

Pre-Publication Report  
**INSPECTION REPORT**

**EATOCK PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Westhoughton

LEA area: Bolton

Unique reference number: 105202

Headteacher: Miss Naomi Richardson

Lead inspector: Dr Alan Jarvis

Dates of inspection: 25<sup>th</sup> – 27<sup>th</sup> April 2005

Inspection number: 266777

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

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### INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

|                              |  |
|------------------------------|--|
| Type of school:              | Primary                                      |
| School category:             | Community                                    |
| Age range of pupils:         | 3 – 11 years                                 |
| Gender of pupils:            | Mixed  |
| Number on roll;              | 223  |
| School address:              | St George's Avenue<br>Westhoughton<br>Bolton |
| Postcode:                    | BL5 2ER                                      |
| Telephone number:            | 01942 634672                                 |
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| e-mail address               | head@eatock.sch.uk                           |
| Appropriate authority:       | Governing body                               |
| Name of chair of governors:  | Councillor Linda Thomas                      |
| Date of previous inspection: | 25 <sup>th</sup> January 1999                |

### CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The school serves the local community with nearly all pupils living locally. Numbers have fallen slightly as a result of falling birth-rates locally. However, these have held up as more parents now regard Eatock as their first choice school in the area. Nearly all pupils are from a white British background and, of the eleven pupils who are not, none speak English as an additional language. Overall, the pupils' socio-economic backgrounds are below average, although there is a wide spread of advantage. The percentage of pupils claiming free school meals is average. Attainment on entry to the nursery has varied considerably in recent years. It is currently well below average. However, pupils now in Year 6 started with standards that were below average whilst those in Year 2 were broadly average. The numbers who join or leave the school in any one year is much higher than normal. An average proportion of pupils have a special educational need as is the proportion that is supported via a statement of special educational needs. However, the numbers are not evenly distributed and can be quite high in some years. Pupils' special needs include specific needs such as autism, dyslexia or moderate learning difficulties, visual impairment, speech and communication, physical or social, emotional or behavioural difficulties. The school has a maintained nursery and a "before and after school" care club. Unusually, it teaches a range of modern foreign languages and leads developments in this with other schools in the area. In 2004 it achieved the "Basic Skills" quality mark and

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“Artsmark”. This year it gained the “Healthy Schools award”. The headteacher has been in post for just over two years.

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**INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM**

| <b>Members of the inspection team</b> |                 |                | <b>Subject responsibilities</b>  |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------|----------------|--|
| 2711                                  | Dr. Alan Jarvis | Lead inspector | Science; information and communication technology; design and technology; special educational needs.     |
| 32655                                 | John Bostock    | Lay inspector  |  |
| 31838                                 | Martyn Williams | Team inspector | English; modern foreign languages; religious education; art and design; physical education, citizenship. |
| 18027                                 | Sheila Mawer    | Team inspector | Foundation Stage; mathematics; geography; history; music.  |

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**PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT****OVERALL EVALUATION**

This is a **very good school** with some excellent features. It is living up to its mission of “Giving children wings to fly” very well. It is very welcoming and vibrant. All groups of pupils achieve very well by the end of Year 6. This is because of highly effective teaching, their real enthusiasm for learning and a curriculum which is tailored to their needs. The headteacher’s innovation, the excellent leadership team and very strong support from other staff and governors are paying great dividends. The school provides very good value for money.

The school’s main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The headteacher’s excellent leadership and “can do” approach are driving up standards and the whole quality of education, and motivating both staff and pupils alike.
- Achievement is very good in the Foundation Stage, English, mathematics and science.
- Pupils’ excellent behaviour and attitudes to learning help them get the most from school.
- Streamlined and very effective management enables staff to focus on what matters most.
- Pupils are achieving well in ICT but the unreliable equipment is limiting higher standards.
- Pupils’ personal development is very good overall but the weakest area is the development of their understanding of the cultural diversity of our modern society.
- Some parents are reluctant to be fully involved in what the school has to offer their children.

Good overall improvement has enhanced the already effective provision identified at the last inspection. Standards have varied with changes of intake but have generally held up well. Achievement was good and is now very good. Teaching, the curriculum and governance are very much stronger. Issues raised at the last inspection have been successfully addressed. Attendance has fallen.

**STANDARDS ACHIEVED**

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

The standards in the table have varied because of the widely different abilities of each group on entry. Those who took the tests in 2003 were much more able than those in 2004. Standards have been depressed by the high number of pupils who join from other schools, many of whom have special educational needs. In 2004 pupils achieved well, considering their particularly low standards on entry. They did well compared to their peers in similar schools. **Achievement is now very good overall.** Children in the nursery and reception classes achieve very well in most areas of learning, where standards are average. However, achievement in their personal, social and emotional development is excellent and standards are above average. Standards in the current Year 2 are above average in

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reading, writing, mathematics and science. They have achieved well through Years 1 and 2. Similarly, above average standards in the current Year 6 in English, mathematics and science reflect very good achievement. All groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs, are achieving very well through Years 3 to 6. The high numbers of pupils who join part way through quickly achieve as well as others. Standards in ICT are average and achievement is good. Standards in religious education and physical education are also average, and pupils achieve well in these subjects.

**Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral social and cultural development, are very good.** They are extremely keen to work hard. Their behaviour is exemplary at all times, and their excellent moral development is a particular strength. However, whilst their awareness of their own culture is good, their understanding of other cultures in Britain is more limited. Pupils are very keen to come to school and punctuality is good. However, attendance has fallen as more parents have decided to take holidays during term time.

### QUALITY OF EDUCATION

**The school provides a very good quality of education. Teaching is very good** overall, especially in the Foundation Stage and Years 3 to 6, and in English, mathematics and science in all years. Excellent standards of behaviour are consistently upheld and the encouragement given to pupils is first rate. Consequently, pupils develop the joy of learning and a great feeling of success. Teaching in the Foundation Stage, English, mathematics and science is consistently very good. Learning is very interesting and fun, and pupils know exactly what they should learn and achieve. Pupils collaborate very well, support each other and learn very well independently. Pupils with special educational needs are supported very well in their learning by high numbers of very well trained support staff. Very good assessment helps pupils recognise their achievements and improve.

The curriculum is also very good. It is very well tailored to promote high achievement amongst all groups of pupils. The exciting Foundation Stage curriculum stimulates pupils' learning very well. Many pupils take part readily in a very good range of enrichment activities. Classrooms are very well resourced and imaginatively organised. Pupils of all ages settle into school very quickly and continue to be supported very well as they get older. Pupils play a very strong role in the running and development of the school. The school capitalises very well on many worthwhile links with the community. Effective partnerships have been forged with other schools. However, despite the positive steps taken by the school, a significant minority of parents are reluctant to support their children's learning at home or ensure high levels of attendance.

### LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

**Leadership and management are very good overall.** Many responsibilities are devolved to the senior leadership team, who execute them extremely well. The school runs very smoothly, allowing staff to cope with unforeseen circumstances and maintain the very good ethos. Performance management is acutely focused on raising standards. Leadership and management of the Foundation Stage, English, mathematics and science and provision for pupils with special educational needs are all very good. A high priority is placed on developing the skills of staff and deploying them to best effect. The work of the governors meshes in very well with the school's development and financial cycles. Statutory requirements are met. Complaints are very rare but are dealt with promptly.

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

Parents are very pleased with all aspects of the work of the school. The vast majority say their children are very happy and praise how well their children are taught and looked after.



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Pupils love coming to school. They particularly like the way their teachers show them how to learn and do better. They would change hardly anything. Many say it is a “brilliant school”.

### **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

The most important things the school should do to improve, which they have already identified, are:

- Improve the reliability of the ICT equipment.
- Continue to work with parents to improve attendance and support learning at home.
- Further strengthen pupils’ understanding of the views and beliefs of other cultures.

**PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS****STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS****Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects**

Achievement is a measure of how well pupils are doing, taking into account their progress and capability. Achievement is very good overall. It is very good in the nursery and reception classes, good in Years 1 and 2 and very good in Years 3 to 6. This is regardless of pupils' starting points, gender, ethnicity or special educational need. Standards are above average by Year 6.

**Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children in the Foundation Stage achieve outstandingly well in their personal development.
- Overall achievement in English, mathematics and science is very good.
- The high numbers of pupils who join the school each year quickly improve their achievement.
- Pupils with special educational needs achieve very well because of the support they get.

**Commentary**

1. When children start in the nursery, their levels of spoken language and social skills are particularly poor. Consequently, teachers and support staff continually focus on their personal and social development and children quickly relish coming to school. Achievement is very good in both the nursery and reception classes in most areas of learning. Children in the current reception class are likely to reach average standards in most areas of learning. However, achievement in their personal, social and emotional development is excellent and standards are above average. The flying start is a result of consistently very good teaching and a rich, very well resourced curriculum which is very well suited to children's needs.

*The tables shown in this section give average point scores for pupils. Each level in the National Curriculum is given a number of points. Pupils are expected to move on one point every term. So, if a school's points are one point above the national, their pupils are, typically, a term ahead.*

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

| Standards in: | School results | National results |
|---------------|----------------|------------------|
| Reading       | 15.7 (17.4)    | 15.8 (15.7)      |
| Writing       | 13.7 (16.3)    | 14.6 (14.6)      |
| Mathematics   | 17.1 (17.3)    | 16.2 (16.3)      |

*There were 33 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

2. Over the past five years, results have risen faster than those nationally in the national tests taken at the end of Year 2. This is a result of stronger teaching in Years 1 and 2, a clearer focus given to reading and writing, carefully tracking the standards of boys

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and giving higher attaining pupils work that is more challenging. Both boys and girls have done particularly well in mathematics, where standards have generally been above average. Standards in reading, particularly those of girls, have been better than those in writing. More pupils have reached the higher level 3 in science. The stronger results in 2003 reflect a more able group of pupils than normal. Standards were lower in 2004 and were below average overall. However, they reflected the high numbers of pupils with special educational needs. Taking their starting point into account, pupils who did the tests in 2004 achieved well.

3. Pupils in the current Year 2 continue to achieve well in their first two years of the National Curriculum. Standards are above average in reading, writing, mathematics and science but were average at the start of Year 1. Standards are quite a bit higher than last year but the proportion of pupils with special educational needs is also lower. The continuing focus on writing and improving the proportion of pupils reaching the higher level 3 is paying off.

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

| Standards in: | School results | National results |
|---------------|----------------|------------------|
| English       | 26.2 (26.6)    | 26.9 (26.8)      |
| Mathematics   | 25.6 (26.7)    | 27.0 (26.8)      |
| Science       | 28.9 (29.7)    | 28.6 (28.6)      |

*There were 30 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

4. Standards in the national tests at the end of Year 6 have not been rising as fast as those nationally in recent years. There are a number of reasons for this. The last four year groups who have taken the tests had particularly low standards on entry. Test results have also been depressed by the larger than normal proportion of pupils with special educational needs and the high numbers joining or leaving between Years 3 and 6. In 2004 the below average standards overall represented good achievement overall taking into account their starting point and the high numbers who joined partway through the school. They did well compared with their peers in similar schools and picked up a lot of ground during Years 3 to 6.
5. As was the case last year, just under a third of pupils in the current Year 6 joined the school after Year 2. This is a much higher than the proportion nationally. The change in their school and home circumstances inevitably has an impact, both emotionally and because of the different approach taken in different schools. The very high expectations in Eatock, the very good ethos for learning and the high quality care given to these pupils ensure that they settle in very quickly. The school's data and observations in lessons confirm these pupils achieve very well. Standards and achievement in Year 6 are better than last year. This is a consequence of the very good provision becoming embedded. Pupils in the current Year 6 started school with standards that were generally below average. In English, mathematics and science, standards are now above average. Although numbers who join or leave the school remain high and there is an above average proportion of pupils with special educational needs in this class, achievement is very good in each subject. Standards in ICT are average; pupils' achievement has improved and is now good. This is because the ICT facilities are much better, teachers are more confident in using the equipment and pupils have many more opportunities to develop and use their skills across the curriculum. However, higher standards and use across the curriculum are limited as the reliability of the computer system has suffered as more demands have

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been made on it. Standards are average in RE and physical education. Effective teaching has resulted in good achievement.

6. There are several reasons why pupils are doing so very well. Teaching, learning and the curriculum are now very good. More is known about each pupil. Consequently, their progress is very effectively tracked and remedial action taken if any look as if they are falling behind. Standards have also benefited because many develop great confidence in their own learning and a very good ethos has been established. The encouragement they receive has enabled them to thrive and flourish. Most pupils with a special educational need achieve very well. This is because their individual needs are identified at an early stage and they are given the right support at the right time. Although not all reach the expected level for their age, most do.

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

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are excellent. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good overall. Attendance is satisfactory.

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### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The outstanding attitudes of pupils to their work support their high achievement and ensure they maximise the benefits they gain from coming to school.
- Pupils' multicultural understanding is the weakest area of their personal development.
- Excellent relationships ensure pupils learn in an environment in which they flourish.
- Pupils take full responsibility for themselves and the consequences of their actions.
- Some parents do not support their children's attendance as well as they should.

### Commentary

7. Attendance has declined since the last inspection. In the last school year, the level was below the national average for this type of school. Although pupils are very keen to attend, a significant number of parents do not support the school's efforts by deciding to take holidays during term time. This disrupts not only the learning of the pupils concerned, but also that of the others in the class as teachers help them try to recover some lost ground. The school promotes and manages attendance very well in its communication with parents and celebrates exceptional attendance with pupils. It works very closely with the educational welfare service. Consequently, attendance has improved recently. Unauthorised absence remains very low.

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

| Authorised absence |     | Unauthorised absence |     |
|--------------------|-----|----------------------|-----|
| School data        | 6.0 | School data          | 0.0 |
| National data      | 5.4 | National data        | 0.4 |

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

8. Pupils display an extremely strong interest and enthusiasm in lessons and other activities. For example, they contributed intelligent questions and answers in a Year 5 personal education lesson when discussing harmful substances. They remained focussed, attentive and respectful of the opinions of others throughout. Pupils work hard, and enthusiastically show off their work. Pupils constantly arrive at the headteacher's room to show their work and receive praise. Excellent attitudes and behaviour begin in the Foundation Stage and form the basis of the on-going high performance of pupils as they progress through school.
9. Pupils thrive and flourish because there is a very purposeful and happy atmosphere in the school. This reflects the excellent relationships pupils enjoy with one another and with their teachers. They help and care for each other without prompting. For example, teachers took exemplary care of a child who fainted in the school yard during the inspection and pupils quickly support others who have accidents. Pupils of differing ability levels mix and work very well together in lessons, play and other activities.
10. All pupils are aware of the extremely high expectations regarding conduct at all times. They respond very well. Behaviour is excellent in the classrooms, assembly and around the school grounds. Pupils say that bullying is extremely rare. There have been no exclusions for several years. They hold very positive views about discussing issues in a mature way and resolving conflicts fairly. In a school council meeting pupils debated the need for friendship benches and suggested the possible re-use of existing equipment rather than buying new ones. Pupils enjoy taking responsibility and respond very positively to the opportunities provided.

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11. Pupils' spiritual, moral social and cultural development is very good overall – with moral aspects being excellent. Whilst cultural development is satisfactory overall and their knowledge of their own culture is good, their understanding of multicultural life in modern Britain is the weakest element. There are few pupils of non-white ethnic origin in the school, displays around the school do not sufficiently reflect the multicultural dimension of this country and such ideas are not yet well embedded in the curriculum. Teaching introduces limited ideas of our multicultural society, such as by bringing some visitors to the school from other cultures and faiths. However, the school recognises that further development of pupils' real knowledge of what life is like in other cities, towns and other areas is necessary.

### QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides a very good quality of education. Teaching, learning, assessment and the curriculum are all very good. Staffing and resources are very good but the ICT equipment is unreliable. Accommodation is good. The care and support given to pupils, their involvement in the work of the school and links with the community are additional very good features. Links with other schools are good. A significant minority of parents are not as supportive as they should be.

#### Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are very good overall. They are very good in the Foundation Stage, good in Years 1 and 2 and very good in Years 3 to 6. Assessment is very good.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Excellent standards of behaviour are upheld and the encouragement given to pupils is first rate; consequently, pupils develop a joy of learning and a great feeling of success.
- Teaching in the Foundation Stage is very well suited to the needs of younger children.
- Teaching is very good in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science.
- Learning is very interesting, fun and pupils know exactly what they should learn and achieve.
- Pupils collaborate very well, support each other and learn very well independently.
- Pupils with special educational needs are supported very well in their learning.
- Very thorough assessment helps pupils recognise their achievements and improve.

#### Commentary

##### *Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 39 lessons*

| Excellent | Very good | Good     | Satisfactory | Unsatisfactory | Poor | Very Poor |
|-----------|-----------|----------|--------------|----------------|------|-----------|
| 2 (5%)    | 19 (49%)  | 14 (36%) | 4 (11%)      | 0              | 0    | 0         |

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

12. One of the main reasons why pupils achieve so very well is that teaching and learning are very good. At the last inspection, just one in five lessons were judged very good or better. Most were satisfactory. The table illustrates very clearly how much more

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(around one half) is now very good or excellent. The benefits of intensive staff training, annual targets for teachers to improve aspects of their performance and the very consistent way in which innovative approaches are implemented have considerably strengthened teaching. Parents are very complimentary about how much teaching has improved. The inspectors agree.

13. Planning in the Foundation Stage is very thorough. As a result, a very good balance is provided between stimulating tasks which are led by the teacher and the many opportunities that are provided for pupils to learn through play. Relationships between the children and all adults are excellent. This helps create a very purposeful learning environment in which the children are attentive and highly motivated. Children's personal, emotional and social skills are constantly in the minds of the teachers and other staff. Teaching in this area is excellent.
14. Teaching in English, mathematics and science is very good overall. It is stronger in Years 3 to 6 than in Years 1 and 2 because learning generally proceeds at a quicker pace and challenges for individuals are even better defined. Spanish is also taught very well. The key reasons why pupils are often engrossed in their learning are:
  - pupils' attitudes and behaviour are of such a very high standard that teachers can focus on driving up pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills;
  - a flexible but very rigorously monitored approach is adopted to planning and so lessons are always interesting and challenging;
  - teachers teach with assurance because they have been very well trained; and
  - teachers know their pupils very well and so constantly set work which is very challenging.
15. The common teaching methodology used helps assure consistency. At the start of every lesson teachers share with pupils, "We are learning to.....". Pupils refer to this as WALT. Consequently, they are crystal clear about what they have to do. In addition teachers stress "What I am looking for" so that pupils can focus on the things that matter and achieve their very best. Pupils refer to this as WILF. In addition, pupils' progress in learning is also assessed very well. One frequently used way of doing this is for pupils to hold up green, orange and red coloured "traffic light" cards. The idea is that if they fully understand what they have covered they hold up a green card. An orange card means they have not understood everything and a red card that they don't. In many lessons, teachers also introduced short physical exercises or thinking tasks to refresh pupils' bodies and minds. Pupils know this as "Brain Gym". In a Year 5 lesson, this was led by a pupil. Sometimes, these features linked together extremely well.

### Example of outstanding practice

**WALT and WILF, excellent assessment and some help from "Tina Turner" helped Year 3 pupils learn about magnets and kept them learning at the limits of their capabilities.**

Straight away the teacher didn't have to think about settling pupils down as they came to the lesson wanting to learn. This is the WALT. "Investigate the strength of magnets" Here is the WILF. "I want you to come up with your prediction about which magnet is the strongest". Both were emphasised so the pupils were absolutely clear about what they had to do. After a sharply focused discussion, pupils in different ability groups came up with a way of testing the strength of the four different magnets. The teacher moved around, not only continually challenging them but also assessing their thinking. The teacher asked, "Why is the test fair in this group but not in the group in the corner?" More challenge. "Think about your tests – make them fair". The teacher spotted that some pupils were flagging. Tina Turner to the rescue. The class exercised and sang the hit song "Simply the Best". That did the trick. Pupils worked much harder. Near the end now. Out come the traffic light cards. The teacher chose pupils holding a card of each colour. Her extremely perceptive questions pinpointed exactly what they had learnt. Pupils' answers and the number of green cards showed the very rapid

gains made in understanding.

16. Class teachers and support staff work very closely together. They know the additional needs of the pupils with special educational needs very well. Most support is provided in class. Extra support is given to those pupils with more acute difficulties by withdrawing them for lessons once a week for more intensive teaching. Staff use assessment information very well to give pupils realistic but very challenging work. The very well trained support staff are very skilful at bringing the very best out of pupils. For example, extremely focused support of one pupil in Year 1 led to him beaming with delight about his successes in a physical education lesson.
17. The quality of assessment of pupils' work was satisfactory at the last inspection. It is very good now. Information is continually gained in lessons, through data analysis and through regular testing in the Foundation Stage, English, mathematics and science. This is used very systematically in planning to match work very closely to the needs of all groups of pupils. Teachers meet pupils and their parents twice yearly to discuss how well they are doing and set targets for improvement. Target setting is good in mathematics but sharper in English, where it is very good. Regular discussions in lessons and reviews of how much has been learnt at the end of each lesson help pupils judge the success of their work. Assessment would be even better if pupils were given more opportunities to show exactly and explain how they have met their targets. Assessment systems are up and running in all other subjects and are increasingly giving teachers a clear idea of standards and how they vary year by year. Much marking is constructive and supportive but only the very best contains well focused, diagnostic comments to show pupils how to do even better. Parents of pupils with a special educational need receive regular feedback on their children's progress and are able to discuss how their needs can be best met. Pupils who join the school during the year are assessed very carefully and given work that helps them move on.

### **The curriculum**

The curriculum and its enrichment are very good. Staffing and resources are very good overall. Accommodation is good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The very well tailored curriculum promotes high achievement amongst all groups of pupils.
- The unreliability of the computer suite limits standards in ICT.
- The exciting Foundation Stage curriculum stimulates pupils' learning very well.
- Many pupils take part readily in a very good range of enrichment activities.
- All classrooms are very well resourced and organised in highly imaginative ways.

### **Commentary**

18. The key areas of literacy, numeracy and science are emphasised very well. National guidelines for all subjects are not followed rigidly but have been adapted very effectively to provide a closer match to the needs of all groups of pupils. A recent curriculum focus on raising boys' achievement has reduced a wide gender gap so that boys now do as well as boys in England as a whole. Pupils with special educational needs receive very good support from their teachers and teaching assistants, who use their skills and experience very well. The school stresses its "multiple intelligences"



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approach where pupils' strengths are identified and fostered. One consequence is that there is a range of extension activities for gifted and talented pupils and specific workshops are arranged with the cluster group schools.

19. Cross-curricular approaches regularly enhance provision in all subjects. Examples include the themed activities such as the multi-cultural arts week and design technology week which included support from the local secondary school. A distinctive feature is the role play areas which are set up in each classroom, such as a Victorian parlour and travel agents. These considerably enhance the communication skills which underpin learning. Although not part of the national pilot strategy, the school on its own initiative teaches a number of modern foreign languages from the Foundation Stage onwards. The many benefits include broader cultural horizons, a better understanding of how language works, and the motivation of following parts of the regular curriculum in a novel and memorable way. In consequence, pupils' academic and personal skills and knowledge develop progressively very well.
20. The curriculum in the nursery and reception classes is very imaginative. The rich and varied learning experiences are very well suited to the differing needs of younger children and ensure high levels of achievement. Children's personal, social and emotional development is extremely successful in helping them to mature and become independent learners.
21. A very good programme of additional experiences and visits complements and enriches work in the National Curriculum. Pupils enjoy a wide range of clubs, including a debating society, unusual for pupils of this age. Many participate in music and arts competitions and the school holds the Artsmark award. Sporting activities are especially strong, with many visiting specialists sharing their expertise and helping to refine pupils' skills. The prominent role given to food means pupils learn from their earliest years how to relate to others in a comfortable atmosphere at the table. Social skills develop very well and are reinforced throughout all years. Through a variety of subjects, pupils learn much about healthy living and also conservation and recycling. Pupils' personal development is already very good thanks to a very good, inclusive programme of personal, social and health education, including appropriate guidance about sex and drugs education. In consequence, pupils mature very well and widen their experiences.
22. Staffing levels, including the increased numbers of teaching assistants, are very good. Classrooms have attractive displays celebrating pupils' work and including teaching aids and learning prompts which help promote high quality learning. Three classrooms have computer-linked display screens which are used very well to enhance virtually all subjects. Although there was a considerable investment in ICT four years ago, the equipment is not able to cope with the current demands made on it. Consequently, pupils do not spend as much time using it as they might. Although achievement is satisfactory, this does limit the development of their ICT skills. Role-play areas within or alongside classrooms give good space for preparation and performance, but separate space - for example for group teaching or music tuition - is at a premium. The library has been absorbed into classrooms so the school is investigating the provision of an information resource room. Outside space is very good and includes a wildflower meadow, vegetable allotments and wildlife area. These provide a very good focus on the environment.

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

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Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety are very good. The school provides pupils with very good support and guidance and takes very good account of their views.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- All staff ensure high levels of care and protection.
- Pupils settle into school very quickly and continue to be supported very well as they get older.
- Pupils play a very strong role in the running and development of the school.

### **Commentary**

23. Teachers know pupils very well and are committed to the care and development of their physical and emotional well-being. As a result, pupils feel more able to be ambitious in their learning without fear of failure or embarrassment. Supervision of breaks is well managed and accidents or incidents at play at lunch time are handled sensitively. Maintenance of buildings and equipment is carried out in an orderly and timely way. Risk assessments of the building, and trips, are regularly carried out. Arrangements for child protection are very good with designated officers and other staff being recently trained. Many staff are competently trained in first aid. A number of minor issues were found during the inspection. The school now has firm plans to deal with these. Both parents and pupils are very satisfied with the care.
24. There are helpful “wrap around care” arrangements through breakfast and after-school groups that are shared with pupils from other schools. Children very quickly settle into the nursery and learn necessary routines and required behaviours. Very good information is provided to parents so they too feel comfortable with their children starting school. Children are very sensitively introduced in a phased way, which enables them to get used to coming to school and learning with other children. Similarly, older pupils arriving in term time are inducted smoothly and carefully. Very good systems are in place for tracking pupils' personal and academic development, with a focus on underachievement and pupils at risk.
25. The school council provides a well-established and mature opportunity for pupils to raise issues. It meets frequently during lunch breaks. Two elected pupils from each year represent the opinions of their classmates. Discussions are then followed up in each class, where pupils try to resolve suggestions locally at first. Sensible discussions took place in both arenas during the inspection, and issues of importance to pupils such as a request for air fresheners and friendship benches were discussed. Pupils also run clubs and help in the office at lunch time without staff supervision. For example, older pupils were observed teaching younger ones to dance to pop music whilst others independently run an art club. The school has a house structure of competitions and involvement. The pupil house captains who run them carry out their duties very well.

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

The school has a good partnership with parents. There are very effective links with the wider community and good links with other schools.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

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- A significant minority of parents are reluctant to be fully involved in what the school has to offer, to support their children's learning or ensure good attendance.
- The school capitalises very well on many worthwhile links with the community.
- Effective partnerships have been forged with other schools.

### Commentary

26. The wide range of visitors includes drama groups, musicians and artists, local clergy who support spiritual development and sports coaches. During the inspection a senior citizen worked very effectively with a small group of pupils and taught them about crop rotation, which linked in very well with the school gardening club. Visits by the emergency and welfare agencies contribute to personal, social, health and safety education. A wide range of visits focus on topics and subjects such as work on geography, the environment and nature as well as sport, adventure and team building activities for senior pupils. For example, visits are made to museums, art galleries and environmental locations. The choir sing at local events, pupils visit older local citizens, the families and friends are invited to shows and the Christmas and summer fairs. Together these activities considerably widen pupils' experiences.
27. Regular meetings of headteachers and other senior staff within the area help share best practice and are effective in staff training. For example, good advantage is taken of the workshops held in local high schools and support from them for the school's design and technology and European weeks. Emerging links with schools in Madrid and Tanzania are starting to develop the cultural understanding of pupils, as is a link with a multi-cultural school in London. Pupils mainly move on to one particular high school and effective transfer arrangements are established. Pupils have a taster day at the high school and they work on bridging projects in science, literacy and mathematics to take to their new schools. These have a positive impact on their work.
28. Nearly all parents are very satisfied with the school. They feel well informed by the comprehensive information about the life of the school, and comfortable about approaching the school and having their opinions and suggestions sought out and considered. Some parents give their time generously to the school. However, a significant minority are reluctant to fully support their children's learning at home and ensure good attendance and punctuality. Courses provided (or promoted) by the school are generally poorly attended. A few parents at the parents' meeting had some concerns about how the school responds to complaints. These were investigated. Complaints are rare but correct procedures are followed.

### LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Overall, leadership and management are very good. That of the headteacher and senior leadership team is excellent. Governance is very good and much improved.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher's innovative leadership motivates both staff and pupils alike.
- The senior leadership team is extremely effective in its work.
- Streamlined management enables all staff to focus on what matters most.
- The work of the governors meshes in very well with the school's development and financial cycles.

## Commentary

29. The headteacher has the full confidence of parents. Nearly all remark on how extremely happy their children are at school and how well they learn and mature. In the space of just over two years, she has established a school in which every child truly matters and is able to take charge of their own learning. The school has successfully implemented many new ideas. These are increasingly being shared with other local schools. Almost on a weekly basis teachers visit to look at how WALT and WILF are implemented, the very strong provision in the Foundation Stage and approaches to literacy and assessment. Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning, teaching, the curriculum, governance and relationships with parents have improved rapidly because all staff know exactly what they are working towards. She had already identified the key issues for action identified in this report.
30. The senior leadership team have thrived on the key responsibilities that have been devolved to them, such as the development of ICT, tracking pupils' progress and developing innovative practice in pupils' learning. Consequently, they know the role they have to play in realising the school aim of "*Giving children wings to fly*", sustaining the very good ethos for learning and driving up standards. Hand in hand with this is the much stronger accountability placed on them. Their work is monitored extremely rigorously by the headteacher and governors alike.
31. Very careful attention has been given to ensuring that management is not over-complicated or time-wasting, and can be concentrated on realising the school's ambitions. Consequently, the school runs very smoothly. This leaves staff time to cope with any unexpected problems, maintain the very good ethos and lead developments. Some features stand out. The very good annual plan for developing the school is clear, precise, focused and affordable but the strategic plan is not quite as sharp. A high priority is given to appointing staff who fit in with the philosophy of the school. Staff, including those new to the school, are very well deployed and trained, which enables them to teach to a high quality and to their strengths. The annual setting of targets for both teaching and non-teaching staff is very well developed and is acutely focused on further raising achievement. The collection and analysis of data have been considerably strengthened and this now gives teachers a very clear insight into pupils' achievements.
32. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very well led and managed. The governor responsible for this area is very active. For example, she liaises with parents who may have a concern and quickly resolves the issue or helps provide the answers they need. The work of the high numbers of very well trained support staff is very carefully managed. Consequently, pupils who need extra support are very well provided for. Leadership in the Foundation Stage, English, mathematics and science is all very good. This is a key factor in the better provision and improved achievement in these areas. ICT is also very well led. However, the impact of the very positive initiatives that have been put in place is impaired by the unreliable equipment. Other subjects are led and managed well.

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

| Income and expenditure (£) |         | Balances (£)               |        |
|----------------------------|---------|----------------------------|--------|
| Total income               | 605,560 | Balance from previous year | 62,094 |
| Total expenditure          | 633,222 | Balance carried forward    | 34,432 |

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|                       |       |  |  |
|-----------------------|-------|--|--|
| Expenditure per pupil | 2,715 |  |  |
|-----------------------|-------|--|--|

33. Governors play a very effective role in helping to improve the school. Their committee structure runs very well; a good number keep very close contact with the headteacher and the staff they have been linked to. They are very closely involved in helping to formulate and evaluate the school improvement plan and this is supported by an intimate understanding of the budget and their involvement in performance management. The annual cycle of meetings and the formulation and monitoring of the budget and priorities for development are closely intertwined. Currently, there are problems with the local education authority's systems for monitoring finances. As a result, the governors are ensuring their oversight is as accurate as it can be. Money is very well targeted on ensuring and further improving standards and achievement, although longer term strategic planning could be sharper. The school provides very good value for money.

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

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

34. Provision in the Foundation Stage is very good. This enables children to make a very effective start to their education. At the last inspection, provision was good in the nursery and satisfactory in reception. Very good improvements have been made since then and there is a strong drive for learning. In particular, the teaching in reception has improved from satisfactory to very good.
35. The children's attainment on entry to the nursery is well below average. The spoken language of about a third of the children is particularly poor. Because of very good induction procedures, they quickly feel secure and soon become engrossed in their learning. Meticulous planning ensures a good balance of stimulating teaching and very good opportunities to learn effectively through play. Assessment is very good and the planned tasks take good account of differing abilities. The effective use of WALT and WILF in reception encourages the children to do well as it helps them to know what they are learning and how well they have done. The co-ordinator has established a strong and effective team. High expectations are set and a rich curriculum is provided, which meets the needs of children very well. The indoor accommodation is very attractive, although rather cramped, but there is a spacious outdoor area for the nursery children. Outdoor provision is more restricted for children in reception. Resources are very good in the nursery and good in reception.

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

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

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

- This area receives a very high focus, ensuring the children achieve exceptionally well.
- Relationships are excellent and children quickly settle into classroom routines.
- Children are highly motivated to learn and their behaviour is excellent.
- Confidence and independence are developed very well in the role-play areas.

#### **Commentary**

36. Children achieve exceptionally well because of excellent teaching, outstanding relationships and a very welcoming environment in which they quickly feel secure. They make very rapid progress and by the end of the reception class, most are likely to reach above average standards. This area of learning is given a high priority and is central to the Foundation Stage curriculum. As a result, the children are highly motivated and have a very strong desire to learn. Their progress is helped significantly by very good arrangements for gradually introducing them to the nursery and reception. This helps them to settle in quickly. Adults work very effectively together to reinforce the qualities of caring and sharing. They set excellent role models. Consequently, the behaviour of the children is outstanding. Stories such as the "Three Billy Goats Gruff" are often used to reinforce how poor behaviour affects others. The children show very good levels of confidence and responsibility in choosing what to do and working independently. For example, in the nursery they tidy and wash up after

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snack time independently. In the reception class they are very skilled in deciding their own characters and acting out events at the “vet’s surgery” together.

### COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve very well because of very effective teaching and learning.
- Role play is used exceptionally well to extend literacy skills.
- The teaching of reading and writing skills is very good in both classes.

#### Commentary

37. Standards are below average but achievement is very good. This is because of very good teaching. Although the children make very good gains in their learning, about a third are unlikely to reach the expected standards by the end of the reception year. These are the children who entered school with very low levels of language skills. However, a small group are expected to exceed expectations.
38. Speaking and listening are given a very high priority in the curriculum and the exciting role-play areas provide outstanding opportunities to promote language skills. In the nursery, for example, the teaching assistant was used very productively to extend vocabulary when she joined the children to build a “fire station”. The wealth of resources in the “vet’s surgery” helps reception children to initiate conversations together. Many are speaking fluently, such as the “receptionist” who told a client that the vet was full and she would have to make her appointment on another day. The children are taught to listen carefully as soon as they start school and because of this they respond well to questions, wait for their turn to speak and remember what they have been taught. Early reading and writing skills are promoted very well in the nursery. Children enjoy sharing their favourite books and are beginning to recognise some letter sounds and words. They readily make marks and some letters in their free writing, such as recording the list of snacks on offer at playtime. Most can write their own names.
39. The very good provision continues in reception, where significant improvements have been made to the teaching of reading and writing since the last inspection. Very good organisation enables adults to work productively with small groups on reading and writing activities. The highly imaginative role-play areas and lots of visits and visitors provide a very good incentive for children to write freely in a wide range of contexts. For example, during the inspection, two pupils from Year 5 gave a talk about their gerbil to children in reception. This provided the focus afterwards for their writing. Alongside the free writing they are helped to formally improve the way they form letters. Many are now writing short sentences independently. The guided writing session in the literacy lesson is very well taught and extends the children’s writing skills effectively. Through skilled teaching, most children are now on the early stages of a reading scheme. A small group of children are reading quite fluently for their age.

### MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

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

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### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Early numeracy skills are taught very well and enable children to achieve very well.
- Very strong emphasis is given to help children learn the language of mathematics through play.
- The outdoor area in the nursery is used very effectively to support mathematics.

### Commentary

40. Standards are average. Skilled teaching helps children to use mathematical language confidently and develop ideas to solve problems through play. Good resources are used during these challenging sessions, impacting positively on learning. In the nursery, the children learn to count up to 10 and recognise the missing numbers on a number line. The outdoor area is used extensively to enliven the children's learning. In one outdoor session they soon began to understand the difference between long and short when they compared the horizontal and vertical lengths on a "fireman's ladder". The very effective teaching and learning continues in reception. Although access to the outdoor area is timetabled and not freely available, a challenging range of practical activities are planned indoors. For example, different sized containers were used in the "vet's surgery" to estimate the number of scoops of dog biscuits needed to fill each bowl. The children's estimations are already reasonably accurate. Most are very confident in counting in 5's to 100 and particularly enjoy counting in French and Spanish. The higher attaining children are confidently recording addition and subtraction sentences up to 20.

## KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The rich curriculum stimulates children's curiosity very well.
- Visits and visitors significantly enrich the learning.
- The children benefit from the informal teaching of different languages.
- Children make rapid progress in developing their ICT skills.

### Commentary

41. The teaching is very good and ensures that children achieve very well. Standards are average overall but ICT skills are above average. Children are provided with abundant opportunities to learn about the world through an innovative curriculum, very good resources and frequent visits and visitors. In religious education, they celebrate important world festivals and are currently learning about Jesus and his friends. The current topic on "people who help us" has resulted in visits from the police, fire service and local vet. These visits have given the children a much wider experience of the world. The extensive garden and wildlife area around the school have provided excellent opportunities to learn about growth and change. The children have grown different plants and investigated the growth of frogs and butterflies.
42. The innovative practice of teaching French, German and Spanish adds considerably to the children's knowledge and understanding of the world as well as their



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communication skills. Frequent opportunities are used to sing, count and reply to questions in different languages. The children's ICT skills are above average and achievement is very high. This is because computers are freely available and there is a wide selection of software. ICT is used regularly to support all areas of learning. For example, in the "vet's surgery" the children in reception found the correct program and used the mouse confidently to add up amounts of money for a bill. They then confidently completed an invoice and printed out their work.

### PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

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

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Outdoor physical provision is very good in the nursery.
- Insufficient opportunities are provided in reception for free choice in outdoor play.

#### Commentary

43. Because the teaching is very good, almost all children are likely to reach average standards and achieve very well. The outdoor area in the nursery is spacious and very well resourced for physical development. There is a large and imaginative climbing frame, a good supply of wheeled vehicles and an abundance of small equipment. Activities are very well planned and supported by adults and because there is free access for nursery children, they make a flying start in their physical development. They are now moving with good control and co-ordination. In the reception class, although there are regular planned sessions for children to use the outdoor area, they are not given free choice during the day. However the teaching in the hall is very effective and children make very good progress when they improve their skills in jumping and throwing a ball. The reception teacher is very aware of the disadvantages of not being able to give children more access to an outdoor area, especially as the indoor accommodation is rather cramped. However she is very inventive and recently set up a "fitness centre" for role-play during the topic on growth and change. Here the children planned their own timed activities on a range of fitness equipment and recorded their performances. The children develop a very good awareness of a healthy life-style when they have healthy snacks and access to fresh fruit each day. Their skills in handling pencils, scissors, brushes and other tools are developing well because they work regularly with a wide range of materials across all of the areas of learning.

### CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

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

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is very good and children achieve very well.
- There are exciting opportunities for imaginative play, especially in the nursery.
- Standards in music are above average.

## Commentary

44. Nearly all children are on track to reach average standards in this area overall; in music standards are above average. The role-play areas both indoors and outside provide a wealth of opportunities for imaginative play. The children often help in their preparation and so their painting and collage skills also improve. They happily engage in activities and because the areas are changed regularly, interest levels are kept high and there is constant challenge in the learning. The children in nursery and reception are given very good opportunities to draw and paint pictures freely and make collages, prints and models. The staff are very skilled at intervening at the right time to help them to improve their skills and so their confidence in using different materials improves. The recent visit from the vet and the opportunity for children to bring their own pets to school has provided very worthwhile experiences to draw and paint their favourite pets. The children regularly take part in planned music making sessions and also use music freely in their role-play activities. In the music lesson observed the children in reception sang very tunefully, knew all the words of the songs and maintained a very good beat when accompanying the singing. The teaching is very skilful. This is the reason for the very high achievement in music.

## SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

### ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

45. All pupils study **modern foreign languages** from the time they start school. This initiative broadens their horizons very well. Pupils find out about people and places in France, Germany or Spain. They learn to hold basic conversations and read and write about simple themes. They also gain useful knowledge about how language works. Many aspects of other subjects such as numeracy become more appealing when studied in another language: pupils regularly count in French, German or Spanish as they undertake tasks in various lessons. In the two lessons observed, teaching was good and very good. Teachers know the countries well, love the languages and use them for real purposes. As a result, pupils learn to communicate properly and gain a very good foundation for their secondary education.

### English

Provision in English is **very good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- A very good curriculum means pupils achieve well by Year 2 and very well by Year 6.
- Teaching and assessment are very good overall, leading to very good learning.
- Very good subject leadership has raised achievement, especially for boys.
- Literacy is emphasised very well throughout the curriculum.

## Commentary

46. Standards in listening, speaking, reading, and writing are above average by Year 2. This represents good achievement relative to their average standards at the start of Year 1 and provides a secure foundation for learning in Years 3 to 6. Pupils are currently doing better compared with national averages than in the 2004 National Curriculum tests, when standards were below average in Year 2. Standards of the

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present Year 6 pupils are above average and higher than last year. This represents very good achievement because their standards were below average on entry to the school. School records and lesson observations show that the higher than usual number with special educational needs and those who joined the school after Year 2 are achieving very well. There is a very good match of tasks to pupils' abilities in all years but the pupils achieve better in Years 3 to 6 because teaching is stronger.

47. The National Literacy Strategy is not followed rigidly but adapted to suit the school and the particular themes that run across the curriculum at different times. Pupils read regularly for a variety of purposes. By Year 2 they read aloud with some fluency and show their understanding by explaining their preferences. By Year 6 they read accurately and discuss books thoughtfully. At present pressure on space means that there is no separate library, which limits pupils' opportunities to research independently. Writing has been a recent focus. Standards of handwriting have improved throughout the school. Accounts of a recent school visit show that Year 5, for example, write very clearly and accurately at length and demonstrate a very good grasp of appropriate style. Teaching is good in Years 1 and 2 and very good over Years 3 to 6, where targets are more precise so that challenges for individuals are even better defined. Targeting is supported by very good tracking systems which identify how well every pupil is doing. The WALT and WILF approach means lessons are very productive because pupils know that they are getting somewhere and how well they are doing so. Pupils rapidly build up their understanding and use of language thanks to probing questions, plentiful opportunities for speaking for various purposes and focused correction and attention to grammar.
48. Subject leadership and management are very good because lessons and pupils' work are regularly monitored and action taken to share strengths and identify areas for development. The action taken to raise boys' achievement, for example, has reduced a wide gender gap and brought it into line with the rest of England. The introduction of a range of support strategies and extension activities, but above all the rigorous reworking of the curriculum, has raised standards and led to good improvement since the last inspection.

### Language and literacy across the curriculum

49. In all lessons, targeted vocabulary is identified so that correct terms in, for example, science, mathematics and religious education may be properly used. Marking usually takes good account of spelling and grammar. There are opportunities to write at length, for example in history and religious education, and word-processing supports drafting in a variety of subjects as well as in English itself. The use of role play and of "talk partners" for discussion is a particular strength. These strategies help to build pupils' self-confidence and develop their competence in speaking and listening very well. This provides a strong basis for their other communication skills.

## MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **very good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- All pupils achieve well by Year 2 and very well by Year 6.
- Very good and at times excellent teaching enables pupils to learn very effectively.

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- Challenging tasks are very well matched to pupils' attainment.
- Further developments are needed to link target setting and marking to the very good assessment.
- Very good leadership and management has helped to drive up standards.

### Commentary

50. Standards in Year 2 are above average. This represents good achievement from pupils' average standards at the start of Year 1. Standards are well above average in Year 6. This shows very good achievement from their entry to Year 1, where standards in mathematics were higher than English and science. Pupils new to the school quickly achieve very well. Achievement has improved significantly since the last inspection. The reasons for the very good achievement are principally the very good teaching and learning, the effective setting arrangements and demanding tasks that are very closely matched to pupils' ability.
51. Teaching is good in Years 1 and 2 and very good in Years 3 to 6. Overall, it is very good. Lessons observed were never less than good and one was outstanding. Teachers have very high expectations of pupils' behaviour and achievement. They deliver stimulating lessons with confidence and imagination and capture pupils' enthusiasm for learning. As a result, pupils work with very high levels of motivation, their behaviour is excellent and they have a strong desire to learn. The pace is purposeful; activities are varied and include a lot of problem solving. Every minute is spent productively on helping pupils to learn successfully. Resources are used very effectively to explain ideas and make things clearer. For example, a "smart board" - a computer-driven whiteboard - was used particularly well in Years 5 and 6 to demonstrate the correct measuring and drawing of angles. On one occasion, the teaching seen was inspirational.

### Example of outstanding practice

**In a Year 4 mathematics lesson, excellent teaching significantly developed pupils' knowledge and understanding of rotational symmetry.**

It was soon apparent that the teacher not only had an expert knowledge of mathematics, but also knew how to explain a difficult concept skilfully. Very effective links were made with learning from a previous lesson on reflective symmetry. This reminded pupils of what they already knew. Then starting with a starfish and moving on to other resources, the teacher imaginatively explained, with pupils' help, the order of rotation of different objects. The teaching was strengthened by targeted questions, which provocatively challenged pupils' abilities and ensured everyone took part. The highly relevant and absorbing learning continued in the independent tasks. Pupils were asked to find rotational symmetry on car wheels, make a wheel trim and experiment with shapes. Tasks were clearly targeted to pupils of differing needs. Pupils worked with extreme concentration, were totally engrossed and displayed high levels of confidence and independence. At the end, the teacher expertly drew together what had been learnt and asked pupils to explain their understanding of rotational symmetry. It was clear they had successfully mastered the processes by focusing their thinking totally on the task. Achievement and learning were very high. They also had lots of fun and thrived on exceptional relationships. The teacher's wonder of rotational symmetry was truly infectious.

52. A very strong feature of the teaching is the way assessment information is used very successfully to plan lessons and match tasks precisely to pupils' abilities. This enables all groups to participate fully in lessons and to use their time productively. It also means that higher attaining pupils are challenged very well in their learning, while those with special educational needs are given work that enables them to achieve as well as everyone else. Pupils with special educational needs are also helped considerably through the very effective support they receive from teaching assistants. The very successful use of WALT and WILF gives pupils a very good focus for their

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learning. It also helps them to be clear about what they need to learn in the lesson and to know how well they have done. While assessment is very good overall, individual target setting and marking are weaker elements. Target setting is relatively new and not yet clearly embedded in practice, while marking is not always used enough to help pupils understand what they need to do to improve further.

53. The subject leader monitors other teachers' lessons very well. This has led to a high level of consistency and improved their teaching skills. It has also contributed to a clear sense of purpose from all staff, who have high aspirations to continue to raise achievement. She has also worked with a strong direction to address all of the weaknesses from the previous inspection. Achievement, standards, teaching, planning and assessment have all improved very well since the last inspection. The recent introduction of setting by ability of pupils in Years 5 and 6 is also making a very positive contribution to the achievement of pupils.

### Mathematics across the curriculum

54. The skills of mathematics are taught well across the curriculum. The good use of ICT to extend mathematical skills is very well established in data handling but there has been less impact in some other areas of mathematics. Although the school has identified the need to extend the use of mathematics in science and design and technology, the examples seen in pupils' work show that good care is taken to ensure that calculations and measurements are accurate. In art and design, many examples of using shapes are seen in patterns and designs. In history, there is a good focus on using time lines to record the sequence of dates in periods of history. Graph work is a strong feature of fieldwork and surveys in geography.

## SCIENCE

Provision in science is **very good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- A high quality and vibrant curriculum stimulates pupils to achieve very well.
- Very good and at times excellent teaching makes lessons varied and very enjoyable.
- Pupils' excellent attitudes and behaviour enable them to focus hard when learning.
- Literacy is used very well but there is scope for numeracy and ICT to be further strengthened.
- The subject is led and managed very well and any weaknesses are quickly addressed.

### Commentary

55. Standards in the current Year 2 are above average; all groups of pupils are achieving well from their average starting point at the start of Year 1. In recent years, higher attaining pupils have underachieved. The proportion of pupils reaching the higher level 3 is now in line with the proportion nationally as a result of better challenge for them in their learning. Standards are also above average in the current Year 6. Value added scores and observations in lessons show that the majority of pupils have achieved very well from the start of Year 3. Pupils who joined during the course of Years 3 to 6 have picked up speed and are achieving very well. Achievement overall is very good because the subject has a higher priority, teaching is considerably improved and a higher focus is given to scientific enquiry.

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56. Many wider opportunities are taken to enliven and enrich the curriculum. At the heart of this are very well planned opportunities for pupils to develop their skills of scientific enquiry at first hand. These are helped by the very good resources which have been assembled. Unusually, these are enhanced by the focused use of role play areas which help pupils develop their scientific understanding through discussion and debate. For example, this year pupils used role play in the “police forensic centre”, “weather station” “dentists” to help bring relevance and enjoyment to their science. The development of the school site and a focus on the school being an eco-friendly environment help provide a very good environmental focus. The younger pupils have had visits from a chiropodist and explored habitats in the local park; the older pupils have visited the Science Museum in Manchester to see science in the wider world. The only area for development is to provide more opportunities to think about multi-cultural science.
57. Teaching and learning are good in Years 1 and 2 and very good in Years 3 to 6; very good overall. Learning is stronger in Years 3 to 6 because more opportunities are given for pupils to work independently and there is a brisker pace to learning. As in many other lessons, the use of WALT and WILF, the attention paid to giving challenging work to pupils of different abilities and the support provided to pupils with special educational needs are consistently very good. Questioning is also often very effective. This regularly helps pupils to clarify the scientific ideas in their minds. The pupils’ own excellent attitudes to learning and capacity to work independently come to the fore when they embark on practical work. This contributes to the very good pace seen in many lessons. Occasionally, teaching is excellent when difficult ideas are taught and learning is constantly amended as a result of gauging what has been learnt.
58. One of the key reasons why pupils do so very well is the priority given to developing pupils’ confidence in speaking and writing about science. For example, pupils are continually encouraged to learn new scientific vocabulary and write clear explanations, predictions and descriptions. These aspects they do very well. The only area for further strengthening is the confidence pupils have in considering the reliability, significance and validity of their experimental data as they approach Year 6. Sound use of numeracy and ICT is evident throughout all years but pupils do not readily exploit the potential of these in their learning.
59. The subject leader has ensured very good improvement since the last inspection. Teaching has much more pace and challenge and the presentation of pupils’ work has greatly improved. Achievement has risen and as a result, standards are now rising after a lull. More formal monitoring of teaching, learning and the tracking of progress being made by individual pupils has also improved achievement. A particularly worthwhile innovation has been the introduction of “floor” books which are used in Years 1 to 3. These contain pupils’ work, photographs and other records which pupils constantly use for reference to consolidate their learning.

## INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

### Main strengths and weaknesses

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- Achievement is good because of the good quality teaching and effective use of support staff.
- Resources are much improved but their unreliability is holding back standards.
- The curriculum is well planned and all aspects of learning are covered effectively.
- The subject is very well led but some steps taken have yet to feed through to standards.

### Commentary

60. Pupils are now reaching average standards by Years 2 and 6. All groups of pupils are achieving well in all years. Standards are not higher by the time pupils leave school because pupils did not have earlier access to the good quality resources they enjoy now. There are several reasons why achievement has improved. The school now has an ICT suite, the subject is much better planned and resourced, teachers are much more confident in teaching the subject and support staff are used more effectively.
61. At the last inspection, the school had one or more computers in each classroom. Pupils used them on a rota basis. This meant, in effect, that they had limited time to develop their ICT skills. Now the school has an ICT suite which is used by each class twice a week as well as class laptop computers. There is Internet access and a good range of other equipment such as digital cameras, equipment for measuring the environment, tape recorders and video cameras which extend pupils' ICT capabilities. However, the computers and the way they are linked together frequently cannot cope with the much higher demands made on them and break down. This has led to the pupils spending much less time developing their skills than was planned. Although they achieve well in the time available, this unreliability limits the standards achieved.
62. Good attention is given in all years to pupils developing their confidence in using word-processors, databases and spreadsheets in their learning. Younger pupils control floor robots and older pupils use sensors to monitor the physical environment, such as in a Year 6 science lesson where they recorded light levels. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well in the curriculum by support staff and helped by the well chosen software which has been purchased for them. Good use of role play as, for example, in the "Internet café" and "travel agents", helps pupils develop a good sense of how computers are used in the real world. The normal curriculum is effectively enhanced by a well attended weekly ICT club.
63. Teaching and learning are consistently good. In lessons observed the teachers' good subject knowledge shone through, planning was effective and individual needs were well catered for. For example, in Year 3 a quick rethink was needed as half the computers failed just before the lesson started. However, the backup plans the teacher had prepared enabled good use of the available computers. The higher attaining pupils sent e-mails to "Willy Wonka", thus effectively making the lesson interesting and linking it to literacy. The average and lower attaining pupils were well supported by teaching assistants who guided as they wrote out their e-mails before their turn on the computer came. Pupils co-operated well and worked at a good pace.
64. Leadership and management of the subject are very good. A great deal has been accomplished in the last two or three years. Computer-linked display boards are steadily being introduced and are enhancing teaching and learning. An effective assessment system is in place and is increasingly being used to track standards. Very positive steps have been taken to identify opportunities to use ICT across all subjects

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but these have yet to be fully embedded. Overall, improvement since the last inspection has been good.

### Information and communication technology across the curriculum

65. Satisfactory but improving use is made of ICT across the curriculum. Around the school, the interesting displays illustrate the regular opportunities taken for pupils to use their ICT skills in other subjects. For example, Year 1 have used e-mail linking ICT to literacy and Year 2 have used it in numeracy to produce a range of charts which show how long cars are parked on the school drive. Year 3 have set up "Willy Wonka's Internet Café" and Year 5 have done some very good surveys of their favourite foods, lessons, sports and pop stars. The Internet is frequently used for research in geography, history and religious education. Software is also soundly used to enhance work in art and design, music and modern foreign languages.

## HUMANITIES

*Religious education was inspected in full. Work in history and geography was sampled.*

66. In **geography**, pupils continue to benefit from a good range of activities. The local area is used regularly for visits and helps pupils to widen their knowledge and understanding. Years 1 and 2 use the area around the school to develop their skills in map work. They also visit the seaside to learn about different places. In Year 6, pupils gain a better understanding of rivers when they make a visit to a local river to undertake fieldwork. Good links are often made with ICT and mathematics, and these help to make the learning more meaningful. For example, traffic surveys are carried out in the local area and information is presented in graphs and analysed. In Year 4, pupils have been focusing on India and have benefited from an Indian visitor who worked with them on dances from India. The school has identified the need to develop multi-cultural links through geography more widely.

67. There is a very imaginative curriculum in place for **history**. The high quality displays around the school confirm the enthusiasm of teachers and pupils for the subject. A great strength is the excellent use of role-play areas which have an historical theme and the extensive use of visits and visitors. Teachers make very good use of these facilities to bring the subject alive for pupils and to help them to interpret history and carry out investigations. Cross-curricular links are very strong, especially through the role-play areas. In particular English, ICT and art are promoted very effectively. In Year 6, for example, pupils have prepared their own PowerPoint presentations on the life of John Lennon, while in Year 2 they used laptops to carry out their own research into Florence Nightingale. In Year 5 pupils prepared a "Greek day" and built their own Greek temple. Excellent resources and a very knowledgeable co-ordinator, who has recently reviewed the curriculum framework, also enrich the provision. Effective assessment procedures have been introduced since the last inspection.

### Religious education

Provision in religious education is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- All groups of pupils achieve well.



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- Teaching and learning are good but work is better balanced in some classes than others.

### Commentary

68. Pupils in Year 2 are achieving well and working above the expectations of the Bolton Agreed Syllabus. They recount stories accurately and describe features of the religions studied using correct terms. They are beginning to make links with aspects of their own lives but are limited in tackling ultimate questions of faith and values. Discussions with pupils in Year 6 and examination of their books show that standards are broadly in line with expectations. This means that they too are achieving well because they were below average on entry to the school. They are starting to evaluate and not simply describe aspects of the different faiths studied, but are limited in suggesting how their own beliefs might be influenced by this.
69. The school has adapted national guidelines and materials well to interpret the agreed syllabus. As a result, teaching is good. The balance between the two attainment targets of learning about and learning from religion is better in some classes than others. Teaching was satisfactory where pupils learned much about religious stories and could retell them accurately in their own words. Where teaching and learning were very good, pupils saw how they could learn from these stories and use the experience to contribute to the development of their own values and beliefs. There are generally good opportunities to talk in pairs and groups or as a class and pupils also have good opportunities to write or word-process various tasks. This effectively supports the development of their literacy skills.
70. Assessment procedures are soundly linked to what pupils are expected to achieve in each year. These are satisfactory but do not provide as much detailed information to support teaching and learning as the school wants in order to raise standards further. In consequence, the school is exploring a more precise system of levels following those of National Curriculum subjects.
71. Leadership and management are good. The subject leader is working to improve assessment systems. He has organised a good range of resources, especially artefacts. There are visits to places of worship and the school plans to increase these. There is also a good range of visitors which includes clergy but also ordinary men and women who talk about what their faith means to them. Since the last inspection, achievement has risen so improvement has been good.

### CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

*Physical education was inspected in full. Art and design, design and technology and music were sampled.*

72. In **art and design**, pupils' work shows that planning has improved since the last inspection. The curriculum is better balanced to address 3-dimensional work. Younger pupils' competent understanding of colour, shape and proportion develops well over later years through cross-curricular work, whole-school themes and the inspiration of visiting artists. Individual strengths of "art smart" pupils are fostered well. The school holds the Artsmark award.

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73. In **design and technology**, pupils' work shows that the curriculum is more systematically covered than at the time of the last inspection. Pupils in all years are given interesting and challenging tasks and a good emphasis is placed on the designing and making process, which was weak at the last inspection. For example, Years 1 and 2 have made moving vehicles, Year 3 monsters that move with the aid of pneumatics and Year 6 shelters for people using recycled materials. Provision is extended by a well attended club after-school on a Tuesday. Literacy features very well in pupils' design briefs. The recently appointed subject leader has made a good start by strengthening assessment and links with other subjects, and by bringing more visitors in.
74. **Music** continues to enjoy a high profile in the school. Singing is still a particular strength. In assembly pupils sing very tunefully, with a good tone and clear diction. The choir, who performed an African song in four parts very skilfully, are clearly reaching standards that are higher than most other schools. The school also provides a rich and varied programme of additional experiences for the pupils. These include instrumental tuition, musical productions and workshops from visiting musicians. The provision has been strengthened further since the last inspection with a greater variety of percussion instruments. Pupils also have the opportunity now to use ICT to extend their skills in composition. Assessment, which was underdeveloped at the last inspection, is now being used to measure the progress that pupils are making. Two lessons were observed. In one standards were above average and teaching was very good; in the second standards were average and teaching was satisfactory.

### Physical education

Provision in physical education is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well as a consequence of good teaching and learning.
- Extra-curricular activities help to enhance learning very well.

### Commentary

75. Standards are above average by Year 2. This means pupils achieve well because they enter the school at a broadly typical level of physical development. In a Year 1 lesson observed pupils sequenced movements effectively and started to evaluate what they were doing in order to improve. Standards are average in Year 6. This also represents good achievement because this group of pupils entered the school with below average standards of physical development. Those in Year 5 whose standards were broadly average on entry to the school reach above average standards, particularly in their control and co-ordination of athletics movements. This reflects consistently good achievement through the school.
76. Most of the teaching is undertaken by the subject leader and one other teacher in Years 3 to 6. They each take responsibility for different year groups. They have also to some extent divided the different strands of the subject between them to find the best match to their strengths so pupils may gain the most benefit. They will review this and make necessary changes next year. Teaching assistants work very well to enable pupils with special educational needs play as full a part as possible. In the best lessons, all pupils were encouraged to think hard about what worked well and what

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could have worked better in their own performances and those of their classmates. In some lessons, the focus on evaluation and improvement was not as sharp so pupils were less effectively engaged in refining their skills.

77. A very good range of extra-curricular activities for all ages helps bring more specialist tuition to more pupils. Visitors include coaches from Bolton Wanderers FC. The school puts teams forward for local and regional competitions and parental support is increasing. Football, rugby, netball, dance, tennis and tae kwon do are only some of the activities which help to raise pupils' levels of competence and promote enjoyment through physical activity.
78. Subject management is good, especially in the identification of strengths and weaknesses and the deployment of teachers' expertise. The subject leader has only recently taken on the role so there has been limited time in which to raise achievement further. The weakness in swimming noted at the last inspection has now been addressed. Swimming records show that pupils are doing better and that the vast majority should meet or exceed national expectations by the time they leave school. Improvement has therefore been good.

### **PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP (PSHE)**

*This area was sampled.*

79. This area is very well planned and coordinated. A very good programme for all years helps pupils learn about themselves as they grow up, their place in the school and local communities, and their wider responsibilities in the world. This includes an appropriate programme of sex and relationships and drugs education that meets statutory requirements. The school encourages a healthy lifestyle, and also conservation and sustainable development. All adults take care to ensure that all pupils know they matter individually. In lessons observed in Years 2 and 4 careful questioning helped all groups of pupils to become involved. The very good relationships between teachers and pupils ensured that everyone listened to each other with consideration and respect for different views. Assemblies also contribute very well to pupils' personal development. For example, pupils responded very maturely to the recent theme of conflict, drawing attention to African civil wars and the plight of child soldiers.

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### PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

*Inspection judgement*

*Grade*

|  |          |
|--|----------|
| <b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>                       | <b>2</b> |
| How inclusive the school is  | 2        |
| How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection | 3        |
| Value for money provided by the school                               | 2        |

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

|   |          |
|---|----------|
| <b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities (ethos)</b> | <b>2</b> |
| Attendance  | 4        |
| Attitudes   | 1        |
| Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions                         | 1        |
| 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             | 3        |
| The quality of the school's links with the community             | 2        |
| The school's links with other schools and colleges               | 3        |

|  |          |
|--|----------|
| <b>The leadership and management of the school</b> | <b>2</b> |
| The governance of the school                       | 2        |
| The leadership of the headteacher                  | 1        |
| The leadership of other key staff                  | 2        |
| The effectiveness of management                    | 2        |

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