

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **LEAMINGTON PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Sutton in Ashfield

LEA area: Nottinghamshire

Unique reference number: 122467

Headteacher: Mr Paul Aspinall

Lead inspector: Mrs Barbara E Doughty

Dates of inspection: 31<sup>st</sup> January to 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2005

Inspection number: 267196

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

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## **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Type of school: Primary  
School category: Community  
Age range of pupils: 3 – 11  
Gender of pupils: Mixed  
Number on roll: 409

School address: Clare Road  
Sutton in Ashfield  
Nottinghamshire  
Postcode: NG17 5BB

Telephone number: 01623 455951  
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Appropriate authority: The Governing Body  
Name of chair of Mrs N Meynell  
governors:

Date of previous 5<sup>th</sup> July 1999  
inspection:

## **CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL**

This is a large primary school with 409 pupils, including 96 children attending the Nursery class part-time. The area the school serves is one of considerable social and economic deprivation. Thirty-two per cent of the pupils are currently known to be eligible for free school meals. All of the pupils are from white British backgrounds and not one is learning English as an additional language. The percentage of pupils that the school has identified as having special educational needs, usually around 18 per cent, is in line with the national average. Although less than one per cent has a statement of specific need, a number have high level needs, such as autism, profound and multiple learning difficulties, dyslexia, and some severe social, emotional and behaviour difficulties. Attainment on entry to the Nursery class is well below average. There is constant disruption to the school register with usually about 30 per cent of the pupils joining the school between the start of Year 1 and the end of Year 6. The school is involved in several national and local initiatives including Sure Start, Family Learning and Adult Education. It gained a Healthy Schools Award in 2004 and School Achievement Awards in 2001 and 2004. The deputy head teacher has been in post for just a year.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
22261	Mrs Barbara E Doughty	Lead inspector	Science
14141	Mr Ernie Marshall	Lay inspector	
18703	Mrs Christine Canniff	Team inspector	Special educational needs Mathematics Information and communication technology Art and design Design and technology Music Physical education
32596	Mrs Gillian Phillips	Team inspector	The Foundation Stage curriculum English Religious education History Geography

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**This school provides a sound education** and gives satisfactory value for money. Standards are below those expected nationally for pupils aged 11, but most pupils achieve satisfactorily because of sound teaching. Behaviour is good and pupils have positive attitudes towards work. The school is competently led and managed and weaknesses are tackled satisfactorily.

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

- Pupils make good progress in Years 5 and 6 due to effective teaching.
- Pupils achieve well in information and communication technology (ICT), but standards in science are not good enough and not enough is done to improve pupils' speaking skills.
- Pupils' progress is not checked thoroughly enough.
- Pupils have very good attitudes to school; behaviour is good and relationships are very good.
- Learning opportunities are enriched well through visits, visitors and clubs.
- The head teacher's and deputy head's leadership styles complement each other well; there is a good team spirit and a sound focus on raising standards.

The school has made satisfactory improvement since it was last inspected in 1999. Most of the key issues have been dealt with. Since then, test results in English and mathematics have risen faster than nationally, but have not kept pace with those in similar schools. Standards in ICT are higher and improvements to pupils' personal development have heightened pupils' enthusiasm for learning. The weaknesses in this report have already been identified and are being tackled, but this has yet to impact on standards. Marking is still of variable quality, science remains an issue, and assessment is still not accurate or used effectively enough.

### 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	C	E*	E	E

*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.*

**Pupils' achievement is satisfactory.** By the end of the Reception Year, children are a long way off achieving the goals they are expected to reach. Similarly, standards are well below the national average at the end of Year 2 in reading, writing and mathematics and at the end of Year 6 in English, mathematics and science. However, this reflects pupils' well below average attainment on entry, the constant changes to the school register causing disruptions to learning, the high number of vulnerable pupils, and the high level of specific special educational need. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 make good progress in English and mathematics, but there is too much to do and standards remain low. Despite efforts to increase the amount of investigative work in science, achievement is not good enough and standards are still too low. Pupils' speaking skills are poor; whilst many children start the Nursery class with weak communication skills, the school does not do enough to improve

these. Standards in ICT are in line with national expectations and pupils progress well mainly because of improved resources and teaching. Pupils achieve well in art and design. Although standards in religious education do not meet the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus, achievement is sound. **Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are good.** Pupils behave well and have good attitudes to work. The attendance of most pupils is satisfactory but a small minority miss too much schooling due to family holidays taken during term time.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The quality of education provided by the school is satisfactory; teaching is sound.** Teaching is good in Years 5 and 6, where the best learning takes place. Throughout the school, teachers mostly make work interesting and because of this pupils work hard; a well-ordered atmosphere is maintained and pupils show enthusiasm for learning. Pupils understand what they are to do because teachers share the learning objectives with them. Relationships are very good, built on trust and respect. Teachers have a secure understanding of national teaching guidelines, but sometimes in their determination to work methodically through these, teachers in Years 1 to 4 do not always tailor the work well enough to pupils' needs or allow sufficient time for repetition and consolidation. Marking does little to help pupils understand what they do well or how to improve and teachers make little use of information from the previous year's tests to identify gaps in learning. Pupils' learning opportunities are enriched well by visits, visitors and clubs and the school involves pupils well in saying what they like and what they would like to change. The school's partnership with parents is good.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**Leadership, management, and governance are all satisfactory.** The governing body fulfils its statutory duties soundly. The head teacher and senior managers know what is and is not working and have already put in place plans to deal with the weaknesses identified in this report. The deputy head in particular has a very good idea about what needs to be done to improve the effectiveness of assessment and how to involve pupils more in evaluating their own learning. These plans, however, are embryonic and whilst staff and governors want every child to do as well as possible, too little has been done yet to ensure that the needs of all pupils are met effectively. This is because the systems for tracking pupils' progress are not good enough and senior managers cannot be sure where the most and least progress is made. Subject leaders are starting to get to the heart of what is happening in their subjects, but their ideas are too new to have yet made a substantial impact on improvement. Governors are regular visitors to school and take a keen interest in what is happening. They rely on the head teacher to keep them informed, but balance this well with questioning standards, what is going on and how the school intends to improve.

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

Parents and pupils are happy with this school. Pupils are particularly happy with the fair way they are treated and that there is always someone they can go to if they are worried about anything. Parents appreciate the approachability of the staff and the way the school deals with bullying.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- Improve assessment and its use.
- Improve pupils' speaking skills.



- Improve provision in science.

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

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

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

The achievement of all groups of pupils is satisfactory although overall, by the time the pupils leave the school at age 11, standards are well below average in English, mathematics, and science. This, however, reflects the high number of vulnerable pupils, the incidence of specific special educational needs in the school, and pupils' well below average attainment on entry. Although improving, achievement and standards in science are not good enough.

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

- Pupils in Years 5 and 6 make good progress in English and mathematics because teachers tailor the teaching plans suitably to meet pupils' needs.
- Most pupils achieve well in ICT and art and design to reach the nationally expected level by the end of Years 2 and 6.
- Poor speaking and writing skills have a detrimental effect on standards in all subjects.
- Standards in science are not high enough and achievement is unsatisfactory.

#### **Commentary**

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	13.5 (12.3)	15.8 (15.7)
Writing	13.3 (12.6)	14.6 (14.6)
Mathematics	14.4 (13.2)	16.2 (16.3)

*There were 39 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	24.9 (24.5)	26.9 (26.8)
Mathematics	24.8 (23.9)	27.0 (26.8)
Science	25.6 (25.1)	28.6 (28.6)

*There were 49 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

1. Results and trends show that since the last inspection in 1999, the Year 2 and Year 6 results have risen faster than nationally in English and mathematics and have broadly kept pace with the national upward trend in science. However, whilst the usual national trend is for results to climb steadily each year, the pattern at this school is one of fluctuation, with results rising and falling at the end of Year 6, reflecting standards at the end of Year 2.
2. The work pupils are doing, and have done, shows that most pupils usually achieve as well as could reasonably be expected in English and mathematics given their well below average attainment on entry, the disruptions caused by pupils leaving and

joining school other than at the usual time of admission, the number of vulnerable pupils, and the level of specific special educational need. Pupils usually do as well as those in similar schools but, because of weaknesses in the school's assessment arrangements, this school has not improved its results as fast as it could have done or as fast as similar schools have.

3. Pupils make good progress in English and mathematics in Years 5 and 6. This is because teachers adapt the national teaching plans to take account of the way these pupils learn best and of their need to reinforce what they have already learned. Nevertheless standards are well below average at the end of the school because there is too much for these Year 5 and 6 teachers to do. Most pupils leave the school still struggling to read accurately, write in sequence, and sustain and extend their ideas logically. Their speaking skills are poor. Many struggle to find the most appropriate words to express their thoughts and make their feelings clear. For example, when asked what part of a plant the stamen is, one Year 6 pupil responded with "Them swayey things". Many pupils do not talk in sentences or use appropriate subject vocabulary to make meaning clear. For example, when talking about why chocolate and pizza are not good for healthy eating, one pupil remarked, "Got rubbish in them". This and pupils' poor writing skills have a detrimental impact on standards in other subjects, such as science, history and geography, and make it difficult to gauge pupils' understanding and the extent of their learning.
4. The school has worked hard to raise standards in ICT, and these are much improved from the time of the last inspection when standards were too low, achievement was unsatisfactory, and the school was failing to meet statutory requirements. The new computer suite and newly purchased ICT equipment such as digital cameras and data-loggers have brought about improved ICT skills. Standards are now in line with national expectations – a good achievement given that few pupils have regular access to computers at home.
5. Standards in religious education do not meet those set out in the locally agreed syllabus, but pupils' achievement is satisfactory given their low starting point. Standards in art and design are in line with those expected nationally and pupils' achievement is good.
6. The school has made a good start in basing pupils' science work on learning through investigation. However, this is not yet fully embedded throughout the school. Consequently, pupils do not achieve well enough and standards are lower than they could be. The Year 5 and 6 pupils in particular are given too much support in their work because teachers are afraid that because of what they have missed already, they will not be able to do the work without it. As a result, pupils lack experience in planning and carrying out investigations and struggle to plan investigations in order to get reliable results and draw valid conclusions. Throughout the school, science report writing is poor, hampered by pupils' well below average literacy skills. Pupils' verbal and written explanations of what they are doing and have done lack clarity because pupils struggle to organise their thoughts, use scientific vocabulary competently, and express themselves succinctly. For example, in a Year 3/4 science lesson, although pupils had had a really good go at planning and carrying out an investigation to test which brand of kitchen towel gave the best value for money, they struggled to explain what they had done in order for others to make suggestions about whether or not their tests had been valid.

7. Although they are a long way off achieving the goals they are expected to reach by the end of the Reception Year, children in the Nursery and Reception classes achieve satisfactorily. Many of them start school with well below average attainment and extremely impoverished language skills, which are developed satisfactorily as they work and play in the Nursery and Reception classes. However, not enough is done in these classes and throughout the school to improve children's speaking skills, and progress is not as fast as it could be.
8. Pupils with special educational needs, including those with statements of specific need, make the same satisfactory progress as their schoolmates. However, paralleling the situation of their schoolmates, their learning is slowed too often when work is not always tailored well enough to meet their identified learning needs and too often they can only do it with support from the teachers or teaching assistants. There are currently three pupils identified as gifted or talented although the school's systems for identifying such pupils are underdeveloped.

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

Pupils enjoy coming to school and their attendance is satisfactory. They behave well and have good attitudes to learning. Their personal development is good.

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

- Very good social and moral development enables the school to work as a happy and orderly community.
- Pupils' good attitudes and behaviour help them to work hard in lessons and ensure little time is wasted.
- Good standards of personal development prepare pupils well for their future responsibilities of citizenship.

### **Commentary**

9. The school has made a priority of improving pupils' attitudes and behaviour and has set high expectations for pupils to meet, which they rise to well. This is a real strength of the school and an essential basis for raising standards. Pupils are given the opportunity to discuss the school rules and because of this they understand what these are and why they are needed. They are happy with the way in which staff apply these rules consistently and fairly. As a result, their behaviour is good. Any incidents that occur are dealt with quickly and effectively. Parents are happy to work with the school on behaviour and bullying issues and are pleased with the way in which the school deals with any incidents of inappropriate behaviour.
10. Good attitudes, effort and behaviour are recognised and rewarded; praise is effective as are the certificates presented at school assemblies. Pupils know what is expected of them. For example, they understand the difference between right and wrong and they show concern and respect for each other. The school has successfully created an atmosphere of friendship and mutual respect, with no evidence of bullying or other forms of harassment, which justifies the view held by parents that their children like school and want to attend. There have been five fixed-term exclusions in the current school year, none of which relate to bullying and all of which were dealt with effectively and using the correct procedures.

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	409	5	0

*The table gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.*

11. Pupils relate well to the staff and show good interest in their lessons and the range of activities provided. They work well independently, in pairs and in groups and share resources sensibly; this is particularly noticeable in the Nursery and Reception classes. Throughout the school, pupils work well, concentrate on their tasks, and try hard to please. They are happy to show their completed work and to talk about what they have done. When older pupils are given additional tasks to do in the classroom they are keen to help and there is no shortage of volunteers. Outside the classroom, pupils volunteer readily and eagerly for other tasks such as helping in the office, picking up litter in the play areas, and issuing and replacing play equipment.
12. The school provides good opportunities for pupils to develop satisfactory spiritual awareness and secure knowledge of their own culture; knowledge of other faiths and cultures is satisfactorily promoted. Competitive sports such as basketball are popular and enable pupils to develop leadership and team-working skills, as do the annual residential visits for pupils in Years 3 to 6. The school provides opportunities for pupils to consider the needs of others by contributing to charities and entertaining the elderly. The school council is well established to enable pupils to have a say in what goes on and for its members to work for the benefit of all. Older pupils are given advice from staff, the school nurse, and a visiting police officer on how to respond to issues such as drugs and alcohol abuse and how to develop a sense of responsibility to the community.
13. The rate of attendance at this school is below the national average for primary schools but is satisfactory for the great majority of pupils. Holidays taken in term time by a minority of parents, due mostly to the special rates offered by the travel industry at these times, contribute to the higher than average absence rate. The school does all it can to improve the situation but its attempts to persuade parents not to take holidays during term time have had little effect. Punctuality is satisfactory and the school day starts and finishes on time.

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

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	6.2	School data	0.7
National data	5.1	National data	0.4

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

**QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL**

The quality of education provided by the school is satisfactory. Teacher and learning are sound. Curriculum enrichment activities are interesting and relevant and out-of-school activities contribute well to pupils' learning. Accommodation is good; outdoor and indoor learning areas are well planned and easily accessible. Pupils enjoy trusting relationships with adults in the school and have a good say in school routines through their work on the school council. The school has established good relations with parents and effective links with the community and other schools.

## Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Teaching is particularly effective in Years 5 and 6 and in ICT throughout the school. Assessment and its use are not good enough, except in the Nursery and Reception classes, where they are satisfactory.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching and learning in Years 5 and 6 is good.
- ICT is taught well and pupils are excited by the work.
- Teachers make it clear to pupils what they are going to do and learn, giving work purpose.
- Very good relationships mean pupils work hard because they want to please their teachers.
- Insufficient emphasis on developing scientific understanding through investigations in Years 1 to 4 and too much direction in Years 5 and 6 slow learning.
- Pupils do not have enough opportunities or encouragement to develop adequate speaking skills and because of this do not use subject-related vocabulary to express themselves clearly.
- Some teachers are too quick to say pupils have grasped an idea and move them onto the next step; they do not use assessment information effectively to tailor the teaching plans to meet the needs of the pupils, make it clear to pupils how to improve, or keep a check on the consistency of pupils' progress.

### Commentary

#### *Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 42 lessons*

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0	4 (10%)	14 (33%)	22 (52%)	2 (5%)	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.*

14. Teaching is good in Years 5 and 6, where all of the very good lessons observed during the inspection were. It is satisfactory in the Nursery and Reception classes and in Years 1 to 4. Throughout the school, teachers take care to ensure that pupils know what they are going to learn in each lesson and that they are clear about what to do. This gives the work purpose and meaning and pupils understand the point in persevering with it. Very good relationships between staff and pupils are built on mutual trust and respect and harmonious relationships permeate the school. Pupils work hard because they want to please their teachers and teachers in turn reward their efforts through consistent and well-earned praise.
15. ICT is taught well. There have been many improvements to provision in ICT and some well-focused in-service training for staff. As a result, teachers' subject knowledge is much more secure now than it was at the time of the last inspection and their expertise is much improved. Time in the computer suite is used well to develop pupils' ICT skills and some good use is made of these skills to support work in other subjects, such as in science when Years 5 and 6 pupils measured sound using data-loggers and presented their findings using a multimedia presentation program.

16. The most effective teaching and learning take place in Years 5 and 6. Here, lessons move at a good pace and, because of this, pupils are interested and maintain good concentration. Teachers base learning on relevant and mostly practical work and so pupils understand it, such as when using mathematics to solve problems. They have high expectations about what pupils can achieve because they are aware of what pupils can and cannot already do and they use this information well to adapt the national teaching plans and tailor the work to take pupils onto the next step.
17. However, elsewhere in the school, teachers are reluctant to move too far away from the prescription of the national subject guidelines and because of this do not always make allowances for what pupils do and do not know, or their need for consolidation and repetition. This means that, although learning is satisfactory overall, too often, some pupils move through the work at too fast a pace and onto the next step before they have fully grasped an idea. This is because teachers are too quick to assess that pupils have understood an idea and move on to the next thing to be taught in the teaching plans. For example, pupils managed to complete their mathematics work successfully one day and because of this, the teacher decided that they had a secure enough understanding and moved to the next idea, when in reality the learning of most of the pupils was too shaky to do this. The problem is exacerbated further because teachers do not involve pupils enough in self-assessment. They tend to use sessions at the end of lessons to go over what pupils have done, rather than what they have learnt and need to learn next. In Years 1 and 2, the weekly 'plan, do and review' sessions are ineffective because teachers do not engage pupils in discussion about which activity would best meet their needs. These lessons become no more than free choice sessions, during which pupils tend to choose things they can already do rather than practise skills they do not have. Whilst this goes some way to develop independence, because there is no direction to the teaching or learning, progress is not good enough. In addition, the comments teachers write in pupils' workbooks are mainly celebratory and there are very few that help pupils to improve. Also, the records kept of pupils' achievements are insufficiently analysed to check that all pupils make at least reasonable progress. This means that too much catch-up is left to Years 5 and 6.
18. An increased emphasis on developing pupils' scientific enquiry skills is having a positive impact on pupils' understanding in science. However, mainly because of the school's focus on raising standards in English and mathematics, science has received very little attention since the last inspection and improvements have been a long time coming. Whilst science teaching is now satisfactory overall, too much has gone untaught in the past and pupils have too much catching up to do. This means that the older pupils have got too many gaps in their learning already and too little time to pursue and eradicate them, which in turn means that standards are still too low. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 are very insecure at planning and carrying out investigations on their own and this is exacerbated further because teachers in these years are reluctant to let them have a go in case they cannot produce the quality of work at the end of the lesson that is expected from pupils of their age. This means that whilst these pupils can carry out investigations and get valid and reliable results under the guidance of adults, because they do not have the experience of working independently, they cannot achieve well enough in test situations.
19. This school does not do enough to improve pupils' speaking skills, especially given the impoverished language at the start of the Nursery class. Whilst there are some opportunities for pupils to talk about what interests them and to discuss topical issues, these are not planned well enough or often enough and too little is done to raise standards in speaking.

## **The curriculum**

The overall quality of the curriculum is satisfactory and now meets statutory requirements fully. Visits and extra-curricular activities enrich the curriculum well and enhance pupils' learning. Staffing, accommodation and learning resources are satisfactory; they are suitably matched to the curriculum and satisfactorily deployed to help pupils to learn.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- National teaching plans are not sufficiently well adapted to meet the needs of all pupils.
- There is a good planned programme of visits and visitors that broaden and enrich pupils' experiences and learning.
- A good range of extra-curricular activities supports pupils' learning well.
- There has been good improvement to the resources for ICT since the last inspection.

## **Commentary**

20. The school provides an appropriately broad and balanced curriculum, which includes all the subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education. There is a satisfactory programme for personal, social and health education, including sex education and teaching pupils about the dangers of drug misuse. Teachers plan together in year groups, ensuring that pupils of the same age cover the same work. Work is based on the national guidance in all subjects. Although the day-to-day planning takes some account of pupils' previous learning, in some subjects teachers are not always creative enough in their planning to make the curriculum more interesting for pupils; for example, too little emphasis is given to developing pupils' independent scientific enquiry skills.
21. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. The school ensures that individuals' learning problems are identified at an early stage and good liaison with support agencies ensures that suitable support is provided for pupils who need it, especially those with specific learning difficulties. Pupils' individual education plans contain appropriately focused learning targets. The issues concerning curriculum planning, however, also impact upon the progress of these pupils and the work is not always tailored well enough to meet their needs. Pupils are given effective help by support staff, but the deployment of these staff is such that their help is scarce, especially in Years 3 to 6.
22. The school provides pupils with good opportunities to experience a wide variety of activities both during lunchtime and after school. Extra-curricular clubs for sport, music, computers and science are run by teachers and visiting specialists. These activities effectively enrich the curriculum, support learning in lessons, and make a good contribution to pupils' personal development. Participation in the 'Sports Co-ordinator Project' has increased pupils' access to a wider range of sports and pupils have good opportunities to take part in competitive sport with other schools. In addition to developing a sense of fair play they experience a high degree of success in local competitions, the most recent being the winning of two games in the local school basketball tournament.
23. The school makes full use of the local community with regular visits and visitors to stimulate interest and enhance the curriculum. These make a significant contribution to the breadth and quality of pupils' experiences of the world outside the school



environment. Examples include visits to a country park, museums, art galleries and places of worship. Residential visits for Years 3 to 6 pupils have a strong focus on pupils' personal development as well as providing pupils with the opportunity to take part in a wider range of activities. Visitors, including theatre groups, enhance the personal, social and health education curriculum and extend pupils' awareness of the importance of a healthy lifestyle.

24. The accommodation is good, particularly in the building that houses Years 3 to 6, where there is a large hall, a computer suite, an art room and additional rooms for small group work. However, the library is now being used as a teachers' resource room and this limits the opportunities for pupils to develop their library and research skills. In the smaller building, housing the Nursery and Reception classes and Years 1 and 2, the recent refurbishment of the classrooms provides pleasant and spacious workspaces that include useful computer areas.
25. Improvements to the resources for ICT, including more computers and a wider range of equipment, ensure that the curriculum now meets statutory requirements for all age groups.

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

Procedures for ensuring pupils' care, welfare, health and safety are satisfactory overall; they are good in the Nursery and Reception classes and satisfactory in Years 1 to 6. The support, advice and guidance for pupils' personal progress are satisfactory, but unsatisfactory for their academic progress. The way in which the school involves pupils in its work and development is good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Carefully planned induction into the Nursery class helps children settle in quickly.
- Good relationships between pupils and adults in school give pupils the confidence to approach an adult for guidance when worried about anything.
- The school council is used well to gather and promote pupils' views and to give them a voice in the life and work of the school.
- The advice and guidance for pupils' academic progress are not good enough.

### **Commentary**

26. Induction into the Nursery class is good. This is partly because of the good liaison the Nursery class staff have with the 'Sure Start' pre-school learning facility situated on the school site. Prospective parents and children visit the Nursery class to meet the staff and see the range of equipment and activities offered. Parents are given detailed information about what is taught and how they will be able to help their children to settle into the routines of school life. Prior to starting in the Nursery class, children attend short sessions to help them to build up trust and confidence. The Nursery staff and the school's special educational needs co-ordinator carry out early assessments of the children's needs to identify any support that may be needed once they start school.
27. Throughout the school, the trust and mutual respect that exist between staff and their pupils give pupils the trust and confidence they need to be able to approach an adult for help or advice if they are worried or concerned about anything. Pupils know that they will be listened to and help will be given. The school's pastoral care worker helps those pupils with personal worries or problems by providing a listening ear and neutral advice, which the pupils can choose to take or not. The high number of pupils seeking

her advice and support indicates the service is very much appreciated. A small number of parents have also requested permission to seek advice on the same confidential basis.

28. The school has regular procedures for asking pupils' opinions about aspects of the school's work and daily routines. Questionnaires are issued and responses are analysed. The school council, with representatives from Years 2 to 6, provides an effective means for improving the communication between pupils and the senior staff on matters of school improvement. Council members canvass classmates for suggestions and bring them to the head teacher for discussion. They organise their own fund-raising activities and account for the money raised. The council has successfully achieved the purchase of better play equipment and a new wide-screen television for pupils to use when bad weather prevents outside play, and is currently discussing improvements for internal decoration and carpets.
29. Teachers and teaching support assistants monitor pupils' academic and personal progress. Pupils' achievement is assessed and recorded through testing and examination of completed work in lessons. The information gathered, however, is not used well enough all of the time and by all of the teachers to ensure that lessons are planned to meet pupils' needs or that national teaching plans are adapted to ensure each pupil can work to his or her full potential.

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

A good partnership between the school and parents has been established. Good links with the local community and other schools are used well to enhance the curriculum and improve the quality of education provided for the pupils.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The school's partnership with parents makes a positive contribution to pupils' learning at home and at school.
- Good use of the local community enhances the curriculum and provides a stimulus to pupils' learning.
- Links with other schools and colleges are used well to support staff development and enhance pupils' learning.

### **Commentary**

30. The school encourages parents to take a role in supporting their children's learning both at home and at school. Parents are consulted regularly on matters such as behaviour policies, school uniform and community use of the premises and the school responds well to parents' concerns. There are a good number of regular parent helpers in the classrooms, particularly in the Year 1 and 2 classes. Parents come into school to demonstrate their skills in crafts and help pupils with their work. Parents often stay with their children at the breakfast club and help with supervision on visits. The school keeps parents informed of their children's progress through annual written progress reports and during consultation meetings with teachers. Adult education courses enable parents to improve their own knowledge and skills in a variety of subjects, and new initiatives such as shared homework exercises and literacy and numeracy support sessions have been started.

31. The school has established good and varied links with the local community. Pupils are given opportunities to extend their learning through visits such as to the local science and innovation centres, farms, country parks and historical sites. Members of the local police, fire service and health service give instruction on personal and home safety, the dangers of drug abuse, and personal health matters. The school takes part in the local tenants' and residents' annual community action day and the choir entertains the local elderly. Links with local organisations have enabled the school to attract donations for premises improvement and sponsorship for sports kit. Local sports teams attend to provide coaching.
32. The school has effective links with other schools and colleges, the most significant one being with the local secondary school. Pupils have many opportunities to share provision in sport and dance and Years 3 and 4 pupils receive tuition in French from secondary school staff. Transfer for the Year 6 leavers is made easier since they are very familiar with the premises. The school is a member of the 'pastoral care group' of five schools, which gives them access to shared training sessions and to the services of a professionally trained counsellor. Membership of the local 'family of schools' provides the head teachers, senior staff and subject co-ordinators of these schools with the opportunity to discuss common problems and share good practice. The school enjoys links with a special school in the south of England, which the school choir visits for a day and enjoys an overnight stay.
33. Good links with local colleges and the University of Birmingham are used to provide additional classroom support from students and graduate teachers in training. Work experience placements are offered to these students and also to secondary school students, many of whom are ex-pupils of this school.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Leadership and management of the school by the head teacher and senior members of staff are both sound. The governance of the school is satisfactory and the governing body meets its statutory duties fully.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The strengths and qualities of the head teacher and deputy head teacher, appointed just a year ago, complement each other well.
- The head teacher is highly influential in the pastoral care of the pupils. He knows what needs to be done to raise academic standards but the management systems to enable this to happen have not had sufficient impact and have been slow in raising standards.
- School leaders and managers have a commitment to inclusion. However, they do not do enough to check on the consistency of pupils' progress or that the work pupils are given takes sufficient account of their different needs and is pitched at the right level.
- Subject leaders have made a good start in finding out about their subject but have not yet used the information to increase the effectiveness of teaching and improve achievement.
- The hard working and committed governing body supports the school well but relies too heavily on the head teacher for information.

### **Commentary**

34. The head teacher has successfully developed an ethos that values everyone as individuals. He knows the pupils extremely well, and has a genuine concern for their well-being. Staff and governors share his commitment and as a result the school is a happy learning environment, which promotes pupils' personal development well. The head teacher is also at the forefront in developing effective links with parents and the community, which support pupils' learning well. These are key strengths in the school and ensure a learning environment in which all pupils are safe and secure and have the foundations to learn.
35. To complement the head teacher's qualities as a shining example in fostering effective relationships and pastoral care, the deputy head teacher's strengths lie in promoting and supporting pupils' academic development. He is a very good role model for teaching, and has very good knowledge of the curriculum. For example, he and the head teacher have identified that the school needs to improve the procedures for checking how well pupils are learning, and whether they are making enough progress, and have made a good start to reviewing these. However, changes are embryonic and there has not been sufficient time to see the impact of these changes on pupils' learning.
36. The head teacher provides clear educational direction for the school. He is focused on improvement and has a sound understanding of what needs to be done to raise standards. Since the previous inspection he has created a senior management team with clearly defined roles and responsibilities. They share his vision for the school, and understand the strengths and weaknesses of the school. However, whilst several of the management systems have the potential to be effective, they are too new yet to have raised standards. For example, a good amount of data is collected on pupils' performance and progress in English but it has not yet been analysed in sufficient detail to pinpoint exactly what needs to be done to enable pupils to achieve well and to raise standards. Subject leaders have made a good start in finding out about their subject. However, the recent monitoring of teaching and learning by some of them, whilst supportive and encouraging, has not been rigorous enough to get to the heart of what is and is not working and to improve the quality of teaching.
37. Staff are fully committed to inclusion, but are not quite there yet in achieving it. They treat all pupils with respect and value them as individuals and they work hard to include pupils in all aspects of school life. However, they do not check accurately what pupils know and what they find difficult, and too often they move on to the next stage of learning before some pupils are ready. As a result, the work they give pupils is not always tailored to their needs and is, at times, too difficult for pupils to achieve well.
38. The governors meet regularly to discuss the work of the school, and many of them visit the school to work with pupils and staff. In particular, the very hard working chair of governors commits a large number of hours each week to visiting the school, helping in the classrooms, and working with the head teacher and staff. The governors are very supportive of the head teacher, and share the staff's commitment in putting a strong emphasis on the pupils' pastoral care. Since the previous inspection they have played a greater part in shaping the direction of the school through, for example, their involvement in the creation and evaluation of the school improvement plan. They are well informed about educational and day-to-day matters through the information provided by the head teacher. However, they rely heavily on this information and, as a result, they do not always scrutinise and where necessary challenge or propose alternatives in order to ensure that there is sufficient rigour in school policy and practice.

39. Financial management is efficient and secure. The school works closely with the local education authority in planning and monitoring the budget. The staff and governors work hard to ensure that money is spent wisely for the benefit of all pupils. For example, the recent investment in resources for ICT has been an important factor in raising the standards in the subject.

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

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	944,470
Total expenditure	933,598
Expenditure per pupil	2,682

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	7,899
Balance carried forward to the next year	18,771

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

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

40. Provision in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory. When children enter the Nursery class most are working at levels well below those expected for their age, especially in communication, language and literacy. As a result, though their achievement is satisfactory, very few children reach the goals expected for their age in any of the areas of learning by the end of the Reception Year. Although teaching and learning are satisfactory in all areas of learning, there are some good features in the teaching, but there are also times when the teaching is unimaginative and somewhat dull. Throughout the Nursery and Reception classes there is good teamwork between the teachers and knowledgeable classroom assistants. They give children plenty of help and provide a caring environment in which young children are happy and feel safe. Children behave well and work hard because the adults have high expectations of behaviour. However, in the 'plan, do and review' sessions, some of the activities do not have a clear enough focus and adults do not always check that children know which activity they need to choose in order to focus on the what they need to learn and practise next.
41. The leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are sound. The Foundation Stage manager sets a good example in teaching; she has a good understanding of the needs of young children and how they learn best.

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

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

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

- Good relationships and high expectations of behaviour by all staff mean that children behave well, work hard, and enjoy learning
- Adults give children plenty of help and encourage them to be independent. However, when there is not a clear purpose to the activities, children lose concentration and too often work alone rather than with others.

#### **Commentary**

42. Though few children reach the expected levels by the end of the Reception Year, their achievement is satisfactory because of sound teaching. Staff have a kind and supportive manner towards the children and create a calm and caring environment with well-established routines. For example, children in the Nursery class take off their coats and quickly join their groups at the beginning of each session, and wash their hands after painting. All staff have consistently high expectations of behaviour so children behave well because they know what is expected of them. Effective reminders and good use of praise encourage children to help one another. Children choose activities independently and, for example, put on their aprons by themselves before using glue. For example, when children in the Nursery class worked with the teacher to program the floor robot, there was a real sense of purpose and children shared, took turns and worked well together. However, when there is less focus to the activities, children work in isolation or rely too much on adult support. For example, though

children in the Reception class shared the vehicles in the sand there was very little interaction between them. Similarly, during 'sorting time' in the Nursery class, many children wandered around unsure of what they were to do, and as a result staff put away many of the activities helped by a small number of children.

## COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Staff have correctly placed a high priority on developing children's speaking skills. However, they sometimes miss opportunities to develop these skills.
- Staff systematically teach the skills children need for reading and promote children's interest in books well. As a result, children enjoy sharing books and a few children read simple words independently by the end of the Reception Year.

### Commentary

43. Though few children reach the expected levels by the end of the Reception Year, their achievement is satisfactory because most start the Nursery class with well below average and sometimes poor language skills. Overall teaching is sound. In the most effective lessons in one of the Reception classes the teacher seized every opportunity to develop children's speaking skills. For example, she extended the children's vocabulary when she used words such as 'pearlised', 'fluorescent', 'dull' and 'bright' to describe the types of paint children could use, and explained that children were going to 'test' different materials. In answer to her well-focused questions one child explained that a piece of fabric felt like "a pillow – when you lie on it it's fluffy". Similarly, in a well-focused activity in the Nursery class, children made 'cakes' from play dough. They talked spontaneously to each other about the ingredients they needed, and what they were doing. However, there are times when staff miss opportunities to develop children's speaking skills. For example, at times there is no clear purpose to some of the role-play activities, and children do not develop their language skills because staff do not join in the play.
44. Children's interest in books is promoted well so they enjoy listening to stories and talking about books. A systematic approach to the teaching the sounds of letters of the alphabet means that many children are beginning to recognise individual letter sounds and a few words by the time they leave the Reception classes, and a few can read a number of words independently. There is an appropriate balance between teaching children the skills they need for writing and letting them write independently.

## MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Adults provide a good range of practical activities that develop children's mathematical skills. However, staff do not check that children know what they need to do to improve their work.
- Occasionally adult-directed sessions are too long which results in children losing concentration.

### Commentary



45. Although few children reach the expected levels for their age by the end of the Reception class their achievement is satisfactory because teaching is sound overall. Children learn best when they are engaged in practical activities matched well to their different abilities, and when adults model precise mathematical language. For example, in a lesson in a Reception class, children were engaged in a variety of well-chosen activities that helped them develop a basic understanding of subtraction. Some children used objects such as beads, others played a game with a dice, and another group used the floor robot to work out subtraction problems. These activities were particularly successful because the planning focused clearly on what children should learn, and gave teaching assistants good guidance. As a result they asked well-focused questions and supported children's learning well. However, at times activities do not have such a clear focus and children sometimes sit for too long so they become restless and lose concentration.

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

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Though staff provide some good opportunities for children to learn from first hand experiences they miss opportunities to extend children's knowledge and understanding of the world.
- Computers are used well to support children's learning.

### **Commentary**

46. Few children reach the expected level for their age, and standards are well below average by the end of the Reception Year, reflecting the limited experiences of most children before they start in the Nursery and the missed opportunities to extend these in class. Children's achievement is satisfactory because of the sound teaching, and is most effective when staff provide children with exciting activities that foster their curiosity. For example, children in a Reception class enthusiastically tested a range of materials to find out which were suitable to make a waterproof hat for a soft toy. Similarly, they found out that dry sand trickled through their fingers but wet 'paste' stuck to their fingers. At times, however, children's experiences are limited by the range of activities and materials available, in both the classroom and the outdoor learning areas.
47. Children in the Nursery and Reception classes use computers regularly and are beginning to develop their computer skills well. Staff ensure that the programs provided are at a suitable level for the children and enhance children's learning in all areas of learning. For example, children in the Nursery class used the computer 'mouse' to 'drag and drop' objects and numbers on screen, which successfully reinforced their mathematical development. Children in the Nursery and Reception classes successfully programmed the floor robot to move a specified number of steps along a number line.

## **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in physical development is **satisfactory**.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Daily use of the good outdoor learning facilities contributes significantly to the children's physical development, especially in the Nursery class.

## **Commentary**

48. Children achieve satisfactorily because of the sound teaching in the Nursery and Reception classes. As a result, by the end of the Reception Year almost half the children reach the levels expected for their age. The area outside the Nursery class is popular with children because it has a good range of wheeled toys and climbing equipment, which successfully stimulates children's enthusiasm. With supervision they share rides and take turns at manoeuvring bikes and cars around the play areas, and climb, slide and balance on the climbing equipment. Teachers provide a variety of good opportunities for children to develop their skills such as cutting and manipulating materials. As a result, children use tools such as paintbrushes and scissors safely, and can manipulate small pieces of construction equipment to make models. Many children in the Reception classes hold pencils correctly and form recognisable letters because teachers give them just the right amount of help and encouragement.

## CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- In the Nursery class, the range of materials and the activities staff give children for art are sometimes not sufficiently varied to enable all children to make good progress
- Though staff provide many opportunities for children to take part in role-play activities, children develop their imagination most effectively when adults join in their play.

### Commentary

49. By the end of the Reception Year, very few children reach the expected level for their age. However, their achievement is satisfactory because overall the teaching and learning are satisfactory. Children in the Reception classes and the Nursery class have sufficient opportunities to use different materials, such as paint and collage materials. However, at times the activities in the Nursery class are not sufficiently varied, and do not enable children to experiment and use their imagination. For example, the teacher showed the children a completed collage of the surface of the moon before giving them a small range of materials to complete their own collage. As a result, the activity became one of copying rather than exploring the media and children coming up with their own ideas.
50. When adults support children in their play activities there is a real sense of purpose and children use and develop their imagination well. For example, children in one of the Reception classes constructed a space ship outside using plastic bricks and broom handles. The teaching assistant gave the children just the right amount of help and asked well-focused questions. As a result, the children talked enthusiastically as they put the finishing touches to the space ship. They took on the roles of 'driver' and 'passengers', and there was great excitement when the driver announced, "Only one more ... OK ... We're ready!" However, there are times when children are unsure what they are expected to do and do not get the best out of the activity. For example, though the teacher provided 'alien' costumes for children in the role-play area in one of the Reception classes, children did not take on roles and most children played in isolation.

## SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

### ENGLISH

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good and imaginative teaching in Years 5 and 6 makes learning fun. Work is tailored to pupils' needs and because of this pupils are enthusiastic, work hard and achieve well.
- In Years 1 to 4, assessment information is not used effectively to ensure that work is matched to pupils' needs or analysed rigorously enough to drive up standards.
- The school has identified the need to develop pupils' speaking skills, but teachers do not regularly plan opportunities for this in the lessons.

### Commentary

51. Standards are well below average in reading, writing and speaking and listening by the end of Years 2 and 6. Most pupils' achievement, including that of those with special educational needs, is satisfactory and standards at the end of the school reflect those on entry. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Common features include teachers' high expectations of pupils' behaviour, and the good relationships between the pupils and teachers. As a result, pupils work hard and behave well to please their teachers. Action has been taken to redress most of the weaknesses identified in the previous inspection, and there has been satisfactory improvement. For example, the strong emphasis on developing pupils' writing has resulted in standards in writing improving faster than the national average. Spelling is now taught more systematically, and pupils in Year 5 and Year 6 have a neat handwriting style and present most of their work carefully.
52. Teachers do not always accurately assess what pupils know and find difficult, and data collected from test results is not analysed in sufficient detail to identify where pupils' strengths and weaknesses lie. Teachers do not adapt the national guidance sufficiently well to meet pupils' varying needs. As a result, work is not pitched at the right level for some of the pupils and does not enable them to build securely on previous learning. In one lesson, for example, Year 2 pupils struggled with the task of scanning text to find information about Florence Nightingale. As a result, they were not able to complete the task of recording the answers to the questions they had been given. Personal learning targets give pupils something to aim for, but they are not always appropriate for the pupils. Teachers' marking does not always help pupils understand what they need to improve and how.
53. The most effective teaching is in Years 5 and 6, where the work is well matched to pupils' needs. Pupils are taught in sets with pupils from their year who have similar abilities. However, teachers ensure that the level of work is further tailored so that it is at just the right level for the pupils so that they can achieve very well. Teachers present work in exciting ways and take into account the different ways pupils learn. Pupils are involved well in lessons through short, sharp and varied activities, such as working together in groups, using whiteboards to record ideas or brainstorming ideas as a class. The teachers constantly challenge the pupils with well-focused questions. As a result, pupils are very enthusiastic, work very hard and are well prepared with their ideas and suitable vocabulary when they come to write. This was evident in a very good lesson in Year 5, for example, where pupils made good use of their discussions and their previous planning to successfully structure non-chronological writing about an imaginary animal.
54. Whilst the school makes use of the national guidance for teaching reading and writing, they do not use it for teaching speaking skills. As a result, teachers do not build effectively on the skills pupils already have, and the opportunities for pupils to develop their speaking skills vary from lesson to lesson. Some teachers regularly use 'response partners', where pupils can rehearse what they are going to say before speaking in front of the class. For example, in a very good lesson in Year 6 the teacher explained the principles of debating very clearly. She then gave pupils very good opportunities to prepare their responses to support or oppose the motion by discussing them with other pupils. As a result, pupils argued their case effectively, explaining their reasons and using contrasting connectives such as 'on the other hand' effectively. However, in other lessons pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to talk about their work. For example, in a Year 1 class pupils were asked to write questions but the tasks was too difficult for many of them as they were not able to formulate questions orally.

55. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The school, led by the co-ordinator, has worked hard to successfully address the issues from the previous inspection and improvements have been satisfactory. She has correctly identified further areas as priorities for improvement, such as developing pupils' speaking skills. However, although she has some opportunities to observe lessons and examine teachers' planning, the process is not rigorous enough. Neither her observations, nor those of other senior managers, focus sufficiently on the quality of teaching and learning or on the standards pupils achieve. This means that there is not a clear understanding of the ways teachers can improve their teaching and of how standards can be raised further.

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

56. The use of English in other subjects is unsatisfactory and pupils' well below average competence in reading, writing and speaking has a detrimental impact on standards across all subjects. Because pupils' speaking, reading and writing skills are well below average they are not able to articulate their ideas, or write in sufficient detail in subjects such as religious education. For example, pupils in Years 3 and 4 could not explain the importance of the work of Mother Teresa, and many were not able to record their ideas about how people could help others, because of their below average writing skills. Teachers do not plan specifically how to develop pupils' reading, writing and speaking skills in other subjects, and because of this they miss opportunities to help and support pupils' learning.

## **MATHEMATICS**

The provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching in Years 5 and 6 is good.
- Pupils with special educational needs do well in Years 3 to 6.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are good, but their poor speaking skills hamper their learning.
- Information about pupils' achievement is not used well enough to tailor the teaching plans to meet the needs of all pupils.

### **Commentary**

57. Although standards are well below the national average by the end of Years 2 and 6, pupils achieve satisfactorily over time. This is because teaching and learning are sound overall. Throughout the school, lessons are purposeful and teachers make clear to pupils what they are to do and learn. This gives the work purpose and pupils work hard because they understand what they are to do and why. This, coupled with good relationships and teachers' high expectations for pupils' personal development, results in pupils generally behaving well and having positive attitudes to their work. Pupils respond well to the support and guidance they receive from adults and are confident enough to seek help when they are unsure about something. However, pupils are less confident at volunteering during oral sessions when teachers ask them to talk about what they have done or are doing. Often, only the few most confident talkers volunteer to answer questions and take part in the discussion.

58. Most of the pupils with special educational needs in Years 3 to 6 with specific numeracy learning targets are taught in the lower sets where the provision is good because imaginative teaching and sensitive well-organised support combine to accelerate progress and increase pupils' self-esteem. Teaching and learning are consistently good in these sets and in Years 5 and 6, because teachers carefully build pupils' knowledge and understanding in small, manageable steps, checking that each has been understood before moving on. They involve pupils in evaluating their learning so that they have a clear understanding of what they have achieved. At the end of the lessons, they check on what pupils have learnt and use the information to adapt the following day's work to take account of how well pupils have or have not progressed.
59. However, this does not happen well enough in Years 1 to 4. In these classes teachers set work at the expected level for each age group closely following the national guidance, but they do not take enough account of pupils' starting point. This is because they make too little use of assessment information to identify what pupils already know and what they need to learn next. Consequently, ideas are often taught too soon and because of this pupils' learning is sometimes built on shaky ground and their progress is slower than it could be. In addition, teachers do not analyse pupils' responses to the end-of-year test questions in order to identify specific strengths and weaknesses in their knowledge and understanding. Consequently, teachers do not have enough detailed information to adapt the year plans or to set personal targets for pupils in order to ensure that weaknesses are dealt with early, and pupils understand what they need to do in order to improve their work.
60. Leadership and management are sound overall and satisfactory improvements have been made to the school's provision in mathematics since the last inspection. A whole-school pursuit of improved standards in the subject over the last few years has improved things, and between 1999 and 2004 standards rose faster than the national rate. However, they are currently barely keeping pace with the national upward trend, and are lagging behind those of similar schools. The school knows that the key lies in improving the use teachers make of assessment information to tailor the work to meet the needs of individual pupils more effectively and is working hard to deal with this. However, systems are too new to impact yet on raising standards.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

61. Opportunities for pupils to use their mathematical skills in other subjects of the curriculum are satisfactory. Pupils apply their data-handling skills when learning to use graphing programs and databases and when they use ICT programs to help them practise skills, as in a mixed Year 1 and 2 lesson seen on subtraction. Pupils make use of their mathematical skills in science, for instance to measure the growth of seeds under different conditions and create a graph so that these can be compared numerically. This helps them to develop an appreciation of the practical uses of mathematical skills. However, pupils' lack of confident mathematical skills sometimes makes them reluctant to use them in other subjects.

### **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **unsatisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Improvements to the teaching of investigative science are starting to have an impact on learning, but too much emphasis is still put on learning scientific facts in isolation.
- The subject leader has made a good start at analysing data and pinpointing what needs doing but the management structures are not yet fully in place to enable her to get to the heart of what is going on and there has been insufficient improvement since the last inspection.
- Although the teaching is satisfactory overall, there is insufficient allowance made for consolidation and repetition to ensure pupils have grasped an idea before moving on to the next step.
- Assessment is unsatisfactory.
- There is some good use of ICT in science and the science lunchtime club promotes science well by increasing pupils' curiosity and interest in asking why and how.

## Commentary

62. Insufficient improvement has been made to science since the last inspection and standards have barely kept pace with the national upward trend. This is because, until recently, the school's focus has been on improving provision in literacy and numeracy, and there has been very little emphasis on raising standards and improving teaching and learning in science. However, with improvements to literacy and numeracy beginning to show through, the school is now looking at how it can improve teaching and learning in science. With this in mind, last term the subject leader was given two days to start to explore what is happening in science. She spent the time wisely watching lessons, talking to pupils, analysing staff and pupil questionnaires, and interpreting the limited data available. As a result, she has a broad idea of what is and is not working, although the school has yet to put in place effective management systems to enable her to promote and bring about the improvements. Nevertheless, under her satisfactory leadership, there is, at least, now a clear sense of purpose emerging and a clear plan for the future.
63. The subject leader is a good model for effective teaching. She is very clear about what she wants to see happening around the school and is determined to get there. Some staff training has given teachers a clearer idea about how to teach investigative work more effectively and there are signs of this practice becoming more embedded in some classes, such as when pupils in Years 3 and 4 tested the absorbency of different brands of kitchen towels to see which gave best value for money. Some of their plans did not work, but they learned from their mistakes and already, from one lesson to the next, started to change their investigation methods because they realised the results were not going to be valid. However, this way of teaching is embryonic and in some years there is still too much focus on imparting knowledge rather than on developing pupils' enquiry skills so that they can acquire the knowledge themselves. Over-direction in Years 5 and 6 in particular means that these pupils get results at the end of lessons, but they learn too little because they rely too much on following the teachers' instructions and so lack experience and confidence in thinking for themselves. Whilst this means that their workbooks appear to show secure enough learning, when left to their own devices such as in the national tests, pupils have little success. For example, Year 6 struggled to explain how they would test a given hypothesis. They did not understand that they would need to carry out the test several times to get reliable results and so ensure validity. Although they could say that a test is only fair "if you change one thing and keep the rest the same", they became very confused about how to put this into practise.

64. This means that, overall, standards are not good enough and pupils do not achieve well enough over time. This is because weaknesses in teaching that have yet to be dealt with are still hampering progress, albeit to a lesser degree than they were. In both Years 2 and 6, only about half of the pupils are working at the level expected for their age and very few are working at the higher level. Although teaching is now satisfactory overall, it is barely so and there are still a lot of improvements to make. Assessment is unsatisfactory. All pupils are moved on to the next step regardless of whether they are ready because teachers do not check well enough on pupils' learning to find out who needs to go over an idea again and who is ready to move on. This means that learning is too often built on shaky ground, exacerbated further when teachers move inflexibly through the national subject guidelines without sufficient regard to adapting them to deal with the gaps in pupils' learning and their need for repetition in order to consolidate their learning.
65. This has not been picked up on because management systems are embryonic and not yet embedded. Currently no one checks that individual pupils are doing at least as well as could be expected or that their progress is consistent as they move through the school. This is because assessment information is not collated in an easy-to-interpret way and cannot therefore be used to identify, pursue and eradicate gaps in pupils' learning and weaknesses in teaching.
66. The weekly science club, currently for pupils in Years 3 and 4, and later to be used to boost the learning of Year 6 pupils, successfully promotes interest in science. For example, pupils were fascinated when a pin inserted into the top of an inflated up balloon failed to cause the balloon to either pop or deflate. However, the club is not in itself sufficient to make up for weaknesses in class teaching.
67. ICT is used well to support learning in science. For example, pupils in Years 5 and 6 confidently and competently used data-loggers to measure sound when testing which materials make the best insulator. They 'fetched' the data and imported it quickly and knowledgeably into a multi-media presentation program.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils achieve well as they progress through the school.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good overall.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are good and they enjoy the ICT lessons.
- Leadership and management are good and planned improvements are successfully implemented.



## Commentary

68. Standards at the end of Years 2 and 6 are in line with those expected nationally and have risen since the last inspection when they were below those expected for pupils age seven and 11. Pupils achieve well, particularly given that very few have any pre-school experience of using computers or access to programs other than computer games outside school. The computer clubs for pupils in Years 5 and 6 enhance the curriculum and provide these pupils with more opportunities to practise their skills and refine them further, so helping to overcome the barriers to their learning. The school has successfully addressed all the issues identified in the previous report and the good gains made in standards and achievement result from marked improvements in the quality of teaching and in the range and deployment of resources, and effective subject leadership.
69. Lessons have a clear focus and are well organised. Teachers draw on secure subject knowledge and give clear explanations and demonstrations because training has been effective. Some teachers use technology well to involve pupils in an interactive way during the introduction to the task and most use a good balance of questioning and telling to clarify and extend pupils' understanding so that they are confident in applying their knowledge to a new activity or subject. Work builds well on pupils' prior learning. Year 2 pupils, for the most part, confidently log on and off and quickly learn how to use an appropriate range of programs, although some still do not find it easy to control the computer 'mouse'. As pupils progress through the school they gradually use a wider range of programs and applications so that by Year 6 they use these skills to create multi-media presentations. Although pupils are developing some good skills, they are not always clear about the benefits of using ICT.
70. Pupils are keen to begin the tasks and they organise themselves sensibly when working with a partner or in groups. They co-operate well with each other when working at the computers and take turns with equipment so that all get to practise their skills. They readily help and support each other, which contributes well to their learning and to their personal development. Pupils are generally well supported by teachers and, when available, teaching assistants; relationships are good and pupils are willing to seek and receive their advice.
71. The co-ordinator has a good subject knowledge and understanding of the curriculum. She has led the improvements to the provision for ICT well and is keen to build on these. Information gained from checking on teaching and learning, and from surveys relating to staff confidence and pupils' access to computers, guides the plans for further improvements. She has revised the assessment procedures so that teachers have a more precise picture of what pupils can do well and what they need to improve, in order to match tasks more accurately to pupils' differing needs. Resources and accommodation are good overall so that pupils now have greater access to computers and cover a wider range of work.

## Information and communication technology across the curriculum

72. The use of ICT to enhance learning in other subjects is satisfactory. For example, word-processing skills are used in a number of subjects, pupils enhance their data-handling skills in mathematics using graphs and databases and ICT is used effectively in geography and history to research information from the Internet and other resources. Teachers often link the development of pupils' computer skills in ICT lessons with work being done in other areas of the curriculum, such as science. For

example, pupils in Years 5 and 6 used data-logging equipment to monitor environmental conditions. However, in some lessons teachers do not give enough emphasis to how ICT can be used as a tool for learning. The recent increase in the number of computers in the classroom reflects the subject action plan of improving resources so that pupils can make greater use of technology in their day-to-day learning.

## HUMANITIES

73. It is not possible to make firm judgements about the provision, including teaching and learning, in **geography** or **history**, because there was insufficient time to observe any complete lessons. However, from examining pupils' completed work and talking to pupils in Year 2 and Year 6, it is evident that in both subjects teachers make satisfactory use of national guidance to make sure that pupils build on the knowledge and skills they have learnt previously and that teachers plan satisfactory links to other subjects. For example, pupils in Years 3 and 4 painted portraits of the Tudors, and pupils in Year 2 took on the role of soldiers in the First World War when they wrote letters. However, teachers do not plan opportunities for pupils to use their speaking skills or to develop specialist language in their work.
74. History and geography are taught at different times of the year and during the inspection there were no geography lessons. However, from talking to pupils and examining their work it is evident that pupils develop their mapping skills satisfactorily as they move through the school. For example, pupils in Year 2 mark physical and human features on their maps of the imaginary Isle of Struay, and have a satisfactory understanding of some of the similarities and differences between their local environment and Struay. Pupils in Year 6 use atlases to locate the continents of the world, and can explain how climate is affected by factors such as the proximity to the equator.
75. In history, pupils develop key skills satisfactorily, such as finding evidence from artefacts, because teachers make sound use of primary and secondary resources. For example, the teacher had explained key facts about the life of Florence Nightingale to pupils in Year 2 and had provided a good video, which made the work interesting. As a result, the pupils Year 2 had a good understanding of the differences between hospitals at the time of Florence Nightingale and modern hospitals. In Year 6 pupils knew that artefacts, such as pottery, and writing from the time, provided evidence of life in Ancient Greece. For example, they explained that they could find out about the clothes and weapons a soldier used from looking at the decorations on the pottery. Pupils in Year 3 and Year 4 talked enthusiastically about their visit to Wollaton Hall as part of their work on the Tudors. They dressed up in costumes of the period, joined in Tudor dances and wrote with quill pens. This visit brought the work alive and promoted pupils' understanding well.

## Religious education

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers encourage pupils to apply what they learn in their lessons to everyday life. This effectively supports their personal and social development.

- Teachers do not give pupils sufficient opportunities to talk about what they know and understand.
- Because there are few checks on what pupils know, work is not always sufficiently adapted to meet pupils' differing needs.

## **Commentary**

76. Pupils do not reach the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus at the end of Year 2 or Year 6, but achievement is sound. Only three lessons were observed, and as a lot of work covered in religious education lessons centres around discussions, there was limited written work to examine. However, from these lessons and an analysis of the available work and talking to pupils, teaching and learning are sound.
77. In the most effective lessons teachers find interesting ways to help pupils understand the relevance of what they have learnt to their everyday life, and to discover the meaning behind religions as well as the facts. For example, in a lesson in Years 5 and 6, pupils acted out short plays which demonstrated that they understood that the sayings of Muhammad, such as 'No man hath given his child anything better than good manners', are relevant to their own lives as well as to the lives of Muslims. Role-play also gave pupils a good opportunity to develop their speaking skills. They planned the plays, took on the parts of different characters and performed them in front of their classmates.
78. However, teachers regularly miss opportunities for pupils to talk about their work and reflect on what they have learnt. For example, in a lesson about Mother Teresa, pupils listened to the teacher for a long time and only a few pupils entered into the short discussion. As a result, many pupils were unable to recall the information the teacher gave them. Pupils of all abilities were given the same task, which did not take into account pupils' different needs. As a result, pupils who had limited literacy skills did not complete sufficient work. The inaccurate assessment of pupils' abilities and the incorrect matching of work to pupils' different abilities are major factors in preventing pupils from reaching higher standards than at present.
79. The leadership and management of religious education are satisfactory and there is adequate checking on the quality of provision. Action has been taken on most of the areas found to need improvement at the previous inspection and improvement has been satisfactory. There is a satisfactory range of resources and these are improving pupils' experience and knowledge. A systematic approach to teaching pupils about Christianity and other faiths ensures pupils' understanding and knowledge build as they go through the school. As a result, pupils gain some insight into, for example, the similarities and differences between different faiths and the importance of their sacred texts. The co-ordinator has recently introduced a programme for collective worship in which a theme from the religious education learning programme is explored throughout the week. For example, during the inspection week the theme of 'We are unique' gave pupils a good opportunity to reflect on what makes people unique, and supported their spiritual, moral and social development well.

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

80. These subjects were sampled, but there was insufficient evidence to judge provision, standards or teaching in design and technology, music and physical education or to judge provision or teaching in art and design. Evidence was gathered, however, from

looking at teachers' planning and samples of pupils' work and from discussions with staff.

81. Standards in art and design are in line with national expectations and achievement is good. This is because the **art and design** curriculum gives pupils experience of working with an appropriate range of materials, including those found in the natural environment. Teachers' planning indicates good integration of opportunities for pupils to study the styles and techniques used by well-known artists, such as Lowry. Pupils make satisfactory use of their sketchbooks to practise techniques, such as exploring position and movement, which is reflected, for example, in the good Year 5 and 6 drawings of people in action. Pupils of all ages incorporate good detail into their artwork to make it accurate and life-like. They use colour and shade well to create depth and line to create perspective. Teachers plan appropriate links with other subjects; for example, pupils in Years 1 and 2 create colourful patterns using the computer. Participation in the National Gallery's 'Take One Picture' project has generated new insights into the creation of works of art and helped to raise the profile of the subject within the school.
82. Teachers make use of the national guidance when planning for **design and technology** so that pupils experience an appropriate range of designing and making skills. They undertake a variety of projects, including, by pupils in Years 3 and 4, designing and making a board game. The recorded aspects of this work, however, such as planning the method and sequence of making and evaluation of the final product, are of very variable quality. The information is clearly communicated by more able pupils, but not completed by others. Currently Years 3 and 4 pupils are studying paper carrier bags. They investigate made products to inform their own work. In the session seen, however, pupils appeared reluctant to undertake the measuring task, reflecting their lack of confident mathematical skills.
83. Planning for **music** covers all strands of the music curriculum although the co-ordinator is working to raise the profile of the subject and broaden opportunities further for pupils to take part in this creative art. All year groups have opportunities to take part in musical performances, in which the focus is on singing. Pupils who are keen on this activity can extend their experience by joining the school choir, which is very popular. Some of the choir take part in a joint performance with an Essex school for pupils with special educational needs. This contributes well to their personal development and promotes, through regular attendance at rehearsals, an understanding of commitment. Although offered, very few pupils take up the opportunity to learn a musical instrument. Resources for music, reported as unsatisfactory at the last inspection, still require some improvement.
84. In **physical education**, the school plans appropriately for the development of pupils' physical skills and the curriculum covers all key areas. All pupils take part in regular indoor and outdoor physical education activities, and there is a planned programme of swimming lessons. The curriculum is enhanced well by good provision for sport outside the school day. The good range of sports clubs includes football, netball, basketball, rugby and orienteering, with opportunities for pupils to learn from visiting specialists and professionals.

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

Provision in personal, social and health education and citizenship is **satisfactory**.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There are suitable opportunities for pupils to take responsibility and show initiative but not enough for them to debate and discuss topical issues.
- The school council enables pupils to influence change.
- Most pupils understand the need to get on with others, and appreciate the rights of individuals.
- The school has gained the first of the Healthy Schools Awards and is now going for an Emotional, Health and Well-being Award.
- No one checks on how well pupils are learning or how well teachers are teaching.

## **Commentary**

85. Although no discrete personal, social and health education lessons and only a few 'circle times' were seen, from talking with pupils and the co-ordinator, examining the co-ordinator's file and looking at planning, teaching is sound, achievement is satisfactory, and pupils broadly meet the recommendations of the non-statutory teaching guidance.
86. This subject is not generally timetabled as a discrete subject and the lack of a formal curriculum means that some discussions about current environmental issues, such as the recent Tsunami in the Far East, take place, but these are short and too incidental to impact enough on pupils' understanding of world-wide events and issues. However, around the school, pupils get many opportunities to take responsibility and show initiative, such as through their work on the school council, which gives pupils a good voice in what goes on in the school and the opportunity to change things. Members take their work very seriously and enjoy the responsibility it gives them.
87. Most Year 6 pupils understand the need for rules in school and laws throughout the country, because if there were none "It would be like gangs in New York". They know that being naughty is not something to be proud of because "it does not impress the teachers or make Mum proud of you" and "sets a bad example to the little ones". They have some useful ideas about how to stay away from trouble and know that there is safety in numbers when being pressured by peers to smoke or take drugs. They talk confidently about how people have the right to believe in different things and have a basic knowledge of the major world religions and cultures and they fully understand how the media can present things in different ways to influence the way you think.
88. The school is very focused on healthy living and pupils are aware of the need to eat a healthy diet and take regular exercise "to pump your blood round faster" and "burn off calories". The school has gained a Healthy Schools Award and is now going for the Emotional, Health and Well-being Award.
89. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The co-ordinator has done some good work for the national awards and her commitment to gaining further awards is good. However, she does not have a clear enough idea of what is going on around the school or about what needs improving because she has seen only three lessons so far. These observations are more descriptive than evaluative, making her unclear about how well pupils are learning and what is and is not working in teaching.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
<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>4</b>
Pupils' achievement	4
<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities (ethos)</b>	<b>3</b>
Attendance	4
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>	<b>4</b>
The quality of teaching	4
How well pupils learn	4
The quality of assessment	5
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	4
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	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3
<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>4</b>
The governance of the school	4
The leadership of the headteacher	4
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).*