high quality resources.

53. Children have a good knowledge of feasts and festivals. They know about Christmas and Eid and have celebrated Chinese New Year with a dragon dance. Such activities contribute very well to children's cultural development and enables them to learn how people are the same and yet have different beliefs and life-styles. By the end of the reception year, children will have achieved well, meeting their expected targets because of the very good teaching.

## **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children are given a wide range of exciting opportunities to develop the necessary motor skills.

### **Commentary**

54. Teaching is very good and children have many opportunities to extend their physical development. Frequent use of scissors, writing and drawing pencils, paint brushes, baking equipment and other tools succeed in improving children's hand-eye coordination. When outside they have opportunities to ride, balance, throw and catch. In better weather, the large apparatus is used. However, at present, there is no outside area where children can choose to work without adult supervision.

55. In physical education lessons, children understand the need to warm up and make their hearts beat faster. They imitate animal movements to the sound of musical instruments and they understand the need to think about others as they move fast around the hall. Consequently, children achieve well and by the time they enter Year 1, most will have met the expected standards.

## **CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Lively and interesting activities capture children's interest and stimulates them to use their imaginations to develop their ideas.

### **Commentary**

56. Teachers motivate children by providing many varied and stimulating learning opportunities. Children concentrate hard to make scarecrows from a wide variety of materials and paints and they are given many opportunities to develop their creative skills. They use a wide variety of fabrics, paint, papers and card to create animal pictures, for example. They use different paint techniques to create seascapes and the classroom bears



evidence of how the arts are used to make learning relevant and indicate clear links between the different areas of learning. For instance, the work on 'The Little Red Hen' covers aspects of science, literacy and creative art work. Children achieve well because of the very good teaching and, by the end of reception year, their attainment is likely to have reached the expected standards for children of their age.

## SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

### ENGLISH

Provision in English is **very good**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve very well throughout the school.
- The management of English is very good.
- Improvement in the quality of writing since the last inspection is outstanding.
- The use of English in other subjects is very good.
- The quality of teaching of English is very good.
- The use and quality of teaching assistants is outstanding.

#### Commentary

57. Present standards of speaking, listening, reading and writing are, overall, well above expectations. Pupils achieve very well throughout the school. There has been excellent improvement in standards since the last inspection. At that time they were judged to be poor; now they are above average in Year 2 and well above average in Year 4.

58. The quality of teaching is very good, with some excellent teaching taking place. All lessons are very well planned and take accurate account of the different needs of individual pupils. Those with special educational needs are very well supported not only by the teachers but also by the team of support staff and visitors. Their work is equally well planned so as to maximise the support they give to pupils. All pupils know their targets well and what they need to do to achieve them.

59. Teaching assistants are exceptionally effective, enabling each pupil to gain the maximum from every lesson. They have a clear understanding of the needs of each pupil, as a result of their very close work with teachers. They monitor pupils' progress throughout lessons and intervene with timely and effective support as children require. Consequently every pupil is able to participate fully in every lesson and to make progress.

60. At the beginning of every lesson pupils become aware of what they are going to learn, they work towards those goals and at the end of the lesson they are able to account for progress that they have made. In one Year 1 class, for instance, a puppet called 'Walt' opened the lesson with a dialogue introducing the day's targets, to learn words ending with -nt, -nch and -np. At the close of this very good lesson 'Walt' came out to discuss, with the pupils, what progress had been achieved. In an excellent lesson in Year 2 inspired teaching of poetry helped the pupils to 'perform' poems to enhance the quality of their reading. At the end of the lesson the pupils 'performed' their poems, reading with understanding and expression. In all lessons the use of the interactive whiteboards enhances the quality of the teaching and motivates pupils very well. Teachers' marking of writing is very effective with very good comments on pupils' written work and in their reading diaries. In a good Year 4 lesson the pupils tackled a planning exercise that involved telling two parallel stories, based on the book Rosie's Walk. This was a challenging exercise; however pupils were very well motivated by good teaching and developed good plans as the basis for future writing. Planning for future writing is built into the teaching of English and not only helps the pupils

to write in a logical pattern but also supports each pupils' developing writing skills. This high quality teaching of English represents a big improvement since the last inspection.

61. The school has very effectively targeted the improvement of writing and reading over the last few years, resulting in outstanding improvement in the quality of pupils' writing. The 'Thinking Wheel' used across the whole school means that many pupils, as well as developing their learning strategies, also use their literacy skills to support learning across the curriculum. The whole school is decorated with many examples of good writing, stories and poems written by pupils, informative displays linking written work with descriptions of, for example, how the body works using scientific language such as muscle, ligament, translucent and opaque. Reading is an experience to be enjoyed and readers in Year 4 discussed books that they liked, read with pleasure from school and public library books and, in the case of even a less able pupil, showed that improving reading was a key target. Reading is further supported by paired reading with a 'buddy' that is a regular feature of the school's teaching. The reading week was enjoyed by all the pupils and was very well supported by visitors from the community. The school has recognised the need to keep boys motivated and has acquired books that will interest boys particularly. During the reading week male role models were very evident.

62. The subject has made very good progress since the last inspection because of the very good leadership and management of the subject by a very knowledgeable coordinator who has a firm grasp on the subject. She has very effectively monitored the progress the school has made and her clear ideas for the development of the subject put the school in a good position to improve further.

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

63. The whole school is orientated towards enhancing pupils' English skills. For example, in a religious education lesson pupils discussed in detail why the Torah was important to Jews. In science pupils used vivid and scientific language to report the effect of experiments, for example in Year 2 describing how different vehicles moved over different surfaces. ICT was used very well to enhance the quality of pupils' writing, to display effectively what they had written and insert appropriate pictures. The school's integrated approach to the whole curriculum strengthens the teaching of English through every subject.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils' achieve well, enjoy mathematics and work hard.
- Teaching and learning are good.
- There is good emphasis on the use and application of mathematics in other subjects.
- The leadership and management of the subject is very good.
- ICT supports learning very well.

### **Commentary**

64. Current standards in Years 2 and 4 are above expectations. Standards at the time of the last inspection were average at the end of Year 2 but have improved continuously over the past three years. Pupils now in Year 2 have achieved very well. When they started school their standards were below those expected for their age.

65. Pupils now in Year 4 have achieved well. Their standards have improved from average in Year 2 to above average now. Achievement by all pupils is the result of their very positive attitudes to mathematics combined with very good teaching in Years 1 and 2 and good teaching in Years 3 and 4.

66. Pupils enjoy mathematics lessons, encouraged by teachers and teaching assistants to achieve well. They respond with great enthusiasm to their mental mathematics work. Teachers set quick fire challenges that require the pupils to think, use previous knowledge and explain their methods. The interactive whiteboards are used very effectively to help pupils visualize the learning and pupils use them confidently to demonstrate their answers to the rest of the class. For example, in Year 2, pupils raced against the clock to halve numbers and find double the number on the interactive whiteboard program. Pupils were not only mentally calculating but also identifying the matching pairs and explaining their method to the other pupils. This they achieved very well because of the constant praise and encouragement by the teacher and teaching assistant that maintained the momentum of the learning. Pupils are often so keen to learn that the only thing slowing the pace of the lesson is the teachers' over emphasis on ensuring that the pupils understand the task. One little girl clearly keen to get on with the practical investigation in making three dimensional shapes kindly informed her teacher and the class that "we know what to do ". Because of the very good relationships between the teachers and pupils the teacher readily and humorously accepted this as a "fair comment".

67. Teachers' very good planning is clear and accurate and work is well matched to pupils' differing abilities. For example, in a Year 4 lesson on co-ordinates, the more able pupils were given more demanding work using quadrants and negative numbers to access points on their maps and give accurate directions on how to move to from one point to another. This lesson closely linked to map work in geography, required pupils to add further amenities or features to their map and record the new co-ordinates. When learning is less than good it is because not all pupils are expected to contribute in the whole-class part of the lesson so that some pupils are not actively involved and become distracted.

68. Teachers have a good understanding of mathematics and the subject leader is having a very good impact on promoting improving standards in mathematics across the school. Teaching plans are closely monitored and are adjusted to take account of the outcomes of assessments and the differing needs of the pupils in each class. Pupils' responses on national assessment tests are closely analysed so that weaknesses are identified and addressed by all teachers. This means that there is a shared responsibility for the standards and achievements of all pupils. The subject leader encourages teaching to be based on practical and investigative activities to enable pupils to develop sound and secure basic skills on which they can build as they mature in their thinking and application of mathematical concepts. Half- termly targets are clear and related to individual pupils' needs; pupils know their targets and what they need to do next to improve further.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

69. Many good opportunities are created for mathematics to be used in other subjects. For example, pupils calculate scores in games lessons. In science pupils record data in a block graph, measure temperature at specific time intervals and use metres and

centimetres to measure distance. In geography pupils locate places on maps using co-ordinates and the directions of the compass. ICT is used to make practising mathematics skills fun and leads to pupils' deeper understanding of mathematical concepts in a range of different contexts. However, the systematic and planned use of mathematics across the curriculum is not as well enough developed.

## **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards are above expectations by the end of Years 2 and 4 and all pupils achieve very well.
- The quality of teaching and learning is very good.
- There is a strong emphasis on investigative science throughout school which supports the 'Thinking Wheel' approach to learning.

### **Commentary**

70. There is a strong whole-school focus on the development of practical, investigative science. This has been significant in improving the standards seen at the last inspection. By Year 2, standards are above average and pupils achieve very well, because teachers provide challenging work that motivates pupils through fun activities. For example, in a Year 2 lesson on living things, pupils used real plants to identify the name and function of parts of a flowering plant. Pupils made good use of appropriate scientific vocabulary such as 'reproduce' and 'pollen' and their literacy skills were well used when recording their work. Clear explanations by the teacher and ample opportunity to investigate the flowers allowed pupils to ask their own questions about the work. Pupils with special educational needs made the same progress as their classmates because they were well supported by well-briefed teaching assistants who helped them learn in smaller steps to other pupils.

71. By Year 4, pupils' work continues to be of good quality and standards are above average. Pupils achieve very well because teachers use the elements of the Thinking Wheel to find out what pupils already know and what pupils still need to find out. Pupils are clear about what they are going to learn in lessons and teachers set challenging but exciting work. Consequently, pupils are well motivated and apply themselves vigorously to their work. For example, in an excellent Year 4 lesson about teeth, children already knew the names and function of their teeth, knew that diet played an important part in preventing tooth decay and investigated the effects of cleaning their teeth in different ways. School had provided each child with a new toothbrush so that pupils were made aware of the importance of dental hygiene and pupils ensured they carried out their investigation fairly.

72. Overall, the quality of teaching of science is very good. For example, in a Year 1/2 and 3/4 class, teachers were confident with their own subject knowledge, and so were able to explain and demonstrate new learning explicitly, such as the need to keep all other factors the same whilst changing only one variable factor, such as the method of brushing teeth. Pupils in these lessons were given choices of resources, able to carry out their own investigations and given responsibility for their own learning, contributing well to their personal development. Pupils were eager to work hard to meet their teachers' high expectations.

73. The subject is very well led and managed. The subject leader has a thorough overview of the subject throughout the school and monitors planning, teaching and pupils' work. The use of ICT in science is well developed.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teachers have good knowledge and skills.
- The teaching of ICT is closely linked with other subjects.
- Good use is made of the ICT suite and Interactive Whiteboards.
- Technical difficulties are occasionally limiting pupils' learning.

### **Commentary**

74. The school has made very good progress in improving the standards that pupils attain in ICT since the last inspection, when attainment was judged to be below average in Years 2 and 4. The school has addressed the issues raised very well and now the standards exceed national expectations at the end of Years 2 and 4. Provision is now good and all pupils make good progress because lessons are well planned and closely match the differing needs of the range of pupils in every class.

75. The improvement has been achieved because of well considered strategic planning to improve resources and teachers' and teaching assistants' expertise. An excellent example is the decision by the governing body to equip all classrooms with interactive whiteboards simultaneously in order to be able to plan effective training for the whole staff. In the lessons observed where the interactive whiteboards were used teachers demonstrated secure and confident skills that supported the pupils in achieving the learning objective in a range of subjects.

76. The quality of teaching is good and often very good both in ICT lessons and when teaching other subjects using ICT. For instance in a very good ICT and English lesson, Year 1 and 2 pupils used a suitable program to help them write very good descriptions of "an alien". The range of descriptive phrases available for them to select added humour and interest to their writing and helped them to develop the skills of saving and retrieving their work into a folder. Work samples analysed show that younger pupils copy, paste and insert pictures into their writing and successfully programme a robotic toy to synchronise its movements to create a "dance". As pupils move into Years 3 and 4 they continue to develop competence in a range of skills such as researching suitable internet sites to find information relevant to their history studies, importing digital photographs into descriptive writing and constructing graphs and tables to record data in science and other subjects.

77. The ICT suite is well used by all classes. Lessons are well planned and often start in the classroom where teachers provide clear demonstrations using the interactive whiteboard ensuring that pupils know what to do before working independently. Occasionally younger pupils are given too much information to absorb and this results in them not being sure of what to do when they arrive in the suite. In less successful lessons observed, though the intended learning was good, the technical difficulties that could not

easily be resolved by the teacher meant that the pupils did not achieve as much as they were capable of. Pupils would also benefit from having adjustable chairs that would help them access the computers more safely and comfortably.

78. The subject is very well co-ordinated both at the day-to-day management and strategic level. Priorities in the school improvement plan have been adjusted to respond to the need to upgrade the computers emphasising the importance and value the school gives to the subject. Continuity of learning is good because teaching plans are closely monitored with very specific developmental skills taught from the Foundation Stage through to Year 4. Good work was seen stored on the network demonstrating pupils' achievements and progress in all aspects of the subject.

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

79. Teachers are using ICT well in a range of subjects including art and design, English, geography, history, mathematics, music and science. Some good examples observed were data being used to produce bar charts and information collected from CD-ROMS and the Internet being used by pupils to enhance their knowledge of history.

## **HUMANITIES**

80. Insufficient evidence was collected in **geography** and **history** for judgements to be made. However, teachers planning and pupils' past work was scrutinised and one geography and one history lesson was seen. The scheme of work covers all the requirements of the national curriculum and is enhanced by a range of visits and visitors that make the subjects more meaningful for pupils. Like other subjects the 'Thinking Wheel' is used to great effect, to give pupils ownership over their pattern of working and to enhance the quality of learning. Teaching in both lessons seen was very good. In Year 1 geography, pupils showed considerable interest in comparing life in Bromsgrove to life in the Hebrides. These pupils were in the later stages of the 'Thinking Wheel' and were telling others about what they knew. To do this they were preparing a poster to attract tourists to The Isle of Struay. They had a very good understanding of what life on a Scottish island is like. In the very good history lesson pupils explored artefacts that helped them understand how the Vikings lived. In their work these pupils had studied how candles were made, how grain was ground to make flour, the importance of fire and what the Vikings wore. Other pupils in Year 4 had tracked the Viking voyages. Geographical studies in Years 3 and 4 had included weather and mapping exercises both of which were effective.

81. The leadership and management of both subjects is good. The coordinator is aware of the needs of the subjects and has a vision of how the subject is to be developed.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

Provision in religious education is **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The curriculum is well planned to deliver an understanding of pupil's own and other faiths.
- Pupils show great respect for the artefacts of other faiths.

- The quality of teaching is very good using the 'Thinking Wheel' to enhance the pupils' quality of learning.

## Commentary

82. Pupils' achieve well and standards exceed those expected for their age. This subject was not fully reported at the time of the last inspection, and no comparisons can therefore be made. During this inspection two lessons were seen, discussions were held with the coordinator and pupils' work was scrutinised.

83. The quality of teaching is very good. In Year 1, pupils reflected very well on their recent visit to a synagogue and were developing their understanding of the Jewish faith by studying why the Torah is so important to the Jewish people. Pupils watched with intense interest and deep respect for the sacred text as the teacher, making very good use of available resources, carefully displayed the reproduction Torah scroll. The very good teaching and high levels of respect displayed by pupils led naturally to a mature discussion of what pupils valued in their lives. In Year 4, pupils again displayed deep interest and considerable maturity when studying Jesus's entry into Jerusalem and its religious and historical significance. They investigated various depictions of the event, using the interactive whiteboard, and wrote about how they felt people who witnessed it might have felt. This exemplified how pupils' literacy skills are reinforced and practised through the study of religious education, as did the short dramatisation of the event with which pupils demonstrated what they had learned.

84. Leadership and management of the subject are very good. The school uses the 'Thinking Wheel' to great effect to strengthen the quality of the pupils' learning. Resources are good and they are treasured so as to add to the feeling of respect for sacred artefacts. The school bases its scheme of work on the locally agreed syllabus but has modified this to suit the needs of its pupils. Through its scheme of work, the school recognises the importance of Christianity in the community and the multi faith nature of our society.

## CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

85. Insufficient work was seen in **design and technology** to judge the overall quality of provision. The analysis of pupils work shows that they are encouraged to learn through an investigative approach. Pupils are developing a good range of planning, designing and evaluating skills. For example in Years 3 and 4 they design and make money containers. They select suitable materials and develop stitching skills to make the container strong. Pupils evaluate the design through answering a range of questions such as "is it fit for purpose? ". They carefully record the method and instructions used. This learning is then extended through further design challenges such as making a mechanism for a pop-up feature in a book. Pupils learn to label the essential components in the design of the moving parts and evaluate the outcome of how the mechanisms could be further improved.

86. In **physical education** insufficient evidence was available to judge the quality of provision or pupils' standards. However, in lessons seen, pupils achieved very well showing better developed skills than those expected for their age. For example in an excellent dance lesson pupils in Years 3 and 4 created, performed and evaluated their own dance and then those of their classmates. In Years 1 and 2, pupils showed good control of their body and awareness of others when running fast between hoops. A significant strength of the lessons seen was the links with other curriculum subjects. For instance the dance lesson was based



on the history topic of the Vikings and the games activities on the pupils' geographical studies of features of islands.

87. Sport and physical activity are well catered for through after school clubs and other physical challenges on residential and educational visits. Pupils successfully participate in a number of local school tournaments in football and cricket. Outside specialists are used well to help teachers to develop further expertise in particular aspects of teaching the physical education curriculum such as dance.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

88. Only one lesson was observed and insufficient evidence is therefore available to judge the quality of provision of art and design. It is evident from the high quality displays around the school, from scrutiny of pupil work and one lesson observation that work planned in art and design covers the necessary programme of study and that pupils are enthusiastic about the subject. By the end of Year 2 standards are above expectations and pupils achieve well. By the end of Year 4, pupils' competence and confidence have improved very well. They produce work of a standard that is well above expectations for their age and they achieve very well. This is because, throughout the school, pupils are offered a rich and varied art and design curriculum by teachers who are enthusiastic about the subject and who are skilled and confident when teaching it.

89. Scrutiny of pupils past work indicates that pupils have access to a wide range of resources and that teachers have high expectations of their pupils. Studying the work of famous artists is used well as a stimulus for art and design activities and stories from around the world also contribute to the rich art displays around the school. Such work contributes very well to pupil's personal development as does the participation in the school's Art Week. Art and design is well used to enrich the teaching of other subjects such as history, ICT and English.

## **MUSIC**

Provision in music is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils enjoy the subject and have good opportunities to participate

### **Commentary**

90. Music forms an important part of the school. In addition to two good lessons that were observed, pupils were seen singing in assembly and a discussion about the subject's role in the school was held with the co-ordinator. Overall, standards are satisfactory and the quality of teaching is good.

91. By the end of year 2, pupils achieve well and reach expected standards for their age. Their enjoyment is obvious and they participate enthusiastically. In a good Year 1 /2 lesson, after the teacher explained clearly what the pupils were going to learn and where it fitted in with previous lessons, pupils performed a chant which described a storm. They fluently used such terms as 'crescendo' to describe the storm's climax. In collective worship, all pupils sing with piano accompaniment with enthusiasm. Their singing is tuneful. All pupils

have good opportunities to listen to music from around the world. At the start of one Collective Worship, they listened to Vietnamese music which helped to create an appropriate atmosphere for worship and contributed to their cultural development.

92. By the end of Year 4, continuing good achievement maintains pupils' satisfactory standards. All staff are well supported by the subject co-ordinator and the use of a published scheme of work gives non-specialists confidence to teach effectively. In a Year 3 /4 class, pupils used a wide variety of musical instruments to compose a sequence of music to represent a world picture. Groups performed for each other, gaining much from their involvement.

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

93. Insufficient lessons were observed to judge the quality of provision for pupils' personal, social and health education. In one very good lesson seen for pupils in Years 1 and 2, pupils were encouraged to consider the importance of telling the truth and the harm that can be done by not doing so. Pupils responded to the story of the boy who cried "wolf" by considering how the villagers might have felt at various times in the story. All concluded that the truth is the way forward and that telling stories is damaging.

94. The school places great emphasis on helping pupils to develop as well rounded young people ready for the next stage of their education. Assemblies play a significant role in instilling a sense of shared values. For example, in a very good assembly seen, pupils "rapped" the school rules.

95. The school identifies a "thought for the week" which is considered by all pupils in their classrooms and in assembly. Older pupils write their comments about the week's thought on notice boards located in corridors where all can see them. On the thought that we must all value each other, various pupils had written the following comments:

" respect other people"

"respect teachers and pupils"

"if someone makes a mistake, that doesn't change our respect for them"

96. And perhaps most indicative of the strong values pupils develop under the school's stewardship was, "tolerance is the other way around to racism. We must all be tolerant"

97. The school's scheme of work for personal, social and health education is detailed and comprehensive. It emphasises a healthy life in a harmonious community in which personal growth and development is celebrated.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

### INSPECTION JUDGEMENT

Grade

<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>2</b>
How inclusive the school is	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>3</b>
Pupils' achievement	2
<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>	<b>2</b>
Attendance	3
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>	<b>2</b>
The quality of teaching	2
How well pupils learn	2
The quality of assessment	2
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	2
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	2
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	1
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).*