

## INSPECTION REPORT

### **LITTLE PAXTON PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Little Paxton, St Neots

LEA area: Cambridgeshire

Unique reference number: 110733

Headteacher: Mrs B English

Lead inspector: Mr F Carruthers

Dates of inspection: 18 – 20 January 2005

Inspection number: 267221

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:	4 – 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	239
School address:	Gordon Road Little Paxton St Neots Cambridgeshire
Postcode:	PE19 6NG
Telephone number:	01480 375600
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs P Conway
Date of previous inspection:	11 / 01 / 1999

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This average sized primary school is situated in the village of Little Paxton near St Neots. There are more boys on roll than girls. Children enter the Reception class in the September of the school year in which they are five. The attainment of the children on entry varies and in most years is broadly average. The attainment on entry of the children in the current Reception class was below average, however. There are very few pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and none is at the early stages of learning English as an additional language. The village from which the majority of the children come has less social deprivation than is normally found. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs, of whom four have statements, is below average. Their needs include emotional or behaviour difficulties, autism, hearing impairment and multiple learning needs. Three pupils are in public care. Pupil mobility<sup>1</sup> is similar to that found in most schools but in last year's Year 6 the rate was more than twice the average. The school is a *Health Promoting School* and it has achieved *Beacon* status, the *Artsmark* and a *School Achievement Award*.

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<sup>1</sup> Mobility refers to the proportion of pupils who join or leave the school at times other than starting in the Reception class or at the end of Year 6.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
21285	Mr F Carruthers	Lead inspector	English, Geography, History, Information and communication technology
11414	Mrs A Bennett	Lay inspector	
14732	Mrs E Korn	Team inspector	The Foundation Stage, Science, Art and design, Design and technology
20007	Mr T Neat	Team inspector	Mathematics, Music, Physical education, Religious education, Special educational needs

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## **REPORT CONTENTS**

	Page
<b>PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS</b>	
<b>STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS</b>	<b>8</b>
Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
<b>QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL</b>	<b>11</b>
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
<b>LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECTS</b>	
<b>AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS</b>	<b>28</b>

## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**This is an effective school.** Strengths include pupils' very good achievement in English and good achievement in information and communication technology, the good quality of the provision, including teaching and learning, and good leadership by the headteacher and the governing body. Pupils' achievement in mathematics and science and the management of the school are satisfactory. The school gives **good** value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- standards in English are well above average and pupils achieve very well;
- provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good and pupils achieve well;
- pupils have good attitudes towards learning and behave well;
- teaching assistants and support teachers make a very good contribution to the overall quality of pupils' learning;
- pupils' skills solving written problems in mathematics are insecure and in science higher attaining pupils are not achieving as well as they could;
- the curriculum is enriched very well, especially by additional creative experiences and residential trips but time allocated to mathematics in Years 3 to 6 is lower than in most schools;
- the headteacher has made a good start to her leadership of the school and the governing body is very well led by the chairperson;
- the role of the subject leaders is under-developed.

Overall, the school has made good improvement since the last inspection despite major changes of personnel at senior and middle management level. The school has achieved three national awards in recent years. High standards have been maintained in English but they have not held up as well in mathematics and science. Improvements to provision in information and communication technology and to the school environment have been good. There were no key issues at the last inspection. Satisfactory improvements have been made to the three minor issues raised then: the provision in the Reception class is now good; there are good cross-curricular links between subjects and with literacy and information and communication technology; higher attaining pupils are doing well in English but not quite as well in mathematics and science.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

*Key: A\* - in top 5% of schools; A - well above average; B – above average; C – average; D – below average; E – well below average; E\* - in bottom 5% of schools*

*Similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 2.*

**Pupils' achievement is good overall** and very good in English but the more able pupils are underperforming in mathematics in Years 3 to 6 and in science throughout the school. Children make good progress in the Reception class and the majority are on course to attain by the end of the Reception year the early learning goals in all areas of development inspected. There was insufficient evidence to judge attainment in physical development. Pupils continue to achieve well in reading and writing in Years 1 and 2 and standards are above average in Year 2. Standards in mathematics in Year 2 are average. The attainment of pupils currently in Year 2 was below the levels normally found in mathematical development when these children joined the school and they have progressed well. Achievement in science is satisfactory and standards are average in Year 2

but could be higher. In Years 3 to 6, pupils achieve very well in English because of very good provision. Achievement in mathematics and science is satisfactory but pupils' ability to solve problems and carry out investigations is limited. These aspects for improvement feature in the current school improvement plan. In Year 6, current standards are well above average in English, above average in information and communication technology and average in mathematics and science. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well. The table above indicates how standards have varied over three years because of variations in the nature of the year groups. Standards were high in 2003, for instance, and in English were in the top five per cent of schools nationally. In 2004, an unusually high proportion of pupils with special educational needs in the year group and some pupils with below average attainment joining the school from other schools shortly before the tests led to standards dipping sharply. As a result, in mathematics, for example, the results were in the bottom five per cent of similar schools. This was a blip and the school is on course for higher standards in the current Year 6. **The quality of pupils' personal development is good.** Their social development is very good. Levels of attendance are above average and pupils' attitudes to learning and their behaviour are good. A few pupils have emotional or behavioural difficulties and these pupils receive valuable assistance from support staff. The school's positive behaviour policy, however, is not used consistently enough in order that pupils hear others being praised and rewarded for behaving well.

### **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The quality of education, including teaching and learning, is good.** Strengths in teaching include the very good use made of supporting teachers and classroom assistants who contribute significantly, for instance, to the good progress the children make in the Reception class and pupils make in reading throughout the school. There are some shortcomings in the teaching of mathematics and science. Procedures to assess pupils' progress are effective in English and mathematics but not fully established in science and information and communication technology. The curriculum is good overall and is enhanced very well by a good range of creative activities, Theme Weeks, visits and visitors to school. Provision for pupils' welfare, support and guidance is good and there are good links maintained with parents, the community and other schools.

### **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**Leadership and governance of the school are good.** The headteacher has made a good start in leading the school and has a clear vision of how she wants the school to develop. She is well supported by the recently appointed deputy headteacher and the good work of the governing body. The management of the school is satisfactory with strengths in financial management. The role of the various subject leaders, some of whom have changed responsibilities, is under-developed, particularly in monitoring teaching and learning in their subjects.

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

Both parents and pupils have positive views of the school. Parents agree that their children like school and make good progress. Some are concerned about the behaviour of a small minority of pupils who have emotional or behavioural difficulties and how it affects their children. Inspectors find that the school is committed to improving the behaviour of the few but consider the behaviour policy is not used to maximum effect. Some parents find the links the school makes with them could be better but inspectors consider these links to be good. The school has noted the concerns.

### **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- increase the time spent teaching mathematics in Years 3 to 6 and remedy the shortcomings in teaching in order to improve pupils' achievement in the subject;
- in science, provide more challenge for higher attaining pupils and more opportunities to develop pupils' independence in practical activities in order to improve achievement;
- continue to develop the monitoring and evaluating roles of subject leaders.

In addition, staff should make better use of the positive behaviour policy in order to praise and reward good behaviour.

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

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

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

Pupils' achievement is good overall. It is very good in English and standards are well above average. Achievement is good in information and communication technology, where standards in Year 6 are above average. Pupils achieve satisfactorily in mathematics and science and standards are average in Year 6. In Year 2, standards are above average in English and average in mathematics, science and information and communication technology.

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

- Standards in speaking, listening and reading are high by Year 6 and pupils achieve very well. Standards of writing are above average.
- Children get off to a good start in the Reception class.
- Pupils with special educational needs achieve well.
- Pupils achieve well in Years 1 and 2 in English, mathematics and information and communication technology.
- Pupils' skills solving written problems in mathematics in Years 3 to 6 are insecure.
- In science higher attaining pupils are not achieving as well as they could.

#### **Commentary**

1. Pupils' achievement in English is very good. This aspect is a key strength of the school. Because provision is very well planned, making full use of skilled support staff to teach small groups in lessons of the National Literacy Strategy and to supplement pupils' learning with additional strategies such as the *Early Literacy* and *Additional Literacy Support*, pupils make very good progress in reading. By Year 6, standards are well above average. Throughout the school, pupils' achievement in speaking and listening skills is very good. Pupils are articulate and give full answers in discussions. Writing has been a focus for attention and shortcomings have been identified in pupils' work. As a result, standards have been consolidated and are above average in Year 6. Since the time of the last inspection, high standards have been maintained despite a drop in 2004, which was caused by the nature of the year group, with a higher than average proportion of pupils with special educational needs in it and above average pupil mobility. In 2003, the school's performance was in the top five per cent of all schools. Targets for the school to achieve this year are high and in the past the school has been successful in reaching them. The leadership and management of the subject have contributed very well to this performance. The commitment of governors and senior staff to the importance of basic skills teaching in this subject is clear in the school's policies and practice.
2. Children make good progress in the Reception year from their attainment on entry. They achieve well in all the areas of learning inspected. The majority of children are on course to attain the goals for early learning in all areas of development except physical development where no judgement was possible. Good achievement is the result of effective provision and teaching which is good overall and often very good. The children concentrate well and join in activities readily. Their speaking skills come on well because of the many opportunities for conversation they have. They enjoy sharing books with an adult and begin to identify letter sounds. Early attempts at writing are good and their understanding of numbers to 20 is a strong feature of their mathematical development.
3. Most pupils with special educational needs make good progress and many make very good progress in relation to their prior attainment. The school spends much money and effort on ensuring that every pupil with specific needs has targeted support in the classroom. The teaching assistants work well and often very effectively with pupils, contributing strongly to the



good progress they make. Gifted and talented pupils make good progress in English and information and communication technology, and satisfactory progress in most other subjects. Overall, there is no significant difference between the performance of boys and girls.

4. Younger pupils achieve well in mathematics. For many years the results attained by pupils in Year 2 in the national tests have been well above average compared with all schools and similar schools. In 2001 and 2002 they were in the top five per cent of schools nationally. Pupils' achievement in the current Years 1 and 2 is good. Standards are average, but the attainment of pupils currently in Year 2 was below the levels normally found in mathematical development when these children joined the school. As a result, it is clear that they have progressed well. Achievement in Years 3 to 6 is satisfactory overall but there is room for improvement. For example, the level of challenge for higher attaining pupils is sometimes insufficient and there are too few opportunities for pupils to solve problems that involve words and to undertake investigations. In the current Year 6, standards are average overall and teachers anticipate that the proportion of pupils attaining the higher Level 5 will also be similar to the average for all schools. This is an important priority for improvement.
5. In science, pupils' achievement is satisfactory. A high proportion of pupils attain expected levels in national assessments and tests in Years 2 and 6 but there are too few pupils attaining the higher Levels 3 and 5. This is partly because the extended curriculum at the higher level is not being taught in Year 2. This is resulting in very few pupils attaining Level 3 compared to similar schools. In Years 3 to 6, there is some inconsistency in approach to the teaching and some is directed too much by the teacher so that pupils' investigative skills are limited.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	17.8 (17.6)	15.8 (15.7)
Writing	16.7 (16.4)	14.6 (14.6)
Mathematics	18.4 (18.2)	16.2 (16.3)

*There were 31 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	27.2 (30.6)	26.9 (26.8)
Mathematics	25.9 (28.7)	27.0 (26.8)
Science	28.1 (30.3)	28.6 (28.6)

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

6. Standards in information and communication technology are average in Year 2 and above average in Year 6. Pupils achieve well across a range of applications because of the good provision in the subject, skilled teaching and support staff and good use of hardware and software. Attainment in religious education is average in Years 2 and 6 and in art and design it is average in Year 6. No judgements were made on standards in other subjects.

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

Pupils have good attitudes towards learning and behave well. The school makes good provision for their personal development, and provides particularly well for them socially. Attendance is good and pupils arrive very punctually.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils enjoy school, work hard, and almost all behave well.
- Pupils are given very good opportunities to develop socially, and there is good provision for their moral development.
- The positive behaviour policy is not consistently used to improve the behaviour of a small number of pupils who have emotional or behavioural difficulties.
- Assemblies do not contribute sufficiently to pupils' spiritual development.

## Commentary

7. Parents confirm that pupils enjoy school. They arrive happily, know what to do at the start of the day, and quickly settle to classroom routines. Pupils are given good opportunities to play their part in the school community, and good numbers attend after-school clubs. They arrive very punctually, attendance is above the national median, and has been at a high level for a number of years. No absence that is unauthorised. Parents and the school work well together to ensure high levels of attendance.

### Attendance in the latest complete reporting year 2003 – 2004 (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	4.6	School data	0.0
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.*

8. Almost all pupils are keen to learn, and they are interested in their work, doing their best. They concentrate well, particularly when supported by an adult, because relationships in school are good. A few pupils have behavioural problems, which is of concern to some parents. The school has provided them with additional adult support in class. This works satisfactorily, but teachers are not reinforcing acceptable behaviour enough, as laid out in the school's positive behaviour policy, in order that pupils hear others being praised for behaving well. The school is aware of pupils who lack confidence and this would build the self-esteem of those pupils throughout the school who do behave well.
9. Pupils are kindly, but seek adult approval: they want to 'get it right'. The school council, concerned about pupils misusing the quiet area of the playground, could only think of negative ways of dealing with the problem, and were quite interested in the idea of modelling good and quiet behaviour themselves. Assemblies mostly comply as acts of collective worship but do not encourage deeper reflection and understanding of beliefs enough. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory.
10. Pupils in Year 6 enthusiastically get on with their day-to-day responsibilities and are seen playing with the youngest children at break times and eating with them at lunch. Behaviour at playtimes is good with pupils of all ages playing well together. There have been no exclusions in recent years, and the school follows up carefully any reported incidents of bullying, using teaching time to reinforce its inappropriateness. The school provides very well for pupils' social development through residential visits such as those in Years 4, 5 and 6. Provision for pupils' moral development is good. Pupils are clear about right and wrong, and they enjoy the reward schemes.
11. Teachers have clear guidance on ways to incorporate aspects of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development into their teaching. Provision for pupils' cultural understanding is satisfactory. Through geography and religious education they have some idea about different

countries and faiths, and the school council is raising money for victims of the recent tsunami disaster.

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

All aspects of provision are good with strengths in teaching, learning and the enhanced curriculum. There are shortcomings in provision for mathematics and science. Provision for pupils' welfare is good and there are effective links with parents, the community and other schools.

### Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is good, as are the procedures to assess pupils' progress.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The best teaching is in the Foundation Stage and in English.
- Teaching assistants and support teachers make a very good contribution to the overall quality of pupils' learning.
- Teaching in mathematics and science has some shortcomings.
- Procedures to assess pupils' achievement in English and mathematics are effective helping the staff to track their progress over time, but they are not yet fully established in science and information and communication technology.

### Commentary

#### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 32 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0 (0%)	4 (12%)	20 (63%)	8 (25%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

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

12. The proportion of good or better teaching is similar to that found at the last inspection and there is no teaching is unsatisfactory. The quality has been maintained despite several changes of staff over the last few years. The very good teaching was observed in the Foundation Stage and in English lessons involving pupils in Years 5 and 6. These aspects are two strengths of the school and the quality of teaching reflects that.
13. Key features of the good teaching include the strong teamwork evident among teaching and support staff. The teaching assistants and the part-time teachers who do not have full responsibility for a single class make a very good contribution to the overall quality of teaching and learning. This is evident in the Reception class, where the teacher and her skilled assistant work very well together, and in a range of subjects, such as English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology. This is effective use of staff. In English, members of the support staff are very skilled in teaching some of the additional literacy strategies to groups of pupils. Weekly, hour-long sessions of guided reading in Year 6 are led by several staff and volunteers working with small groups of pupils selected by their prior attainment. Such focused attention is highly beneficial to the pupils' reading development and is an important factor in accounting for the high standards found. Additional members of staff enable science, for instance, to be taught to discrete age groups in the mixed-aged Years 1, 2, 5 and 6. Members of the support staff make a significant contribution to the progress made by pupils with special educational needs, helping them to achieve well. Teachers prepare lessons and brief their assistants conscientiously with a view to meeting the needs of all pupils through the provision of different tasks for different ability groups, including those

with special educational needs. A further strong feature is homework, which makes a good contribution to learning in Years 5 and 6.

14. Where there are shortcomings in teaching and learning, they are in specific subjects. For example, in mathematics and science, teachers' planning does not always stretch the higher attaining pupils. Work in science is sometimes too much directed by the teacher. In mathematics, there are missed opportunities for pupils to solve problems, undertake investigations and evaluate their own work at the end of lessons. This latter shortcoming is counterbalanced by a strength in English, in which older pupils are encouraged to evaluate the work of each other in a system called *Response Partners*.
15. Procedures to assess pupils' progress are good overall. They are comprehensive in English and mathematics and give teachers clear information on how pupils are achieving. Information is then used to set targets for pupils and identify how best to group them and provide additional support. The use of assessment in science and information and communication technology is not fully established yet. The progress of pupils with special educational needs is tracked carefully and their individual education plans have small measurable steps. The targets set for gifted and talented pupils to achieve as each term progresses are at an early stage of development and, because they are not defined closely enough, they do not contribute fully to their achievement.

### **The curriculum**

The curriculum, accommodation, staffing and learning resources are good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The curriculum for Years 1 to 6 has improved and it is now good, although the time allocated to mathematics in Years 3 to 6 is lower than in most schools.
- The curriculum is enriched very well, especially by additional creative experiences and residential trips.
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very effective.
- Arrangements to ensure that learning proceeds smoothly as pupils pass through the school are very good.

### **Commentary**

16. The curriculum for the Foundation Stage is good and the weaknesses identified in the last inspection have been addressed well. Activities provided are frequently very good and the children are given opportunities for active learning. There is an imbalance, however, in the planning in relation to the number of opportunities for child-initiated learning compared to teacher-directed learning, and the outdoor area is an under-used resource for learning.
17. A broad range of suitable learning experiences makes a good contribution to the standards that pupils achieve. Overall, the amount of time given to each subject is satisfactory and the over-emphasis on English and mathematics noted in the last report has been addressed. However, the time currently allocated to teaching mathematics in Years 3 to 6 is lower than in most schools. This is having a negative effect on the results the school achieves.
18. The recent moves by senior staff to increase the opportunities for creative experiences have enriched the curriculum considerably. They have also enhanced the links made between subjects, making learning more enjoyable and relevant. For example, the initiative this year to *Take One Picture*, inspired by the National Gallery, involved the pupils in Years 3 to 6 using their chosen painting as a stimulus to do work in subjects such as mathematics and music and to produce poems, pictures and much more. Further enrichment comes from other events such as Music Week and visits from specialist groups, including one performing street dances.

The school's success in this aspect of its work has recently been confirmed by the award of the nationally recognised *Artsmark*. Residential trips greatly extend the range of learning opportunities for pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6. Activities undertaken on these excursions, such as making television programmes, fieldwork and rock climbing help to raise standards in subjects such as geography and history, and contribute much to helping pupils to become mature, independent and responsible.

19. The school works well to make the curriculum accessible to all pupils and provide them with equal opportunities to succeed. The individual programmes provided for pupils with special educational needs are constructed very well and the targets set for them are made up of closely defined, small, achievable steps.
20. Good use is made of computer software to plan the curriculum successfully. A special programme ensures that pupils gain skills, knowledge and understanding progressively. Very effective arrangements allow the pupils to move from the Foundation Stage to Year 1 and from Year 2 to 3 as smoothly as possible. For example, the teachers in Year 2 and Year 3 have recently completed in-service training together to help to make sure that pupils do not slip back when they move from one class to the other. Also, the Year 3 teacher spends time in the summer term working with pupils in Year 2 so that the pupils get to know her. These procedures make pupils more confident and help to maintain progress as pupils pass through the school.
21. The accommodation contributes well to the standards that pupils attain. The attractive *Jubilee Garden* offers very good opportunities for pupils to sit and reflect. The quality and quantity of learning resources are good overall. The very good provision of experienced and well-trained teaching assistants has a positive impact on the learning of pupils, especially those with special educational needs.

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

The school provides well for pupils' care, welfare, health and safety. Pupils are well supported by their class teachers and teaching assistants both academically and socially. The school involves pupils satisfactorily in its work and the school council helps pupils contribute to school life.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils' welfare is prioritised and those with greatest need receive good care.
- Very good arrangements are made for pupils starting school.
- Day-to-day health and safety matters are not reviewed systematically enough.

### **Commentary**

22. Teaching and support staff know the pupils well and pupils' welfare is prioritised. The school is committed to doing its best for all and the headteacher is determined that every pupil should be helped to succeed. She makes very good use of a wide range of support services. For example, there is exceptionally thorough support for children in public care with a clear focus on their needs, whether physical, emotional, behavioural or educational.
23. Attendance is recorded on computer, and this allows it to be well monitored, although registers are not yet printed off for storage as required. The legal aspects of health and safety are in place and reported to governors. However, day-to-day working practices are not reviewed through observation or undertaking risk assessments. A few minor concerns were reported to the school. All the members of staff are trained in child protection matters and arrangements comply with those agreed locally, and there are sufficient trained in first aid. Most pupils are confident that there is an adult they could turn to in case of need.

24. Teachers offer good guidance to their pupils through providing targets in numeracy and literacy. They use personal, social and health education lessons to address immediate issues of concern to pupils. Parents confirm that very good arrangements are made for pupils starting school.
25. The school council gives pupils a voice in school decision-making. Classes elect their representatives, but there are some missed opportunities to raise the profile of the council in school. There are very good arrangements for seeking the views of pupils with special educational needs about work in school and the progress they are making.

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

Links with parents and the community are good, as are those with other education establishments.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Parents are willing to be involved in initiatives like reading and their role could be further developed.
- A satisfactory range of written information is provided but annual reports are not specific enough.
- The school makes good efforts to deal with parents' concerns quickly.
- Good use is made of visits and visitors.

### **Commentary**

26. Parents are happy with the school, the progress their children are making and the fact that they are expected to work hard and do their best. They are keen to support at home and in school, and a substantial number come in to school twice a week to share a book with their children. The headteacher is accessible to parents and parents like the fact that there are monthly *surgeries* when they can see their child's class teacher.
27. Parents receive a good range of written information. Newsletters keep them up to date, and seek to answer the parents' concerns, for example about the large number of pupils in Year 4. A fifth of parents responding to the pre-inspection questionnaire did not know how their child was getting on or feel able to help. The curriculum outlines that they receive are detailed and easy for parents to read, but could be further developed to incorporate ideas for parents to use at home. The school forges a very effective partnership with the parents of pupils with special educational needs, resulting in a high proportion of parents attending reviews and becoming involved in helping to set targets for their children to achieve.
28. Pupils' annual reports are satisfactory. They tell parents what their child knows, understands and can do, but not how they are getting on in relation to expectations for their age. Assessment information held by teachers is not shared with parents, except at the end of Years 2 and 6, so it is hard for them to know the level of support to give. Senior members of staff are currently not looking as well as they might at the information they provide from the parents' perspective so that their contribution can be further developed.
29. The community is used well as a teaching resource, and Christian festivals are celebrated in the church. There are a good number of visits and visitors extending pupils' learning experiences. Two groups of schools work well together in the area, helping to improve the curricular opportunities for pupils. The school contributes well to teacher training and retraining. The local secondary school is seeking specialist status and it plans to involve the school in a media studies project.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and governance of the school are good overall. The leadership provided by the headteacher is good and she is supported well by the deputy headteacher. The governance of the school is good. The management of the school is satisfactory.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher has made a good start to her leadership of the school and has a very clear commitment to doing the best for all pupils.
- The governing body is very well led by the chairperson.
- Subject monitoring in English is very good.
- In the non-core<sup>2</sup> subjects in particular, the monitoring and evaluating role of subject leaders is under-developed.

### Commentary

30. During the last year, there have been changes to all senior leadership and management positions. The headteacher has made a good start to her leadership of the school. She has a clear vision for the school that includes a very strong commitment to including pupils of all backgrounds and need. This is reflected in the high number of support staff and the very good provision for pupils with special educational needs. The headteacher is committed to gaining all the available support for the pupils in the school who need it the most. She has high aspirations for the school. Her focus has been on English and this is successfully reflected in the high standards in this subject throughout the school. The senior management of the school has good potential to develop provision further.
31. During this period of change, the governing body has been very influential in shaping the direction of the school. The chair of governors has provided very good support and the chair continues to act as a critical friend to the newly appointed senior staff. There is a full complement of governors who bring a range of expertise to the school. There have been recent improvements to the monitoring role of the governors and they have become more involved in financial planning. Subject leaders make presentations to the governors, although no information on standards was included in a recent science report. Some governors have a specific individual monitoring role. These various systems together with reports of performance from the headteacher enable the governing body to be well informed. The governors challenge the work of the school and in such aspects as class size; they have been very involved and influential.
32. There were no major key issues following the last inspection. Improvement in the three minor issues has been satisfactory. Since the last inspection, each subsequent version of the school improvement plan has been sequentially numbered as an indication of progress towards these issues. In the development of the Foundation Stage curriculum good progress has been made, although the imbalance between teacher-directed and child-initiated activities remains. In relation to continuing to raise the attainment of the higher attaining pupils, this has been successfully achieved at Year 2 in English and mathematics, but not in science. In Year 6, this has been achieved very well in English and in reading in particular but not to the same extent in mathematics and science, where achievement from Year 2 to Year 6, when compared to similar schools, has been broadly satisfactory from 2002 onwards. In relation to the third minor issue, improving cross-curricular links and the use of other subjects to promote literacy and information and communication technology, there has been good improvement. Links between numeracy and other subjects are under developed.

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<sup>2</sup> The non-core subjects are history, geography, art and design, design and technology, music, and physical education.

33. In the short time that the headteacher has been in the post she has created good teamwork, despite many staff changes and recent appointments. There is a real sense of partnership with the deputy headteacher; the headteacher and other senior staff provide good models of teaching. However, management overall is satisfactory. The role of subject leadership is new to some members of staff and others have recently taken on different subject responsibilities. Monitoring of provision, teaching and standards in English has been, and remains, strong and the tracking of the pupils' progress and evaluating progress against targets are effective. Although time is made available for subject leaders to monitor teaching and develop their subjects, monitoring and evaluating in subjects other than English have not been rigorous. For example, the lower than average number of hours devoted to mathematics in Years 3 to 6 compared to schools nationally has not been identified. Tracking the pupils' performance is not yet fully established in science or information and communication technology.
34. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is led and managed very well. The very effective work done by the coordinator in overseeing classroom practice, administration, monitoring planning and providing training for teachers and their assistants has a very positive effect on the progress the pupils make. There has been innovation in the curriculum with a thrust towards the creative subjects that has led to the school winning poetry competitions and developing effective links between, for example, art and other subjects of the curriculum.
35. The school improvement plan is a comprehensive document containing a considerable focus on school self-review and it prioritises improvements well. There is a clear link to the budget. This is a good document for reviewing improvement over time and identifying how the school is moving forward. The headteacher has introduced a 'buddy' system whereby staff review each other's teaching. This process is developing the monitoring skills of all the staff but there has been insufficient opportunity for all the subject leaders to monitor the teaching in their respective subjects.
36. Recruitment of staff has been managed well. The school had two newly qualified teachers last year, both of whom have stayed at the school. The Reception teacher has had an effective programme of induction as a new member of staff. The school makes a good contribution to initial teacher training. Monitoring the effectiveness of teachers' performance is satisfactorily established.
37. The financial position of the school is stronger than it has been in recent years, with an unexpected balance carried forward of approximately nine per cent. There is a clear plan of how this money is to be spent in the future and much of it is to go towards the fabric of the building. A considerable amount of the school's spending in the recent past has been on urgent maintenance and planned improvements to the school's building. The budget is also appropriately used to fund the priorities in the school improvement plan. The school seeks to operate financial prudence by comparing quotes in order to gain best value. The spending per pupil is just below the average of primary schools nationally and the school provides good value for money.

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

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	646,413
Total expenditure	630,523
Expenditure per pupil	2,771

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	8,400
Balance carried forward to the next	24,290



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

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

38. There are 27 children in the single Reception class, who all attend full time. The induction<sup>3</sup> process into this class is very good and the children have made a good start to their education. Teaching is good overall and is frequently very good. The class teacher has very high expectations and a good relationship with the children. There is a very good partnership with the experienced teaching assistant who makes a very effective contribution to the teaching and learning that takes place. The curriculum is now good and this is a good improvement from the last inspection. Activities provided are frequently very good and the children are given opportunities for active learning. There is an imbalance in the planning in relation to the number of opportunities for child-initiated learning. The outdoor area is an under-used resource for learning. Play times and lunch times are not planned for as specific learning times and the adult supervision at lunch times is not always adequate.
39. The current children in the Reception year entered school with attainment below the average expected for children of this age. Their personal and social development was average but the language skills of many were well below average. The initial evaluations of the children's ability have been used appropriately to group them for activities. A scrutiny of the children's records and previous work shows that they have made good progress from when they entered. If this current rate of progress is maintained, most are likely to achieve the early learning goals expected by the end of the Reception year.

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

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

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

- Standards are around those expected for the pupils' age and almost all the pupils achieve well and are on course to attain these early learning goals.
- Teaching is good and the very good working relationship between the two adults in the classroom provides a very good role model for the children.

#### **Commentary**

40. The children enter the classroom happily and they have the confidence to move around and to undertake their activities independently. Higher attaining pupils act independently and help each other in ways such as carrying paintings together to the drying area. This confidence is gained through the good relationships they have with the adults and the consistency of the expectations, routines and behaviour that the adults provide. About half of the children have the self-esteem to express their needs and the most able have the confidence to initiate conversations with others. Adults work hard to develop the children's ability to work as part of a group, by providing many activities that require taking turns and sharing, and the children work harmoniously together.
41. The class teacher prepares interesting activities that stimulate and interest the children. This is reflected in their good attitudes and the length of time they remain focused upon an activity. About 80 per cent are already starting to meet the learning goals for their ability to concentrate and to remain interested and motivated by their tasks. The children show their growing independence and the good training they have received by the co-operative manner in which

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<sup>3</sup> Induction refers to the arrangements to receive pupils who are new to the school, helping them to settle into school routines and to make friends.

this is achieved. A weakness within the planned provision is the relatively few planned opportunities for the pupils to initiate their own activities and to develop their self-control. In the times observed when this took place, the children worked in an animated manner. There are no trained adults outside with the children at lunch times to help develop their social skills.

## **COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The children began school with well below average skills in this area of the curriculum. Their achievement is good. If they continue to progress at the current rate, the majority should attain the expected early learning goals by the end of the year.
- The class teacher provides many good opportunities to develop spoken language skills in whole-class and small group settings.
- Reading stories as a shared experience is very well managed.
- Opportunities for the children to pursue their own interests, in order to develop language for negotiating and for problem solving are not frequent enough.

### **Commentary**

42. The class teacher plans for the children to hear a good range of literature and both the adults in the classroom provide a constant flow of well-structured dialogue. In these ways the adults provide a good role model of language for the children. Almost every lesson includes opportunities for developing listening skills and a time for developing conversation when working as part of a group. About a quarter of the children are already exhibiting many of the learning goals for spoken language. These children interact with others, negotiate plans and take turns in conversations. They do this most animatedly in their 'free choice' activity times and to a lesser extent when they work on group tasks directed by the teacher. About a further third of the children are below expectations for their age, using mainly simple statements. There are regular opportunities for the children to talk in front of the class and to reflect upon happenings of personal interest or importance. These are good opportunities for the children to learn how to use speech to clarify their thinking and understanding of events. The class teacher has good relationships with the pupils and as a result, reluctant speakers participate.
43. The quality of teaching is good. A main strength in the teaching is the use of interactive games to develop the children's knowledge of letter sounds and to identify the initial sounds in words. Almost all children have started to recognise some letter shapes and link these to sounds. The most able 25 per cent are identifying how changing the vowel changes simple words like *cat* to *cot*. An excellent feature in the teaching is how the lower attaining children are included when stories are shared together. Both the class teacher and the teaching assistant have a copy of the book and they read the story together. The teaching assistant makes this a very close experience for the few lower attaining children she works with, while the class teacher shares the story with most of the class in a large group. All the children are included well, because the class teacher asks questions from both the groups of children. Writing is taught very well in small group situations so that each child has individual tuition and no bad habits are formed. Few children started school knowing how to write their name and this skill is consistently taught. However children are not encouraged to write their name on every piece of work they produce.

## **MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The quality of teaching is very good in this area of learning.
- With the current good provision maintained, the majority are likely to attain the learning goals by the end of the Reception year.

### **Commentary**

44. Lessons are well planned to develop counting and number recognition and to incorporate a range of purposeful activities that appear as games to the children. Tasks are carefully planned to match the ability of the children. Their achievement is good. The higher attaining children are starting to meet the early learning goals. They count securely to twenty and they perform simple sums of addition and subtraction to five. Most children know the names of basic flat shapes and those with higher attainment identify some of their properties, such as the number of corners. They are also able to distinguish between thick and thin but they lack the vocabulary for this. In the lessons seen, the properties of basic shapes were taught very well through an exciting range of tactile activities. These included uncovering shapes in sand, identifying shapes hidden in socks and moulding the outer perimeter of basic shapes in dough. Through these very well selected activities the children learn very effectively and purposefully.

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

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching is very good and the children achieve well.
- With the current good provision maintained, the majority are on course to attain the learning goals by the end of the Reception year.

### **Commentary**

45. The class teacher plans the full curriculum with a specific focus every half term. The current focus is upon this area of development. The children are helped to develop a sense what it is like to be in a snowy environment with a role-play area of an igloo. Stories relate to this theme and to a range of animals and their sounds. In the lessons seen, the children benefited from the help of a parent and a student. The class teacher used all the adults available well to provide small group teaching. In this manner, all the children were involved in exploring materials and observing the changes carefully when they mixed together flour, glue and paint. The adults helped the children to focus and to develop their observational skills through well-directed questions and comments. Children also have frequent opportunities to explore basic materials such as sand, water and dough. They are taught how to hold tools such as a pencil and a paintbrush correctly. Children are introduced to directing a programmable toy along the floor.

## **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

46. This was not an area of focus during the inspection and no specific teaching of body control was observed. The children have some opportunities to ride tricycles and to balance and climb when outdoors at lunch times. Older pupils are with them at these times. Only one tricycle was seen being used and the two children observed pedalled appropriately for their age. The pencil control of the children is below that expected for their age. Their ability to manipulate dough and to control a paintbrush is average for their age.

## CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- With the current provision maintained, the majority are on course to attain most of the learning goals in this aspect by the end of the Reception year.
- The children's imaginative development is below that expected for their age and adults work well with the children to develop these skills.

### Commentary

47. There is a good emphasis in the planned activities upon children exploring colour with paint. Achievement is good in this aspect of creative development. The teaching assistant works closely with individuals and groups helping them to explore, such as by adding white to primary colours. Children are thrilled to see the changes and they paint lines of changing colour with considerable control and concentration and with obvious enjoyment. The class teacher plans for specific activities that involve exploring materials and using them creatively. She provides considerable encouragement and support in order to entice the children to select these activities in their free choice time. An 'igloo' is provided for imaginative play, but this was rarely seen being used, primarily through the limited time for free choice activities. This is a weakness in provision. When this time was provided, the teaching assistant worked well with the boys in order to stimulate their imaginations. Apart from the music played as the pupils tidied away their activities, no music was seen being introduced or taught during the inspection.

## SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

### ENGLISH

Provision in English is **very good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in speaking, listening and reading are high and in writing they are above average.
- The staff, both teaching and support, have good skills to teach the subject.
- The school makes very good use of intervention strategies to bolster pupils' progress.
- Members of staff have high expectations of what pupils can achieve.

### Commentary

48. Pupils' achievement is very good. Standards in Year 2 are above average and have been consistently above or well above average since the time of the last inspection. Pupils make good progress in Years 1 and 2 in all aspects of English and this is the result of good teaching, a clear focus on encouraging the pupils to speak well and regular reading sessions with staff, parents and volunteers.
49. Progress in Years 3 to 6 is very good. In reading, pupils achieve very well. This is because the school teaches the National Literacy Strategy well and makes very good use of the national programmes of *Additional Literacy Support* and *Further Literacy Support* to target teaching for small groups of pupils. Teaching assistants make a very good contribution here. They also help with sessions of guided reading and writing very well. As a result, standards in Year 6 are well above average in speaking, listening and reading and are a key strength of the school. Pupils are articulate in their conversation and read fluently. Targets for pupils in the current Year 6 are high and the school has been successful in achieving them in recent times. Almost

all pupils are already achieving the expected Level 4 or better in speaking, listening and reading. Pupils with special educational needs and those who show a real talent for writing achieve well because of the very good provision. Since the last inspection, results in Year 6 tests have been good, though in 2004 they dipped because of the nature of the year group which had a high proportion of pupils with special educational needs.

50. Standards in writing are above average. Because the senior staff analyse the results of tests closely, they have identified aspects of writing which pupils find difficult and given attention to improving them. As a result, pupils are taught to write clearly, with good attention to lively language along with correct and sophisticated forms of punctuation and grammar. They write poetry very well and they have achieved success in competitions. They are taught well how to compose narratives, descriptions and persuasive pieces of writing.
51. The quality of teaching and learning is good across the school. Two lessons involving pupils in Years 5 and 6 were very good. The workforce is skilled and levels of support for pupils are very good. Several parents and volunteer helpers also make regular and much appreciated contributions to lessons. The school has strong links with local teacher training institutions and student teachers provide opportunities for teachers to help individual and small groups of pupils to make progress in lessons. Teachers have high expectations of what can be achieved and get fully involved in new and innovatory strategies to improve pupils' achievement. For example, following the publication of guidelines on speaking and listening, the school has begun to put in place a planned programme of drama lessons, starting with Years 3 and 6. A further initiative is for one member of staff to work for one lesson per week on writing for different purposes with pupils likely to reach the higher Level 5. Spelling skills are taught systematically and lists to be learnt are composed according to pupils' prior attainment. Homework, especially in the older age groups, is well planned and given a clear importance in the overall provision. Because of these high expectations, pupils learn well and have good attitudes to reading and writing. They work well either independently or in groups. They have a good knowledge of their targets for improvement and are encouraged through a technique called *Response Partners* to comment on each other's work. They thereby become more aware of an audience for their writing.
52. Leadership and management of the subject are very good. The new subject leader has taken over the very well planned provision effectively and made a confident start in the role. Strategic planning for the subject is very good. Procedures to assess pupils' progress are good and the school has in place an effective system for tracking pupils and identifying any under-achievement. Monitoring and evaluating data about the school's performance highlight areas of strength and concern and there have been opportunities for monitoring the quality of teaching by the headteacher and local education authority advisers. Improvement since the last inspection has been good, for example in developing provision, resources and assessment procedures. The school has addressed the minor issue to raise the attainment of higher achieving pupils.

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

53. Pupils' skills are developed well across the curriculum. Subjects such as science, geography, history and religious education provide many opportunities to promote pupils' speaking and listening; the pupils write accounts and reports in these subjects; and they use non-fiction and the Internet to research topics. Each classroom in Years 3 to 6 has a notice board, *What's in the News?*, promoting reading skills and discussion. There are good opportunities for pupils to use word processing skills to make polished versions of their written work.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils achieve well in Years 1 and 2.
- Teaching and learning are good in the main.
- A reduction in teaching time has adversely affected standards.
- Pupils lack opportunities to practise solving some kinds of problems

### **Commentary**

54. For many years the results attained by pupils in Year 2 in the national tests have been well above average compared with all schools. In 2001 and 2002 they were in the top five per cent in the country. The results gained by pupils in Year 6 were also well above average in 2001 and 2003, and above average in 2002. Last year, however, the outcomes of the Year 6 tests were below average compared to all schools and well below average in relation to similar schools. Evidence held by the school indicates that the pupils currently in Years 2 and 6 are likely to attain average results. The decline in the school's performance in Year 2 is due to a fall in the overall attainment of children joining the school in recent years. The relatively low standards in Year 6 tests last year were influenced by a significantly higher proportion of pupils with special educational needs in the year group and by some pupils with below average attainment joining the school from other schools shortly before the tests.
55. Inspection evidence shows that pupils achieve well in Years 1 and 2. Standards are average, but the overall attainment of the pupils currently in Year 2 was below the levels normally found when these children joined the school. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 achieve satisfactorily. The evidence from observing lessons and scrutinising pupils' work shows that thanks to the good demands teachers make, pupils generally work above the level expected for their age. However, the time allocated to teaching mathematics in Years 3 to 6 is below that in most primary schools. This has a negative effect on the results that the school attains. The programme of work for pupils in Years 3 to 6 has been changed recently and it will be some time before any benefits arising from this are seen in the Year 6 test results.
56. Generally, teachers plan well to meet the needs of pupils of different abilities but there is sometimes scope for improving the selection of tasks for higher attaining pupils. The marking of pupils' work is good, with helpful comments which show them how to improve. However, opportunities are missed to get pupils to discuss and evaluate the success of their learning in the final part of lessons. This reduces pupils' independence and the ability of the teacher to understand how well pupils are learning.
57. The assessments made by teachers indicate that pupils do not do as well in using their mathematical knowledge to solve problems as in other aspects of their work. The scrutiny of pupils' work during the inspection shows that relatively few demands are made on pupils to solve problems involving words or to undertake investigations. This has a negative effect on the standards they attain.
58. There is too little evidence to judge leadership and management. The headteacher has taken on temporary leadership prior to the appointment of a new subject leader. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

59. Opportunities are sometimes provided, such as the interpretation of graphs by Year 6 pupils in science, but overall there is too little development of mathematical skills in other subjects.

## SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The number of teachers to teach the subject is good and the pupils are frequently taught in small groups.
- Teachers provide good introductions to the lessons, frequently with practical demonstrations and they have good questioning skills. These hold the pupils' attention well.
- Pupils in the Years 2 to 6 are not given sufficient opportunity to develop independence in their practical work.
- The school's policy not to teach the extended curriculum at the higher level in Year 2 has an adverse impact upon the numbers of pupils who attain the higher levels throughout the school.

### Commentary

60. In recent years, standards in Year 6 have been well above the average. The intake of the school varies and this is reflected in the current standards that are average overall. In 2004, there were many more pupils than usual with special educational needs. In this year, standards declined and were below the national average. The percentage of pupils attaining the higher levels was below the national average. Standards in the current Year 6 are higher than in the previous year because the percentage of pupils at around the expected standards has improved and is above the national average. The percentage of pupils at above average standards (the higher Level 5) remains below the national average. Pupils' achievement overall in Years 3 to 6 is satisfactory.
61. In Year 2, in 2004, the teachers identified that all the pupils attained the nationally expected level and this is a high percentage compared to all schools nationally. The school's policy is not to teach the extended curriculum at the higher level in Year 2. This is stated in school documents and confirmed by senior staff and governors. The impact is that teachers are too cautious in their approach and the percentage of pupils achieving the higher Level 3 is below the national average and well below the average for similar schools. In the current Year 2, owing to the considerable support provided, almost all of the pupils are working at nationally expected standards. A good proportion of pupils, however, exhibit the potential to attain the higher standards. Pupils' achievement in Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory overall and the lower attaining pupils benefit from very good additional support from the teaching assistants and they achieve very well.
62. The quality of teaching is satisfactory but with aspects for improvement. Pupils in Year 1 benefit from the experience and high expectations of the subject leader and good team teaching by all the adults present. Teachers in Years 1 and 2 introduce the lessons well, making good use of resources. All pupils undertake their observations enthusiastically. Teachers do not always use the plenary<sup>4</sup> at the end of the lesson, however, to extend the high ability pupils sufficiently. As a result, the more able pupils who entered the school with high standards are not all reaching the higher levels in their knowledge and understanding.
63. In Years 3 to 6, teachers use a predominantly practical approach but the pupils' independence in investigating is not developed sufficiently. As a consequence, although the teachers demonstrate some good general teaching skills, teaching is satisfactory overall. During the inspection, little practical work was seen being undertaken by the pupils. The pupils in Year 4 responded well to the good questioning skills of the teacher and this helped them to recall well

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<sup>4</sup> Plenary refers to parts of lessons where all pupils are gathered together and they share the same learning focus.

their practical work. In discussion, they demonstrated a satisfactory understanding of the variables required for a fair test. Their ability to record their observations on a work sheet was limited and the class teacher needed to dictate their answers. The teaching in Year 5 is well planned, with different activities to suit the varying ability groups in the class. By Year 6, the pupils' skills of enquiry have extended to recognising that several readings or measurements provide a more accurate result. However, in the lesson observed, the pupils were told exactly what they had to do and what to use. The pupils in Year 6 described this as the usual teaching approach. This method restricts the pupils' ability to develop the higher level skills of enquiry. It also restricts the pupils' independent use of scientific terminology.

64. The subject leader provides satisfactory leadership and management. Additional teachers are employed so that science can be taught in whole year groups, with no split classes. In Years 1 and 5, the school gains considerably from this additional allocation and all the pupils achieve well. In these year groups, lessons are planned with appropriately varying activities and support for each ability group. There has been insufficient opportunity for the subject leader to monitor the teaching throughout the school in order to identify standards. A recent training session, however, has resulted in a new planning structure for investigative skills that is designed to enable these skills to be systematically developed and assessed throughout the school. Target setting and tracking the pupils' progress are not yet established. Although standards have risen in absolute terms since the last inspection, relative to the national picture they have declined and overall improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory. Literacy skills, in the form of note taking, and numeracy skills, in the form of drawing graphs, are used and developed well. Good use is made of computers and other technology for extending the pupils' knowledge by researching topics and for revision in Year 6.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Members of staff have good expertise to teach the subject.
- There have been good improvements in resources since the last inspection.
- By Year 6 pupils are confident using the good range of software available.
- The use of information and communication technology across other subjects is good but more use could be made of computers for charts and graphs in mathematics and science.
- The subject is well led and managed and there is good technical support available from within the staff.

### **Commentary**

65. Standards are broadly average in Year 2 and above average in Year 6. Pupils' achievement is good. By Year 2, pupils have covered a good range of skills, including directing a programmable toy, and using simple word-processing and graphics software. In a good lesson observed, pupils in Year 2 were assisted by the teacher and teaching assistants to write a short piece of text, using the shift key to make capital letters, and the space bar and back space to move the cursor on and back. Higher attaining pupils could change the style and size of the font independently. Pupils can access and open the individual folders in which they keep their work. They have good attitudes to the subject and are enthusiastic when talking about it.
66. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 continue to make good progress. They carry out research using the Internet, for example on the biography of famous people such as Galileo, and use music programs to compose simple sound sequences. In Year 6 pupils learn how to make *PowerPoint* presentations which include animation and sound. The quality of their work is good. They know how to use a spreadsheet and have used formulae to manipulate the data



gathered. Pupils have used simple graphics software to create book covers, pamphlets and advertisements. They know how to combine text and graphics to good effect, for example to make magazine and newspaper articles. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress through the support they receive from staff. All pupils observed and interviewed were enthusiastic about the subject.

67. Only a few lessons of direct teaching were seen and it is not possible to judge the overall quality of teaching. Pupils' learning, evident from the lessons seen, work samples and discussions with pupils, is good. Key strengths of the teaching include the teachers' and assistants' expertise, which is the result of regular training often led by the subject leader. Members of staff make good use of the two information and communication technology suites, often dividing the class between the two, providing the opportunity for better access to machines and supervised by two or more members of staff. This is very effective use of time, resources and staffing. Pupils work at a good pace and they were seen supporting one another as well as working independently. They pick up key skills quickly. By the time they are in Year 6, for instance, their keyboard skills have developed well. An interesting initiative, which helps to motivate pupils and encourage them to take pride in their work, is that pupils take with them a CD-ROM of all their work when they leave in Year 6.
68. Leadership and management of the subject are good. The subject leader has had a high profile in introducing new hardware and helping staff to become familiar with it. She is ambitious for the subject's development and ensures that the coverage of the curriculum is good. She is supported by some very useful technical assistance from one of the administrative staff, helping to keep hardware and software running with the minimum of interruption. Assessment was under development at the time of the inspection. The school has made good progress since the last inspection in provision, especially upgrading hardware, software and improving teachers' expertise.

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

69. A minor issue at the last inspection was to improve the use of computers in other subjects. There has been good improvement and the subject is used regularly to support work in English, mathematics, science and foundation subjects. Members of staff have been alerted to opportunities to use computers and these are evident in work sampled and discussions with pupils. There were few examples of computer-generated charts and graphs in mathematics and science, however.

### **HUMANITIES**

70. One lesson each of **geography** and **history** were seen during the inspection. These subjects were sampled and no judgements can be made about the overall provision in either. The quality of teaching and learning in each lesson was good. There is good coverage of the curriculum in each subject and both of them contribute well to the school's enhanced curriculum and to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Not only are there many visits to places of interest such as a Saxon settlement and a Victorian manor house but the school makes good use of the locality, including the village itself and a nearby nature reserve. Pupils during Years 3 to 6 make residential visits that include activities covering different locations in geography and different periods in history. There are Theme Weeks, which cover both subjects in their cross-curricular approach, and specialists are invited to school to speak to the pupils. Both subjects make a good contribution to pupils' speaking, listening, reading and writing skills. Opportunities for report writing and for persuasive, descriptive and narrative writing are good.
71. Too few lessons were seen in **religious education** to judge provision. Standards are in line with those expected in the locally agreed syllabus in Year 2 and Year 6, as they were at the time of the last inspection. The achievement of pupils, including those with special educational

needs, is satisfactory. Work in religious education makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural development. Pupils learn about a wide range of religions, including Christianity, Judaism, Islam and Hinduism. They are encouraged to recognise the similarities and differences between religions.

72. Only two lessons in **religious education** were observed during the inspection. Both lessons were good. It is clear from the discussion in lessons that pupils develop a good understanding of the importance of religion in peoples' lives. In a lesson in Year 4, pupils achieved well in beginning to understand the symbolism of some of the artefacts associated with Judaism. Pupils in Year 5 made good progress in understanding the life of Jesus, thanks to the teacher's good use of DVD technology. The subject leader is newly appointed and it is too early to judge the impact of her work on standards and provision. However, she has made a good start in helping colleagues to implement the local education authority's new programme of work. Strong links with the village church, to which valuable visits are made by the pupils, help to raise standards and to promote pupils' spiritual growth. Strong support from the governor with responsibility for religious education, who is also a clergyman, has a very positive impact on provision.

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

73. **Art and design, design and technology, music and physical education** were only sampled during the inspection. Insufficient evidence was collected to make a judgement on provision in each. It is clear, however, that these subjects help to enhance the curriculum through a good range of activities that include Theme Weeks, visits and visitors. There are also extra-curricular activities and clubs associated with them.
74. A review of the pupils' sketchbooks, work on display and in lessons indicates that standards in **art and design** are broadly average in Year 6 and above average in Years 3 and 4. The curriculum is good and is enriched by studying a wide range of artists. The school has achieved the *Artsmark* for its activities in this subject. A recent, successful innovation has been studying a painting and linking this piece of art to all areas of the curriculum. All the pupils in Years 3 to 6 have undertaken this.
75. In the one lesson seen in **design and technology**, which was in Year 3, standards were broadly average. A strong feature in the work of this class was a booklet in which the pupils recorded aspects of their work. This indicates that the full process of designing, making and evaluating a product is undertaken thoroughly.
76. In **music**, the standard of singing heard in acts of collective worship was satisfactory. Pupils in the Reception class, Years 1 and 2 sing with enthusiasm. They particularly enjoyed the action song in a birthday assembly. The rendition of *Sing Hosanna!* by pupils in Years 3 to 6 in assembly was melodic, but lacked commitment. Opportunities were missed in a Year 1 and 2 act of collective worship to further pupils' knowledge and understanding by commenting on the music played as pupils entered and left.
77. In **physical education**, the pupils in Year 5 observed in a hockey lesson attained average standards. They passed and stopped the ball competently and are developing an appropriate understanding of tactics, although the pupils did not look well enough for spaces to occupy to receive a pass. The lesson was satisfactory, with the teacher coaching well as activities were carried out. The pupils were keen to practise and co-operated well when working in groups. The records held by the school show that, thanks to the good arrangements for swimming, standards in this aspect of the subject remain high. Few pupils leave the school without being able to swim 25 metres unaided. Leadership and management of the subject are good. Although only in post for two terms, the subject leader's work is already helping to raise standards. The training in how to teach dance lessons she has provided for colleagues and the improvements made to the assessment of pupils' progress are examples of this.

## PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

78. No lessons were observed and therefore no judgement of the overall provision is possible. The arrangements made for this aspect of the school's work are good. They have improved since the last inspection. All classes now have regular lessons and the school is implementing a new and comprehensive programme of work. The school places a great deal of importance on teaching this part of the curriculum and the quality of its work has recently been accredited in a national scheme with a *Healthy Schools* award. The new programme of work puts great emphasis on helping pupils to develop life skills, such as making good decisions about diet and exercise. It also ensures that elements the school is required to teach, particularly sex and drugs education and raising awareness of the dangers of tobacco and alcohol, are covered well. Visitors from the community, such as police and nurses, contribute much to the range of learning experiences. The provision makes a strong contribution to pupils' personal development. Leadership and management of the subject are good. The subject leader has begun to support colleagues well since taking on the role at the start of the autumn term and her monitoring of the implementation of the new scheme is helping to ensure its effectiveness.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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