

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **GRAFTON INFANT SCHOOL**

Longton, Stoke-on-Trent

LEA area: Stoke-on-Trent

Unique reference number: 124008

Headteacher: Mrs G Latos

Lead inspector: Mr P M Allen

Dates of inspection: 20<sup>th</sup> - 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2004

Inspection number: 266899

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:	3 - 7
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	237
School address:	Marlborough Road Longton Stoke-on-Trent Staffordshire
Postcode:	ST3 1EJ
Telephone number:	(01782) 235 401
Fax number:	(01782) 235 401
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr B Williams
Date of previous inspection:	26 <sup>th</sup> April 1999

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This is an above average sized Infant school. It draws the vast majority of its pupils from the immediate area which contains a mixture of housing and has some socio-economic difficulties. There are 237 pupils on roll, including 39 who attend full-time in the Nursery for one year. These Nursery children had very recently started school at the time of the inspection. Following a protracted period of consultation, it is intended that the school will be amalgamated with a local primary school in September 2005 although, at the time of the inspection, planning permission had yet to be given for the new site. As an interim arrangement, 30 pupils now in Year 3 have continued at the school. Currently, apart from the Nursery, there are eight classes, all with discrete age groups: two each for Reception and Year 1, three classes for Year 2 pupils and the new one for Year 3 pupils. The great majority of pupils are of white UK heritage background. There are small numbers of pupils from a mixed heritage background and from a Pakistani heritage background. Three pupils speak English as an additional language; none are at an early stage of English language acquisition. Twenty-five pupils are identified as having special educational needs, this proportion being below the national average; most of these pupils have moderate learning difficulties. There are no pupils who have Statements of Special Educational Need. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is above the national average. Most pupils have experienced pre-school education through the school's own Nursery class. Attainment on entry to the Reception class varies from year to year, but overall it is below what could be expected, most notably in speaking and listening.

The school has been given the following awards: Healthy Schools 2001, Gold Artsmark 2002, Investor in People 2002, Schools Achievement Award 2002, Partnership Promotion School 2003, LEA Beacon Network School 2004.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
17531	Mr P M Allen	Lead inspector	Foundation Stage Mathematics History Physical education
9942	Mrs S Stevens	Lay inspector	
29686	Mr J S Lord	Team inspector	Science Information and communication technology Art and design Geography English as an additional language Special educational needs
32180	Mr D T W Sleightholme	Team inspector	English Design and technology Music Religious education

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a **very successful school** which is constantly striving to improve. It has a significant impact on the lives of the children it serves. The overall very good quality of the teaching results in pupils achieving very well, raising their level of performance from low standards on entry to above average attainment by the end of Year 2. The staff commitment to, and care for, all pupils is outstanding and both staff and pupils thoroughly enjoy being at school. Very good leadership helps the school to aspire to do the best it can for the pupils. The school provides very good value for money.

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

- The school is successful because of the excellent leadership of the headteacher, who shows clear vision, a sense of purpose and a strong determination to provide the best for each child.
- The overall very good quality of teaching provided by the teachers, the teaching assistants and the classroom assistants motivates the pupils to achieve very well, reaching above average standards in English, mathematics and science.
- Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress because of the very good provision made for them.
- The curriculum is very well planned and innovative and well matched to the needs of the pupils.
- The pupils' very good attitudes, behaviour and relationships have a significant impact on their learning.
- There are very good procedures for assessing the pupils' work, monitoring their progress and setting targets in literacy, numeracy and science.
- The use of outdoor play to promote and support children's learning in the Foundation Stage (Nursery and Reception) is relatively underdeveloped.

The school has made a good improvement since its previous inspection in 1999. The key areas for improvement, to improve levels of punctuality and promote good attendance and to ensure more challenging work in group time, have been fully addressed. The school's successful programme of improvement, including the quality of teaching and learning, have led to it being more effective than previously.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
reading	A	A	C	A
writing	B	A	B	A
mathematics	B	A	E	D

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

The idiosyncratic 2003 results shown in the table do not fully reflect the pattern of high attainment since 2000. The 2003 year group had a higher percentage of pupils with special

educational needs than usual. The school's focus on writing brought about good results whereas in mathematics, although a very good number reached Level 2, the expected level for most seven-year-olds, disappointingly few reached the higher Level 3. The unvalidated results for 2004 indicate standards which follow the trend of being above the national average. Currently, standards at the end of Year 2 and in Year 3 are above the national average in reading, writing, mathematics and science. These standards are very creditable. **Pupils across the school, including those with special educational needs, those who are higher attainers and those who speak English as an additional language, achieve very well relative to their capabilities** because of the very good teaching they receive. Even though many children start Nursery with low attainment, they make good and often very good progress so that the vast majority achieve the goals children are expected to reach by the end of the Foundation Stage (Reception Year). Standards in information and communication technology are similar to those expected nationally. Standards in religious education are broadly in line with the requirements of the locally-agreed syllabus. Standards in art and design are good across the school. **Pupils' personal development is very good.** There are high levels of care and very good relationships which contribute to pupils' very good attitudes. **Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and, in some respects, very good.** Attendance is now satisfactory and the school continues to work hard to improve it further.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The quality of education provided by the school is very good. Teaching and learning are very good overall.** The teaching is characterised by a team approach, high expectations, high quality shared planning and very good assessment systems. The learning support staff make a significant contribution to the quality of the teaching and learning. The very good curriculum is innovative, enriched by very good links across the curricular areas and enhanced by a very good range of extra-curricular activities. Although the Foundation Stage provides a stimulating curriculum, the outdoor provision is in need of further development. All staff have extremely caring attitudes towards the pupils, providing very good guidance and support. There is a very good partnership with parents. The school works very closely with the local community, including the network of local schools in which it enjoys a high profile.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**Overall leadership and management are very good.** Governance is good and meets statutory requirements. Governors are knowledgeable and enthusiastic, with plans to further develop their monitoring role. The inspirational headteacher provides very clear direction for the school, one of striving for excellence. She is well supported by a very effective senior team and knowledgeable and enthusiastic curriculum co-ordinators. Monitoring and evaluation of the school's work is rigorous and successful.

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

During the consultation and discussions, the parents were very supportive of the school and its staff; they value all that is done to help their children and appreciate that it is a very good school. However, a significant number of parents, understandably, expressed their concerns and anxieties about the unclear timescale of the proposed amalgamation and the proposed new building. Pupils have very positive views and they enjoy coming to school and want to learn; they show affection and respect for the adults who work in school.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

This very successful school has no significant weaknesses but would benefit from:

- The improvement of planning and provision to promote and better support children's outdoor play in the Foundation Stage.



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

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

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

Throughout the school, pupils achieve very well in relation to their capabilities. This is because of the overall very good quality of teaching they receive. Pupils raise their level of performance from low standards on entry to Reception to standards at the end of Year 2 which are above the national average in reading, writing, mathematics and science. There has been good improvement in standards since the previous inspection.

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

- There is a trend of pupils achieving very well and reaching creditable standards; this is as a consequence of the very good quality of the teaching.
- The very good provision for pupils with special educational needs enables them to achieve very well.
- Reading skills are well developed throughout the school.
- Pupils reach good standards in writing.

#### **Commentary**

1. Children are given a very positive start to school life in the Nursery and Reception Years. Although there is a wide range of attainment on entry when children start at Nursery age, overall attainment is very low, especially in social, communication and language skills. Although children make good and often very good progress in the Nursery, by the time they enter the Reception Year, standards are still below what could be expected. Nevertheless, the very good provision made over the two years and the good and often very good teaching of the teachers and Nursery nurses enable these children to achieve very well. As a consequence, the vast majority of them are likely to reach the goals children are expected to reach by the end of the Reception Year. There is an appropriate focus both on personal, social and emotional development and on communication, language and literacy and so children do well in these areas of learning.

#### ***Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 – average point scores in 2003***

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	15.8 (17.8)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	15.7 (16.4)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	15.2 (18.4)	16.3 (16.5)

*There were 66 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

2. The 2003 results are not typical of standards over recent times. The 2003 year group had a high proportion of pupils with learning difficulties. As a consequence of focusing on writing, the pupils attained well in that area, but less well in mathematics where too few pupils reached the higher Level 3. The school's analysis of data shows that the pupils in this year group showed significant 'value added' in their achievements over time. The unvalidated results for 2004 indicate standards which, like previous years, are above the national average in each subject tested. All the available evidence indicates that standards are higher now than they were at the time of the previous inspection and that they have gradually risen. Inspection findings indicate that standards at the end of Year 2 are above the national average in reading, writing,

mathematics and science. Pupils in the newly-established Year 3 class are achieving very well and reaching good standards in English, mathematics and science.

3. National performance data over recent years indicates that there are no significant differences in the attainment of boys and girls. This is clearly reflected in the school's analysis of how different groups of pupils perform which indicates that there are no significant differences in attainment by gender or ethnicity.
4. Pupils with special educational needs achieve very well. The clear and appropriate targets for improvement on their individual education plans enable them to make very good progress in their learning. These targets are reviewed and revised on a regular basis. The early identification of any difficulties and the very effective support provided make a significant contribution to the achievement of these pupils. Over recent years, the school has become very effective in targeting the needs of the higher-attaining pupils by providing carefully planned, challenging activities. The higher attainers' needs are being met, partly through 'master classes' run in conjunction with the local network of schools.
5. Standards in religious education are broadly in line with the requirements of the locally-agreed syllabus. Standards in information and communication technology are in line with those normally seen. Given the time constraints of the inspection, it was not possible to make firm judgements about standards in other subjects, although there is evidence of good standards in art and design across the school.
6. The school's own 'value-added' analysis shows that almost all pupils achieve well compared with their prior attainment and ability on entry to school. They make similarly good progress, irrespective of their gender or background. The school is successful in its aspiration to maintain and raise standards. Challenging but realistic targets are being well met. The leadership of the school successfully fosters a shared commitment amongst the staff to continue to raise standards and to continue to improve the quality of education provided. The high effectiveness of the school is clearly reflected in the good standards reached at the end of Year 2, especially given the low attainment on entry.

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

Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and relationships are very good. Their personal development is supported well by the good spiritual and cultural provision and the very good moral and social development in the school. Attendance levels are satisfactory and improving steadily, as is punctuality.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils have very good attitudes to school and behave very well around the school and in the playground.
- ADULTS' HIGH EXPECTATIONS AND CONSISTENT IMPLEMENTATION OF POLICY, WITH PRAISE AND GOOD HUMOUR, RESULT IN PUPILS' VERY GOOD BEHAVIOUR.
- The very good relationships between all members of the school have a significant impact on pupils' learning and their very good attitudes.
- Pupils gain self-knowledge, confidence and respect for others through the very good promotion of social and moral development in the school.

## Commentary

7. Pupils clearly enjoy coming to this school, which is a happy, welcoming place where laughter and enjoyment are encouraged throughout the day. When Year 1 pupils were asked what they liked best about their school, a deafening response of 'Everything!' was the answer. Because of the overall very good quality of the teaching, and the numerous innovative strategies used by many teachers, the pupils listen and concentrate well and are keen to answer questions. Pupils of all ages have very good attitudes to school routines and their work. Very young children learn to work independently or in small groups, developing skills in socialising and sharing.
8. Pupils behave very well in lessons, around the school and at playtimes, when they happily share the equipment provided for them. Staff are consistent in the application of effective behaviour management systems accompanied by much praise and a sense of fun greatly enjoyed by the pupils. The small minority of pupils who have behavioural difficulties are managed well and do not disturb the learning of others. Pupils have confidence in approaching staff with any incidents, such as bullying, should they occur, knowing they will be dealt with quickly and effectively. Lunchtimes are organised well; they are pleasant and orderly with a 'healthy eating' menu to tempt the children.
9. Social and collaborative skills are promoted constantly and successfully throughout the school. Praise is used well by all staff to encourage and motivate pupils. Humour, also, is an often-used strategy, which results in friendly and outgoing pupils who are eager to discuss their work with visitors or share a joke with staff. There have never been any exclusions.
10. Pupils given responsibilities around the school carry them out with confidence and pride, for example the Year 3 'buddies' who are very sensible and conscientious in attending to any minor disputes or keeping an eye on the 'friendship bench' for anyone needing some companionship. Relationships are a strength of the school and pupils treat each other with kindness and respect. Pupils with special educational needs and those from ethnic minorities are involved in all aspects of the work and play in the school. Pupils are generally keen to raise money for charity and take much interest in the school they help to sponsor in Kenya.
11. Pupils' personal development is good. All aspects of personal, social and emotional development are well promoted in the Nursery and Reception Years and the children respond well. Spiritual development is promoted well across the curriculum and through assemblies. Spontaneous opportunities in collective worship and circle time are used to encourage a sense of wonder or a time of quiet reflection; for example, pupils write short prayers about something of importance to them to be attached to the 'prayer tree' in the hall, or, in Year 2, sit captivated by a role-play characterisation of a character in a literacy lesson. Pupils clearly understand the difference between right and wrong and this is reinforced well during circle time. They are encouraged to work and play together, learn to express their opinions or express thoughts during daily class time and to listen to others when it is their turn to speak. Cultural development is fostered successfully in art and design, music, geography and religious education. Celebration of festivals, such as Diwali and Eid, provides pupils with experiences of other cultures and faiths. The enactment of a Christian wedding for Year 1 pupils, including the setting out of the

classroom as a church, with an appropriately dressed bride and groom, wedding cake and guests, brought a religious education lesson to life.

12. Punctuality and attendance were an issue in the previous inspection report. The low attendance figures have been largely due to holidays in term time, Potters' Holiday, which is not a recognised school holiday and sickness, such as chicken pox. However, due to the very good efforts of both the school and the education welfare service, this situation has now improved and the figures for the current year indicate that attendance is now satisfactory. The majority of pupils now arrive punctually in the morning, eager to begin their work and lessons, which begin promptly and on time. The importance of good attendance is stressed to parents, and pupils' individual attendance levels are closely monitored by the school and the education welfare officer.

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

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	5.2	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.*

**QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL**

The quality of education provided by the school is very good. The overall very good quality of the teaching and very good levels of care and support mean that most pupils are able to learn very well. There is a very good partnership with parents and the school works very closely with the local community.

**Teaching and learning**

Throughout the school, the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is very good; consequently, pupils achieve very well.

**Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The school's commitment to equality of opportunity helps to ensure the very good achievement of all groups of pupils.
- Teachers have high expectations of pupils.
- Lessons are based on accurate assessments of pupils' progress and contain interesting and challenging activities.
- Learning support staff make a significant contribution to the quality of teaching and learning.
- The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is very good.
- Assessment procedures are very good for English, mathematics and science and for pupils in the Foundation Stage.

**Commentary**

13. The high quality of teaching and learning, which marks an improvement since the previous inspection, is the product of the headteacher's very clear vision of a school built upon the principle of equality of opportunity. New approaches to teaching are

encouraged and evaluated according to this principle. The outcome is that lessons are very well organised to meet the needs of all groups of pupils, regardless of their background, ethnicity, or stage of development. Gifted and talented pupils and higher-attaining pupils are challenged to reach their potential. This is part of the teachers' commitment to equal opportunities. The pupils respond well. Over time, they develop the skills and capacity to work independently, showing good engagement and productivity. Homework is used effectively to reinforce and extend what is learned in school.

14. Teachers consistently require pupils to show high standards of behaviour. Sanctions are rarely needed because there is a very good ethos for learning. As a result, interruptions are minimal and this enables pupils to work uninterrupted for sustained periods of time and promotes pupils' perseverance and productivity in their learning.
15. Teachers' very clear understanding of the National Curriculum, the locally-agreed syllabus for religious education and their knowledge of how pupils can learn, underpin the overall high quality of lessons. Very clear and appropriate learning objectives are shared with pupils so that they, as well as the teachers, can assess their level of understanding. Assessments are used very constructively in planning future work which ensures that learning builds very effectively on what pupils already know and can do. Teachers also appreciate that pupils need practical and interesting experiences if they are to learn well and acquire new knowledge and understanding.
16. An excellent lesson for Year 1 pupils exemplified this approach. The teacher prepared four practical activities all skilfully linked to the traditional tale of 'Little Red Riding Hood' to capture the pupils' interest. The pupils worked eagerly on their tasks; weighing the contents of Little Red Riding Hood's shopping basket, writing a shopping list for Little Red Riding Hood, baking cakes to take to Granny and making cake boxes to carry the cakes. The activities took account of pupils' interests which encouraged discussion and co-operation while also taking account of pupils' personal abilities. The consequence was that pupils' concepts, skills and ideas were extended very effectively and they achieved extremely well.
17. The learning support staff are used very effectively to support pupils' learning. During the introduction to lessons, for example, the assistants observe the pupils, making notes of those who show understanding and those who need further help. Similarly, at the end of working with a group of pupils the assistants ensure that the teacher is fully aware of the progress pupils have made. This very good teamwork by the staff makes a significant contribution to the pupils' very good achievement.
18. The quality of teaching and learning for pupils who have special educational needs is very good. The school has a systematic process for making sure that the pupils' needs are identified at an early stage and that support is provided. The clear and appropriate targets for improvement on individual education plans are reviewed and revised on a regular basis. The level of care provided by the school, along with imaginative, well-organised teaching and the very effective support provided, makes a significant contribution to the achievement of these pupils. Teachers ensure that these pupils are very well supported, often through the very effective work of teaching assistants and classroom assistants, to meet the targets on their individual education plans. Communication between teachers and support staff is very good, ensuring consistent high quality instruction.

19. Staff are making good use of the Foundation Stage profile, with observations and achievement recorded carefully. The procedures for assessing and recording individual pupils' attainment and progress are very good for English, mathematics and science. There is an effective whole-school system of assessment and record-keeping used by teachers to decide pupils' levels of attainment and to set targets for improvement. Assessments are used very constructively in planning future work, which ensures that learning builds very well on what pupils already know and can do. Teachers mark pupils' work thoroughly and positively, including helpful written comments. Some of the marking is exemplary.

**Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 31 lessons**

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
1 (3%)	13 (42%)	14 (45%)	3 (10%)	0 (0%)	0 (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.*

**The curriculum**

The curriculum is broad, balanced and innovative, with many strong features. The range of extra-curricular activities enriching the curriculum is very good. The range and quality of resources are very good. The accommodation, although attractive and imaginatively used, is only satisfactory overall.

**Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The curriculum is fully inclusive in that it meets the needs of all the pupils.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good, enabling them to achieve very well.
- Personal, social, health and citizenship education is very good.
- There is a very good match of teachers and other staff to the demands of the curriculum.
- Outdoor provision in the Foundation Stage is in need of further development.

**Commentary**

20. The school's curriculum shows a good improvement since the previous inspection. It is broad and balanced, preparing pupils well for the next stage of their education. It is being systematically developed to cater for the needs of the oldest year group of children who have recently started on Year 3, Key Stage 2. The curriculum meets statutory requirements, including those for the provision for religious education and collective worship. The quality and range of learning opportunities provided are very good, with some very strong elements. The Foundation Stage provides a stimulating and imaginative curriculum rich in worthwhile activities, although the provision for outdoor play is not as well developed as that for the other areas of the curriculum. The very good choice of extra-curricular activities includes art, music, information and communication technology, French, first aid and cookery clubs. The arts are well promoted and there is a good range of sporting activities. These include gymnastics, netball and football, which are popular with pupils.
21. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies, adapted to meet the needs of the school, are used effectively to teach the skills of literacy and numeracy and enable pupils to achieve very well. The school is constantly striving to enrich the curriculum through the development of very good links across the curricular areas to make learning more effective and meaningful for the pupils. As part of a local pilot scheme, the school has developed its curriculum, notably in Year 1, to provide an approach which is more practically based with less formality than previously. Its success led to the school being

filmed as part of a training DVD being made for the Department of Education and Skills. During this inspection, the story of Little Red Riding Hood (part of a topic on traditional stories) was being very effectively used in Year 1 as the basis for very good provision in English, mathematics and science.

22. Provision for personal, social and health education and citizenship, including attention to alcohol and drugs misuse, is very good. Sex and relationship education is part of an area for further development to cater for the needs of the pupils as they move through Key Stage 2. Currently, pupils benefit from learning about life cycles, including human birth, partly through the input of the school's nurse. The curriculum is inclusive because it ensures equality of access and opportunity for all pupils. School planning includes 'circle time' where pupils are free to express personal feelings and concerns. Teachers have positive strategies that develop children's initiative and responsibilities.
23. The school ensures that all pupils have equal access to learning opportunities. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. Well-planned activities, very good teaching and very thorough tracking procedures ensure that these pupils make very good progress. Targets are appropriately linked to individual education plans.
24. Although the accommodation does have shortcomings, such as a relatively small hall and the lack of a playing field, it is used imaginatively and overall there is good space, for example in the Nursery. There are sufficient teachers and a very good number of well-qualified support assistants, who are well able to meet the demands of the curriculum. The overall quality and quantity of resources are very good and these are used appropriately. The interactive whiteboards are being used effectively. Overall, the accommodation and resources are having a positive impact on standards and achievement.
25. The roles of the knowledgeable and enthusiastic curriculum co-ordinators have been well developed and are having a positive impact on provision. The teachers and learning support staff in all parts of the school are experienced and work very efficiently together to support the pupils' learning and contribute to their very good achievement over time.

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

The school takes very good care of its pupils and guides their learning very well. The school promotes the pupils' health, safety and welfare very effectively. Within its caring and secure environment, the school provides very good support and guidance. It seeks pupils' views, listens to what they say and considers and acts upon their suggestions as appropriate.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The school is a very caring place, with very good induction arrangements.
- The school takes good care of pupils' health, safety and well-being.
- Pupils have very good trusting relationships with staff and feel confident in approaching them should they have problems or difficulties.
- The school sets targets for pupils in consultation with them and their parents and provides very good intervention strategies to raise achievement.
- Very good assessment arrangements enable staff to support pupils' learning effectively.
- The support and guidance provided for pupils with special educational needs are very good, enabling them to make very good progress.

## **Commentary**

26. The school has a calm and positive atmosphere. Staff have a very caring approach and adults and children get on very well with each other. Lessons are happy and convivial with all pupils being treated as individuals and helped to concentrate on their learning and respond positively. Staff are consistent in looking after the pupils' well-being and their welfare. This is much appreciated by parents and carers. Teachers and support staff constantly praise pupils' efforts and successes, which in turn raises pupils' self-confidence. Staff get to know pupils and their families well and support them effectively. Child protection issues are suitably covered and good medical care is provided. Health and safety is considered very effectively.
27. The school has very good procedures for monitoring pupils' academic progress, which track pupils' learning and individual progress as they move through the school. Early identification of pupils with special educational needs ensures that effective support is provided as soon as possible, successfully promoting their very good progress. This support is given mostly in class, in small groups or as individual work, on basic skills in literacy, for example. There is very good liaison with external special needs support staff and other outside agencies. Regular assessment ensures that the work planned is sufficiently focused to enable pupils to make very good progress. The regular reviews of individual education plans give appropriate, achievable learning steps which are used very effectively by teachers to support planning.
28. Foundation Stage staff manage the process of 'starting school' well. Children are made very welcome by staff and they settle quickly into school life. If a child has difficulty in settling, parents are encouraged to stay for a while until the child feels happier. Most children transfer from the on-site Nursery, where induction procedures are praised by parents and carers who are already well known to staff when they enter the school.
29. Teachers in the classroom value pupils' views and all are involved in setting classroom rules. Parents, teachers and pupils are also involved in setting realistic targets for each pupil to achieve, helping to promote pupils' independence and taking joint responsibility for the child's learning. The staff work hard to provide very good support for pastoral matters. The high level of care, support and guidance enhances the quality of education provided.

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

The school has very good overall partnerships with parents, the community and other schools and colleges. Parents and carers are very happy with the care and education their children receive.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Parents are very supportive of the school and its staff; they value all that is done to help their children.
- The school provides very good information for parents.
- The headteacher and staff are available to parents daily and are able to deal with any worries or problems on an informal basis.



- Very good links with the local community and other schools enhance and enrich the curriculum and benefit both pupil and adult learning.

## **Commentary**

30. Although parents are very satisfied with the education their children receive at the school, as they were at the time of the last inspection, there is growing anxiety about the future amalgamation. The school works very hard to build and maintain its very good partnership with parents and carers. Parents receive detailed information on general matters through regular newsletters and items on the parents' noticeboards throughout the school. Daily personal contact with staff in the playground is appreciated by parents, who are seen to enjoy socialising with staff or passing on information about their child. The very clear annual written reports that teachers produce tell parents exactly how well their child is doing in each of the subjects and whether or not there is room for improvement. Targets, set in consultation with parents and pupils, are realistic and include areas for personal development, such as effort, co-operation, behaviour and citizenship. The reports are easy to understand and parents are invited to discuss them with the headteacher if they wish. Consultation meetings are supported well and appreciated by parents and carers.
31. Parents are pleased with the way the staff are approachable and respond to their concerns, treating any complaints seriously. Parents are informed of the areas of work that their children will be covering each term and the topics they will be studying. They are shown how to support their children with their work and the majority are involved to some extent with their child's work at home. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are kept fully informed and are included in discussions as soon as any needs are identified. Parents are fully involved in any reviews and with their child's individual education plans.
32. There are very productive links with the community and local churches, and ministers are very supportive, regularly participating in assemblies. The Parents', Staff and Friends' Association brings members of the community, pupils and their families into contact with the school through fundraising activities, such as the Summer Fayre. Parents, carers and grandparents are encouraged to help in the school and with visits. The school is involved with a local community partnership scheme and local employers support the school. A multi-agency group working in the school enhances the links with the community and gives the school an understanding of local needs and opinions which enables the school to fit more closely into its surrounding community.
33. The school enjoys a high profile in the successful local network of schools. There are close and effective links with local schools and well-established transition arrangements for pupils going to the junior school. The school provides work placements for students from local high schools, colleges and universities.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

The overall leadership and management are very good. The headteacher provides excellent leadership for the work of this well-managed school. She is supported very well in leading and managing the school by the assistant headteacher and senior members of staff. Governors give good support to the school and perform their duties well.

## MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- The headteacher's outstanding leadership provides very clear direction and sense of purpose, reflected in her very high aspirations for the school.
- The headteacher provides an excellent lead for innovative changes in the curriculum and the leadership and management roles of other key staff.
- The training and professional development opportunities for staff and trainee teachers are excellent.
- The school's ethos of care ensures the health and wellbeing of staff are a priority, and this is underpinned by excellent systems that manage the workload and deployment of all staff.
- Financial management is very effectively linked to educational priorities, and the school applies the principles of best value well.
- Governors have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and fulfil their statutory duties well, but they could usefully develop their monitoring role.

### Commentary

34. The leadership of the headteacher is excellent. Her interest in each individual's development sets an excellent example for others to follow. She is invariably on hand to offer support and guidance to staff and governors and is readily available to parents. The headteacher is proud of the school's achievements but is always seeking to improve on these. Her vision and sense of purpose is shared by staff, and this is reflected in the confident and committed way they go about their work. They fully support the direction the school has taken in moving to a more innovative curriculum where the development of pupils' skills, within a curriculum that builds upon the work in the early years is seen as crucial to the school's continuing success. Curriculum leadership and management are very good. The quality of the school's self-evaluation is very good, so that all aspects of the school's work are systematically reviewed and evaluated, leading to a programme of continuous improvement.
35. Staff are united in their desire to provide the best educational experience for all pupils and, through implementing changes to the curriculum and adopting more effective teaching methods, they are enabling pupils to achieve above average standards in English, mathematics and science. The good amount of improvement that has taken place since the previous inspection, especially in raising attendance levels, improving the quality of teaching and achieving high standards, is testimony to the leadership team's determination and skill in moving the school forward. Above all, the aim is to make the school 'a happy, family school where everyone is encouraged to do their best and success is celebrated'. The status, provision and support given to pupils who have special educational needs typify the way the school 'mission statement' is translated into practice. Parents are right to feel that the school is well run.
36. The governing body is effective and fulfils its statutory duties well. Governors share the headteacher's vision for the future direction of the school, and promote school policies that value and support each pupil's all-round development. They have a good grasp of the school's strengths and weaknesses and play their part in shaping the direction of the school through the school development plan. Governors have been very actively involved in preparing for the proposed school amalgamation and the move to a new site. As a result, they have given insufficient time recently to their monitoring role. The governing

body is well led by an experienced chair who supports the school's efforts to put excellence and enjoyment in the curriculum, but who is prepared, with fellow governors, to challenge staff proposals in order to ensure there is sufficient rigour in school policy and practice.

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

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	667,862	Balance from previous year	39,530
Total expenditure	662,156	Balance carried forward to the next year	45,236
Expenditure per pupil	2,854		

37. The school's financial management is secure. There are very good procedures in place to ensure funds are used wisely and accounts are monitored. The school's strategic planning is very good, and is enhanced by a sophisticated computer program that enables it to evaluate value for money, by measuring the level of investment against the results, for example whether a significant investment of funds has led to raised standards in a school development priority. The school follows the principles of best value well by securing competitively priced contracts, by comparing its performance with local schools and in sharing good practice with them.
38. The school actively promotes links with other schools as it continuously strives for excellence. It is part of a networked learning community and has been awarded local education authority Beacon Network status. These productive links also generate a significant amount of income that is returned to the school to enhance provision. For example, the school is able to fund a significant amount of professional development for all teachers, which has contributed to the significant improvement in the quality of teaching since the previous inspection. There are also sufficient funds to ensure staff have guaranteed time away from their classes for preparation, planning and assessment. The school's excellent reputation for training student teachers leads to a number of placements each year, and trainees benefit from the excellent guidance, advice and professional development they receive within the school.
39. The school's strong culture of care, with the health and wellbeing of staff and pupils central to everything it does, is a very significant important factor in making this a very successful school which is constantly striving to improve.

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

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

40. The good features reported in the previous inspection have been maintained, ensuring that provision in the Foundation Stage is very good overall; this ensures that children are given a very good start to school life. Standards reached are similar to those described in the previous report. Children start Nursery in the September of the year in which they reach three years of age, attending full-time for one year prior to starting the Reception Year. As the inspection took place early on in the school year, children had been in Nursery for a matter of weeks and some were still part-time, getting ready to attend full-time.
41. On entry to the Nursery, the attainment of most children is well below what could be expected and a significant number of the children possess poor speaking, listening and communication skills, with a number having poor social skills. Assessments made on entry identify this low level of attainment in basic skills which has an adverse effect on learning in most areas of experience. Although children make good and often very good progress in the Nursery, by the time they enter the Reception Year, standards are still below what could be expected.
42. The accommodation enables very good communication, transition and transfer. The rich variety of resources and the flexible organisation enable staff to stimulate and extend children's learning effectively. In the Nursery, there is an appropriate balance of adult-led activities and opportunities for children to exercise choice, initiating activities for themselves or with others, and thus developing independence and the ability to manage resources for themselves. In Reception, there is a balance of more formal taught sessions and opportunities for individually chosen activities, which also promotes independence. There are good routines established for children selecting and working in the different areas or with particular pieces of equipment. Whilst there is some provision to support children's outdoor play, it is only adequate. The small secure area outside the Nursery, the small play area outside Reception and the 'train' play area at the far end of the playground, present access difficulties.. Although regular use is made of the outdoor areas, teachers are not planning for, and making the most of, the outdoor areas to promote and extend children's learning.
43. Work in the Nursery is led by an experienced teacher working alongside the two experienced and skilful Nursery nurses. The Foundation Stage manager is providing very good leadership and management. The quality of teaching is good and often very good throughout the Foundation Stage. Teachers and Nursery nurses work very effectively in the Nursery and Reception teams. Planning and assessment are very good. All staff are skilful in observing aspects of children's learning; they understand children's learning needs and plan carefully to meet them. Teachers use a good range of teaching strategies appropriate for children of this age, in both their direct teaching of the whole group and in more intensive work with individuals or small groups. This ensures that children have very good opportunities to learn through a variety of structured practical activities, which contribute positively to the progress they make and their very good achievement. At times, very good provision is made to extend higher-attaining children in Reception, when a small group works separately with one of the staff on more challenging planned activities
44. Observations of the children and a review of the school's records and assessments undertaken indicate that most children achieve very well in relation to their abilities, which shows the very good 'value added' by the school from entry to Nursery to the end of the Reception Year. Virtually all the children are likely to reach the expected goals in communication, language and literacy, although a smaller number are likely to reach the

higher level competencies such as those concerned with writing. Similarly in the mathematical area, virtually all are likely to meet the goals. In these two areas, between ten and twenty per cent of the children are likely to exceed the goals. In the personal, social and emotional area and the physical area of learning, virtually all are likely to meet the goals, with a small number exceeding them.

45. Standards in the four areas of learning described above were made the main focus of the inspection of the Foundation Stage. The other two areas were less of a focus. Nevertheless, the good quality assessment data collected by the school, indicate that in knowledge and understanding of the world and in the creative area of learning, virtually all the children are likely to achieve the expected goals by the end of the Reception Year, with a very small number likely to exceed them.

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

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children achieve very well, making good and sometimes very good progress in their social development because of the high expectations of the adults.
- Relationships are excellent and teaching is very good, so children have fun and enjoy learning.
- The staff, working as a team, are very good at promoting the children's self-esteem.

### **Commentary**

46. This area of learning, which is woven into all the activities, has an appropriately high priority when children start in the Nursery because initial assessments indicate that personal and social development for many are below what could be expected. Children achieve very well because the quality of teaching is consistently very good, there are very good relationships amongst the children and all staff and there is a well-planned range of activities, thus ensuring that children settle quickly and feel secure. The inclusion of children is excellent. All the staff work successfully to ensure children learn to share, co-operate and play confidently with others.
47. Adults provide very good role models and their interaction with children ensures that children feel safe, confident and secure. They make learning fun and as a result, children enjoy it. At the same time, adults communicate clear expectations about behaviour which ensures that children behave well. They learn to share and take turns at the various activities. Most children co-operate well with each other, in the role play areas for example, or in working with the sand or water. These opportunities contribute positively to children's social development. There are good routines to help children develop their personal hygiene, which are effectively reinforced. Children become increasingly able to maintain attention and concentrate; they are learning how to learn. A very positive feature is the amount of praise given which helps to promote self-esteem.

## **COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY**

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

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children make good and often very good progress in developing their language skills and do well to achieve expected standards by the end of Reception.
- Good opportunities are provided to develop children's speaking skills.
- There is good provision for higher-attaining children to develop their reading and writing skills in Reception.

## Commentary

48. As a consequence of the overall very good teaching, there are very good opportunities provided in both the Nursery and the Reception classes. Teachers and Nursery nurses give an appropriately high priority to extending children's language skills. This enables the children to make good progress and helps the vast majority to achieve the goals children are expected to reach by the end of Reception. Some children are reluctant to speak but staff are patient and work hard to include them. Staff in the Nursery make good use of the opportunities they create in the various activities to engage children in conversation to promote the acquisition of vocabulary. There are good routines for promoting speaking and listening, which are introduced right from the start in Nursery and which are successfully and consistently reinforced throughout the Foundation Stage. Teaching in the Reception classes makes very good use of the collection of puppets, including 'Lenny the Lion' and 'Tilly the Tiger'.
49. Children benefit from a wide range of imaginative provision to stimulate spoken language; for example, they enjoy playing together and talking together in the role play areas such as 'Goldilock's house', 'the greengrocers' and 'the florist'. They practise their language skills with puppets. They benefit from hearing stories such as 'Little Bear Lost' and 'Peace at Last' and when taking home one of the good number of 'story sacks' which contain books and artefacts.
50. Children copy adults' writing and, during the Reception Year, start to write independently. In Reception, a very good programme of work enables the children to improve their knowledge of the sounds of letters and improve their writing skills. Increasingly, they are showing good word recognition skills. A good range of information and communication technology programs helps the children to reinforce and practise their skills. Examination of current planning indicates that there is a good emphasis on the development of reading and writing skills throughout the Reception Year. The needs of the higher attaining children in Reception are carefully planned for to enable the children to achieve very well in relation to their capabilities.

## MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Staff plan a wide range of activities to support learning which ensure that children achieve well.
- Every opportunity is taken in all activities to promote children's mathematical development.
- Reception children benefit from well-organised work which effectively develops their understanding of numeracy.

## Commentary

51. On entry to the Nursery, few children can recognise numbers and most have a very limited understanding of mathematical concepts. Good and often very good teaching involves all staff making the most of the practical activities set up in the Nursery and the Reception classes to promote children's rapid progress. This contributes positively to ensuring that learning is good and means that the vast majority are likely to reach the goals children are expected to reach by the end of the Reception Year. All staff are good at helping children to count in a variety of practical activities and children do so enthusiastically. Children are encouraged to use appropriate mathematical language in working out problems in their play, for example, and the adults are skilled at posing questions to make children think about number, quantity or shape. In the different areas they have set up, staff work hard to extend children's learning.
52. Nursery children are beginning to use mathematical language and this is effectively promoted. They sort and match objects and use a good range of jigsaws. All the children like to join in number rhymes such as 'Ten Little Monkeys Bouncing on the Bed' and 'Five Little Speckled Frogs' and counting games and they begin to learn to write numbers. They learn to sequence events such as the times of the day. A good range of mathematical experiences is given to children, including practical activities which promote discussion using vocabulary such as 'more than' and 'less than'. Very focused questioning helps to extend the children's learning.
53. Reception children say and use number names in order up to ten and beyond. Children can count reliably up to five objects and confidently use mathematical and positional language such as 'bigger', 'smaller', 'above', 'below' and 'behind', for example when they are working with sand or water. They learn the names and properties of some common two-dimensional shapes, like triangle, rectangle and circle.

## PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The very good range of opportunities to work with a variety of small tools contributes effectively to the children's physical development.
- Outdoor play is in need of further development to better promote children's learning.

## Commentary

54. The teaching and the provision for children to develop fine motor skills is very good so that they have good opportunities to develop their skills in manipulating equipment such as scissors, writing and drawing pencils, paintbrushes and other tools and in handling equipment when making models or playing games. They also learn to manipulate pieces as they do jigsaw puzzles. They use the computer mouse with increasing control. Such activities contribute to the progress they make in this area of their learning.
55. The provision to develop their skills outside is satisfactory and could be further developed. Some activities are provided outside to enable children to move, climb, balance and control large play equipment, but provision is restricted by the quality of the spaces and the resources available. The planning for outdoor play lacks clear learning objectives and is less well considered than that of other areas. Some use is made of

outdoor play to promote learning across the other areas of experience, but more could be done. In the Reception Year, teachers make use of the hall for physical education lessons, however, which enable children to develop an awareness of space and to gain control over their own bodies in various situations. Nursery children are given valuable opportunities to visit a local swimming pool in the summer term.

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

56. Very little direct teaching was observed in these two areas of learning. As a consequence, it is not possible to make secure overall judgements on provision in these areas, although the school's record-keeping and assessment procedures give clear indications of likely standards by the end of the Reception Year.
57. In knowledge and understanding of the world, planning indicates that children are given a good range of experiences to help them to find out about the world and their place in it, including valuable opportunities for visits and visitors and valuable opportunities to learn about living things. In the creative area of learning, children have good opportunities for creative work in the role play area and in all the singing opportunities. Work on display and in booklets indicates that children have very good opportunities to explore colour, texture, shape, form and space. Children experience a good variety of media, including different types of paint and collage materials, depicting such subjects as sunflowers, butterflies and ladybirds.

## **SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGE 1**

### **ENGLISH**

Provision in English is **very good**.

### **MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES**

- Standards are above national averages by the end of Year 2.
- The overall very good quality of teaching is enabling pupils to achieve very well.
- Very good leadership and management are supporting further improvements in the subject very effectively.
- The school's innovative approach to curriculum planning is ensuring literacy skills are taught very well across the curriculum.
- Teachers use marking and assessment very well to inform lesson planning, and to ensure that pupils are clear about what they need to do to improve their work.

### **Commentary**

58. Standards have been maintained and improved since the previous inspection, most notably in writing. Standards of attainment are above average in reading and writing by the end of Year 2. These findings are reflected in the results of the 2003 national tests in writing but not in reading where standards were in line with the average for all schools. When compared to similar schools, reading and writing results were well above average. This reflects the very good achievement of pupils who, from a low starting point, make very good progress in learning by the end of Year 2. This very good progress in developing language and literacy skills is well reflected in the 2004 unvalidated results where standards were assessed as above average. Pupils who have special educational needs achieve as well as their classmates, in relation to



their prior attainment. There are no significant differences in the attainment of girls and boys, or pupils of different ethnicity and this is borne out by the school's own analysis of data.

59. Standards in reading have gradually improved over time. Appropriately, the school sees the acquisition of reading skills as high priority when planning lessons, and teachers regularly listen to pupils read individually, or in groups, monitoring their progress closely. For example in a very good lesson with pupils in Year 2, the teacher used the stories of Katie Morag as her focus when devising activities to help pupils read instructions, and put them in order. When they were unsure about a word, the teacher encouraged pupils to try strategies they already knew, such as using knowledge of the sounds letters make, or reading past the unfamiliar word in order to gain an overall sense of the sentence. These skills were developed further in a small, guided reading group when the teacher used her prior assessment of pupils' reading abilities to provide appropriate further practice and consolidation. Teachers' very good use of assessment to respond to individual needs and the emphasis given to the teaching of reading skills, are having a positive impact on pupils' attainment in reading.
60. Writing standards are above average and continue to be a strength of the school. This is because teachers provide frequent opportunities for pupils to practise and develop writing skills in all curriculum areas. For example, in a very good lesson in Year 1, the teacher selected the story of 'Little Red Riding Hood' as a stimulus for integrated activities with a literacy focus. The lesson planning reflected the stages pupils have reached as writers. For example, one group wrote a 'sorry' letter from the wolf to Granny, using full stops to separate sentences whereas a higher-attaining group added capital letters at the start of sentences and completed four sentences independently. This very good quality planning is contributing to the very good achievement of pupils as they practise and develop literacy skills across the curriculum.
61. Standards in speaking and listening are low for many pupils when they enter school. Nevertheless, they achieve very well, over time, because the school plans opportunities for the development of pupils' speaking and listening skills very well across the curriculum. For example, in the headteacher's assembly, pupils had to listen very carefully as she said one line of a prayer at a time. They repeated each line until they had recited the whole prayer, speaking clearly and confidently as they did so. In all lessons, teachers provide good opportunities for pupils to participate in asking and answering questions. For example, in a good lesson with a Year 2 group, the teacher dressed as a farmer and one of the pupils as a sheep. This engaged pupils' interest as they thought carefully about the stages they would follow in washing the sheep, and it provided an opportunity for some pupils to articulate this to others. In the 2003 national tests, teachers assessed speaking and listening skills as above average. Following recent guidance from the local education authority adviser and the arrival of new speaking and listening materials, the school is well placed to raise these standards further.
62. Leadership and management of the subject are very good. The joint co-ordinators have checked on performance in national tests, and looked at samples of work. As a result, they are able to evaluate pupils' strengths and weaknesses and target training more effectively. There has been a full cycle of lesson observations by the headteacher and one of the co-ordinators, which has focused on evaluating the quality of teaching and learning. Feedback to staff has enabled them to adapt their teaching strategies and to adopt a more creative and innovative approach to curriculum planning, leading to very effective teaching of literacy skills. There are very good systems in place to record pupils' progress, including detailed reading records that help teachers to plan the next steps in learning. The marking of pupils' work is of very high quality because it comments on how well pupils have met the learning objectives and it informs pupils of what they need to do next. The regular setting of 'bubble' targets helps pupils to focus on areas that will make a real difference to their work.
63. There are good resources to support teaching, and further resources are to be acquired for pupils in Year 3 who have remained at the school and are reaching good standards. Overall, there has been good improvement since the previous inspection because the quality of teaching has improved from sound to very good; there is now very good emphasis on teaching

the structural aspects of writing, when there was insufficient emphasis previously and pupils have attained well above average standards for the last few years, compared to similar schools. The breakfast club is a useful way of targeting pupils who need additional help with reading and writing skills. An appropriate amount of homework is set, enabling pupils to practise reading and spelling, and the home/school reading record is a useful way of working in partnership with parents in developing pupils' reading skills.

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

64. This is a strength of the school. The innovative approach to curriculum planning 'maps' the key literacy skills very well to National Curriculum subjects. For example, the Isle of Struay topic in Year 2 links the key literacy skills of writing instructions, to information and communication technology, when pupils program Katie Morag to walk round the village (attached to a programmable toy); with the teacher's help, pupils devise a way of recording the instructions. As part of the Year 1 work based on 'Little Red Riding Hood', in design and technology pupils used dough to make cakes for Granny so that they could say sorry, in information and communication technology they designed 'sorry' cards, and in numeracy, they addressed letters to Red Riding Hood and Granny, and then counted how many they had posted.

### **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **very good**.

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

- Most pupils achieve very well because of the very good teaching and learning, which leads to above average standards by the end of Year 2.
- Work is planned carefully and imaginatively to meet the needs of all pupils.
- Pupils with special educational needs are very well supported.
- Pupils have very positive attitudes and work hard to do their best.
- Leadership and management of the subject are very good.

#### **Commentary**

65. Many children start school with a limited mathematical understanding. As a result of the high quality of teaching they receive, they make good progress so that standards at the end of Year 2 are above the national average and well above those for similar schools. These standards, which are very creditable, were not reflected in the 2003 results. In 2003, although a very good number of the low-attaining year group reached the appropriate Level 2, disappointingly few reached the higher Level 3. The current good standards are reflected in the unvalidated results of 2004 when virtually all pupils reached the Level 2 expected of most seven-year-olds with a good number reaching the higher Level 3. The Year 3 pupils are reaching good standards in mathematics.
66. There has been a good improvement since the previous inspection. Standards have gradually risen; the very good leadership and management have led to good improvements in the provision which ensures that pupils have a very good grounding in number calculations, shape and space and handling information. The quality of teaching has improved, the work is planned very effectively and there are very good practices for assessing how the pupils are doing, tracking their progress and setting targets for improvement. The National Numeracy Strategy is consistently and imaginatively adapted to suit the needs of the pupils and has been well

used to improve the quality of education in mathematics. An excellent Year 1 lesson was based on the story of Little Red Riding Hood, with weighing and measuring activities based on the objects in Red Riding Hood's basket. Making and baking cakes and designing and making cake boxes linked curricular areas together in a way which fully engaged the pupils.

67. Teaching and learning in lessons seen were very good, with teachers planning very effectively to cater for the needs of all pupils, including the higher attainers and those with special educational needs. Lessons start with a brisk mental arithmetic session that pupils enjoy. It is clear that pupils and staff enjoy the numeracy lessons. Pupils are encouraged to develop their knowledge and understanding of number through the teachers' skilful questioning and use of vocabulary; staff ensure that pupils are actively involved and are able to demonstrate their developing knowledge and understanding of counting and place value linked with addition and subtraction. In the excellent lesson referred to previously, the teacher fully engaged the pupils and made excellent use of time with very explicit high expectations, so that the pupils knew what was expected, giving them very good motivation to do their best. In a very good Year 3 lesson on estimating and measuring length, the teacher's use of time and resources, including the interactive whiteboard, together with her very good involvement of a teaching colleague and a student to support pupils, enabled the lesson to proceed at a good pace.
68. Pupils learn to appreciate patterns in numbers. They are helped to explain their own calculations and to reflect on their own learning. Classes are well managed during the main part of the lesson and learning support assistants support pupils with special educational needs effectively, enabling them to achieve very well. Effective intervention and questioning deepen pupils' knowledge and understanding and a very good work match and support enables all pupils to achieve very well in lessons.
69. Homework is carefully planned and monitored and makes a positive contribution to the standards being achieved. The marking of pupils' work is consistent and of a very good quality. It helps the pupils to understand how they are progressing and what they need to improve. In a review of the work in mathematics books collected from the previous year, the quality of marking in Year 1 was exemplary. Presentation of work by pupils is usually good which fits in with the school's ethos of care.
70. The subject is well resourced. Very useful revenue is generated when the school's three 'leading' mathematics teachers work with other schools. Leadership and management of the subject are very good. The enthusiastic and knowledgeable co-ordinator has a very clear understanding of strengths and areas for development in the subject. Results are analysed carefully and targets set. There are very good procedures for monitoring pupils' attainment and progress. Effective teams have been created through joint planning and evaluating. Well-structured monitoring of teaching and learning ensures that good practice is shared, leading to consistency in the high quality of teaching. The subject is well set to continue to improve.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

71. The school gives a high profile to cross-curricular work. As a consequence, pupils make effective use of mathematics as part of their work in other subjects and this helps them to begin to develop an appreciation of the practical uses for their skills. For example, they use graphs and tables to record data in geography and science; they use measuring skills in design and technology. They use computer programs to practise and reinforce number skills.

## SCIENCE

The provision in science is **very good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve very well because the teaching is very good.
- In their knowledge of science, pupils make very good links with other curriculum subjects.
- There are very good systems for checking pupils' progress so that lessons build well on what they already know.
- The subject is very well managed and this has a positive impact on the quality of teaching and learning and pupils' standards.

### Commentary

72. Overall, standards are similar to those identified at the last inspection. The majority of pupils enter school with low levels of attainment. All pupils achieve very well in Years 1 and 2 in relation to their prior attainment, including those pupils with special educational needs, and their standards are above average by the end of Year 2. Year 3 pupils are reaching good standards. This is very creditable and largely due to the very good quality of teaching and learning in these classes. No differences were observed in science between the achievement of boys and girls or other groups.
73. The quality of teaching is very good, which is an improvement on the previous inspection when it was judged to be good. The very good quality of teaching has a significant impact on the progress pupils make and on the very good achievement by the end of the key stage. Teachers have a secure subject knowledge which is reflected in their detailed planning and in the technical language they use in lessons. There is a clear identification of the knowledge, understanding and skills to be developed. Most lessons have good pace, which keeps pupils interested and very well behaved because they are eager to participate. Teachers use questioning to good effect to move learning on and they take time to consolidate new learning and clear any misconceptions. The learning support staff make a significant contribution to the quality of teaching and learning which impacts on the progress the pupils make and the standards they achieve.
74. Wherever possible, science is taught as part of a topic which puts learning into a wider context. An example of this was seen in Year 2 where the pupils were learning about friction as part of their science work linked to the 'Isle of Struay'. The teacher tackled a difficult subject by telling the pupils that the captain of the ferry boat on the island was having problems disembarking vehicles from his ferry due to the surface of the ramp. This led to the pupils investigating the effect of different surfaces on the speed of a toy vehicle as it rolled down an inclined ramp, so that they could advise the captain. This made learning interesting, gave a purpose for learning and made very good links with their work in literacy and geography.
75. The teacher in the previous example used pupils' demonstrations to assess how well they had learned and was able to identify those who had a confident grasp of the ideas as well as those who needed some reinforcement. This is typical of the school's approach; through assessments, observations and discussion, pupils' knowledge is monitored and the information used to make sure that higher attainers receive further challenge, while lower attainers and those with special educational needs get extra support. The school

has been innovative in offering 'master classes' in science to a number of Year 2 pupils who have been identified as gifted in their science work. They work alongside pupils from the Network Learning Community for one session each half term. In the session seen, the pupils worked enthusiastically and shared ideas so that they learned from one another.

76. Leadership and management are very good. Through lesson observations, the checking of teachers' planning and pupils' work, the co-ordinator has a clear understanding of the subject's strengths and weaknesses and what needs to be done to maintain, and improve upon, pupils' good standards. Although the curriculum overall is broad and balanced, the school has identified the need to further develop pupils' investigative work, ensuring that it is clearly identified in lesson planning.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils achieve well as a result of good quality teaching and learning.
- Subject leadership is very good.
- Information and communication technology is used well to support learning in other subjects.
- The central bank of computers is not always accessible.

### **Commentary**

77. Standards at the end of Year 2 are in line with national expectations as they were at the time of the previous inspection. Nevertheless, pupils' achievement is good as a result of good teaching. The pupils handle the keyboard and mouse confidently and can explain the various functions. Pupils develop appropriate skills; the pupils in Year 1 can enter and store information in a variety of forms; in Year 2, the pupils plan commands to make things happen; in Year 3, the pupils format text. In discussion, pupils explained confidently how to apply the skills they had been taught.
78. The quality of teaching is good and where available there is good use of the two recently-installed interactive whiteboards to help present ideas to pupils. The planning of lessons is very good and builds on national guidance very well. Strong features of the curriculum are the development of skills in the subject and the links to supporting learning in other subjects. As a result, pupils are beginning to develop their skills in a structured and systematic order and are learning to apply them in meaningful and interesting ways. For example, in a good lesson in Year 2, the pupils gained a much better understanding of how to use direction commands to control a programmable toy through planning and modifying a journey for 'Katie Morag' on the Isle of Struay. All pupils make good progress, including pupils with special educational needs who are helped very ably by the learning support staff. 'Master classes' in information and communication technology offered through the local network of schools provide good opportunities for the higher attainers in Year 2. Pupils' very good behaviour, including their willingness to co-operate with other pupils, is a significant contributor to the good learning that takes place.
79. The central bank of seven computers is used for other purposes at certain times of the day. This limits pupils' access and progress. The school is taking steps to remedy the

situation by, for example, setting up laptop computers in classrooms. This was seen in a good lesson in Year 3, where a group of higher-attaining pupils worked well on laptops and made good gains in formatting text by highlighting and selecting different fonts, size and colour.

80. Subject leadership is very good. Though she has only recently taken on this responsibility, the co-ordinator has a clear picture of the subject across the school and her enthusiasm provides a very good example for her colleagues. The action plan for the subject links well to the school development plan. The subject co-ordinator has observed lessons and monitored planning, discussing her findings with staff. The management is effective; however, tracking pupils' progress over time is at a relatively early stage of development.

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

81. Throughout the school, the planning of work in information and communication technology provides good opportunities to use the subject to assist learning in other areas of the curriculum; for example, an art program is used to create illustrations of a 'Rainbow' fish; pupils listen to stories played on the listening centres to follow the text in the appropriate book to develop their reading skills; geography skills are developed through a programmable toy. During the inspection, the interactive whiteboard was used well in a numeracy lesson to display data and a graph relating to the types of transport on the Isle of Struay.

### **HUMANITIES AND CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS**

The work in geography and history and in art and design, design and technology, music and physical education meets statutory requirements. These subjects were not specific areas of focus for the inspection and only a limited range of evidence was sampled. As a consequence, there is insufficient evidence to make overall judgements on the quality of the provision. The available evidence did, however, indicate that standards in art and design are good across the school.

#### **Geography**

82. No lessons were seen during the inspection and, as a consequence, there is insufficient evidence to make secure judgements about standards or the quality of teaching. Evidence from pupils' work, displays and planning documents indicates that pupils are receiving an appropriate curriculum which is taught as part of a series of topics. Throughout Year 1 and Year 2, pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress.
83. As part of their topic on 'Traditional Tales', the pupils in Year 1 develop their mapping skills by planning a route for Little Red Riding Hood through the woods. They develop an understanding of the wider environment and what can be done to improve it by carrying out a survey of the traffic controls in the local area. In Year 2, pupils demonstrate an awareness of localities beyond their own through the topic, 'Island Homes'. Work is well matched to the needs of pupils; for example, in the previously mentioned Year 2 topic, high-attaining pupils effectively use a key to represent the land, sea and islands of Scotland and understand how to use an atlas to label the countries of the United Kingdom. Where available, teachers make good use of information and communication technology to make learning stimulating and maintain pupils' interest. For example, in a

Year 2 lesson, the teacher showed effective use of an interactive whiteboard using traffic survey data collected by the pupils to build up a colourful graph.

84. The subject is well led and managed and well resourced. The school's programme of work for the subject follows national guidance which promotes continuity and progression of teaching and learning. At the end of each unit of learning, assessments are made to enable teachers to plan the next steps in teaching and learning. The co-ordinator monitors teachers' planning and pupils' work to check subject coverage. Lesson observation is at an early stage and is part of an action plan.

## **HISTORY**

85. Just one lesson of history was seen during the inspection. Evidence from a review of the work covered during the year prior to the inspection indicates that the pupils receive an appropriate curriculum which has a number of positive features.
86. In a satisfactory lesson seen in Year 2, the pupils were introduced to a new topic on transport. Using a timeline, they were enabled to sequence inventions, such as car and a horse-drawn carriage. Through carefully differentiated work, the pupils were able to gain insights into how people travelled before the invention of the motor vehicle, helping them to gain knowledge of differences between living in the past and the present day.
87. The subject leadership and management are good, showing knowledge and enthusiasm. The recently updated policy and scheme of work give clear guidance on each of the half-term projects, with each project being well resourced. There are good links with other areas of the curriculum and some innovative ideas; for example, in a study of Florence Nightingale, two 'visitors' travelled from the Crimean War and gave the pupils good insights into the very poor hospital conditions prior to Florence's arrival. This promoted role play and imaginative letters from soldiers to people at home. In this way the school makes good use of visitors to school, such as a local historian, and also visits to the local area such as that to the Gladstone Pottery Museum. Visits further afield include ones to Brampton Museum and the Englesea Brook Centre. Progress is monitored through a system of simple assessments.

## **Religious education**

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The school follows guidance well in the locally agreed syllabus to develop pupils' understanding of different religions.
- The subject is well led by the co-ordinator.
- Pupils' work is assessed at the end of topics, but there are no procedures to inform teachers' short-term planning.

## **Commentary**

88. At the time of the previous inspection, standards were judged to match the expectations of the locally-agreed syllabus. Although an appropriate amount of time is given to religious education, during this inspection just one lessons was observed. As a

consequence, there is insufficient evidence to make firm judgements on the quality of teaching and learning. Evidence considered included a scrutiny of pupils' work, discussions with pupils, teachers' planning and observations of acts of collective worship. The available evidence indicates that pupils are still achieving standards which are broadly in line with the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus.

89. The quality of teaching was very good in the one lesson observed with pupils in Year 1, where the theme was 'Who I belong to'. As part of this very effective lesson, the teacher conducted a Christian wedding, involving pupils as the bride and groom, playing the part of the vicar herself. Initial discussions focused on weddings pupils had attended and the teacher's own recent wedding. These discussions were promoted through photographs, including pupil and staff albums, and this enabled pupils to say how they felt when they attended a wedding. By the end of the lesson, pupils had taken part in a 'mock' wedding, where their learning had 'come alive', and they had developed a very good understanding of why people get married and the different roles they play at weddings. In order to celebrate this special event, pupils attended a Reception where they ate cake, danced and 'toasted' the bride and groom. Through a contrived first-hand experience, pupils of all abilities made very good progress in learning in this lesson and achieved very well, including those who have special educational needs.
90. There are a small number of visitors who come into school to lead faith assemblies and pupils go out of school from time to time to visit the local church for the Harvest Festival, Carol Service, or work in geography on buildings. Religious Education is also promoted through acts of collective worship, especially through prayer. For example, in an act of collective worship led by the headteacher, pupils joined in by reciting a prayer about things that are important to them. Pupils have also worked on prayers by creating a 'prayer tree'. They have written about what is important to them. One pupil wrote, 'Thank you for the creatures and the plants, and the people in school', and another thanked God for cats and dogs.
91. Leadership and management of the subject are good. RE has not been a priority in the school improvement plan, but the co-ordinator is keen to develop the subject further through supporting staff as they implement the new syllabus. She has already undertaken a significant amount of work on the new syllabus by rewriting all the plans that guide the teaching of different topics. She has also looked carefully at pupils' work and displays around school. Feedback has been given to staff about the quality of the work and the different approaches to teaching, including using art and drama as a stimulus. There are some procedures in place to monitor pupils' progress, but these could usefully be developed to include regular assessments to inform teachers' planning. Current procedures summarise pupils' strengths and weaknesses at the end of a topic only. There are sufficient resources to support the teaching of the locally-agreed syllabus, but the school does not have software to support pupils' learning through information and communication technology. Overall, there has been satisfactory improvement since the previous inspection.

## **Art and design**

92. Only one lesson in art and design was observed during the inspection. However, evidence indicates that art and design has a secure place in the curriculum and pupils produce work that is of a good quality. For example, a Year 2 topic on 'Homes' stimulated the pupils' interest in the similarities and differences in buildings which led them to develop their observational and drawing skills in detailed sketches of local buildings, showing good skills in the use of line, pattern and shading. Samples of pupils' work, together with scrutiny of curricular planning, show that pupils are given opportunities to use a good range of techniques and materials, including drawing, painting, sculpture and working with textiles. These aspects of art and design are celebrated in 'Creative Development Days', such as when the pupils in Year 2 explored weaving techniques and



the colours and textures of natural and manmade fabric before weaving a striking and vibrant 'technicolour dreamcoat'.

93. The work on display shows that the pupils are taught about the work of known artists and often use their work as a stimulus for their own. For example, the pupils in Year 1 looked at the work of Van Gogh, Picasso and Matisse as a starting point for their work on self-portraits which showed good skills in blending coloured chalk and applying paint.
94. In a very good sculpture lesson for Year 3 pupils, the teacher's knowledge and understanding of the subject, together with her enthusiasm, explanations, demonstrations and high expectations enabled most pupils to achieve very well. The pupils made very good progress in their understanding of the work of a sculptor by making individual designs and maquettes before creating group sculptures; they worked very well together, were interested in the activities and could explain each stage of their work.
95. The subject is very well managed by an enthusiastic team. The school draws on the expertise of visiting artists who work with pupils on large-scale projects. Such activities help to widen pupils' experiences of art and to make the subject meaningful to them. The subject makes a significant contribution to the spiritual and cultural development of the pupils as recognised by the recent national award of a gold 'Artsmark'.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

96. There was insufficient evidence to make secure judgements about standards and the quality of teaching and learning, although a review of the work indicates that pupils are receiving an appropriate curriculum.
97. Work on display confirms that activities have been completed in line with the school's long-term plan. Pupils have followed a full design and technology process, including opportunities to evaluate the quality of their work. There are very close links between the work in design and technology and art and design, such as in the attractive and well-produced coats for 'Joseph', designed and made by pupils in Year 2. Pupils have positive attitudes to design and technology and this was confirmed in one good lesson in Year 2 where pupils were joining wheels and axles to a chassis in a variety of ways. There was a strong focus on teaching pupils skills before they moved to the design stage. The teacher's questioning and individual support for pupils enabled them to make good progress in this lesson.
98. The subject is well led and managed. The co-ordinator has written a subject policy and has been actively involved in monitoring the quality of teaching and learning in the subject. The subject is well-planned and there are regular assessments of pupils' work, making good use of photographic evidence.

## **Music**

99. Standards were judged to be good as at the time of the previous inspection. Although the indications are positive, there was insufficient evidence to make secure judgements on this occasion.
100. Just one lesson was observed during the inspection. It is clear that music is valued in school and plays an important part in activities that promote pupils' creative

development. Pupils' singing in assembly is tuneful and enthusiastic. They especially enjoyed singing 'This Little Light of Mine', complete with actions. As all staff join in with the singing and actions, this creates a feeling of togetherness that makes acts of collective worship joyous occasions. As pupils leave the hall, they happily continue singing, demonstrating their very positive attitudes to music. At other times, teachers encourage pupils to sing when they are lining up, whilst others break into song when they are taking the register. Music is promoted through visiting musicians; for example, an African-Caribbean drummer and storyteller visited the school recently.

101. The one lesson observed was taken by the co-ordinator with pupils in Year 1. This was a very good lesson, where links were made with ongoing work in literacy as pupils explored how sounds can be made in different ways. There were very good opportunities for pupils to be actively involved in music-making as they took their voices for a walk through the woods. In a very short visit to a Year 3 class, pupils were making music using their voices and tuned percussion as they performed the 'Tortoise Song'. They demonstrated a good standard of musicianship and very positive attitudes to music.
102. The co-ordinator is very actively involved in teaching music and one of her priorities is to see more staff involved in this. Those who teach music are well supported by a commercial scheme that provides a full set of resources for non-specialist teachers, including lesson plans. At present, assessment procedures are not well developed, but the co-ordinator is planning to develop this further. She is also keen to develop the use of information and communication technology in music.

### **Physical education**

103. All the indications are that the provision has improved since the previous inspection, mainly due to the impact of the new subject co-ordinator who is bringing very good knowledge and enthusiasm to bear and is undertaking much of the teaching.
104. As only one lesson was observed during the inspection, there was insufficient evidence to make firm judgements on the standards reached, although all the indications about teaching are positive. In the good lesson seen on throwing and catching skills taken by the co-ordinator, tasks were explained clearly and the lesson moved on at a good pace and had very high expectations of the pupils. Pupils showed a good level of enthusiasm, worked hard and responded well to the teacher's clear instruction. Good use was made of pupils' performances to praise good work and show key skills which were being developed. In another lesson seen briefly, Year 2 pupils were moving well to music in a dance lesson based on 'The March of the Tin Soldier'; their performance was sensitive and polished.
105. Physical education is very well planned. The co-ordinator has a good understanding of what needs to be taught and has introduced a scheme of work which breaks down into good quality lesson plans which provide for good continuity and progression. Pupils experience the full range of activities, even though the accommodation is only satisfactory with no playing field and a relatively small hall. Pupils' attainment is assessed on a regular basis. In the summer term, the Nursery children and the oldest pupils gain valuable experience through visits for swimming which are led by the co-ordinator whose enthusiasm rubs off on to both staff and pupils. There is good support for the very good range of extra-curricular activities which include gymnastics, football, hockey, netball and maypole dancing. The subject is well set to improve further.

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

Overall the quality of the provision is **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Personal, social and health education and citizenship (PSHCE) are well promoted in all aspects of the school's life.
- Members of staff provide very good role models.
- Valuable learning opportunities are provided in the weekly timetabled programme for the work.

### **Commentary**

106. This area has been well developed over recent times by its enthusiastic co-ordinator and, as a consequence, a clear programme has been mapped out for children in the Nursery upwards. It is led by a policy and scheme of work and documented in planning for PSHCE and 'circle time'. The work is implicit in the school's mission statement.
107. Good quality teaching and learning was observed in a 'circle time' with Reception and Year 1 classes. In well-planned and well-managed lessons, the children considered their own likes and dislikes. Puppets were used to illustrate stories and 'listen' to what was said; a 'special rabbit' was passed around as each pupil spoke about their own special places. In both lessons, pupils were helped to appreciate and respect the contributions of others.
108. The school's programme for PSHCE is well organised and includes work on diet and healthy eating, sex and relationship education and personal safety. All this work contributes to the caring, community ethos of the school. Co-operative relationships are encouraged throughout the school and the staff set very good role models, treating all pupils and each other with care and respect. Young as they are, pupils are developing a very good awareness of how to behave in a community and they work very well together in a supportive and caring way. The next development of the work is the impending creation of a school council, aimed at giving pupils insights into the democratic processes. The provision for personal, social, and health education and citizenship is just one of the many features which make this a very good school.

## 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>3</b>
Pupils' achievement	2

<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities (ethos)</b>	<b>2</b>
Attendance	4
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>	<b>2</b>
The quality of teaching	2
How well pupils learn	2
The quality of assessment	2
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	2
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2
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	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2

<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>2</b>
The governance of the school	3
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).*