

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **ELSON INFANT SCHOOL**

Gosport

LEA area: Hampshire

Unique reference number: 116163

Headteacher: Mrs AJ MacCallum

Lead inspector: Dr T Simpson

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

Inspection number: 266794

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant  
School category: Community  
Age range of pupils: 4-7  
Gender of pupils: Mixed  
Number on roll: 247

School address: Elson Lane  
Gosport  
Hampshire  
Postcode: PO12 4EU

Telephone number: 023 92581208  
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Appropriate authority: The governing body  
Name of chair of Mrs R Jakes  
governors:

Date of previous May 1999  
inspection:

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Elson is an average sized infant school serving part of Gosport in Hampshire. The socio-economic background of the pupils is mixed – but is average overall. Attainment on entry is also mixed but overall is above average. The number of pupils who enter and leave the school other than at the normal time is average. There are very few pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds or for whom English is an additional language. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs is average. The needs of the pupils concerned are varied. The percentage with a Statement of Special Educational Needs, however, is below average. There are slightly more girls than boys on roll. The school was given an Achievement Award by the Department for Education and Skills in 2003 and a Healthy School Award in 2004.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
10428	Dr Tom Simpson	Lead inspector	Science, art and design, music, religious education, special educational needs.
31758	Mr Ted Tipper	Lay inspector	
30457	Dr David Evans	Team inspector	English, information and communication technology, physical education, history.
17693	Ms Esther Digby	Team inspector	Mathematics, design and technology, geography, the Foundation Stage.

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**This is an effective school** where pupils achieve well. Teaching and learning are good overall and there are examples of very good teaching at both stages of education in the school. The school is well led and managed and an enriched curriculum is provided. It has broadly average costs and provides good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Standards are well above average in English, mathematics and science and the pupils achieve well overall.
- The pupils have very positive attitudes towards the school and their work and their relationships with one another are very good.
- Teaching is good overall and there are examples of very good teaching throughout the school.
- The pupils have very good and trusting relationships with the adults in the school.
- Links with parents and with other schools are very good.
- Pupils' handwriting and the presentation of their work are not good enough.
- The school is well led and managed but the monitoring role of some subject co-ordinators is underdeveloped.
- The accommodation and resources for learning are very good.

The school's improvement since the last inspection has been good. All the main issues then raised have been addressed well. Standards are higher and the quality of teaching has improved significantly. Curricular planning and provision are now good. Leadership and management are better than previously reported. Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and overall spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are more positive. There have been no areas of decline since the last inspection but the presentation of pupils' work has not improved enough.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2002	2003	2004	2004
reading	A	A	B	B
writing	B	B	C	C
mathematics	B	A	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*

**Overall achievement is good.** Current standards in English, mathematics and science are well above average. Within English, there are particular strengths in reading and speaking and listening. The school is successfully addressing previously identified weaknesses in writing – but the quality of pupils' handwriting and the presentation of their work are too often unsatisfactory. Children in the Foundation Stage will reach the goals they are

expected to reach in creative and physical development and exceed these in all the other areas of learning. There is no significant difference between standards in investigative science and those in the more knowledge based elements of the subject. Provision for pupils with special educational needs and for those who are gifted and talented is good and these pupils are making good progress. There is no significant difference between the achievement of boys and girls. Standards in information and communication technology and history are above average, while standards in religious education meet the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus.

**Pupils' personal qualities are good.** They relate very well to one another and to the adults in the school. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. They generally behave well in lessons and around the school. They have very positive attitudes towards their work and are mostly keen to do well. Attendance is well above average and most pupils are very punctual.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The quality of learning provided by the school is good. Teaching and learning are good overall** and there are examples of very good teaching at both stages of education in the school. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen during the inspection. Strengths within the teaching include the very effective way that lessons are planned to ensure that work set is well matched to the needs of different pupils and to ensure consistency across year groups. Questioning is used successfully to challenge the pupils. Teaching assistants are very well deployed and have a significant impact on the standards being achieved. The pace of learning in most lessons is good because teachers manage the pupils well and encourage very positive attitudes. Conversely, in the few relatively less successful lessons, teachers are not effective in applying the school's agreed procedures for behaviour management. A number of innovative approaches to learning have been introduced but there is still some inconsistency in the implementation of these strategies and this leads to a lack of challenge for some pupils in some lessons. The school has good systems in place for assessing pupils' standards of work and tracking their progress. However, the quality of marking is inconsistent.

A good breadth of curricular opportunities is provided and there is a good range of enrichment activities including extra-curricular clubs, out-of-school visits and visitors to the school. There are very good links between the different subjects of the curriculum, and accommodation and resources for learning are very good overall. Pupils have very good and trusting relationships with their teachers and other staff and there is a good regard for health and safety procedures. Links with the community are good, while links with parents and with other schools are very good.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**Overall leadership and management are good.** The governing body is knowledgeable and supportive and ensures that statutory requirements are met. It is prepared to challenge the school management if necessary. The headteacher and other senior staff provide good leadership. All members of the senior management at the school provide very good role models and are very successful at creating effective teams of teachers and other staff. The school carries out rigorous self-evaluation and monitoring and puts the results to good use in informing its short term and strategic planning. Performance management is fully in place. However, the role of some subject co-ordinators in the monitoring of teaching and learning is underdeveloped. Systems for financial management are good and the school has good regard for the principles of best value.

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

Parents have a high level of regard for the school. They particularly like the way that it is led and managed and the quality of the teaching. Their children are also very positive. Nearly all consider that there is an adult they can go to if they are worried about something.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- Improve the quality of pupils' handwriting and the presentation of their work.
- Further develop the monitoring role of subject co-ordinators.



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

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

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

Overall standards are above average in the reception classes and well above average by Year 2. Achievement is good at both stages of education in the school.

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

- Standards in the nationally assessed subjects of English, mathematics and science are well above average.
- The quality of pupils' presentation and handwriting is too often unsatisfactory.

#### **Commentary**

1. Overall standards in the National Curriculum tests for pupils at the end of Year 2 have been regularly above or well above average for the past few years. The school received an Achievement Award from the Department of Education and Skills in 2003. In the 2004 tests, while results were above average in reading and mathematics, they were average in writing. In comparison with similar schools – a measure relating to the percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals – results in mathematics were well above average. Results in the science teacher assessments were above average in terms of the pupils who gained the expected Level 2, but well above average in terms of those who gained the higher Level 3.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	16.5 (17.1)	15.8 (15.7)
Writing	15.0 (15.7)	14.6 (14.6)
Mathematics	17.3 (17.5)	16.2 (16.3)

*There were 84 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

2. Standards do vary from year to year and there are fewer pupils in the present Year 2 with special educational needs than there were in 2004. The school has also introduced strong support strategies and stringent group and individual targets for improvement. As a result, current standards are well above average in English, mathematics and science. This judgement is mirrored by the school's own tracking system and by its – as yet unvalidated – teacher assessments. Within English, there are particular strengths in reading and speaking and listening. There is no significant difference between standards in investigative science and standards in the more knowledge based elements of the subject. Current standards overall are higher than those reported at the time of the last inspection and the school's trend in improvement is above the national trend. Children in the Foundation Stage are likely to reach the goals they are expected to reach in creative and physical development and exceed these in all the other areas of learning. Standards in information and communication technology and history are above average while standards in religious education meet the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. However, standards of handwriting and presentation across the curriculum are often unsatisfactory. The school has made this

issue a key target of its current school improvement plan. It is an aspiration for all pupils to develop a good pencil grip and effective letter formation. However, not all teachers are enforcing this with the same rigour.

3. Attainment on entry to the school varies from pupil to pupil and from year to year but overall is above average. Results in the National Curriculum tests are adversely affected from time to time by pupil mobility in and out of the school as well as by the numbers of pupils with special educational needs. For example, the majority of pupils who left the school in the recent past were likely to have gained higher levels in the tests. However, current standards, the school's tracking evidence, the good quality of management and monitoring and - above all - the quality of the teaching indicate that achievement is good overall at both stages of education in the school. There is no significant difference between the achievement of boys and girls. Pupils with special educational needs and those who are gifted and talented are well supported by teachers and support staff and make good progress.
4. Examples of the standards being reached in English include a very good Year 1 lesson focusing on writing a report on Armstrong's trip to the moon. The teacher had high expectations from the start. Her methods and input were stimulating, and her good quality, searching and rapid questioning introduced a very good level of challenge for the pupils. As a result this well motivated class of pupils enthusiastically and successfully composed several sentences relating to the journey with a good level of awareness of spacing between words and of simple punctuation. In a very good mathematics lesson exploring the computation of sums of money, the pupils responded very well to the challenging tasks that had been set for them and achieved very well. In a successful science lesson, a wide range of interesting resources was provided to sustain interest and the pupils were able to sort these into groups according to different characteristics.
5. The parents are very pleased with the progress being made by their children.

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

Pupils' behaviour is good. Their attitudes to work and towards others in the school are very good. Their overall spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Attendance and punctuality are very good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils are very enthusiastic in their approach to lessons and other activities.
- The school sets high expectations of pupils' behaviour that are met by the majority.
- The school actively encourages pupils to show a high respect for the feelings of others and helps them develop very good relationships with each other and adults in the school.
- Pupils are given good opportunities to develop an understanding of themselves and the world around them.
- Attendance is well above the national average.

### **Commentary**

6. Most pupils are full of enthusiasm in their approach to lessons. Even at the end of the day this doesn't seem to waver. They are also eager participants in out-of-school activities including the three after-school clubs. In a class assembly on the lunar landing, pupils performing - as well as those in the audience - were eager participants

throughout. Pupils given responsibilities as 'children of the day', 'playground friends' and 'huff and puff' leaders carry out their tasks diligently. All pupils are encouraged to be responsible for their own actions from an early age. Reception pupils soon learn to peel their own fruit at snack-time and undress and dress themselves for physical education. Most will exceed the goals they are expected to reach in their personal, social and emotional development by the time they reach Year 1.

7. There is a simple system for rewarding good and punishing bad behaviour in the classroom that is clearly understood by pupils and appreciated by parents. While this works well with most pupils, a few demonstrate inappropriate behaviour. In such cases, they are supported well by support staff who take them out of the classroom if they persist. In the dining hall and during assemblies they are normally well behaved but can be rather chatty. At lunchtime there is not enough organised play and the resulting boisterousness sometimes leads to minor injuries. Pupils generally move calmly around the school, but after the lunchtime break many enter the school in a rather noisy and disorderly manner.
8. Pupils are taught, from the time they enter the school, the difference between right and wrong and the importance of understanding that, while others may have different views, interests and feelings, these should be respected. As a result, they show tolerance towards one another and normally play and work very well in pairs and small groups. Their compassion for those less fortunate is shown by their eagerness to be involved in fund-raising events for a number of charities. They have also formed close relationships with adults within the school and treat visitors in a friendly yet courteous way.
9. The school is helping its pupils develop their own values, principles and beliefs by exploring the Christian religion through assemblies and religious education lessons, as well as alerting them to the existence of other religions through the same process. They are also made well aware of the naval heritage of their local community through various projects such as the current 'Festival of the Sea 2005'. Despite having a limited opportunity to share the experiences of other cultures through members of the school and surrounding community, the school is working hard to prepare its pupils for life in a multi-cultural society. For example, they explore how the New Year is celebrated around the world and have an annual 'World Culture Week' which, this year, focused on India. During it, pupils experienced cultural aspects such as cooking, painting, music and dancing.
10. Attendance is well above average, reflecting an effective partnership with parents and the eagerness with which pupils come to school. The school is particularly firm regarding taking time off during term time and receives the support of the majority of parents for this.

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

Authorised absence	
School data	3.7
National data	5.1

Unauthorised absence	
School data	0.2
National data	0.4

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

11. There were no exclusions in the previous year. However, the school is currently involved in the appeal process for a pupil excluded this year. From the documentation seen, this is being handled appropriately.

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is good. Teaching is good overall and an enriched curriculum is provided. Pupils are well cared for and have very good and trusting relationships with the adults in the school. Links with the community are good, while links with parents and with other schools are very good.

### Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are good overall throughout the school and have improved significantly since the last inspection. Assessment is used well to match work to pupils' capabilities and to monitor their progress.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers plan very well together.
- Teachers' good questioning skills reinforce and extend pupils' learning.
- Teaching assistants support teachers very well and contribute to the high standards.
- Assessment and tracking information is used well to plan for pupils' differing needs.
- There are inconsistencies in teachers' use of agreed school strategies and some teachers still do not effectively address weaknesses in pupils' presentation and handwriting.

### Commentary

#### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 35 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1 (3%)	6 (17%)	16 (46%)	12 (34%)	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. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall and no unsatisfactory teaching was seen. This shows very good improvement since the last inspection, when the quality of teaching and learning in Years 1 and 2 was identified as a weakness.
13. Teaching is good overall in the Foundation Stage and some very good teaching was seen. Children learn well because they are provided with a wide range of interesting activities, linked to a common theme, which develops the specific skills and knowledge for each area of learning. Learning is especially good in personal, social and emotional development; communication, language and literacy, mathematical development and knowledge and understanding of the world. This prepares children well for learning in all the core subjects of the National Curriculum. However, some poor letter formation and handwriting is not always dealt with sufficiently by teachers at both stages of education in the school.

14. Teaching is good in all subjects of the National Curriculum. Without exception, parents who responded to the inspection questionnaire thought that the teaching was good and that their children are expected to work hard. Pupils enjoy lessons and respond very positively to their teachers because the contexts chosen are stimulating.
15. The quality of teaching and learning has substantially improved since the last inspection. This is as a result of thorough monitoring by senior staff, better curriculum planning and improved use of assessment and monitoring information. Teachers plan very well together in their year group teams and are very well supported by support staff. Lessons have clear learning objectives and activities and tasks are carefully graded to match the range of abilities within each class. Support staff provide very effective additional support, particularly for pupils with special educational needs who make good progress as a result. Teachers use appropriate subject vocabulary which pupils assimilate and apply in their work. The quality of teachers' questioning is usually very good. Teachers pitch their questions well to extend pupils' learning and to challenge more able pupils. The pace of most lessons is maintained well because teachers manage pupils effectively and encourage very positive attitudes. However, a few teachers are not sufficiently confident in applying the school's agreed procedures for behaviour management. In these lessons, the quality of learning deteriorates, as teachers have to spend additional time addressing pupils who are noisy and restless.
16. The quality of teaching varies from satisfactory to excellent. A number of innovative approaches to learning have been introduced. These have generally had a very positive impact on pupil learning, but there are still inconsistencies in teachers' understanding and implementation of these new strategies, resulting in a lack of challenge for more able pupils in some lessons. In some others, teachers do not have a high enough regard for the presentation of pupils' work. In the one excellent lesson seen, in design and technology, Year 1 pupils were given very good opportunities to make independent choices for their use of different techniques and materials to make a wheeled 'moon buggy'. Pupils responded very well because the teacher had given very clear instructions and explanations during the introduction to the activity. Throughout the lesson the teacher and the very able support assistant questioned and discussed pupils' work with them, reinforcing pupils' learning and extending their vocabulary. The pace and productivity of the lesson was excellent. All pupils concentrated very well on their construction and used the tools, such as saws, and materials very sensibly. Pupils co-operated very well with each other, sharing the resources and discussing each other's work. The teacher made explicit her high expectations but ensured that her enthusiasm and praise encouraged pupils to persevere with some quite difficult techniques and to evaluate the outcomes.
17. The school has good systems for assessing pupils' standards of work and tracking their progress, which teachers use effectively. Assessment information is used well to identify termly group targets for learning which are discussed with parents. Weekly targets are shared with pupils, and are clearly displayed in classrooms, and help pupils to be actively involved in their learning. Marking, however, is inconsistent. Some very good examples of marking were seen, which provided good feedback to pupils. However, the school's marking code is not used consistently and in some cases, for example in mathematics, teachers make errors in marking when they are not sure about the application of new strategies. Homework is set regularly and generally extends the learning in lessons well. Teachers ensure that their classrooms make a positive contribution to pupils' learning through attractive displays reinforcing current topic work and the development of key skills. Teaching overall impacts well on pupils' achievement.

## **The curriculum**

The curriculum is good. The enrichment of the curriculum is also good. Accommodation and resources are very good overall.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Cross-curricular themes and topic work are very well developed throughout the school.
- Preparation for the later stages of education is very good.
- Pupils' participation in the arts is very good.
- Accommodation and overall resources to support learning are very good.

### **Commentary**

18. The curriculum is now well structured and the allocation of time to different subjects is well balanced. This represents good improvement since the last inspection. The curriculum is innovative and outward-looking and draws extensively from outside the school. In the recent past, for example, the school has held a multi-cultural week. Statutory requirements are met in all subjects, including religious education and personal, social and health education. The national literacy and numeracy strategies have been well embedded, with the result that pupils achieve well in these areas. Planning in all subjects is very thorough and based on a range of good programmes of work, which are regularly reviewed.
19. The school places a strong emphasis on pupils' personal development. The day-to-day work of the school is aimed at underpinning this, and pupils' personal, social and moral development, self-esteem and sense of responsibility grow steadily as a result of this well-focused area. This pervading ethos is well supported by a specific programme for personal, social and health education (PSHE). The scheme of work is well taught and enhanced by visits, visitors and events. Careful planning also links it well into other aspects of the curriculum, such as science and physical education.
20. Provision and planning for pupils with special educational needs are good. This enables them to access the curriculum well. Where appropriate, teachers' planning takes account of their specific needs. Individual education plans contain precise and manageable targets.
21. Teachers have developed very good cross-curricular links. There are very good opportunities for pupils to participate in musical festivals, dancing events, arts performances and heritage programmes. Pupils visit museums and local environmental areas and they benefit enormously from visitors to the school who bring their rich and varied experiences to support pupils' learning.
22. The school has developed a range of very effective strategies to prepare pupils for the next stage of their education. Liaison with the adjacent junior school and with the nearby community college is very good. The school has worked very hard to foster pupils' understanding of working practices in the junior school and there are many constructive bridging links and exchange visits.

23. The school is well staffed overall and the match of support staff to the curriculum is very good. The site manager is very effective in maintaining and developing the whole site, including the attractive areas that surround the school.
24. The school recently celebrated its twentieth anniversary and the quality of accommodation is very good overall. The building is welcoming and provides a pleasant and stimulating environment for learning. The school has good-sized classrooms. The hall is spacious and offers good opportunities for pupils to develop physical education skills. There is a modern drama room and a new library, with computerised facilities. The outside areas provide very good opportunities to develop games skills and knowledge and understanding in science. The accommodation for the Foundation Stage pupils is good.

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

The school makes good provision for the care, welfare, health and safety of pupils and provides them with good support, advice and guidance. It actively seeks and values the views of its pupils.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The school is successful in providing personal support, advice and guidance for pupils.
- Pupils have very good and trusting relationships with the adults in the school.
- Pupils are well cared for in a safe and healthy environment.
- The school actively promotes a healthy lifestyle for its pupils.
- There are very good arrangements for pupils joining the reception classes.
- Pupils' views are sought and valued.

### **Commentary**

25. Pupils develop very trusting relationships with adults within the school. In a survey of their views prior to the inspection, the overwhelming majority felt there was someone they could turn to if they were worried. The learning support assistants work very effectively as a team ensuring they can work in different classes with a full knowledge of the individual circumstances of the individuals within it. There is a very good system of written personal and social profiles of pupils that are passed on from teacher to teacher. These enable development in these areas to be tracked and ensure that everyone is fully briefed on the particular needs of each individual. Pupils also receive a good level of academic support enabling them to understand what they need to do to fulfil their potential.

26. The headteacher and caretaker carry out an annual health and safety audit of the school, supplemented by regular checks made by a governor who has professional expertise in this field. In addition, teachers carry out annual risk assessments of their classrooms. The venues for educational trips are visited in advance, to assess potential risks and ensure other staff and volunteer helpers are fully briefed prior to the trip. The school was not seen to have any major hazards during the inspection. Care is also taken to ensure the security of the school. The numbers of people qualified in first aid, as well as the medical room and equipment, are appropriate, as is the system for the administration of medicines. The headteacher is the designated person for child protection. She undertakes regular training and is experienced in liaison with support agencies and foster parents and carers. She does not have a fully-trained teacher to deputise in her absence, however, and while she ensures all members of staff are briefed on their role in the process, they do not have any written guidelines in the staff handbook.
27. The school places a strong emphasis on ensuring its pupils develop healthy lifestyles which has secured it the Healthy School Award for the promotion of physical activity and emotional health and well being among its pupils. This was achieved with the involvement of parents, governors and teachers on a working party which organised a range of awareness sessions such as a keep fit morning, parental quiz and an after-school dance club. The lunchtime menu has been altered to include a range of healthy options, while pupils are only allowed to eat fruit or vegetables during the mid-morning snack time. It is clear, from the way even the youngest pupils relished these sessions that the message is getting through.
28. The school has developed good links with its four main pre-school providers. Parents are invited to induction meetings at school and they and their children are visited at home. Both the parent and child are then invited to school for short periods on several occasions. Here they attend lessons and experience different activities that can be potentially traumatic, such as changing for physical education or eating in the dining hall. This system is very effective and clearly appreciated by parents. All those who answered the pre-inspection survey felt the arrangements for helping their children settle in to the school were at least good.
29. The school takes part in an annual survey of pupils' views organised by the local education authority, from which an analysis is made which is used to influence future planning. However, by then the pupils concerned have left the school so it is looking to carry out its own internal surveys of younger pupils, but has not so far introduced a school council to assist in this. Pupils' views are sought informally by subject leaders who include these views to their annual reports on subject progress. They are also being introduced to the self-evaluation of their work and they discuss their targets at the termly meetings with parents. The pupils appreciate these initiatives, with the overwhelming majority believing their ideas are listened to.

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

The school has developed very good relationships with its pupils' parents and carers. Links with the community are good, and those with other schools and colleges are very good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Parents are very well involved through the school seeking, valuing and acting on their views, and they make a positive contribution to their children's learning.
- Parents are provided with a high standard of information about the school, the standards achieved and the progress made by their children.
- Links with the local community do much to improve pupils' learning and develop their social skills.
- The school has established very good links with other schools and colleges.



## Commentary

30. The school carries out surveys of the parents' views on specific topics, such as healthy snacks, and at open evenings to introduce new education strategies. It also carries out informal discussions with groups of parents attending various parents' briefings and pupil progress meetings. The parents have been regularly informed and consulted over the future school changes resulting from the falling roll. Parents are very appreciative of the efforts made to involve them with most of those answering the pre-inspection questionnaire feeling that their suggestions and concerns were taken account of. They also feel very involved in their children's education. At the beginning of each term they receive newsletters outlining what is being studied and are encouraged to support their children with their homework and school projects. They keenly attend an annual 'bring your parent to school' day, activity mornings, a family picnic and regular class assemblies. Parents, and other family members, often talk to pupils about their jobs or lifetime experiences and several help in the school.
31. The school produces a very informative prospectus and the governors' annual report is well presented in tabloid format to make it more reader friendly. There is also a large noticeboard inside the main pupil entrance providing the latest school and community information. Regular newsletters, that keep parents well informed of future events and what is happening in the school, supplement this very good range of information sources. Parents are very appreciative of the way they are kept informed of their children's progress. At the autumn and spring parents' evenings a simple target sheet, identifying progress plus three targets, provides a good basis for discussion on pupils' areas for development. The detailed annual report identifies, by subject, whether a pupil is achieving or exceeding the expected level of achievement or needs support.
32. The school receives visits from a range of members of the local community such as the clergy, the mayor, story tellers, musicians and representatives from the emergency services. Pupils visit the church and various museums and other local venues such as a working farm. They also carry out projects involving visits to local shops to evaluate local amenities, a review of different types of houses and a traffic survey. The school enthusiastically supports local initiatives such as the 'Festival of Sea 2005' for which it is currently preparing banners and bunting. Some good links have been established with business through parental connections.
33. The school has developed a close relationship with the adjoining junior school to which most of its pupils transfer. This includes pupils from all three year groups working with their older colleagues on projects such as poetry and dance. Meanwhile, subject leaders meet to share information and ensure continuity in the teaching between the schools. The school is also a member of a very active cluster of schools based around the main receiving secondary school. It benefits from joint staff training and curriculum support groups while pupils benefit directly from involvement in an annual vocal festival and arts weeks. There are good links with pre-school providers. Good links have also been established with colleges involved in initial teacher training and childcare courses. The local secondary school provides training for support staff and receives work experience placements for its pupils. Teachers also visit 'beacon' schools to identify good practice that they then introduce to their school. These extensive links do much to improve the educational experiences of pupils.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Overall leadership and management are good. Governance is good. The headteacher provides good leadership while all senior staff at the school provide very good role models for the pupils and other staff. Management is good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The good leadership of the headteacher is impacting well on the school's forward development.
- The governing body has a clear view of the school's needs and is proactive in supporting it.
- Extensive monitoring and evaluation by the headteacher and other senior staff have impacted well on the quality of teaching.
- The school leadership is very effective at team building.
- The role of some co-ordinators in relation to monitoring teaching and learning and implementing innovative strategies for improvement is underdeveloped.

## Commentary

34. Governance at the school is good. The governing body is supportive and has a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. It is prepared to challenge the school management when it considers this to be necessary. Individual governors bring a wide range of skills to the role, including among their number, for example, people with backgrounds in the church, the armed services, accountancy, health and safety and education. Each is linked to a subject and visits the school from time to time to discuss their area of responsibility with the relevant co-ordinator and to observe teaching. Some support teachers in lessons or involve themselves with extra-curricular activities. Written visit reports are prepared in order to inform the rest of the governing body. The work of the governing body is supported well by a number of active committees.
35. The headteacher provides good leadership. She is very aware of the school's strengths and areas for further development and is very proactive – with other senior managers – in creating effective teams of teachers and other staff. Her enthusiasm and commitment have been significant in the school's good improvement since the time of the last inspection. She is well supported by the relatively recently appointed deputy, who has a clear and complementary role and who is also a key player in the school's forward development. There is an active senior management team whose members individually and corporately contribute well to the school's smooth running and act successfully as a means of multi-directional communication. The headteacher, deputy head and the other members of the senior management team all provide very good role models for the pupils and the other members of staff. Strategic planning – which was criticised in the last report – is effective and involves all relevant parties including the governors. The school improvement plan is a practical working document which is a good reflection of the school's current needs. Leadership and management of the provision for pupils with special educational needs are good. The well informed special educational needs co-ordinator maintains an effective oversight of the provision and the staff involved in it. All statutory requirements in respect of these pupils are fully met. The school's inclusiveness is good.
36. Rigorous procedures for monitoring and evaluating teaching and other aspects of the school are in place. The headteacher, for example, monitors planning, pupils' work, assessment data and lessons. In the latter case both oral and written feedback is provided for those members of staff concerned. Performance management is fully in place and involves all staff. Newly appointed staff – including those who are newly qualified - are supported well. The monitoring strategies in place have had a major impact on the improvement in teaching since the last inspection. The school's strategies for monitoring are well supported by personnel from the local education authority. Co-ordinators are enthusiastic and have a clear view of their subject's strengths and areas for future development. They carry out regular evaluations of the performance of their area of responsibility, examine the standards being achieved and produce written reports. However, those aspects of their role which relate to the monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning are underdeveloped in several cases. Also their implementation of innovative strategies for improvement is inconsistent. Staff development procedures are good and routine administration is effective.
37. Procedures for financial planning and monitoring are good and fully involve the governing body. A larger than average carry forward of funds from one financial year to another resulted from money being appropriately saved to pay for a new library facility.

The school has good regard for the principles of best value and uses its available resources well. All statutory requirements are met. The recruitment, retention, deployment and workload of staff are managed well. Parents have a high regard for the leadership and management at the school.

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

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	670874
Total expenditure	674947
Expenditure per pupil	2586

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	62216
Balance carried forward to the next	58143

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

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

38. Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is good and has improved since the last inspection. Children enter in the September before they are five, initially on a part-time basis depending on their age, and are currently taught in three parallel reception classes. Their attainment on entry is mixed but overall is above average. The majority of children have attended some form of pre-school provision and the school has good links with the three local playgroups. Induction procedures are very good, with home visits and a number of opportunities for children and their parents to come into school in the summer term before they start. As a result, most children make a secure and confident start to school. The teachers and support staff, under the effective leadership of the Foundation Stage co-ordinator, plan well together to provide a broad and stimulating curriculum. Marking and assessment procedures are good. Teachers use assessment information effectively to provide challenging activities that meet the differing needs of children, including those with special educational needs, and enable all to achieve well. There is a planned programme for the transition from the reception classes to Year 1, which prepares children well for the next stage of education.

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

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

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

- The caring and supportive learning environment provided by teachers and support staff promotes children's confidence and their positive attitudes to school.
- Children are given very good opportunities to take responsibility and to make choices.
- Children concentrate well when working independently, and also when co-operating with others, because of the high expectations of staff.

#### **Commentary**

39. The very good induction procedures and good teaching ensure that children make a confident start to school and these positive attitudes are consistently developed through the supportive relationships and clear expectations provided by all staff. As a result, children know what is expected of them and how to operate in a group, sharing and taking turns. Children are given jobs and responsibilities daily, often involving co-operating with another child, and they carry these out sensibly. Many of the planned activities encourage children to make choices and develop independent learning skills as they plan, carry out and review their tasks. The current topic on 'People Who Help Us' is used very effectively to promote health and safety issues as the children learn about the work of people such as the school crossing patrol and local fire-fighters. Strategies for developing thinking skills through an active approach are used effectively to support children's personal and emotional development. As a result, children make good progress and are in line to achieve the relevant early learning goals by the end of the reception year, with many exceeding the expected outcomes.

### **COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Literacy is planned and delivered in a structured way, resulting in good learning.
- Teachers do not have sufficiently high expectations of children's handwriting and presentation.
- Children's speaking and listening skills are developed well as a result of many different formal and informal opportunities for talking.

### **Commentary**

40. Children enter school with above average literacy skills. They make good progress as a result of the effective teaching of phonics, reading and writing and the many opportunities to develop their vocabulary through speaking and listening. As a result, many have already attained the early learning goals and will have exceeded expectations by the end of the reception year. Children show good knowledge of initial sounds and many are able to identify more complex letter blends. They use these well to support their spelling in written work and many are beginning to write simple sentences. Children are taught a joined handwriting style from the start but some find the pencil control required for this style of writing quite difficult. Consequently, children's letter formation and presentation does not always match their other writing skills and this is not addressed sufficiently well by teachers. Children enjoy books and are beginning to use their knowledge of common words, plus picture clues and repetitive phrases, to read simple text. Many show very good understanding of what they have read when answering questions about the text. All staff extend children's vocabulary very well through informal chats during activities, as well as questioning in structured learning situations. A good example of this was seen in a science investigation in which a group of children tried to find the right material to keep a fire-fighter dry. The children's language development was exciting to hear, as they discussed the method of testing and described the outcomes, prompted very effectively by the teacher's questioning.

## **MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children have a very good knowledge of number for their age and achieve well.
- Teachers plan an interesting range of activities that are often linked to the main topic focus.

### **Commentary**

41. Children start school with above average mathematical skills and achieve well as a result of good teaching. By the end of the reception year, nearly all should attain the expected outcomes and, in aspects of number work, many will exceed the early learning goals. Most children have a good knowledge of numbers to 10 and the more able can work with numbers to 20. They can carry out simple addition and are beginning to identify subtraction by counting back or down a number line. Teachers

use the children's interest in their topic work effectively when planning mathematical activities. For example, children learnt about subtraction by playing a game to get from the top to the bottom of a fireman's ladder by throwing a dice and counting down the rungs. Action songs are used well to reinforce number knowledge on a daily basis. Children are confident in operating programmable toys to change position and move along a numbered grid. Teachers encourage the correct use of mathematical vocabulary and encourage the children to talk about the strategies that they have used and this promotes children's mathematical understanding well.

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

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



## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- A good range of interesting activities is provided, covering all aspects of this area of learning, and children achieve well.
- Children's scientific knowledge is promoted particularly well.
- Children use computers confidently.

## **Commentary**

42. Teachers' effective planning, based on a topic focus, covers all aspects of this area of learning and provides children with a good range of opportunities to investigate and learn about the world around them. For example, in the current topic of 'People Who Help Us', the children had a visit from fire-fighters who talked about their work and demonstrated the vehicles and equipment needed. Groups of children then worked with the teacher to carry out an investigation to see which materials were waterproof and suitable for a fireman's uniform. Role-play and small world toys were used to enact an emergency situation inside and large wheeled toys outside. Children also designed and constructed an emergency vehicle, using junk materials.
43. The good links made with other areas of learning through topic work stimulates the children's interest and provides a context for their work, which results in good achievement. Scientific activities, often involving children carrying out investigations, are a particularly good feature of the curriculum and enable children to develop good knowledge of living things and of materials and objects in the world around them. Children are developing good knowledge of the past and are beginning to identify features of their local environment. Most children use computers confidently, handling the mouse to move the cursor and access different icons or engage in a computer game. Teaching is good and most children are likely to exceed the expected outcomes for their age at the end of the reception year.

## **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in physical development is **satisfactory**.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children handle materials, tools and equipment effectively.
- Physical activity lessons are well planned.

## **Commentary**

44. Children are given a good range of opportunities for physical development, their achievement is satisfactory and most will reach the goals they are expected to attain by the end of the school year. Children demonstrate that they can move and jump in a variety of ways and they use large wheeled toys confidently in the playground. In physical education lessons in the hall, children generally show good awareness of space and are able to move in different ways. They are developing appropriate skills in throwing and catching and are beginning to identify ways of improving their skills. Children demonstrate good manipulative skills when handling tools and equipment. The outside area is used well but the small size of the space directly accessible from each classroom limits opportunities for its use as a learning environment. Teaching is satisfactory.

## **CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in creative development is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Role play is encouraged and children respond imaginatively.
- Children are given a good range of opportunities for painting and constructing.

### **Commentary**

45. Children's achievement is satisfactory and most are on course to reach the goals they are expected to reach by the end of the year. Children show appropriate skills in drawing and painting. Design and construction work, such as the construction of junk models of emergency vehicles, is often of a good standard. Children sing enthusiastically. They are able to recognise the names of some untuned percussion instruments and to play them appropriately. A good lesson was seen in which children were given junk materials to use as instruments. Most 'played' them effectively and were then able to choose a percussion instrument that was played in a similar way. This session made a good contribution to children's vocabulary development, as words such as 'rustling,' 'crunching,' 'shaking,' 'scraping' were explored. Children are encouraged to develop speaking and listening skills and to extend their understanding of the topic focus through role-play. Most respond very well. Some lively drama was seen in which children acted out a burglary with the successful intervention of a policeman as part of their 'People Who Help Us' topic. Teaching is satisfactory.

## **SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGE ONE**

### **ENGLISH**

Provision in English is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards in English overall are well above average throughout the school and pupils achieve well.
- Teaching and learning are good overall, and there are examples of very good teaching.
- Leadership and management of the subject are good.
- Improvement since the last inspection has been very good.
- There is a new library which greatly supports pupils' learning.
- Pupils' handwriting and the presentation of their work are not good enough.

### **Commentary**

46. Standards in English are well above average by Year 2. Results in the National Curriculum tests in reading and writing have been strong over the past few years. In reading they have been consistently either well above or above the national average. In writing, they have varied from above average to average. The most recent test results in 2004 – when there was an unusually high number of pupils with special educational needs in Year 2 – were above average in reading, but average in writing.

Achievement is good in Years 1 and 2, with pupils making particularly good progress in their speaking, listening and reading in Year 2. The achievement of pupils with special educational needs is good and there are no significant differences between the achievement of boys and girls. The good achievement stems from effective teaching and learning, the very good resources in English and from the visionary leadership and management of the subject.

47. Pupils' speaking and listening skills are well above average in Years 1 and 2. The school has introduced many successful strategies to improve pupils' speaking and listening skills and staff have attended a range of appropriate training courses to enhance their competence. As a result, debate and discussion are prominent features of all lessons. Pupils of all abilities are confident, fluent and articulate, with very well developed vocabularies. Higher-attaining pupils, in particular, are able to pose their own well-considered questions and they proffer clear and sensible explanations when required to do so in their lessons. Pupils contribute enthusiastically to class discussions and enjoy participating in role play and in drama sessions. Throughout the inspection, pupils were regularly observed engaging in lively, constructive debates with each other. Pupils of all abilities have the confidence and self esteem to discuss their lesson topics with visitors.
48. Attainment in reading is well above average. By Year 2, most pupils are reading independently and are able to find information from a range of books. The establishment of a new library, with a wide selection of stimulating texts, has made a significant contribution to the development of pupils' reading skills. Higher-attaining pupils have acquired extensive vocabularies. For example, in a vivacious drama lesson based on the Great Fire of London one pupil graphically referred to the 'smouldering embers' of the fire as he sought to recreate and capture the horrors of the event. Although lower-attaining pupils often read more slowly from simpler texts, they invariably demonstrate an insatiable appetite for the books that they have chosen, and they are eager to share the contextual meanings and themes with others.
49. Attainment in writing is above average overall. Higher-attaining pupils write with increasing accuracy and fluency and they successfully employ variations of style in their written work. Pupils of all abilities show good progress over the years in the accuracy of their punctuation and in letter formation. However, pupils' handwriting is occasionally illegible, and some pupils do not pay enough attention to the presentation of their work. Teachers do not always have a high enough regard for this area and pupils are sometimes allowed to use an inappropriate pencil grip. As a result, standards in handwriting and presentation are not as good as the content of the written work. Pupils' spelling skills are improving well and the school has worked hard to further develop this aspect of pupils' learning.
50. Teaching is good overall, with several examples of very good teaching. This represents a marked improvement since the last inspection. Where the teaching is good, there is very good planning and preparation to meet the learning needs of all pupils in the class. Learning objectives are clearly shared with the class, all pupils feel confident enough to share their views, the pace of the lessons is brisk and teachers employ quick-fire questions to stimulate learning. Classroom management is firm and fair and support staff are deployed effectively throughout the lesson. The quality of learning is buttressed well by the positive attitudes of the pupils, who display an enormous enthusiasm for their tasks. In almost all classes, they settle down swiftly to work and launch themselves into their daily activities. In those lessons which were less effective, pupils were slightly restless and noisy, and this usually occurred when class

management was not as firm and as the pace of learning gradually dropped. Assessment procedures are effective in English. Teachers track the progress of their pupils and set targets for improvement. However, the quality of marking is inconsistent.

51. The subject co-ordinator, who was appointed fairly recently, is knowledgeable and enthusiastic and she provides good overall leadership and management of the subject. She has produced a clearly focused action plan for the subject and she recognises that the following are areas for further improvement: the sharing of good practice in the department; the expansion of modelled writing in Years 1 and 2; and developing the monitoring of teaching and learning to ensure consistent and rigorous implementation of strategies.

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

52. There are sound opportunities for pupils to practise their literacy skills across the curriculum. Discussion is prominent in most subjects and targeted vocabulary is regularly emphasised. In history, pupils produce detailed reports on the Great Fire of London and on famous people such as Florence Nightingale. Drama and role play are promoted well and there is considerable emphasis placed on the imaginative re-creation of events.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards are well above average and have improved significantly since the last inspection.
- Good use of tracking information and the analysis of pupil performance has effectively informed strategies to raise standards.
- Teachers use questioning skills very effectively to extend and reinforce learning.
- The presentation of pupils' work is not good enough.
- Some teaching is very good but the quality of teaching is inconsistent.

### **Commentary**

53. Standards in mathematics in Year 2 are well above average. In the 2004 national tests, pupils reached standards that were above the national average and well above that of similar schools. Pupils in the current Year 2 entered school with above average attainment overall and they have achieved well as a result of good teaching. This is a very good improvement since the last inspection when teaching was not good enough to enable pupils to make the expected progress.
54. Pupils have particularly good number skills and can carry out quite complex calculations for their age. By Year 2 most pupils can add and subtract 2-digit numbers and many can work with much higher numbers. Pupils are learning multiplication facts and can use these for doubling or halving a number. Very good questioning by teachers encourages pupils to explain their reasoning and the strategies used, and so enhances their understanding of mathematical concepts. Pupils can apply their numeracy skills well in problem solving and use a range of strategies to help them.

However, the very good range of strategies that are taught by teachers are not always used appropriately by more able pupils because they are not given sufficiently complex problems to require them. For example, younger pupils were encouraged to use a number line to count in tens and units to answer an addition or subtraction sum. However, the sum was easy enough for the more able to calculate without any aid and so the number line was used after the calculation – often inaccurately, as it was not required.

55. Lessons are very well planned with a range of interesting activities that are modified to meet the differing needs of pupils. Assessment and tracking procedures are used well to identify individual learning needs or those of a specific year group. Effective support is given to pupils who are not achieving as well as they should and pupils with special educational needs. The quality of teachers' questioning is generally very good. A very good lesson was seen in which Year 2 pupils worked on number problems based on patterns in multiples of 2, 5 and 10. Pupils recognised that some numbers were multiples of all these and then went on to apply that knowledge to much larger numbers. The teacher's lively approach enthused the pupils and resulted in a very good pace in the lesson. She constantly checked learning and reinforced strategies through very effective questioning which encouraged pupils to explain their reasoning and extend their thinking. As a result, pupils applied their knowledge very effectively in solving the number problems that they were set. A good range of organisational structures and teaching strategies has been introduced to raise standards. These have generally been very successful but a few teachers do not demonstrate good enough understanding of some strategies to implement them effectively and are not sufficiently clear in their use of mathematical language. Pupils' progress is hampered as a result because they are not sure about what they need to do.
56. Evidence from pupils' work shows appropriate coverage of other areas of the mathematics curriculum such as shape and measuring. However, poor standards of writing and presentation adversely affect the quality of pupils' recorded work.
57. The subject leader is a very good teacher of the subject and has a clear agenda for improvement based on effective analysis of performance information. She has identified inconsistencies in the implementation of new strategies, such as the 'Thought Books' and the school marking code, by looking at pupils' work. However, opportunities for the subject leader to visit classes to monitor and support teachers in lessons is not sufficiently well developed. As a result, there is still considerable variability in the quality of teaching, particularly teachers' understanding and use of new strategies. Interactive whiteboards have recently been introduced but are not yet used effectively to involve pupils in the whole class sessions.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

58. Pupils apply their mathematical skills appropriately in a range of subjects as the focus on topic work promotes links between subjects. In design and technology they use their knowledge of two- and three-dimensional shapes and measure accurately when designing and making. Pupils recorded the outcomes of a traffic survey in their geography work using a tally. Mathematical knowledge is also used in some information and communication technology lessons.

### **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **good**.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are well above average by Year 2.
- Teaching is good.
- The presentation of pupils' written reports is often unsatisfactory.

## Commentary

59. In the 2004 teacher assessments of pupils at the end of Year 2, standards were above average in terms of those reaching the expected Level 2 and well above average in terms of those gaining the higher Level 3. Results do vary from year to year and there are fewer pupils in the current Year 2 with special educational needs than there were in 2004. Standards are now well above average overall in Year 2. There is no significant difference between standards in investigative science and those in the more knowledge based elements of the subject. Pupils enter the school with slightly above average knowledge and understanding and their achievement is good. Current standards and provision in science are better than reported at the time of the last inspection.
60. Year 1 pupils are able to sort materials into groups according to a number of characteristics including their appearance and texture. They successfully use a computer program to differentiate between materials that are natural and those that are man made. By Year 2, most pupils have a good understanding of plant reproduction and habitats and carry out a valid investigation into the best environment for growing seeds. They successfully investigate melting chocolate and understand that when cooled some materials will return to their natural state while others will not. When discussing an investigation into whether the height of a ramp affects how far a wheeled vehicle will travel down it, they have a clear understanding of the factors dictating whether their experiment will be scientifically 'fair'. Most have good skills of prediction when, for example, testing different surfaces for friction. Pupils written reports in science, however, are too often untidy and poorly presented.
61. Most pupils have positive attitudes towards their science lessons and behave well in them. Many are enthusiastic about the subject – particularly the practical aspects. Teaching is good overall. There are particular strengths in the detailed way that lessons are planned. Resources are stimulating for the pupils and support their learning well. Questioning is usually challenging and involves pupils of all levels of attainment. Discipline is generally positive, impacting successfully on pupils' behaviour and relationships at all levels. Conversely, in an occasional lesson, pupil management strategies are less successful. From time to time an activity is allowed to go on too long with the result that some pupils lose interest and their pace of learning declines.
62. Planning is appropriately based on national guidelines. Information and communication technology is regularly used to support science. There are assessment strategies in place but the school is currently exploring ways in which these may be improved yet further. The co-ordinator is enthusiastic and knowledgeable and overall leadership and management are good.

## INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards of attainment are above average and pupils achieve well.
- Pupils' attitudes are good and this helps them to make good progress in their learning.

## Commentary

63. By Year 2, pupils' standards in information and communication technology are above average and their achievement is good. Recent improvements in resources and in teachers' subject knowledge are promoting standards still further. Pupils now have regular access to computers and are taught skills systematically. Teachers have raised their expectations of what pupils can achieve and how they might apply their skills across the curriculum.
64. In the lessons observed, there was direct teaching of new skills and the teaching and learning were good overall. The lessons built on previous learning and teachers provided clear instructions, with good use of modelling to check and reinforce pupils' understanding of the relevant skills and competencies. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 demonstrate good control of the mouse and are becoming familiar with the keyboard. Word-processing skills are developing well and most pupils can carry out procedures to print their work. Lessons are well planned and teachers make good use of the new interactive whiteboards. A feature of the lessons was the way in which teachers encouraged pupils to come to the front to demonstrate the use of the whiteboards to others in the class. Teachers set interesting tasks and, as a result, pupils are well motivated and apply themselves well in their lessons. Pupils are sensitively managed to ensure that all can benefit from the new, stimulating resources. Assessment procedures are developing well in the subject, but the subject leader acknowledges that there is still more to be done in this area.
65. Progress since the last inspection has been good. Standards have risen and the curriculum has much improved. The subject co-ordinator is very skilled and she leads and manages the subject well. She provides a good role model for other members of staff and creates a positive and dynamic approach to the development of the subject.

## Information and technology across the curriculum

66. Integrating information and communication technology into other areas of the curriculum to enhance learning is a high priority for the school. The use of technology available to staff and pupils is focused and effective. Information and communication technology is used well in many other areas of the curriculum, for example for drafting and redrafting written work in science and topic work. Pupils use information and communication technology to access information for research and they are familiar with the use of computers as bibliographical tools. Computers are used well to develop learning on a one-to-one basis for pupils with special educational needs.

## HUMANITIES

*Religious education and history were inspected in detail and are reported on in full below. Geography was sampled.*

67. Scrutiny of planning and previous work and discussions with staff indicate that the requirements of the National Curriculum are being met in the case of **geography**. For

example, as part of a local study, Year 1 pupils carry out a traffic survey using a tally stick, make simple pictorial maps and identify different kinds of houses that are found in the area around the school. Pupils in Year 2 compare different kinds of houses found in contemporary India with one another and with those found in the United Kingdom. They also construct maps of an urban area.

## **Religious education**

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Religious education makes a good contribution to pupils' personal development.
- The subject is well led.

### **Commentary**

68. The standards of attainment of Year 2 pupils remain in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus, as they were at the time of the last inspection. Achievement is sound throughout the school.
69. Year 1 pupils have a sound appreciation of why the Bible is a special book for Christians and have a good recall of several well known Bible stories. They understand the importance of symbols in everyday life and know that specific symbols – such as light – have particular significance to the followers of Christianity and other major world religions. Year 2 pupils are able to describe their perceptions of what God looks like – although most present conventional images. Most can give reasons – such as the Creation – for the concept of God as a powerful being and have a sound understanding of aspects of the Hindu religion.
70. Pupils are generally well behaved in religious education lessons and are often very interested in the topics being discussed. Teaching is good overall. In the better lessons, teachers have a good initial focus on what the pupils are expected to learn. Questioning is open-ended and searching, encouraging the pupils to think deeply about the issues they are exploring. Methods are varied and support both the pupils' engagement and their pace of learning. Pupils are well managed and a positive working atmosphere is created. Teachers have a sensitive approach which gives the pupils the confidence to share views and ideas. In an occasional lesson the pupils are not challenged enough.
71. A new locally agreed syllabus has recently been introduced. The school is successfully adapting its planning to conform to this. There is some use of information and communication technology to support religious education, but there is scope for this to be developed further. The co-ordinator is enthusiastic and knowledgeable and manages the subject well.

## **History**

Provision in history is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**



- The achievement of pupils is good and their overall attainment is above average.
- Teaching and learning are good.
- There is a strong emphasis on pupils' skills of enquiry and historical investigation.
- Literacy skills are promoted well in the subject.

## Commentary

72. By Year 2, most pupils display a maturing sense of historical time by placing events and objects in chronological order. Pupils in Year 1, for example, demonstrate good knowledge and understanding of the achievements and influence of famous people, such as Neil Armstrong and other lunar astronauts of the 1960s. In Year 2, pupils have undertaken a detailed project on the Great Fire of London and are able to relate specific details about the causes and consequences of the Fire. A notable feature of their work is the way in which they link history to other subject areas, such as geography, as they compare maps of London before and after the Great Fire of 1666.
73. Most pupils work hard and are productively involved in lessons. They show interest in their chosen topics of study and co-operate well with each other and with their stimulating teachers. They are eager to track down information and they display good research skills in their projects. Pupils are always eager and willing to use information and communication technology to enhance their learning in history. They visit many places of historical interest and they are already planning contributions to the local celebrations surrounding the bicentenary of the battle of Trafalgar.
74. Teaching and learning are good overall. In one good lesson, pupils studying the Great Fire of London presented their dramatic interpretations and imaginative re-creations of some of the events in 1666 with enormous enthusiasm and vivacity. In the excited discussions that ensued, the pupils showed that they were gaining valuable insights into the past and making worthwhile comparisons with contemporary standards of health and safety. In another lesson observed, pupils beavered away at the primary sources, selecting and processing information for the compilation of their data and projects. A salient feature of almost all the lessons is the way in which the teachers forge meaningful and constructive links with other subject areas. This is a particular strength of the school.
75. Leadership and management of the subject are good. The co-ordinator is knowledgeable, well-informed and actively promotes innovative practices. The school is appropriately developing assessment procedures for history. However, monitoring of teaching and learning is not yet rigorous enough.

## CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

*Art and design, design and technology, music and physical education were all sampled.*

76. Discussion with co-ordinators, scrutiny of planning and previous work and the sampling of a small number of lessons indicate that the requirements of the National Curriculum are being met in the case of all four sampled subjects. In **art and design**, for example, Year 1 pupils paint pictures and create polystyrene block prints of flowers and animals. Many art themes are successfully linked to work in other subjects with Year 2 pupils using card and other materials to construct three-dimensional pictures which demonstrate the emotional impact that different colours have on them. They also construct a large scale collage to represent the Great Fire of London. In a **design and**

**technology** project, Year 2 pupils produce labelled designs prior to constructing and decorating puppets from fabric. They then successfully evaluate their products and suggest possible improvements. In one excellent design and technology lesson sampled during the inspection, Year 1 pupils very effectively joined axles to models in order to create 'space buggies' linked to their current topic focusing on Neil Armstrong's pioneering trip to the moon. As a direct result of the quality of the teaching they displayed well above average skills, were able to exercise independent choices over the resources they used and continually evaluated the effectiveness of their work. It was not possible to see any **music** lessons during the inspection, but some good quality singing was noted in assemblies. In one whole school assembly that was inspected, for example, the pupils sang 'Thank you God' tunefully and with a good control of tempo and dynamics. In a sampled **physical education** lesson, Year 1 pupils created a series of balances and movements using both the floor and large apparatus.

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

*This curriculum area was sampled.*

77. The school has a good regard for pupils' personal, social and health education. This is notable in many areas of school life. All staff are responsive to the on-going needs of the pupils and deal with these successfully. The school has recently achieved the Healthy School Award and there is an extensive programme of personal, social and health education lessons in place. Assemblies also contribute well to pupils' personal, social and health education. In one lesson sampled during the inspection, Year 1 pupils were helped to recognise that people's 'wants' were not the same as their 'needs'. In another, Year 2 pupils discussed people and organisations - such as the fire service - that support society. The parents were very positive about the way that their children are helped to become mature and independent people.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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