

# INSPECTION REPORT

## HIGHWOOD PRIMARY SCHOOL

Woodley

Reading

LEA area: Wokingham

Unique reference number: 131689

Headteacher: Mr A Fullagar

Lead inspector: Marie Gibbon

Dates of inspection: 3<sup>rd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> May 2005

Inspection number: 267018

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

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## **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Type of school:	Infant and junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3-11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	250
School address:	Fairwater Drive Woodley Reading Berkshire
Postcode:	RG5 3JE
Telephone number:	0118 9265493
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body, Highwood Primary School
Name of chair of governors:	Kay Gilder
Date of previous inspection:	21.5. 2003

## **CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL**

Highwood Primary School is slightly bigger than most schools. Pupils come mainly from the eastern edge of Reading and the more urban area around Woodley. There are 47 fewer pupils than when the school was last inspected. The school has 73 pupils on the register of special educational needs including four pupils in the Nursery. This is higher than in most schools and higher than at the time of the previous inspection. Many of these pupils have speech or communication difficulties. Twenty-eight pupils have statements of special educational needs including three children in the Nursery. This number is well above the proportion in most schools. Twenty-five of these pupils are supported in the Resource unit for speech language and communication, which is part of the school. Eleven per cent of pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is below the national average. Just over 30 per cent of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds, mainly from Asian or Asian British – Pakistani heritage. Pupils who are learning English as an additional language form 21 per cent of the school population and one pupil is at an early stage of language learning. This is higher than in most schools and higher than in the school's previous inspection. During the last school year, 35 pupils entered the school and 33 left the school other than at the normal time of transfer. This rate of mobility is higher than in most schools and, in some year groups, it has a significant impact on the profile of the group. Attainment on entry to the school is below average but there is some variability from year to year. The school was awarded Healthy Schools status, received the Schools in Action Against Bullying Award in 2004 and has recently gained Investor in People Status.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
23434	Marie Gibbon	Lead inspector	English, art and design, history, religious education (RE), Personal, social, health, emotional development and citizenship (PSHCE) and English as an additional language (EAL) provision.
9092	Ron Elam	Lay inspector	
18083	Judith Howell	Team inspector	Foundation Stage, science, music and geography
16492	Bob Lever	Team inspector	Mathematics, design and technology (DT), information and communications technology (ICT), physical education (PE) and provision for pupils with special educational needs (SEN)
22745	Rosalind Johns	Team Inspector	Resource unit
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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**Highwood Primary School provides its pupils with a satisfactory education. There are, however, important weaknesses.** While there are strengths, including very good relationships and racial harmony, more able pupils do not achieve as well as they should because teachers do not consistently plan to meet their needs and information from assessment is not used sharply enough to set challenging targets. The school has faced significant barriers to improvement in terms of changes of staff since the last inspection. These difficulties are now being overcome by the good leadership of the headteacher. The school gives satisfactory value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The headteacher's leadership is moving the school forward.
- Too few pupils are achieving the higher levels in English, mathematics and science by Year 6 because there are weaknesses in the achievement of, and provision for, more able pupils.
- Relationships in the school, respect for others and racial harmony are all very good.
- Teaching is good in mathematics and pupils' achievement is improving. However, overall, the quality of teaching, particularly in Years 1 and 2, is not good enough to maximise progress.
- The use of information from tests and assessment is not sufficiently rigorous to ensure that all pupils achieve as they should.
- Very good provision in the school's Speech and Language Resource unit enables these pupils to achieve very well and provides a good model for the rest of the school.
- The school's provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good and results in good behaviour and positive attitudes.
- Provision in the Foundation Stage is good.
- Attendance is well below the national rate.

In the school's last inspection in 2003 it was judged to be providing an acceptable standard of education for its pupils. This is also the judgement of this inspection. Attainment on entry to the school is now below average and children of all abilities in the Foundation Stage are now achieving well. Similar standards were observed in English, mathematics and science in Year 6 but standards have fallen in Year 2 in writing and science since the last inspection. This is, in part, due to the school's too limited focus on provision for more able pupils. However, the school now has a significantly higher proportion of pupils with special educational needs including the higher number of pupils who are supported by the Speech and Language Resource unit and a greater number of pupils who are learning English as an additional language. While the quality of teaching is similar to that seen in the last inspection, there has been a high level of staff changes and a significant proportion of staff were new at the beginning of this academic year. The inspection judged that, when these factors are taken into consideration, the school has made a satisfactory improvement since the last inspection.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

Key: A – Well above average; B – Above average; C – Average; D – Below average; E – Well below average.  
E\* Very low. Similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 2.

### Achievement is satisfactory

Standards in English, science and mathematics are below average by Year 6. Standards in writing in Year 6 are well below average. Standards in mathematics and reading in Year 2 are average and, in writing and science, standards are below average. Across the school, too few pupils are

achieving the higher levels. In design and technology, standards are above average in both Years 2 and 6 because the curriculum is well planned and subject leadership is good. Average standards were seen in information and communication technology, art and design and physical education in Years 2 and 6 and in history in Year 2. Standards are below average in history and religious education in Year 6. These were the only subjects where sufficient evidence was gathered to make a reliable judgement. Overall, pupils with special educational needs and those who are learning English as an additional language achieve well because teachers and teaching assistants provide good support. Pupils who are supported by the Speech and Language Resource unit achieve very well as a result of the very good level of expertise of their teachers and support staff.

**Pupils' attitudes are good. Their behaviour is good. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good.** Older pupils show a high level of responsibility and value for each other. Pupils are polite, confident and show a very good level of respect for the feelings and values of others. Their attendance rate is well below the national average.

### **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The school provides its pupils with a satisfactory education although it has areas of weakness. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory.** There are very good relationships between all staff and pupils and this gives pupils confidence and encourages them to work hard. However, teachers do not use assessment information well enough to plan and set work which is consistently achievable and challenging. As a result, too few pupils achieve the higher levels and more able pupils do not receive equality of opportunity. Children in the Foundation Stage achieve well because teaching, assessment and the curriculum are good and meet their needs effectively. Curricular provision and links with parents and the community are all satisfactory. Care and support of pupils are good.

### **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory.** The good leadership of the headteacher is ensuring that systems are being established to improve the areas of weakness in the school. These systems are not yet fully effective because of the significant level of staff change and because aspects are not refined or sharp enough. The head is well supported by the deputy headteacher. All staff have a commitment to improvement. A number are new to their roles and new to teaching and are developing their understanding appropriately. The governors carry out their duties satisfactorily. They have ensured that all statutory requirements are met. However, they do not challenge the school sufficiently, particularly, about its progress in raising the standards of more able pupils.

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

Parents like the school and regard it highly. They especially like the quality of teaching and the progress their children make. Some are concerned about the information they receive about their child's progress and the provision of homework. Most pupils are very pleased with the school. They particularly like the fact that they have an adult to go to if they are worried. They feel that they have to work hard and that teachers help them when they are stuck. Their main concerns are that other children are not friendly and do not behave well. The findings of the inspection are that behaviour is good.

### **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- Raise standards in English, mathematics and science.
- Improve the use of assessment to plan pupils' work and to set targets for improvement to ensure that all pupils, particularly the more able, achieve as they should.
- Improve the quality of teaching, particularly in Years 1 and 2.
- Reduce the number of absences and improve punctuality at the start of the day.

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

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

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

Overall achievement is satisfactory. Standards are average in speaking and listening and ICT in Year 6, in ICT, mathematics and reading in Year 2. They are below average in mathematics and in reading in Year 6, in science across the school and in speaking and listening, and writing in Year 2. Standards in writing in Year 6 are well below average. Children in the Foundation Stage achieve well because of good teaching. Pupils supported in the Resource unit achieve very well because teachers understand their needs very well.

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

- The proportion of pupils achieving the higher levels in national tests is too low because teachers' expectations now, and in the past, have not been consistently high enough.
- Children achieve well in both the Nursery and Year R because activities are well planned and teachers have a good understanding of their needs.
- Pupils with SEN and those who have EAL achieve well against their individual targets because provision is well matched to their needs.
- There is very good achievement for pupils in the Speech and Language Resource because their learning needs are very well met.

#### **Commentary**

1. Children in the Reception class are in line to attain the expected standards in personal and social development and in physical development. In all other areas their attainment is below average, particularly in writing. Achievement in the Foundation Stage is good because teaching is good and the curriculum is well planned and meets children's needs well. This is a good improvement since the last inspection when the raising of standards and teachers' planning was a key issue for improvement.

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

Standards in	School results	National results
Reading	15.4 (16.3)	15.8 (15.7)
Writing	14.4 (15.6)	14.6 (14.6)
Mathematics	17.3 (17.6)	16.2 (16.3)

There were 44 pupils in this year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

2. In the end of Year 2 national tests in 2004, standards were below average for reading and writing and well above average for mathematics when compared with all schools and with similar schools. Standards have risen in the national tests over the last two years and are higher than in the two years before that, particularly in mathematics. These changes partly reflect the variations in groups of pupils but, in the case of mathematics, reflect the good teaching pupils receive in this subject.

3. The findings of the inspection are that standards in Year 2 are average in mathematics, ICT and reading and below average in speaking and listening, writing and science. Standards are above average in DT and average in art and design, PE and history. These were the only subjects where sufficient evidence was gathered to make valid judgements. Where the evidence allows comparisons to be made, standards are similar to the previous inspection in mathematics and reading, ICT, art and PE. Standards are higher in DT but are lower in science and writing. Variations in writing reflect pupils' weaker attainment in this area when they enter the school. The judgements of the inspection are lower in mathematics than the national test results for 2004. This is because there is a higher proportion of pupils with SEN in this year group.



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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	24.8 (23.9)	26.9 (26.8)
Mathematics	25.2 (23.9)	27.0 (26.8)
Science	27.8 (26.0)	28.6 (28.6)

There were 47 pupils in this year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

4. In the national tests in 2004, standards were well below average in English and mathematics and below average in science when compared with all schools. When compared with similar schools, based on pupils who achieved similar test results in Year 2, standards were average in English and mathematics and above average in science. While these results are an improvement on the previous two years in all three subjects, writing remains a weaker element. There are no significant differences in the attainment of groups of pupils.

5. The findings of the inspection are that standards in Year 6 are average in ICT and speaking and listening but below average in reading, mathematics and science. Standards in writing are well below average. Standards are above average in DT, average in art and design and PE and below average in RE, and history. Evidence during the inspection indicated that standards were generally higher in Years 3 and 4. As far as it is possible to make comparisons with the last inspection, standards are higher in DT, similar in reading, mathematics, science, ICT, art, music and PE but standards are lower in writing, RE and history.

6. The school recognises the priority of improving standards in English, particularly in writing, in mathematics and science throughout the school. To support language learning and to help achieve improvement in standards of writing, the school has ensured that speaking and listening elements are incorporated into teachers' planning in all subjects of the curriculum and that older pupils have a good range of opportunities to speak to different audiences. This has enabled pupils to develop their confidence well and to extend the range of their special vocabulary relating to different subjects. However, the use of writing in other subjects is underdeveloped and there are missed opportunities for pupils to consolidate and develop their writing skills. The use of ICT and numeracy in other subjects is developing satisfactorily. Strategies to improve standards in mathematics are having a positive impact on pupils' achievement throughout the school but they have not had sufficient time to be fully effective in Year 6.

7. Pupils in the school achieve satisfactorily overall. There are no significant differences between the attainment of girls and boys. The achievement of more able pupils in the school is too variable because teachers do not consistently challenge and extend their abilities in lessons. The achievement of the older pupils in the school and the impact of the strategies introduced by the school to improve achievement, have been adversely affected by the high number of staff changes during their time in school. In this year group, there is evidence that pupils have underachieved in the past. There has also been an above average level of pupil movement into the school, particularly in Years 5 and 6, which has lowered the general level of attainment in both year groups since they were in Year 2. A key issue from the previous inspection was to maintain standards overall in English, mathematics and science and to raise standards further in Year 6. When the barriers to improvement are taken into account, the school has made satisfactory progress in addressing the issue.

8. Children in the Foundation Stage achieve well because provision and teaching are well matched to their needs. The achievement of pupils with SEN and those who have EAL is good because the caring ethos of the school and the good support they receive help pupils to develop their confidence effectively and because their progress towards their individual targets is carefully monitored and reviewed.

9. The 25 pupils who attend the Speech and Language Resource because their speech, language and communication difficulties require specialist help, do very well against their specific targets and achieve very well compared with their earlier attainment. Individual education plans for speech and language and for different aspects of the curriculum present a very clear picture of each pupil's needs. Targets are very specific, challenging but achievable and easily measurable. As a result,

pupils make very good progress not only in basic skills but also in confidence and positive attitudes to learning.

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

Overall, pupils' attitudes to school and their behaviour are good. Nevertheless, their attendance is poor and punctuality is unsatisfactory. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good overall and has improved since the last inspection.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The great majority of pupils behave well, have positive attitudes to work and enjoy being at school. This is similar to the last inspection.
- The level of attendance is well below that of similar schools around the country.
- The school's provision for social, moral and cultural development leads to very good relationships around the school and very good social awareness.

### **Commentary**

10. The table below shows the attendance figures for the school. The level of attendance has deteriorated in the past two years. Absences are mainly due to medical reasons although some families insist on taking holidays during term time. The office staff monitor the registers to identify any patterns of absence and they work hard to encourage parents of children with low levels of attendance. Nevertheless, some 20 children are absent for more than six weeks in a full year with a consequent adverse effect on their achievement. The school does not ensure that the education welfare officer is actively involved in supporting all of these families and the school has not introduced a reward system to encourage all pupils to minimise absences. Punctuality of the pupils is also a problem with some 10 to 15 pupils often arriving late each day, disrupting the activities at the start of the day.

#### ***Attendance in the latest complete reporting year [%]***

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data:	5.9	School data:	0.5
National data:	5.1	National data:	0.4

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

11. Pupils are interested in what happens in school and they enjoy their work. Parents confirm what was seen during the inspection and what the pupils told the inspectors: they like school. They listen attentively, follow instructions well and settle quickly to the tasks given. They maintain their interest even when not being directly supported by adults in the classroom. They have confidence in their own abilities, are eager to answer questions and are prepared to contribute their ideas. These positive attitudes are the result of the encouragement and support of the teachers and teaching assistants helping the pupils to achieve. However, in a few of the lessons seen, especially in Years 1 and 2, some pupils were less attentive and lost concentration where the teachers did not provide activities matched to their abilities.

12. Pupils in the Speech and Language Resource work very hard both on their own and together. Their work is frequently intensive as they focus on learning new skills and in taking responsibility for managing their own individual needs. They have very good attitudes and most are flexible in their abilities to cope with specialist work in the Resource and their work in mainstream classes. Pupils with learning and emotional difficulties form good relationships with teachers, support staff and each other. When they are supported, they increase their confidence and self esteem. Other pupils are very understanding of their needs.

13. Pupils' moral development is very good. The great majority of pupils behave well in the classroom, at play and lunch times. Pupils have a very good understanding of right and wrong.

They are aware of how their behaviour affects others. They are open, well mannered and polite to adults and to each other. They are welcoming to visitors with the inspectors continually having to respond to the cheery greetings. The school uses a variety of positive strategies to encourage good behaviour and they are generally used consistently by all the staff. Bullying is rare and the school deals quickly and effectively if it does occur. Pupils with special behavioural needs are well supported by the staff and by people from outside services. Last year no pupils were excluded.

14. Pupils' social development is very good. The school provides very good opportunities for pupils to interact with classmates in group work, paired discussions and monitor tasks within each class. They are interested in the ideas of others and listen respectfully to the contributions of others in class discussions. The older pupils have a range of responsibilities around the school. The school council enables pupils of all ages to work together. Their awareness of the wider world is enhanced with the wide range of visitors, inter-school sports matches and collections for charities. Pupils' very good relationships with their peers and with adults contribute to the quality of work in lessons and to the progress they make.

15. The opportunities for pupils to gain insight into values and beliefs in order to develop their spiritual awareness are good. As well as providing time for reflection, school assemblies help pupils to be aware of belonging to a whole school community and, each week, to celebrate the contributions and achievements of others. Personal, social and health education lessons help pupils to appreciate their own worth and to raise their self-esteem. In the classroom, they discuss varied topics and accept that others may have a different view or belief from their own. Pupils willingly demonstrate they can act responsibly, taking care when carrying out tasks in the classroom and around the school.

16. The provision for cultural development is good. Many subjects provide pupils with a fuller understanding of the world around them with, for example, painting and music developing aesthetic awareness. Pupils appreciate the western cultural background from Nursery rhymes and work on, for example, the Tudors in history. The school also provides opportunities for pupils to learn about the lives of people around the world. Parents and pupils commented favourably on the efforts of the school to enable pupils to understand the multicultural nature of British society. Examples of these efforts include parents invited to talk to the pupils about the Muslim culture or explaining about life in Southern Africa. The pupils from a varied range of different cultures mix well with each other and it is very apparent that racial harmony is one of the strengths of the school.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL**

The school provides its pupils with a satisfactory education. While it has areas of strength, particularly in relationships, the school also has significant weaknesses. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Very good relationships in the classroom enable pupils to develop their confidence well, work hard and to behave well. However teachers do not use assessment well enough to ensure that all pupils, particularly more able pupils, achieve as well as they should. As a result, these pupils do not receive equality of opportunity in all subject areas and their progress is too slow. Overall, curricular provision is satisfactory. Curriculum provision, teaching and assessment in the Foundation Stage are good. Care and support of pupils are good. Links with parents and the community are satisfactory.

### **Teaching and learning**

The quality of teaching and learning, procedures for assessment and the use of assessment are all satisfactory.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Lesson planning and teachers' expectations do not consistently provide sufficient challenge for more able pupils.
- The use of assessment is not consistent or sufficiently rigorous to ensure that all pupils achieve as they should.
- Teaching is more effective in Years 3 to 6 because teachers focus more sharply on what they expect pupils to learn and ensure that they are consistent in their good use of lesson time.
- Very good teaching in the Speech and Language Resource is effective in promoting pupils' independence.
- Good teaching in the Foundation Stage is providing children with a good basis for learning.
- Teaching for pupils with SEN and those who have EAL is good because support is well matched to their needs.

## Commentary

### **Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 47 lessons**

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1 (2%)	4 (8.5%)	23 (49%)	18 (38 %)	1 (2%)	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.*

17. In the school's previous inspection in 2003, a similar proportion of good and very good teaching was observed and a similar number of unsatisfactory lessons. As in the previous inspection, some of the best teaching was seen in the Speech and Language Resource unit which remains a strength of the school. In 2003 the strongest teaching in the main school was seen in Years 1 to 6. There has been an improvement in teaching in the Foundation Stage since that time and it is now good. In this inspection, a higher proportion of good or better teaching was seen in the Foundation Stage and in Years 3 to 6 than in Years 1 and 2. The school has experienced significant staff changes since 2003 and this has continued until the beginning of the current year. This has led to inconsistencies in teaching and learning and also in pupils' overall achievement in the past. A period of greater stability is now anticipated.

18. In all classes in the school, there are good partnerships between the teaching assistants, support staff and teachers. They have a good understanding of pupils' needs and work together effectively to plan and review pupils' work and progress. All staff know their pupils well and have very good relationships with them. This helps to promote pupils' confidence and self esteem and gives them good encouragement to take part in lesson activities. A good feature of teaching in most classes is the use that teachers make of 'response' partners to enable pupils to discuss and develop their ideas together before they take part in whole class discussion or before they record their ideas in written form. This strategy is effective in developing confidence but also helps pupils to clarify and consolidate their knowledge and skills.

19. In the very good and excellent teaching seen in the inspection, significant features were the energy and pace of lessons, the high expectations for pupils of all abilities and the effective match of activities to pupils' needs. All teachers have at least appropriate subject knowledge and, where it is good, teachers use their expertise to create varied and interesting activities that involve and interest pupils well. These qualities were seen in very good music lesson in Year 6 where the teacher's good knowledge of her subject, her very good relationships with pupils and her confidence in their abilities enabled them to respond to her challenge and compose and perform their compositions with the rest of the class. However, where teaching has weaknesses, planning and lesson activities do not sufficiently take into account the needs of pupils of all abilities, in particular, the needs of the more able pupils. In the previous inspection, teachers' planning was seen as good. It is now regarded as satisfactory as it does not consistently take into account the needs of all pupils. In a small number of lessons, there are weaknesses in the use of time. These weaknesses were seen in an unsatisfactory science lesson in Year 2 where overlong explanations

weakened the learning focus of the lesson and there was a lack of challenge for more able pupils. As a result, these pupils did not achieve as they should.

20. The quality of teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage as a whole is good. The Nursery and Reception staff know the children very well as individuals and are skilled at developing warm relationships. Consequently, the children settle happily into the Nursery, gain in confidence and move into the Reception class with good attitudes to learning. A strength of the teaching in the Nursery and Reception is the very good teamwork between teachers and support staff. However, at times, the physical activities outdoors for the Reception children lack structure and, as a result, the children become over boisterous. The use of assessment to monitor the development of the children is good and enables teachers to plan effectively for future learning experiences.

21. Teachers use appropriate methods, which enable pupils identified with SEN to learn effectively. Work is planned well to match pupils' needs and teachers are aware of the targets set out in Individual Education Plans. Teaching Assistants (TAs) provide good support, which helps pupils to achieve well in learning basic skills and in other lessons. Teachers and teaching assistants provide well for the needs of pupils who have EAL. They ensure that where possible pupils are partnered with pupils who have the same first language and teachers themselves learn and use simple vocabulary to praise and encourage pupils in the early stages of language learning.

22. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning for pupils in the Speech and Language Resource is very good. It is good in Years 1 and 2 and very good in Years 3 to 6 where sharp, very well informed and dynamic teaching is enabling pupils to become self-motivated and independent learners. Another key factor in this successful teaching is the close teamwork between teachers, speech therapists and support staff. They all share the same philosophy and approach in order to prepare each child for a successful return to mainstream education where this is appropriate. Teaching assistants are well prepared and knowledgeable and draw upon a very wide range of skills and strategies to reinforce work in class and maintain pupils' interest in learning. Good dialogue between specialist and class teachers ensures continued support in mainstream classes. Excellent assessment procedures mean that work is very precisely matched to pupils' various levels of understanding and need as well as high expectations of their achievement.

23. When the school was last inspected, assessment was judged to be a strength of the school. This is still the case in terms of the school's assessment procedures in English and mathematics, which now apply in Years 1 and 2, instead of only Years 3 to 6. In English and mathematics, the school uses a range of tests and assessments made by teachers to plan and record the pupils' progress. They provide a very clear view of how well the pupils are doing. Good procedures for assessing and developing the pupils' writing skills are being introduced in English but some aspects are too new to have had an effect on pupils' progress. There are strengths in the school's assessment of the pupils' work in ICT where the pupils' progress in all aspects of the subject is carefully recorded. However, assessment procedures in other subjects are underdeveloped. For example, in science, formal assessment procedures are limited to recently introduced actions to assess pupils' performance in investigative science. There are no whole school assessment procedures for other aspects of science or for subjects other than English, mathematics and ICT. As a result, the judgement of this inspection is that the school's assessment procedures are, overall, satisfactory.

24. The school's use of assessment information to respond to individual needs also has similar strengths and weaknesses and is also, overall, satisfactory. Strengths include the facts that, in English and mathematics, assessment information is used to set targets to help the pupils to improve. In addition, in ICT, assessment procedures aid the pupils to make smooth progress. Pupils also have other targets, for example, in personal development. They show a clear understanding of all of their targets and believe that they help them to do better. However these targets generally promote satisfactory, rather than good, progress. Assessment information in English and mathematics is also used by teachers in planning lessons in these subjects to try to ensure that pupils are set work which is challenging but attainable. However, the weakest area of the school's use of assessment information is the failure to make sure that more able pupils are consistently given work which is sufficiently demanding. This occurs because their ability is

underestimated and their targets are not adequately related to what they need to do to improve their performance in terms of standards in the National Curriculum. Although teachers plan work for pupils of different levels of attainment in English and mathematics, the work for the more able is not always hard enough. Planning is not consistent in all subjects as detailed assessment information is not available. More able pupils are, too frequently, asked to complete similar work to that being done by all other pupils before being allowed to attempt the planned extension work. As a result, they do not have time to start the work that would really challenge them.

25. Day-to-day assessment and the marking of pupils' work are, overall, satisfactory. In the best lessons, teachers clearly tell pupils what they are expected to learn and discuss their progress with them at the end of the lesson. Strengths and weaknesses in the pupils' performance are recorded to help with the planning of future lessons. However, this does not happen with sufficient consistency across all subjects of the curriculum. Similarly with the marking of pupils' work. In the best examples, pupils are encouraged and given clear advice on how to make their work better. However, this advice is not consistently reviewed to ensure that pupils have followed it successfully. At the other extreme, marking consists of ticks, corrections and praise which is sometimes undeserved and pupils are not told how to improve on what they have produced.

26. Parents and pupils believe that teaching is good. Pupils think that their teachers give them help when they need it and show them how to make their work better.

## **The curriculum**

The curriculum overall is satisfactory. It provides good opportunities for enrichment and the accommodation and resources meet the needs of the curriculum well.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There are weaknesses in planning to ensure the consistent achievement of more able pupils.
- There is good provision for pupils with SEN and EAL.
- Extra curricular provision is good.
- The accommodation is good.
- The curriculum for the Foundation Stage provides well for children's needs.
- Provision for the Speech and Language Resource is very good.

## **Commentary**

27. The curriculum is soundly planned against national guidelines to provide breadth and continuity in learning. Time allocations are broadly in line with recommendations with an understandable emphasis on literacy and numeracy. Schemes of work are in place for all subjects to guide planning, which now reflects single age classes. A sound start has been made to establish cross-curricular links. However curriculum planning does not ensure that the needs of more able pupils are consistently met. The curriculum for the Foundation Stage is well planned and meets the needs of children in both the Nursery and the Reception class.

28. Overall the provision for SEN is good. The curriculum is appropriately organised for those identified with SEN and no pupils are disapplied. Arrangements for using individual education plans are generally effective in ensuring learning needs are met while still enabling pupils to have access to the whole curriculum. The learning support assistants are experienced and receive training within and outside school to develop their expertise.

29. Provision for pupils who are learning EAL is good. Their levels of language acquisition are assessed on entry to the school and teachers plan carefully to meet their needs. Good use is made of the pupils' first language to provide support from other pupils with the same language and staff use simple phrases of encouragement in their language to develop pupils' confidence.

30. Curricular provision for pupils in the Speech and Language Resource is very good. The school ensures that requirements in pupils' statements of SEN are fully met. It provides a careful balance

for pupils between time spent in the Resource and in classes in the main school. This means that pupils have the benefit of the team's expertise and resources to support their individual programmes of work in the Resource in addition to sensitive and unobtrusive support in other classes. Social skills groups are held to enable pupils to develop strategies to cope with social and emotional difficulties. The independence and integration of these pupils are very important features in the ethos of the school and they have the opportunity to take part in all that it offers.

31. A good range of clubs, visits and visitors enhances the curriculum. There are clubs at lunchtimes and after school. These include sporting activities where pupils play netball, football, tag rugby and rounders. There are also music, chess and computer clubs and a choir. Pupils make visits locally and further afield. Year 6 pupils have a residential visit to the Isle of Wight.

32. There are a satisfactory number of well-qualified teachers and support staff to provide for the needs of the pupils and to support the curriculum. In particular, the teaching assistants and lunchtime controllers are well trained to enable them to fulfil their duties well. Overall the accommodation is good. Most of the classrooms are of a good size enabling lessons to take place with pupils at their desks or sitting on the floor. Specialist rooms or spaces include a computer room, music room and two library areas. Other rooms provide community space and a room for the breakfast club and after school care. There are a good number of other areas to enable pupils to be withdrawn for small group or individual work. Accommodation is good for pupils with SEN. There are shared areas and rooms where pupils can be withdrawn to be taught individually or in groups. Most support takes place in classrooms. The building easily enables disabled access and disabled toilet facilities are provided. The playground is large and there are extensive grassed areas. Resources are adequate overall and support the curriculum satisfactorily.

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

The arrangements for pupils' care, welfare and health and safety are good. The provision of support, advice and guidance based on monitoring is satisfactory. The involvement of pupils in the school's work through seeking, valuing and acting on their views is good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The pupils trust the teachers and other staff and know there is always someone to whom they can turn.
- There are effective procedures for ensuring a healthy and safe environment.
- The adults in the school are very caring and know the pupils well.
- Pupils with SEN and those who are learning English are well supported and have their progress carefully monitored.
- Guidance and support for pupils in the Speech and Language Resource unit are very good and ensures that their needs are very effectively met.
- The school provides a variety of opportunities for pupils to express opinions about life in the school.
- There are strengths and weaknesses in the academic guidance the school provides for pupils.

### **Commentary**

33. The school follows the local procedures for child protection and staff have received guidance on how to deal with any concerns that may arise. The arrangements for first aid are good with several trained staff, records kept of treatment and letters for parents if children bump their heads. The school has good arrangements to ensure general safety. Risk assessments are carried out for the various activities that take place around the building and for visits off-site. Teachers ensure that pupils are made aware of health and safety issues that might arise, especially in subjects such as science, DT and PE. The governors are appropriately involved through one of their committees. The local authority regularly visits the school to check on procedures.

34. The staff show good concern for the needs of the pupils and provide good role models to encourage development. Parents are pleased with the level of support in the school, seeing it as a caring community where staff are approachable if there are any problems. In particular, parents agreed that their children were very well supported when they first came into the school. Pupils consider that they are guided very well by the staff and know whom they would go to if they needed help. They also consider that the teachers listen to their ideas. This happens across the school with the school council where pupils are regularly involved in discussing matters raised by individual pupils. In addition, pupils participate in working towards a gold Healthy Schools Award and the school uses questionnaires to assess, for example, pupils' views about an anti-bullying initiative.

35. Assessment arrangements for pupils with SEN are effective and records are thorough and well maintained. The school uses assessment data from teachers and from a range of tests to inform target-setting procedures in individual education plans. Assessments made on entry to school enable early identification of pupils needing extra support. Pupils who have EAL have their level of language acquisition assessed when they join the school. There are sound systems in place to monitor and review their progress both through the stages of language learning and also against National Curriculum criteria.

36. Pupils in the Speech and Language Resource are very well cared for. They have trust and confidence in those who support them and staff ensure that their contributions and achievements are recognised and highly valued. The school taps into the specialist knowledge of outside agencies very effectively to support individual pupils' programmes of work. Annual reviews of statements provide a good picture of how pupils are progressing and a good focus with parents for appraisal and improvement. Older pupils are encouraged to contribute to their own targets. Assessment is systematic and very rigorous and regular reviews of pupils' progress mean that their work is based on a thorough knowledge of their capabilities. When appropriate, pupils are given increased independence and reduced support in class as a preparation for their return to mainstream education.

37. Overall, the school provides satisfactory guidance and support for the pupils' academic development. The school's strong assessment procedures in English and mathematics provide a strong basis for setting targets to help the pupils to improve their performance in these subjects. In conversations, pupils say that they find these targets helpful in doing better. However, the targets set for the more able pupils are not always challenging enough. In particular, the school has not identified and catered for pupils who are academically gifted and talented. In addition, the lack of adequate assessment information in most other subjects precludes pupils receiving adequate guidance and advice in these areas. The day-to-day assessment and the marking of pupils' work also have strengths and weaknesses notably in the variation of their quality. The school recognises greater involvement of pupils in self evaluation of their work as an area for development.

38. The staff have a good understanding of pupils' attitudes to work and their social skills. They consistently and appropriately use praise and rewards to raise pupils' self esteem and to develop their personal qualities. These are also enhanced by the well-structured personal, social and health education programme. Particular pupils are very well supported by skilled staff in the school such as the teaching assistants trained as mentors and people outside the school such as the local authority's behaviour support team.

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

Links with parents are satisfactory overall. Links with the local community and other schools are also satisfactory.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Parents hold the school in high regard and like what the school provides.



- There are good links with parents of pupils with SEN and those who are learning English.
- The school's links with the parents of pupils in the Speech and Language Resource unit are very good ensuring effective communication and partnership.
- The school works hard to provide an extensive range of information about what happens in school and to involve the parents.

## Commentary

39. In their response to the pre-inspection questionnaire and at the meeting, parents showed that they are pleased with what the school provides. Their children like school, the staff expect their children to work hard and they make good progress. The inspectors support their positive views.

40. The school regularly sends home attractive news and other letters about general matters and events. The school understands the importance of parental involvement and, in a variety of ways, encourages parents to understand how they can help their children. A termly curriculum letter outlines what is to be taught in each class. Workshops and classes explain family literacy, numeracy, ICT and parenting skills. The school has recently started to invite parents in to see their children in lessons followed by discussions with the class teacher on how to help at home. Formal consultation evenings take place each term where the parents receive and discuss a written summary of their child's progress. Parents of pupils who need extra support also meet staff on other occasions. The annual reports on pupils' progress in the summer term generally provide a good summary of what they know and can do in each subject.

41. The school also encourages parents to help in school and several parents come in regularly with more helping with trips out and at special events. Pupils confirm that their parents usually insist on the homework being completed. Parents, pupils and teachers comment on the homework which, together with reading diaries, provides a means of two-way communication. Many of the pupils in the Resource unit use a taxi service and the staff maintain contact with the parents by means of informative home/school diaries. The parent/friends' association successfully organises both fund raising and social events. The school sends out questionnaires each year enabling parents to be actively involved in helping to formulate school policies. Nevertheless, despite the school's efforts, a substantial number of parents provide only limited support to their children's education. In particular, not all the parents ensure their children come to school regularly and on time.

42. Parents of pupils with SEN are encouraged to be involved in identifying their needs and providing support. They are well informed and are supportive. They speak highly of the support their children receive. There are good links with outside agencies such as behavioural and emotional support agencies and the educational psychologist. There are good links, for these pupils, with the local secondary school to which most pupils transfer.

43. The school has good links with parents of pupils who are learning EAL. They make good use of the parental liaison officer who provides first language support when it is needed. The school is also developing close links with parents who attend the school for language lessons.

44. There are very good links between the Speech and Language Resource and parents. There is plenty of formal and informal contact between home and school. Parents' views are sought through this regular contact and are taken into account to make the best decisions for the pupils. There is also good liaison with other schools when a pupil is ready for transfer.

45. Links with the wider community and educational establishments extend opportunities for the pupils' academic and personal development. Their participation in sports matches and similar events provide opportunities to meet pupils from other schools. They also take part in the local carnival, music concerts and arts festival. Pupils collect for charities. The local secondary school provides support with a PE teacher, drama and work experience students and there are appropriate contacts to smooth the transition at the end of Year 6. The local cluster of schools provides good

opportunities for staff, both teaching and support staff, to attend training sessions and to share expertise with colleagues in other schools.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. The leadership of the headteacher is good. The leadership of other key staff is satisfactory. The management of the school is satisfactory. The school's governance is satisfactory.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The leadership of the headteacher has effectively created a strong feeling of community in the school.
- There is a good team spirit in the school, with new staff developing their understanding of their roles and responsibilities appropriately.
- Very strong leadership and management of the Speech and Language Resource ensure that provision is constantly improving to meet the needs of pupils.
- Governors are committed and supportive but do not have a sufficiently critical approach to the raising of standards.
- There is a clear focus on raising standards in the strategic planning for the school but it is not sufficiently sharp to ensure all pupils achieve as well as they should.
- The school collects and analyses a good range of assessment data in English and mathematics.

### **Commentary**

46. Since his appointment to the school, the headteacher has seen as a priority the creation of an ethos in which all individuals are valued and treated with respect. In this, he has been successful and this is evident in pupils' positive attitudes to the school and in the very good relationships that pupils have with each other and with adults. Parents and governors comment favourably on the improvement in behaviour and attitudes of pupils in this time. The headteacher is well supported by his hardworking deputy who fully shares and supports his values and priorities. The headteacher monitors teaching and learning regularly and staff are beginning to develop their monitoring roles appropriately. Performance management reflects the school's priorities and its strong commitment to staff development. However, it has not been fully effective in ensuring that the quality of teaching and pupils' rate of achievement are consistent across the school.

47. Since the previous inspection, the school has faced significant staff changes. This has made the development of the roles of subject leaders and the achievement of some of the main goals of school improvement planning more difficult. New staff and staff new to teaching have been carefully selected to fit in with the school's needs and ethos and are well supported in their introduction to the school. Those new staff with more experience are developing their understanding and experience of managing the subjects of the curriculum satisfactorily. Coordination is good in the Foundation Stage, mathematics, English, music, DT and PE. In these subjects and areas, coordinators have a good overview of how well pupils are progressing and are clear about their priorities and how they are going to achieve them. A key issue for improvement in the school's last inspection was to develop the roles of the coordinators for the foundation subjects. Taking into consideration the number of staff changes, the school has made satisfactory progress in this key issue.

48. The leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are good ensuring that provision is effective in meeting children's needs. The special educational needs coordinator (SENCO) is very experienced and knowledgeable and provides good leadership and management. She keeps the required documentation in good order and liaises closely with the Speech and Language Resource Unit within the school. The headteacher manages the provision for pupils who are learning EAL well. He ensures an emphasis on valuing pupils' own culture and on building opportunities to share traditions and language with the rest of the school. A good overview of pupils' progress is

maintained, not only of language levels but also pupils' progress compared to the rest of their year group.

49. The leadership and management of the Speech and Language Resource are very good and make a significant contribution to pupils' very good achievement. The teacher in charge has a very clear sense of purpose and high aspirations for her pupils. She plays a key role in ensuring that every pupil in the Resource is fully included in the school's work. As well as liaising very closely with other members of staff, the teacher in charge carries out training and monitoring in the school as well as ensuring that everyone involved in the Resource keeps up to date with new trends and practices. This means that the close partnership between the Speech and Language Resource and the main school is constantly evolving in order to meet the very specific needs of these pupils.

50. In English and mathematics, the school makes effective use of a good a range of tests and assessments in order to measure and record the pupils' progress. The information from tests is recorded in detail in an easily understood form and is carefully analysed. The results of this analysis are used to diagnose strengths and weaknesses in the pupils' performance and to address the weaknesses. There are also strengths in assessment procedures and in the use of assessment information in ICT. However, analysis of assessment data in other subjects is restricted by inadequate procedures. The results of the end of year national tests and assessments in Years 2 and 6 are analysed by the school and any weaknesses are addressed. However, this does not have a high enough profile to ensure that there is an unremitting and successful commitment to raising standards in the subjects tested in this way. The school makes limited use of financial data to compare its costs and effectiveness with that of similar schools. Overall, the school's finances are carefully managed with good regard for the current and future needs of the school. Careful and prudent planning has created a secure foundation for sustaining existing staffing levels.

**Financial information for the year April 2004 to March 2005 including the Resource unit**

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	904,047	Balance from the previous year	73,309
Total expenditure	837,988	Balance carried forward to the next	66,059
Expenditure per pupil	3,047		

51. Governors are well involved with the work of the school and ensure that all statutory requirements are met. They support and share the vision of the headteacher for the work of the school and have worked hard to strengthen the profile of the school within the local community. They share the process of establishing priorities for the future work of the school and recognise the importance of raising standards. However, in their role as critical friends, they have not been sufficiently focused on the effectiveness of the strategies used to ensure that all pupils are doing as well as they should.

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

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

The overall provision for children in the Foundation Stage is **good**.

52. At the time of the inspection, there were 27 children in the Reception class who were attending the school full time and 34 children attending the Nursery part-time. Children enter the Nursery from a wide variety of backgrounds with speaking and language skills that vary quite widely and limited social skills. From this starting point, children achieve well in most areas of learning and by the end of the Reception year, most will meet the goals children are expected to reach. However, many will not attain the goals children are expected to reach in language and literacy, particularly in writing. In their personal, social and emotional development, they are likely to exceed the expected goals. This represents very good achievement.

53. The good achievement is encouraged well by the effective teaching and good levels of support which children receive. Relationships are very good and, as a result, the children's personal skills rapidly improve. The curriculum is well planned to provide a good range of interesting and relevant activities, which are well matched to children's needs. This is especially significant in ensuring the good progress for children with SEN and those learning EAL. In the school's last inspection, a key issue was to improve the quality of planning and raise standards further, particularly for the higher achievers. Improvement since that time has been satisfactory. Planning has improved and there is evidence to show that the more able children are now achieving as expected in most areas of learning, apart from writing, which remains the weaker area.

54. The Foundation Stage is well managed and children's progress is carefully monitored. Overall, the accommodation is good. Although the Nursery classroom is small, work is planned to extend it in the very near future. The new Foundation Stage outdoor area is spacious and enhances the opportunity for children in the Nursery and Reception to extend their learning outside. Good quality resources provide children with an enjoyable place in which to learn.

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

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

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

- Children achieve very well.
- Very good relationships between children and adults ensure that children feel confident and happy.

#### **Commentary**

55. On entry to the Nursery, many children have below average personal and social skills. The children make rapid progress and grow in confidence, by the time they enter the Reception class, a significant number of them are already on course to reach the goals expected of them. This is very good achievement and reflects the very good teaching and learning. Routines are well established and children very soon feel secure and settle to tasks with a minimum of fuss. Staff expect the children to make choices and become independent learners, taking every opportunity to encourage this. Good use is made of snack time when, for example, children in the Nursery take turns being monitors by helping to prepare the fruit and giving it out. The very good teamwork of the adults in the Nursery and the clear boundaries set ensure that the children know what is expected of them, so that they quickly learn the correct way to behave.

56. Children are encouraged to share and take turns amicably and to consider the feelings of others. Very good relationships mean that children have the confidence to talk, and all adults are

genuinely interested in what children have to say. In the Reception class, they make good progress and, by the time they reach the end of the Reception year, many children will have exceeded the expected goals. All adults encourage the development of social skills in a variety of ways, such as encouraging them to work together in different groups and to support one another as they play. The children show interest in what they are doing, are engrossed in their activities and sustain concentration well. The very supportive relationships ensure that children grow in confidence and learn to treat others with courtesy and respect. Children with SEN and those learning EAL are very well integrated and receive good support, which ensures that they are confident to try new things.

## **COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teachers and support staff take every opportunity to develop children's language skills.
- Children in the Nursery are well prepared to move into the Reception class.
- There are weaknesses in children's writing.

### **Commentary**

57. Few children are on course to attain the expected goals by the end of the Reception year. This is because many of them start school with below average literacy skills. High priority is given to promoting spoken language skills in the Nursery and the good teaching ensures that children make good progress. Learning new vocabulary is a priority. Staff take every opportunity during the activities to develop the children's vocabulary through probing questions, so that they have to think and choose appropriate words to describe what they are doing. In the Nursery and Reception class imaginative play areas are used effectively to stimulate communication between children. Children are given many opportunities to talk and listen. Consequently, by the end of the Reception year, most children respond with relevant comments. Those children with EAL are effectively encouraged to learn new vocabulary and become increasingly confident to speak with others and to the whole class.

58. Children are helped to develop or sustain a liking for books in the Nursery. Well chosen books are shared with the children as a class, in small groups and individually. All children enjoy listening to stories and learn new words, which they use in their play. Most children in the Nursery recognise their own name and are encouraged to read it at every opportunity. In the Reception class, children are able to discuss the characters from a story and are aware of the way books are structured. A few read simple texts independently and use sounds confidently to tackle unfamiliar words. However, most are either still at the stage of 'pretend reading' the words that accompany the illustrations in a book or are just beginning to recognise a few familiar words. The early stage of writing is developed appropriately in the Nursery with a suitable range of opportunities to express themselves by making marks on paper as they play. In the Reception class, sound teaching is helping children to continue with this and attempting to write their own words. However, the work from children in the Reception class showed that only a few children use their knowledge of letter sounds to write simple words or successfully write simple sentences independently. Children achieve appropriately but this is an area of learning identified for development and an action plan is in place.

## **MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

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

- Children achieve well in their counting and number recognition.
- Learning is made enjoyable and develops children's ability to solve practical problems.

## **Commentary.**

59. The good teaching and provision in the Nursery and Reception successfully promote children's mathematical development well. Regular sorting activities and number games are successful strategies for promoting children's learning. Adults take every opportunity to develop children's mathematical skills and particularly the development of mathematical language. Children in the Nursery are encouraged to count at every opportunity. In the Reception class, children continue to develop their ideas through practical experiences, such as comparing the length of 'play worms' and ordering them from the longest to the shortest. Overall, the good teaching helps children to extend their knowledge and understanding and to achieve well. As a result, the majority of children are on course to attain the expected goals for mathematical development by the time they enter Year 1.

60. By the end of the Reception year, most children have gained sufficient knowledge and understanding of number to count and recognise numbers at the level expected for their age with good levels of confidence and accuracy. The more able children are recording simple addition sums to 20 and subtracting numbers up to ten. Their use and understanding of everyday words such as 'biggest' and 'smallest', when talking about numbers are well developed. The children's previous work showed that they had made a good start in recognising coins and understanding the language of size, weight and measurement.

## **Knowledge and Understanding of the World.**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- A wide range of interesting activities is planned to promote learning in this area.
- The school provides a wide range of visitors to enrich learning.

## **Commentary**

61. Overall, the good quality teaching successfully promotes children's knowledge and understanding of the world. The children make good progress and most will achieve the expected goals in this broad area of development. A good variety of interesting activities are planned well to stimulate children's curiosity and enhance their understanding. Visits and visitors strongly support this area of learning and help many children reach the expected goals. For example, children have visited the local shops, a Teddy Bear Factory in Reading. Visitors invited in have included a puppy walker from the Guide Dog Centre, police and fire brigade officers and Mums with babies. Role-play is also used well to increase children's knowledge and understanding of everyday life. Play areas are changed regularly to keep children's interest high and enable them to use their imagination. All children have the opportunity to observe natural living things, which particularly captures their interest. For example, during the time of the inspection, children were involved with the incubation of caterpillars and observed them change into butterflies. Children in the Nursery gain an understanding of the past as they look at photographs of themselves as babies and try to find out who is who.

62. The construction work is purposeful, and reclaimed materials, as well as commercial kits and large building bricks, are provided for the children to explore and create models. Children quickly learn to use the computers in the Nursery and use the mouse to create pictures and the keyboard to practise writing their own name. Children's awareness of religious and cultural traditions is successfully enhanced through the celebration of festivals such as the Chinese New Year, Divali, and the Children's Day in Japan and through stories and role-play activities.

## **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in physical development is **good**.

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

- Children use wheeled toys with increasing skills and control, and climb and balance confidently.
- Children are provided with a wide variety of activities to develop their physical skills.

### **Commentary.**

63. Children achieve well in developing physical control, mobility and awareness of space indoors and outdoors. The Nursery and Reception teacher set up a range of relevant activities in the large shared outside play area to provide children with a wide range of opportunities to enable them to gain confidence and extend their skills in running, climbing and in using wheeled toys and bats and balls. Overall, the opportunities support the physical development of children well. However, in the Reception class, there are times when the physical activities outdoors are insufficiently structured and the children's play becomes over boisterous. Children in the Nursery and Reception also have PE lessons in the school hall and although these lessons were not observed during the inspection, children from the Nursery were seen learning how to stand and balance on one foot.

64. Good opportunities are provided for children to develop their manual skills in the Nursery and Reception class, for example, by handling dough, filling containers in the water tray and completing simple jigsaws. They are provided with a suitable range of pencils for drawing and different tools for painting and printing. As a result, by the end of Reception, the children demonstrate increasing skill and control in the use of scissors, glue sticks, construction sets and puzzles.

## **CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

The overall provision is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children are provided with a wide range of activities that enrich their learning.
- Children have many opportunities for ongoing free choice activities.

### **Commentary**

65. Good teaching and learning enable children to achieve well and meet the goals they are expected to reach in their creative development by the end of Reception. Good learning in this aspect is particularly due to the many creative activities on offer that allow children to explore and use their imagination from the time they enter the Nursery. Resources are organised well, enabling children to select activities in the classroom and outdoors. Children work with a range of different media such as play dough, paper and fabrics, paint freely and have the opportunity to experiment with texture and colour. When painting, they are taught the skills needed to mix paint and use their hands and fingers to make prints.

66. In the Nursery and Reception, the organisation of learning opportunities for children to use their imagination is good and there are many opportunities provided for children to choose a play activity for themselves.

## **SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2**

### **ENGLISH**

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

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

- Pupils in Year 6 achieve well in speaking and listening because the school provides a good range of opportunities.
- Pupils' achievement in reading and writing, particularly the achievement of more able pupils, is too variable across the school.
- Very good relationships in all classes enable pupils to have positive attitudes to the subject and to develop their confidence well.
- Assessment procedures provide a good overview of pupils' progress but information from assessment is not used sufficiently rigorously to ensure a consistent rate of achievement.
- There are too few opportunities for pupils to practise their independent writing and recording skills, particularly in other subjects.

#### **Commentary**

67. Overall standards are below average by Year 6 and Year 2. Pupils' achievement across the school is generally satisfactory. In the school's previous inspection standards were average in Year 2 and below average in Year 6. The rate at which older pupils have achieved as they move through the school has not been consistent. The group of pupils currently in Year 6 has a well above average proportion of pupils with SEN, many of whom have joined the school since Year 2. Standards in reading are below average by Year 6 and standards in writing are well below average. Too few pupils are reaching the higher levels in both reading and writing. Standards of speaking and listening are broadly average. This is the result of the good range of strategies and opportunities for older pupils to speak in class. In Year 2 standards are average in reading and below average in speaking and listening and writing. Pupils enter Year 1 with below average levels of attainment in writing. They make satisfactory progress and this reflects the generally satisfactory level of provision in Years 1 and 2. Pupils with SEN and those who are learning EAL make good progress against their individual targets because the school provides good support and a sympathetic environment in which pupils develop their confidence well.

68. Most pupils in Year 2 answer questions and discuss their work with their partners confidently in class. When they are given the opportunity, higher attaining pupils are able to develop their answers in good detail. However, a small number of pupils, mainly boys, have weaker listening skills and do not pay consistently good attention. In Year 6, pupils benefit from the range of well organised opportunities in both English lessons and in other subjects to speak in a variety of contexts and to a range of audiences. In class, they answer questions and work with their partners readily and with interest. They express their ideas confidently and thoughtfully and sometimes in good detail as was seen in the recent mock elections and in the debates organised on subjects such as anti-bullying. Their range of language and expression is generally appropriate for different purposes but is not wide ranging.

69. Standards in reading are below average in Year 6 and average in Year 2. In Year 2, most pupils understand how to use their knowledge of letter sounds to help them in their reading and a good number are achieving average standards. More able pupils read their books fluently and confidently, developing an appropriate use of expression. Most pupils are able to talk about the story they are reading, identify a favourite book and give simple reasons why they like it. In Year 6, pupils read their books confidently. The majority are able to discuss their preferred genre and talk about elements of character and plot in the books they are reading. Pupils generally select their own reading books and too few pupils choose books that are sufficiently challenging and that are extending their range of reading. As a result, too few pupils are achieving the higher levels. Pupils' library skills across the schools are underdeveloped because they are not specifically identified in



planning for the subject. While pupils are generally confident in using ICT to access information, insufficient use is being made of the school's library facilities to ensure that pupils are confident in understanding how books are organised. Indications are that younger pupils in Years 3 and 4 are developing skills at a more appropriate level.

70. Standards in writing are well below average in Year 6 and below average in Year 2. Pupils enter the school with writing as the weakest element in their attainment profile. The school recognises that writing is a priority for development and has introduced strategies to develop pupils' abilities to discuss and rehearse their ideas with partners in their group before they start to write. This is helping to consolidate pupils' skills, particularly the skills of lower attaining pupils. However, in both Year 2 and Year 6, too few pupils are achieving the higher levels and in Year 6 there is evidence that pupils have underachieved in the past. The use of writing skills in other subjects is underdeveloped and there are too few opportunities, particularly for older pupils, to practise and extend their skills.

71. In Year 2 higher attaining pupils are able to write simple sentences confidently, organising their ideas into stories, simple accounts of events and sometimes using descriptive language to add interest to their writing. However, only a small proportion of pupils are beginning to use a wider range of sentence structure and use full stops and capital letters accurately. The school's records and the scrutiny of pupils' work indicate that pupils have made steady progress during the year.

72. Pupils in Year 6 write in an appropriate range of forms that include narrative, autobiography and biography, reports, and persuasive writing. In the best writing, there is a lively use of language and a confident pace. These pupils understand how to organise their writing into paragraphs and are developing the range of their sentence structures, beginning to use some aspects of more formal expression. However, the accuracy with which pupils of all abilities write is too variable and they do not always ensure that they use basic punctuation consistently. Pupils' range of vocabulary is generally straightforward and average and lower attaining pupils sometimes use an inappropriate oral tone.

73. Teachers are secure in their understanding of the national literacy strategy and implement it appropriately. Teaching in English is satisfactory overall with good teaching seen in some classes in Years 3 to 6. There was no unsatisfactory teaching. In all classes, there are very good relationships between pupils and between pupils and adults that encourage pupils to have positive attitudes to their work. Good use is made of strategies such as working with partners to consolidate and extend pupils' ideas and their expression. The practice is well established and pupils in all lessons were confident and productive in sharing ideas.

74. In the best teaching, lessons are well structured and organised. Pupils are clear about what they are going to learn and the lesson develops at a good pace. There are clear and high expectations for pupils of all abilities and lesson activities provide a good level of challenge. In a good literacy lesson in Year 6, pupils had been preparing during the week to write a piece of persuasive writing based on the theme of healthy eating. The teacher carefully reviewed the main features of the genre using a good mixture of questioning and explanation. He clearly established the task and his expectations and, as a result, pupils settled quickly and productively to work. In a well organised and planned lesson in Year 4, pupils discussed their responses to a video seen previously on the theme of issues and dilemmas. Good use was made of ICT to support the discussion and pupils worked well in pairs to discuss their ideas and to prepare for a brief role play to explore the feelings of their characters. As a result of a well paced and challenging introduction, pupils were well prepared to create interesting ideas and situations. One higher attaining pupil very effectively described the emotions of his character with 'the voice started to echo through his mind like a ghost whispering through the shadow'.

75. Where teaching has weaknesses, these are mainly concerned with the pace of some parts of the lesson. In a Year 2, lesson the introductory session was too long and lacked a clear focus. The attention of some pupils was weakened as a result. The scrutiny of pupils' writing over the year indicated that expectations for the rate at which pupils progress are not consistent and this

particularly applies to more able pupils. Teachers' marking is generally encouraging and helpful but is not always effectively reviewed to ensure that pupils have benefited from the advice given.

76. The coordination of English is good. The coordinator has a good overview of the strengths and weaknesses of the subject. The action plan for the subject identifies relevant and clear priorities. She is aware of the inconsistencies in the rate of pupils' progress and has introduced a good range of assessment procedures for monitoring reading and writing. Some aspects of these are, however, still too new to have had a measurable effect and some are still being trialled. Results of national tests are carefully analysed to identify areas where pupils have difficulty. While these are used appropriately to establish group and individual targets for classes, they are not consistently sharply focused to ensure that all pupils achieve as they should. Improvement in provision since the school's last inspection has been satisfactory.

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

77. Speaking and listening skills are developed well through all subjects in Years 3 to 6. Opportunities to write in other subjects are not sufficiently developed particularly for older pupils in the school. There are missed opportunities in subjects such as science, history and RE for pupils to develop their recording and writing skills.

## **MATHEMATICS**

The provision for mathematics is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching and learning are good and lead to pupils achieving well in lessons
- Pupils show good attitudes and are generally enthusiastic.
- Standards are still below average at the end of Year 6 but there are signs of improvement lower down the school.
- The subject is well led and managed and this supports improvements well.

### **Commentary**

78. National test results in 2004 were high at the age of seven but well below average at the age of eleven. There have been high standards in Year 2 for the past two years but standards now are likely to be average. The present Year 2 has a higher than usual level of pupil mobility and an increasing proportion of pupils with SEN. Pupils achieve satisfactorily from the end of the Foundation Stage but achieve well from Year 1. In the lessons seen, pupils in Year 2 were able to use their mental mathematical knowledge to solve simple numerical problems based on the story of Prince Charming and Barbarella. Most pupils were working within average standards and an appropriate number were achieving the higher levels. Pupils in Year 1 were working with simple two and three dimensional shapes. By the end of the lesson, most pupils could name some basic shapes and could recognise how to create symmetrical patterns.

79. Standards in the national tests for Year 6 have been well below average for the past two years but indications are that present standards are below average as they were at the previous inspection. Achievement is satisfactory when judged against their standards on leaving Year 2 but it has not been consistent due to the level of staff changes. In lessons, pupils show an appropriate understanding of square numbers and are confident in calculating percentages and higher attaining pupils in reducing fractions to simplest forms. However, while pupils in Year 6 are achieving well this year, the proportion of pupils achieving the higher levels is below average. The improvement has not been sufficient to reach the nationally expected standards for Year 6. There are clear indications of improving standards in Years 3, 4 and 5. In Years 3 and 4, pupils are achieving well and maintaining above average standards. Pupils in Year 5 have also achieved well and are likely to reach average standards by Year 6. In all years, pupils with SEN and those who have EAL are doing well against their specific targets.

80. Teaching and learning range from satisfactory to good and are good overall. Teachers insist on good standards of behaviour and set up a calm environment where learning can take place. They have good subject knowledge and challenge all abilities through planning of work, which is well matched to needs. Pupils show good attitudes. They behave well and are enthusiastic in their work. They present their work well and take a pride in it. This helps their ability to calculate accurately and is an improvement on the previous inspection. Marking is good. It is evaluative, encouraging and tells pupils what they need to do to improve. They listen attentively and know what they are expected to do. This was particularly evident in a Year 6 lesson, where pupils worked hard to solve real life money problems related to a theme park. In a good Year 4, lesson pupils also worked on money problems and the top group, working at Level 4, said they found the work enjoyable but challenging. The LSA supported a group of pupils with SEN well on work, which was well matched to their needs.

81. Leadership and management of the subject are good. The coordinator has been in post for two years. She has introduced good assessment in line with key objectives and has worked hard to raise the profile of the subject. The coordinator samples work, supports planning and sees lessons with every teacher over the year. She has worked hard to ensure progression of skills.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

82. There are appropriate opportunities to use mathematics in other subjects. There are time lines in history and data collection and graphical representation in science. Pupils measure accurately in science and DT. In geography they work on maps using different scales. In athletics they measure time and distance and plot their improvements. Computers are used for handling data and to plan logical procedures to control objects.

### **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **unsatisfactory**.

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

- Standards are too low in Years 2 and 6. .
- There is not enough challenge for able pupils.
- The quality of teaching is too variable.
- Assessment procedures are not good enough.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to the subject and behave well in lessons.

#### **Commentary**

84. Standards in science are below average by the end of Years 2 and 6. This is a decline in standards since the school's last inspection.

85. In Year 6, pupils show a secure understanding of electricity and can identify ways in which materials can be separated. Pupils investigate the effect exercise has on their pulse rate and represent data in a bar chart. However, too few pupils reach above average standards and achievement by pupils in Year 6 is, therefore, unsatisfactory. The many difficulties faced by the school through the recruitment and retention of staff have led to inconsistencies in the teaching of science, although there is much that is good now, particularly in Years 3 to 5, where there has been a good improvement in experimental and investigational work. In these classes, pupils are being given well-planned opportunities to carry out their own experiments and learn the correct scientific vocabulary during practical activities. This is particularly helpful in promoting the learning of pupils with SEN and those learning EAL.

86. Work in the Year 2 lesson observed and the analysis of their work indicate that teaching is unsatisfactory and pupils of this age are not achieving as well as they could. The analysis also

shows that writing skills are not being used well enough in science. Most of the work is presented in books mixed in with a wide variety of other subjects, which makes it difficult for pupils to see how their work is progressing. Much of the work set is the same for all pupils and does not challenge the more able because assessment information is not always used well to match work to the pupils' needs.

87. Teaching seen in Years 3 to 6 ranged from satisfactory to good. It was satisfactory, overall. In the best lessons, the emphasis placed on investigative activities was a key factor to learning. In Years 3 and 4, pupils had the opportunity to carry out appropriate investigations in order to answer a particular question. In the Year 3 lesson observed on rocks, the high quality discussion about the investigation process was a key factor in promoting effective learning. Pupils in Year 4 competently carried out an investigation to find out which shapes move more easily through water, as part of their work on friction and water resistance. In both Year 3 and 4, the pace was brisk and the challenge high. Pupils were enthused by the activities and they wanted to succeed. They were fully involved in the lessons and, because of the teachers' skilful questioning, the pupils developed a good understanding of what constitutes a fair test and talked with increasing confidence about the results of their investigations. Where lessons were less effective, the pace was slower and the challenge insufficient to raise standards. However, the analysis of work and discussions with pupils from Year 3 to Year 5, show that the investigative work undertaken is well planned and opportunities for designing their own experiments are now becoming a part of most lessons. These improvements however, have not yet had an impact on standards in Year 6.

88. As the result of a high turnover of subject leaders, the head teacher made the decision to take on the responsibility, in order to provide greater continuity. This is satisfactory in the short term. He has a clear understanding of the fact that standards are too low and that assessment in science is unsatisfactory. Raising standards of achievement in science is a priority on the school improvement plan, which contains suitable steps to achieve this outcome, for example, raising the profile of science across the school and improving the quality of teaching and pupils' understanding of scientific investigation. However, there was less evidence to suggest that weaknesses in assessment procedures and the setting of targets for pupils to achieve are a planned priority.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

Provision in information and communication technology (ICT) is **satisfactory**

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Good resources support developments in the subject.
- The subject is well led and managed and there is clear vision for future development.
- Some teachers are highly competent and provide good support for colleagues.

### **Commentary**

89. Standards are broadly in line with expectations at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 as they were at the previous inspection. Pupils are achieving soundly and making sound progress in developing their skills. Previous work shows an appropriate range of experiences across all strands in Years 3 to 6 with work planned to address the limited use of control in Years 1 and 2. Good support ensures that pupils with SEN and those who are learning English develop their skills appropriately.

90. There is an above average number of computers available. There are five interactive white boards in use and four more are on order. These are proving successful in whole class lessons and providing clear explanations to teach new skills. This was particularly evident in a Year 5 science lesson where pupils were able to observe the solar system.

91. The quality of teaching and learning overall is satisfactory as it was at the previous inspection. All teachers are now confident and competent. Some are highly skilled and willingly share their expertise. Sessions in the computer suite are well managed and pupils show good attitudes and

are keen to learn. When required, they work well in pairs and those with higher skills willingly support others experiencing difficulties. In a good Year 5 lesson, the teacher's excellent knowledge enabled him to teach accurately a control module, where pupils worked with Mimics and programmed pedestrian crossing lights.

92. Leadership and management of the subject are good. The coordinator has a clear vision of what needs to be done, and is putting together a useful portfolio of levelled work to support colleagues. She has successfully introduced new guidelines and skills assessment, which enables pupils to evaluate their own success in learning.

### **ICT across the curriculum**

93. Opportunities to use computers in other subjects are developing appropriately. Pupils use a selection of mathematics programs to reinforce learning and use the Internet to find information in most subjects. Pupils handle data in science and mathematics. An example of this is seen on a study of heart rates in Year 5. They use a range of techniques in art such as "paintings" of Grace Darling in Year 2 history. Across all subjects, pupils make use of the digital camera and present their work by combining text and graphics well.

### **HUMANITIES**

During the week of the inspection two lessons were observed in history and one in RE. Geography was not inspected in this inspection. Inspectors looked at pupils' recorded work and had discussions with coordinators of the subjects, with pupils about their work and with teachers about their planning.

### **HISTORY**

Provision in history is **satisfactory**

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

- There are insufficient opportunities for pupils, particularly older pupils, to develop and consolidate their skills in their recorded work.
- In Year 6, achievement is unsatisfactory.
- The curriculum in history is well enhanced by a good range of visits and visitors.
- There are some useful links with pupils' work in other subjects.

#### **Commentary**

94. Standards in Year 2 are broadly average and, in Year 6, they are below average. While achievement is generally satisfactory in Years 1 to 4, the progressive development of pupils' skills is weaker in Years 5 and 6 because pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to consolidate and extend their understanding in their recorded work.

95. Pupils across all years develop their understanding of chronology appropriately. In Years 1 and 2, they explore how objects change over time and put in order illustrations of the events such as the Battle of Hastings and the Great Fire of London. As they move through the school, they study the history of people in different periods of time, such as the Ancient Egyptians, Ancient Greeks and the Romans. They begin to be aware of how longer periods of time are referred to and to consider how their own lives are different. Older pupils in Year 6 are exploring how their local area of Reading has changed in the recent past.

96. Older pupils begin to explore some of the different ways in which information and historical evidence is obtained and how history can be represented and discussed. However, these skills are not developed progressively in Years 5 and 6, particularly in the range and detail of their recorded work.

97. Indications are from the lesson seen and from discussions with teachers that teaching is generally satisfactory. Good teaching was seen during the inspection in a Year 3 lesson on how pictures, buildings and inventories tell about the past. As part of their preparation for a visit to Hampton Court, pupils studied an interactive program on Hardwick Hall. Pupils achieved well in this lesson because the teacher's clear explanations and challenging use of questions involved all pupils well and enabled them to make a good range of observations. Teachers make effective use of links with other subjects in the curriculum to enhance pupils' learning. In a Year 2 project on Grace Darling, pupils created a whole class display using ICT to create a story board of events and their knowledge of circuits in science to create a flashing light for the lighthouse. In Year 6, pupils explored Viking technology when they created a model of a Viking long boat as part of their work in DT. However, there are weaknesses in the expectations for the amount and detail of pupils' recorded work in Year 6.

98. The coordinator for the subject is new to the role and is developing her understanding appropriately. She has monitored teachers' planning and is developing an overview of pupils' work. The school makes good use of outside organisations to enhance pupils' experiences and understanding of what life was like in past times. There are special focus days on the different periods of time studied and theatre groups visit the school to re-enact events in the past. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' social and cultural awareness.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

99. Only one lesson was seen in the subject due to timetable restrictions. Judgements are made on the lesson seen, on discussions with pupils in Year 6 and with the coordinator for the subject and the scrutiny of pupils' recorded work. Indications are that standards are below the requirements of the Agreed Syllabus by Year 6. There was insufficient evidence to make a reliable judgement about teaching.

100. In the satisfactory lesson seen in Year 1 the learning focus was the work of Christian charities and how they care for others. The lesson was well structured with a good range of activities to enable pupils to work with partners to discuss the meaning of the word 'charity' and to watch a video clip of the work of the Red Cross and Christian Aid. Good support from the teacher and teaching assistant enabled young pupils to grasp some complex concepts. While pupils were encouraged to think how they might spend their money to help others, there were missed opportunities to link the content of the lesson with Christian belief and practice.

101. Discussions with pupils in Year 6 showed they understood how people of different faiths had books which were special to them and how they showed their respect for these books and writings. They are developing an appropriate understanding of how people of different faiths use food to celebrate and to recognise significant aspects of their beliefs. They were able to describe foods used in the Christian religion to mark Christmas and Easter and how feasting and fasting marks the Islamic period of Ramadan and the festival of Eid. Using their recent studies of Judaism, they described special occasions in the Jewish faith such as a Barmitzvah. However, pupils' knowledge of aspects of the Christian faith is not sufficiently secure and they need supportive questioning to establish sometimes basic features. There are too few opportunities for pupils of all ages to reinforce and extend their thinking and understanding in their recorded work.

102. The school uses the resources of the local community well and parents and pupils of different faiths visit and talk to classes on a regular basis to mark special occasions and festivities. There are appropriate links with local clergy and churches of the Christian faith.

103. Coordination in the subject is generally satisfactory. While the coordinator has an overview of teachers' planning and is beginning to create a portfolio of pupils' work she, has not had an opportunity to visit lessons or to monitor pupils' work. Assessment in the subject is incorporated into the planning of the locally agreed syllabus but the school has not made use of the systems.

## CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

During the week of the inspection it was only possible to observe two lessons in PE and one in art and design. No lessons were observed in DT. Judgements have been made on the lessons seen, discussions with pupils and teachers and the scrutiny of pupils' work.

104. Observations of pupils' work across the school and the lesson seen in Year 6, indicate that standards in **art and design** are average for the pupils' ages. By Year 2, pupils are developing an appropriate awareness of colour, shape and texture in a sound range of media. They make whole class collages to link with other subjects in the curriculum. All pupils in Years 1 and 2 explore the shape and texture of natural materials to make living sculptures in the style of Andy Goldsworthy. Visiting artists support the range of pupils' experiences well when they help pupils create a stained glass painting of Sea Life.

105. Pupils' skills develop steadily as was illustrated in the good Year 6 lesson observed. Following a visit to Reading, pupils were reflecting on the images they had collected from the area and discussing their sketches with their partners. The teacher used a good range of resources from different artists to illustrate what artists meant by 'abstract'. As she had involved pupils well in the introduction to the lesson and guided their thinking with effective questioning, pupils were able to explore their ideas with increasing confidence. They used an appropriate range of vocabulary and showed a secure understanding when they talked about the materials observed on their visit and their shape and texture. As a result, when they came to develop their own work, most were able to make good progress. In a well organised evaluation session at the end of the lesson, all pupils had made at least satisfactory progress with adapting their ideas in an abstract style. Some higher attaining pupils had achieved interesting effects and followed examples from artists such as Paul Klee and Gustav Klimt to good effect.

106. Coordination in the subject is satisfactory. The joint coordinators have a good understanding of their roles. They are developing assessment systems for the subject and a portfolio of pupils' work in art to support the guidance on the progression of skills. The curriculum in art is well enhanced by the art weeks organised by the school on a regular basis. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' understanding of their own culture.

107. Samples and photographs of pupils' work in **DT** show that standards are above average in each age group and that the curriculum is broad and interesting. At all year groups, pupils tackle substantial projects, which incorporate the required elements of the subject. For example, pupils in Year 2 have done a challenging project that involved them in making things with a winding mechanism. They investigated and experimented with simple winding up mechanisms, then designed and made their own in order to make a wheeled vehicle move. The project gave them a good understanding of the design process as well as enabling them to practise their numeracy skills in a meaningful context as it involved measuring materials accurately.

108. Pivots, sliders and folded paper have been used by pupils in Year 3 to make pop-up books and, in Year 4, pupils have incorporated scientific knowledge into their work and used electrical circuits when they made torches, alarms and a lighthouse. Year 5 pupils designed and made moving toys, the movement being controlled with a cam mechanism. The overall quality of their work is good. By Year 6, pupils build on their earlier work by undertaking more complex projects such as making bridges. A particularly impressive contribution to pupils' DT experiences was an 'Architecture' workshop, in which all pupils participated and made some amazing structures with just pieces of dowel and elastic bands that ranged from simple bird houses in Year 1 to a Viking long ship in Year 6. Evaluation is clearly a strong point and pupils use this to decide how they would improve their work if they started the project again. The subject is well managed by an experienced member of staff who provides conscientious leadership.

109. In the one **music** lesson observed in Year 6, the high expectations of concentration and behaviour set the scene for very good learning throughout the lesson. The teacher used her very secure subject knowledge effectively to help pupils distinguish the difference between the musical elements of pulse, metre and rhythm and texture. The pupils learnt to sing rhythmically, tunefully

and with appropriate pauses and variation in volume. They were able to sustain a steady pulse by clapping and using sticks and by combining different rhythmic patterns they were able to create a satisfying musical texture. The brisk pace kept all pupils involved in the lesson so that they gave of their best and showed that they wanted to learn.

110. Singing by the whole school in assemblies is good. Pupils sing tunefully in unison, with a good awareness of breathing, diction and dynamics and most obviously enjoy singing. They benefit from a suitable range of experiences. Pupils are involved in school productions and are given the opportunity to perform at music concerts. The curriculum is enriched by a number of workshops and visiting specialists. Although there is a small number of clubs, such as a recorder group, guitar and a folk club, there is no provision for individual pupils to receive musical tuition. A few pupils from Years 5 and 6 have formed their own small rock band, which is led enthusiastically by one pupil who plays the guitar.

111. The subject leader provides good leadership and management. She has clear priorities for improvement in the subject. The school is fortunate in having a soundproofed music room, which although rather small does allow groups of pupils to be taken for sessions. Resources are good and include a good number of instruments from other cultures.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

Provision for physical education (PE) is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Good management of lessons leads to good behaviour.
- Good facilities support pupils' learning.
- A good range of additional activities extends the learning opportunities.
- Leadership and management are now good and are leading to improved opportunities.

### **Commentary**

112. One lesson was observed in Year 1 and two lessons in Years 3 to 6. In these lessons pupils reached similar standards to those found in most schools. This represents satisfactory achievement overall, promoted by the satisfactory quality of teaching and learning. The school reports that most pupils reach the national expectation for swimming.

113. Teachers manage lessons well and pupils are attentive. They listen carefully to instructions and perform sensibly and safely. Pupils enjoy the lessons and make steady progress in developing their skills. In a good athletics lesson in Year 6, the teacher placed very good emphasis on skills for throwing the javelin. All boys and girls achieved well and made good progress in the lesson.

114. The school enjoys good facilities. Outdoors there are good hard surface areas and a good - sized field for a range of sports and games. The hall is of sufficient size for whole class lessons and a good range of resources support pupils' learning in the subject well. Swimming takes place in Year 5 at Bulmershe Leisure Centre.

115. The subject is well led and managed by a recently appointed coordinator. He is skilled and knowledgeable and passes on his expertise to colleagues. There is a good range of extra curricular activities for sport. Pupils can play netball, football, tag rugby, rounders, cricket, athletics, judo and dance. They take part in athletics and cross-country events. Matches are arranged with other schools. The school has good links with Bulmershe Secondary School and with the Wokingham PE Liaison Officer. The subject contributes well to pupils' personal development in terms of taking turns, teamwork and sportsmanship. The subject develops pupils' listening skills and they follow instructions safely and carefully. It supports mathematical development through a range of opportunities to measure performance in terms of time and distance.

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



116. Two personal, social and health education lessons were observed. In these, teaching and learning were good in one and satisfactory in the other. In the good lesson seen in Year 6 pupils discussed how they would help a friend through an embarrassing moment. There were good opportunities for pupils to talk together as a whole class and in pairs and groups and they developed their ideas and confidence well. In Year 2, pupils were being helped to consider how their behaviour affected others. Much work is oral and there is little written work to make judgements about marking and assessment. No overall judgement can be made about standards of attainment or about the quality of teaching and learning overall. It is very evident that this area is regarded as a crucial part of the pupils' development; it is central to the school's good ethos. Pupils are encouraged to express a range of feelings and give their own opinions.

117. PSHCE is taught as a separate subject and includes the recent introduction of a pilot scheme covering the social and emotional aspects of learning, overseen by the SENCO. Other elements are overseen by the PSHCE coordinator. In addition, PSHCE is taught through several subjects, especially as pupils often have opportunities to work either independently or collaboratively. Both science and PE contribute to an understanding of a healthy lifestyle, and RE enhances awareness of social values. The extensive provision also includes consideration of sex and relationships, drugs and anti-racism. PSHCE and its many sensitive elements are often taught as a subject through 'circle time', where pupils have the opportunity to discuss matters of interest to them. Pupils have the chance to be on the school council, which gives them the opportunity to work with children of different ages. Others have monitor jobs around the school. Pupils are involved in producing class rules. This has enabled them to develop a sense of moral responsibility for their own behaviour and to consider the consequences of their action.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<b>Grade</b>
<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>4</b>
How inclusive the school is	4
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	4
Value for money provided by the school	4
<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>5</b>
Pupils' achievement	4
<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities (Ethos)</b>	<b>3</b>
Attendance	6
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>	<b>4</b>
The quality of teaching	4
How well pupils learn	4
The quality of assessment	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	4
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	4
The quality of the school's links with the community	4
The school's links with other schools and colleges	4
<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>4</b>
The governance of the school	4
The leadership of the headteacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	4
The effectiveness of management	4

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