

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **LONG MEAD COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Tonbridge, Kent

LEA area: Kent

Unique reference number: 118575

Headteacher: Mrs Jo Powell

Lead inspector: Mr Rob Crompton

Dates of inspection: 29<sup>th</sup> November – 1<sup>st</sup> December 2004

Inspection number: 267233

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 children:	3 – 11 years
Gender of children:	Mixed
Number on roll:	211
School address:	Waveney Road Trench Wood Tonbridge Kent
Postcode:	TN10 3JU
Telephone number:	01732 350601
Fax number:	01732 771373
Appropriate authority:	Local Education Authority
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Brian Brookman
Date of previous inspection:	17 <sup>th</sup> May 1999

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The school serves a disadvantaged area in the town of Tonbridge and has 211 children on roll. The children are taught in ten classes, generally one for each year group, but there are two year 1 classes and a mixed year 3 and 4 class. When they enter the nursery class, children's attainment is well below average for their age. About 35 per cent of the children have special educational needs, which is well above the national average. No children have statements of special educational need. Twenty-two per cent of children are eligible for free school meals and this is just above the national average. Very few children are from minority ethnic backgrounds and almost all speak English as their first language. The levels of pupil mobility and staff turnover are typical of many schools. The school received the Investors in People standard and the School Achievement Award in 2002.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
7230	Rob Crompton	Lead inspector	Science Information and communication technology Music Physical education The Foundation Stage English as an additional language
13874	Jane Chesterfield	Lay inspector	
30810	Liz Kounnou	Team inspector	English Geography History Special educational needs
24528	Garth Muton	Team inspector	Mathematics Art and design Religious education Design and technology

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

The school has **serious weaknesses** and is not effective enough. The recently appointed headteacher provides very good leadership and has already had a positive impact, particularly on improving children's behaviour. However, children do not make the progress that they should and achievement is poor in most subjects. Teaching and learning are unsatisfactory because of weaknesses in the way work has been planned and assessed. Governors are aware of what needs to be done. Nevertheless, the school provides **unsatisfactory** value for money.

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

- Standards are well below average and many children should be achieving better than they do
- Very good leadership by the headteacher is leading to improvement
- Children in nursery and reception achieve very well because of the excellent curriculum
- Teaching in years 1 to 6 is unsatisfactory because the work set does not always match children's needs
- Poor levels of attendance hinder children's progress
- Provision for children with special educational needs is unsatisfactory

The school has not made enough progress since the last inspection. Standards have fallen in most subjects and children are not making the good progress they were. The quality of teaching is not as good as it was. Weaknesses in information and communication technology (ICT) and assessment remain. Some minor issues have been dealt with but overall improvement has been poor.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

As children enter the nursery class, their social skills, language and communication skills, and level of mathematical development are well below those typical of the age group. They make very good progress in nursery and reception classes but despite this, by the start of year 1, overall attainment is below average. In the following years, levels of achievement are **poor**. The standards reached by year 2 in reading, writing and mathematics are well below national averages and compare unfavourably with those achieved in similar schools. The picture is similar through years 3 to 6. Children do not build well enough on their previous learning so their rate of progress through the junior years is poor and standards in English and mathematics are well below average. Results in science in 2004 were in the lowest five per cent of schools nationally. Although achievement is improving, standards are still below average.

By year 2, children reach the expected levels in ICT but major gaps in the curriculum mean standards are below those expected by year 6. Attainment in history and religious education is below that expected by year 2 and year 6. It was not possible to judge standards in art and design, design and technology, geography, music or physical education.

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

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

Girls outperform boys in most respects and the school is addressing this issue. Children with special educational needs do not make enough progress towards their individual targets.

Overall provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **satisfactory**. Relationships have improved recently, with far fewer temporary exclusions. Good provision for children's moral development is having a positive impact. Levels of attendance are well below average; not all children arrive on time at the beginning of the day.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

The quality of education provided by the school is **unsatisfactory**. Teaching and learning are **unsatisfactory**. Teaching is of a consistently high quality in the nursery and reception classes. In other years teaching has recently improved and in lessons during the inspection was generally satisfactory. However, the level of children's work in their books and their lack of achievement over time indicates several weaknesses. In particular, work is not matched closely enough to children's prior attainment and this hinders their learning. Curriculum plans set out what children should be learning, but these are not always followed through in lessons. Children have good opportunities to take part in additional activities that promote learning and personal development. There is a satisfactory partnership with parents and good support for children and their families. Levels of care are satisfactory, but lack of playground organisation leads to boisterous behaviour and minor accidents.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Leadership and management are **satisfactory**. The headteacher provides very good leadership. Governance is satisfactory. Governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and, with the exception of provision for ICT, carry out their statutory requirements.

## **PARENTS' AND CHILDREN'S VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL**

Parents are happy with most aspects of the school, although some are concerned about behaviour and bullying. Following a period where learning was disrupted by some poor behaviour, children's attitudes are now better and behaviour is satisfactory. However, behaviour outdoors is often too lively. Many parents feel that they could be kept better informed about how their children are getting on and would like the school to seek their views more frequently. The inspection found that opportunities for parent-teacher consultation are adequate and that written reports are satisfactory overall, though with some room for improvement. Children have positive views, particularly about the changes made by the new headteacher.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- improve achievement, particularly in English, mathematics and ICT;
- continue to improve the quality of teaching and learning;
- improve assessment to ensure that work builds on children's prior attainment;
- improve levels of attendance and punctuality;

and, to meet statutory requirements:

- ensure that the whole of the national curriculum for ICT is taught.

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

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY CHILDREN**

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

Standards are **well below average**. Achievement is very good in the nursery and reception classes. In years 1 to 6, children have begun to make better progress in lessons but achievement is poor. Girls do much better than boys.

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

- Standards have fallen in English, mathematics and science over recent years and have not kept pace with the national trend
- Children in the nursery and reception classes make good progress from a low start
- There is significant underachievement in English, particularly by boys, and standards are well below average
- Progress in mathematics and science is improving a little but standards are too low
- Children with special educational needs do not make enough progress
- Children achieve well in ICT in years 1 to 2 but standards are below those expected by year 6

#### **Commentary**

1. Children are not building well enough on their prior learning. Test results and the school's own assessment data shows that they should be doing better than they are. Underachievement is most significant in years 3 to 6. Three years ago children were making good progress through years 3 to 6. Comparing the individual performance of children in the year 6 classes in 2003 and 2004 with their year 2 results indicates that their achievement was well below that expected. The current picture is a little better. Although there is significant underachievement, through good leadership teachers are being supported well. They now have much better assessment data and are being helped to plan work more closely matched to children's needs. Test results and the school's own assessment information show a significant difference between the achievement of boys and girls, particularly in writing, and the school is exploring ways to address this. Poor attendance remains a significant factor in underachievement.
2. The process of identifying where children are and building on their existing skills is well established in the nursery and reception classes. As a result, children make very good progress. They reach the levels expected in physical and creative development. In other areas of learning, personal, social and emotional development, language and communication, mathematical development and knowledge and understanding of the world – they achieve very well but do not reach the expected standards. Many still have weak speech and language skills as they start year 1.
3. Although this low start accounts to some extent for the well below average standards reached in English by year 2 and year 6 it is not the whole story. Reading and writing skills are not being taught systematically enough. Strategies to improve achievement have been introduced, but there is a long way to go. For example, only three of four children are working at their predicted level at this stage in year 6.
4. The situation is similar in mathematics but more is being done to set work at an appropriate level to enable children to make progress. However, children do not have sufficient knowledge or understanding to investigate numbers or solve numerical problems. In science, because most of the work is now centred on practical investigations, children are making satisfactory progress in lessons but their lack of achievement in previous years means that they are not on course to reach average standards by year 2 or year 6.

5. Around a third of children in each class have special educational needs, and many do not achieve the targets set for them in English and mathematics. Work is not adapted well enough to help these children make the next steps in learning.
6. Children in years 1 and 2 are building well on their early skills in ICT and reaching the expected standards by the end of year 2. Although their general ICT skills improve in later years, they do not have enough experience in important aspects of the subject and there are significant gaps in their learning. Children in year 6 are way behind where they need to be in order to reach the expected standards by the end of the year.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	13.7 (13.0)	15.8 (15.7)
writing	12.8 (11.6)	14.6 (14.6)
mathematics	14.8 (14.4)	16.2 (16.3)

*There were 36 children 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	23.5 (24.3)	26.9 (26.8)
mathematics	24.3 (23.9)	27.0 (26.8)
science	24.6 (25.4)	28.6 (28.6)

*There were 46 children in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

#### **Children's attitudes, values and other personal qualities**

Children's behaviour and attitudes to school are **satisfactory**. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **satisfactory**. Attendance is **well below average** and punctuality is **unsatisfactory**.

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

- Children's attitudes and behaviour are improving but behaviour in the playground at lunchtime is too boisterous
- Efforts are being made to improve boys' attitudes to school but more could be done
- Children's achievement is hindered by poor attendance.

#### **Commentary**

7. Staff, parents and governors say that behaviour last year was a major problem. The large number of exclusions during the year suggests that this was true. Children are now more positive and behave reasonably well because the school, with the determined leadership of the headteacher, has worked very hard to address this issue. Good provision for moral development is beginning to work. Teachers sustain discipline well for the most part and, during lessons, children's behaviour is often good. Where lessons are dull and uninteresting behaviour can suffer. In contrast to the calm atmosphere in most lessons and when children are having lunch, behaviour in the playground is frenetic. It is not usually a question of deliberate misbehaviour, rather, the lack of organisation. Often there are four or more ball games going on in the same area. These mainly involve boys so girls are relegated to the margins. Very often there are minor injuries as children rush about with little consideration for others. During one day of the

inspection, thirty-five such accidents were entered into the first aid record. This is unsatisfactory and the parents who expressed anxiety are right to be concerned.

8. A good start has been made in trying to improve boys' attitudes to learning. Books which appeal to boys have been added to the library and students from a local boys' secondary school visit regularly to help with reading and other activities. There are occasions, however, when stereotypical gender roles are reinforced. Girls tend to act as receptionists during lunch time and do many of the jobs around the school.
9. The school works hard to encourage better attendance but, looking through their books, it is easy to see why some children are not making enough progress. Many of them miss important aspects of learning because they have too much time off. Rates of attendance have fallen and the number of times parents keep their children off school without good reason has increased.

## Attendance

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

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	5.8	School data	1.0
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.*

## Exclusions

### Ethnic background of children

### Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of children on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	195	41	0
White – any other White background	7	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Bangladeshi	1	0	0

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

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is **unsatisfactory** overall. Teaching and the curriculum are both **unsatisfactory**. There is **satisfactory** provision of extra-curricular activities. The school provides **satisfactory** care and guidance for children and has **satisfactory** links with parents and the community.

### Teaching and learning

Teaching, learning and assessment are **unsatisfactory**, with the exception of the Foundation Stage (nursery and reception) where all these areas are very good.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very effective teaching in the nursery and reception classes helps children to make very good progress
- The quality of teaching in the lessons seen during the inspection was satisfactory overall, but teachers are not generally pitching work at the right level
- Children respond well to the practical approach in some lessons

### **Commentary**

10. The teachers, nursery nurse and learning support assistant in the Foundation Stage have excellent relationships with the children. The teaching is very good, with one excellent lesson observed. Adults go to great lengths to find out where children are in their learning. During frequent discussions, they share information about individual children and plan accordingly. In this way, children experience success and grow in confidence. Nursery children are already gaining independence in their learning because teachers successfully encourage them to make choices and to discuss what they have learned from the wide range of appealing activities. Whole class sessions are also handled well. Here, teachers introduce a topic and then set very well designed tasks. Small groups benefit from working with an adult who keeps them involved through skilled questioning. Support staff are very well briefed and this enables them to guide children's thinking and to play a very significant role in assessing progress towards specific goals.
11. Although most lessons observed in years 1 to 6 were satisfactory or better, the scrutiny of children's work revealed several weaknesses. There is very little evidence of teachers using assessment information to set work at different levels. This results in some children tackling work which is too easy and, more often, too difficult. Much of the marking is cursory – such as, 'good' and 'well done' – and is not related to the specific purpose of the work. In some books, the amount of work done since the beginning of term is minimal. This means children do not have enough opportunities to learn, practise or consolidate writing skills. The work set for higher attaining children is usually at the right level but too frequently all children are set the same task. This means that many experience failure rather than success. Some exceptions were seen in the lessons observed, for example in the younger year 1 class.
12. In ICT, the quality of teaching and learning in years 1 and 2 is satisfactory but much of what should be taught is missed in years 3 to 6 and teaching is unsatisfactory overall. The quality of teaching in science is now satisfactory but it is unsatisfactory in English and mathematics. Due to the inspection concentrating on achievement in these areas, it was not possible to judge the quality of teaching and learning in other subjects.
13. With the help of the local education authority (LEA), a good range of assessment information has been introduced but not all teachers use it when planning lessons. Instead, they use national subject guidelines for each age group. This is all very well but many children in the school are behind where they should be and find the work too difficult. This is particularly true of children with special educational needs. They are taught skilfully by the special educational needs coordinator, who motivates them very well in small groups and is adept at improving their skills. However, throughout the school, many lessons are not planned well enough to take account of children's individual needs and too often they are working at tasks that are beyond their capabilities. The support they receive in small groups is variable; some teaching assistants are well-briefed and use the school policies and systems well to support children learning to read. In other small groups children do not receive good support, because the activities are not suitable for their needs
14. Children's learning is enhanced when they actively participate in lessons. For example, teachers base most work in science on practical experience but the interest and enthusiasm evident in this subject are not found in many other lessons. There has been an understandable focus on improving behaviour and this has worked well. Some teachers are now beginning to look at lesson planning from a child's point of view and considering what will excite them. For example, turgid comprehension exercises are giving way to more enjoyable and productive ways of learning to think about the meaning of texts. However, there is a long way to go before the school achieves its aim to make teaching excellent and learning enjoyable.

## Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 23 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1	2	9	9	2	0	0

*The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons.*

### The curriculum

The curriculum is **unsatisfactory** because it is not planned well enough to meet the needs of all children, particularly those with special educational needs. The curriculum is enriched through a **good** range of visits and clubs. Accommodation and resources are **satisfactory** overall.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The excellent curriculum in the nursery and reception classes leads to very good achievement
- The curriculum is not planned well enough to help children from year 1 to year 6 make progress in their learning
- Provision for children with special educational needs is unsatisfactory, so that they do not make enough progress
- ICT resources are unsatisfactory

### Commentary

15. Curriculum planning for children in the nursery and reception classes is excellent and has considerably improved since the last inspection. The wealth of imaginative activities excites and engages young children in all areas of learning. The classes are packed with stimulating displays, such as spiders' webs and individually formed and beautifully painted clay diva lamps that sparkle with added glitter. All activities are planned with great care to help children make progress in their learning. The outdoor classroom is used extremely well to promote learning across all areas of the curriculum. Very well-planned activities stimulate children's curiosity and help them to learn as they play. Simple ideas transfix children's interest; for example, a few airflow balls hang down on different lengths of string. Children busily count the balls and talk with adults about longer and shorter, lower and higher balls of various colours. This is typical of the excellent range of activities on offer in both classes.
16. The curriculum for children in years 1 to 6 provides a sharp contrast. Activities are often routine and few are planned that engage children fully in learning. Teachers rely heavily on commercial schemes to support learning in many subjects. In addition, they often spend a great deal of time creating supplementary worksheets for children to complete. As a result, the curriculum is unsatisfactory and contributes to children's underachievement.
17. The new headteacher has worked hard to prepare good long-term plans that set out in detail the skills that children need to develop. However, with some exceptions, the plans are not yet being used consistently in all classes and in all subjects to ensure that children take part in worthwhile activities throughout the school day. Teachers use the national literacy and numeracy strategies to inform their lessons, but do not adapt the national plans well enough to match the needs of their children. This can be seen in the unsatisfactory planning for children with special educational needs. Their good individual plans that set out precisely what they need to learn next are not used effectively in most lessons.

18. The building and grounds are spacious but not well cared for. Since the last inspection, resources in the library have been reviewed and some thought has been given to providing books in each class that will appeal to boys as well as girls. However, more could be done to promote boys' interest by increasing the range of books and other reading materials still further. Resources for ICT are unsatisfactory and mean that children cannot take part in all the aspects of the curriculum that are required in years 3 to 6. As a result, the curriculum does not meet statutory requirements.

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

The attention given to children's care, welfare, health and safety is **satisfactory**. Support and guidance based on monitoring are **satisfactory**. Children's involvement in the life of the school is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children with personal difficulties are well supported
- Care for children in the nursery and reception classes is good
- Child protection procedures are good
- Playground organisation is inadequate

### **Commentary**

19. The school does its best to help children who have difficulties in behaving well and provides good guidance for those who have other problems in their lives. Personal support programmes, which are shared with parents, set out strategies for tackling the issues that stop children from learning. Sympathetic and focused support from the special needs coordinator and the home school worker, through the crusaders club<sup>1</sup> and counselling sessions, means that children have someone to turn to when they need it.

20. The staff in the nursery and reception classes concentrate on helping the children to develop their personal and social skills so that they feel secure in their surroundings and confident with others. A comprehensive induction programme helps the children to settle quickly, and the positive and encouraging approach of the staff helps them get off to a flying start in their education.

21. The school has established good procedures for child protection with thorough training and guidance for staff at all levels. This means that children's overall welfare is safeguarded and monitored effectively. However, insufficient attention is given to keeping the school clean in order to protect children's health and well-being on a day-to-day basis.

22. The school playground is not organised to allow space for a range of different activities and as a result play is often chaotic.

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

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There is good daily contact between staff and parents in the nursery and reception classes
- The governors' annual report to parents and reports on children's progress have improved
- The local church supports the school well

### **Commentary**

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<sup>1</sup> Small group activities intended to motivate children and to promote self-esteem  
Long Mead Community Primary School - 13

23. Good relationships between staff and parents in the nursery and reception classes begin during the induction process. A programme of home visits and school sessions means that everyone can get to know one another. Each day, nursery and reception parents bring their children into class and collect them from the teacher so that information can be exchanged and a dialogue between home and school built up.
24. Since the last inspection, the governors' annual report to parents and reports on children's progress have been updated in order to meet requirements. They now contain all the details required by law. However, reports could be improved further, as they do not give parents a clear picture of how well their children are doing for their age. In subjects other than English, mathematics and science, they concentrate too much on what children have done, rather than how well they have done. Attendance levels are included but poor attendance goes unremarked, so a parent would not know that 90 per cent attendance is not good enough.
25. The nearby church is a reliable source of ongoing support for the school. Members of the congregation run the breakfast club, help with reading and provide pastoral support for individuals, to supplement the efforts of the school staff.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The overall quality of leadership and management is **satisfactory**. The leadership of the headteacher is **very good**. The leadership of other key staff is **satisfactory**. The governance of the school is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher has very clear vision and a very strong sense of purpose
  - Some governors have a good knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of the school
  - The response to children's underachievement has been too slow
  - The leadership and management of the Foundation Stage is very good
  - Financial administration is very good but the allocation of funds needs to be reviewed.
26. The new headteacher has done everything she could possibly do in a short time to deal with the pressing problems of underachievement and unsatisfactory teaching as well as low morale and illness within the teaching staff. She is motivated by an absolute determination to give every child at the school the opportunity to make the best of their potential. The headteacher acted quickly to implement a behaviour policy which is already proving to be effective in supporting staff and improving behaviour. She has also redeployed staff to make the best use of their skills, made significant improvements to curriculum planning, involved key staff in strategic planning as well implementing a host of other initiatives to improve the school. There has been too little time for many of these to have had an impact, but she enjoys the confidence of the governors and the LEA in leading the school out of its present difficulties.
27. A very committed and skilled chair of governors is very aware of the school's weaknesses and determined that they should be dealt with. There are other governors who have a similar understanding. However with two vacancies, and some new governors, the overall impact of the governing body is limited.
28. Governors are aware that the problems of underachievement have persisted for some time. However there is some evidence that the governing body has had some difficulty in the past in acquiring the information it needed to take action. The chair of governors has sought to challenge the school by analysing data himself. In this and other ways, the governors have tried to hold the school to account for the lack of progress since the last inspection and have been prepared to take some difficult decisions. By appointing the current headteacher the governing body have made a significant contribution towards school improvement.

29. The very good quality of leadership and management of the Foundation Stage provides a good model for other coordinators. It is firmly based on improving achievement. The work is planned very carefully to take account of where children are in their learning and their progress is tracked meticulously. This process, together with highly effective team work, means that children achieve very well.
30. Day to day financial administration is very good. However the well-intentioned attempts to protect the school staffing levels as numbers of children fall by carrying forward a significant percentage of the school budget does not accord with the principle that funds are allocated to schools to spend on current children.

**Financial information**

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

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	755,472
Total expenditure	743,982
Expenditure per pupil	2,883

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	59,491
Balance carried forward to the next	70,981

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

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

The quality of provision in the Foundation Stage is **very good**.

31. Children in the nursery and in the reception classes achieve very well because of consistently very good teaching in all areas of learning. Due to their very low starting point, however, standards in most areas are below those expected by the end of the reception year. The provision is very well led and managed and there has been good improvement since the last inspection. The nursery and reception teachers, together with support staff work extremely well as a team. The curriculum is excellent. Work is meticulously planned and is based on very well organised assessment procedures. Staff are never far away from a notepad in which they record the small steps in children's learning. Work is planned in detail only two days at a time which means that it can be tailored very accurately to children's developing needs. The indoor and outdoor areas have been imaginatively designed revealing a very good understanding of how young children learn. Children delight in using the wealth of attractive and stimulating resources.

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

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

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

- The close partnership with parents helps children to settle well in nursery
- Children are successfully encouraged to become independent

#### **Commentary**

32. Parents accompany their children into school at the beginning of the day and staff provide a warm welcome. Children register by putting their photograph on a chart and quickly become absorbed in one of the early morning activities set out for them. When they are anxious about leaving their parents, staff skilfully gain their attention so their worries are soon forgotten.

33. In both the nursery and reception classes, each day includes a 'choose and review' session. In small groups, each with an adult, children discuss what they are going to do and come back to talk about it. The activities on offer are carefully designed to stimulate learning and staff are very good at engaging children in conversations. They do not simply focus on what children are doing, but have in mind their specific needs. If children find it difficult to cooperate, for example, they will be encouraged to work with someone else at a task. Where children are reluctant to share, staff will initiate an activity that requires them to take turns. Although many children lack confidence and have poor social skills as they start school, they make very good progress. However, overall attainment in this area of learning is below that expected by the end of reception.

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

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

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

- Staff take every opportunity to develop children's speech and language
- Children are encouraged to develop enthusiasm for stories

#### **Commentary**

34. Talking is encouraged wherever possible. From the moment children arrive they are encouraged to respond to adult's greetings and registration times help children to take turns in speaking and listening to one another. Staff are well aware of each child's individual stage of speech and language development and therefore can pitch their questions at just the right level. This was seen, for example, during the nursery teacher's skilful one-to-one interaction with a child in the role-play area. Through making 'telephone calls' and 'ordering food from the kitchen' she soon had the child involved, helping him to speak more accurately as the conversation progressed. This is typical of all the adult/child interaction observed. Despite this strong emphasis on speech and language development, however, many children have weak speaking and listening skills by the end of reception.
35. Adults read stories expressively and sustain children's attention very well. As a result, children listen with increasing attention and can remember the sequence of events and describe the characters. The reading corner, set out with cushions, posters and related toys, is well used by children during their choosing times and, again, adults are frequently on hand to encourage and guide children. All staff recognise that this area of learning is the key to many other aspects of children's development and their efforts lead to very good progress. Despite this, however, children's early reading skills are generally well below those expected by the end of reception.

## **MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in mathematical development is **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Daily activities involving counting successfully support children's early numeracy skills
- A wide range of resources help children learn about shape and size

### **Commentary**

36. Each day, children 'help' the teachers to count how many boys and girls are present. They enjoy using a large pointing stick as they count and this helps them to count accurately instead of simply reciting numbers in order. They join in number songs, such as 'Five Little Frogs' and this helps them to understand the meaning of one less and to count backwards from five. Teachers are very good at illustrating numbers using apparatus, for example, making towers of five and ten blocks and asking children which has more or fewer than five. The numbers 1 to 10 are consistently reinforced through table top activities, such as threading beads, jigsaws, play in the toy shop and through stories with numbers as the theme.
37. Both indoors and outside, there are many opportunities for children to learn about shape and size through play. There are sets of building blocks and construction toys of every kind and children often make a bee line for them. Adults strike a good balance between letting children enjoy free play and intervening with appropriate questions, successfully encouraging children to describe what they have built using mathematical language such as 'larger' or 'smaller'. As a result of this very good provision, children build very well on their relatively low starting point. By the end of reception, most count reliably up to ten everyday objects and find one more or one less than a number. Other aspects of mathematics, such as calculating and shape are less well developed, which means overall attainment is below that expected.

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

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Stimulating activities successfully promote children's curiosity
- Early ideas of cause and effect are introduced through early problem solving activities

## Commentary

38. From a child's eye view, the indoor and outdoor areas must be full of temptation. Everywhere they turn there is something interesting to look at or play with. Large windmills flutter in the breeze, the garden is full of plants and there is always something on hand to stimulate interest. In addition to opportunities for children to explore things individually, some activities are led by adults with a specific point in mind. For example, children are encouraged to observe and comment about how string puppets are made to move and to see how light plays the key role in shadow puppets. Reception children were thrilled as they tested whether their 'boats for teddy' floated. Through such activities, children develop early skills in observing and offering suggestions. This stands them in good stead for later work in design and technology and science. Their knowledge and understanding of the world outside their immediate home and school is promoted very well due to such activities and teachers' careful tracking of their progress. Overall, attainment in this area of learning is below expectations by the end of reception.

## PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **very good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children benefit from a very good range of resources for physical development
- Good use is made of the school hall to help children develop physical skills

## Commentary

39. The large and well-designed outdoor area provides a very good environment for children to explore, experiment and refine their movements. They eagerly play on the wheeled vehicles, negotiating the cycle track and obeying the directions of the 'traffic control officer'. This gives them plenty of opportunities to develop control over their bodies and the way they move. Using the climbing frame, they develop increasing confidence in moving over, under and around. Skills such as aiming and throwing are well promoted as they throw balls into nets or try using small tennis bats to hit balls on string. In the classroom, many tasks involve using pencils, crayons, paint brushes and scissors, which gives children ample opportunities to develop their manipulative skills. Children spontaneously move between the classroom and the outdoor area and this enables them to improve their coordination in an unhurried atmosphere. Staff rightly value this aspect of children's development and encourage as much physical activity as possible.

40. Regular sessions in the hall help children to develop control over their own movements and to be increasingly aware of the space around them. Well planned lessons introduce children to such ideas as following, leading and copying and they learn to think about others as they move around. Teachers ensure that they are introduced to ideas about healthy eating and the importance of sleep and personal hygiene. The very effective provision in this area helps children to make very good progress and most reach the levels expected by the end of reception. They control their own movements with confidence and develop an awareness of the effect of their movements on others.

## CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **very good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children respond very well to the very good range of creative activities.

## Commentary

41. Creative activities are so enticing that children approach them with great enthusiasm. For example, children produced lively firework pictures as they listened to well-chosen music. Every day they have opportunities to use paints and graphics programs on the computer. The 'art gallery' contains many examples of children's creative efforts, reflecting the way adults give children confidence to use their imagination and experiment. The role play area stimulates lots of creative speech and language. Children become thoroughly absorbed as they play in the 'kitchen' or the 'shop' and this provides valuable opportunities for language development. Children have good opportunities to explore musical sounds through singing and regular access to instruments. Teachers encourage them to produce loud, quiet, high and low sounds and to use appropriate vocabulary to describe them. Because of this high quality provision, most children reach the expected levels in creative development.

## SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

### ENGLISH

Provision in English is **unsatisfactory**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children are not making enough progress from years 1 to 6 in all aspects of English
- Teaching and learning are unsatisfactory but beginning to improve
- Children do not have enough opportunities to develop English skills when they work in other subjects
- Some new initiatives are beginning to bring about improvements

### Commentary

42. Improvement in English since the last inspection has been poor. Standards are much lower now and well below those expected from years 1 to 6. Children do not make enough progress because teachers do not plan their lessons well enough to enable children of all abilities to improve their skills. Too many lessons do not set out what children of all abilities are likely to be able to achieve. This is because teachers do not make effective use of assessments of children's work. For example, they do not routinely check what children have learned each day at the end of lessons, and use this information to plan the next steps in learning. This is most evident in the unsatisfactory provision for children with special educational needs. In too many lessons these children are working at tasks that do not match their needs. In one lesson, children with very low reading and writing skills were asked to form sentences, when this was clearly beyond their capability.

43. The systems in place to teach reading and writing skills are not effective, and this leads to widespread underachievement. Many of the small reading groups, where children read with an adult, allow children to read aloud in turn, but not to improve their skills effectively. Children's literacy books show that they have few opportunities to develop writing skills. Writing activities are too often completed on low-level worksheets, or are routine tasks, so that opportunities for children to think about how to structure their writing are limited. Some good strategies have been introduced this term to help children improve their skills in speaking and listening. In the best examples seen, children were often encouraged to talk about the work in pairs or groups for a moment or two before reporting their ideas back to the class. Where this was most effective the pace of learning was brisk. Children knew exactly what they needed to discuss and began as soon they were asked. In other lessons this was not organised well, and children spent too much time moving to find a talk partner and too little time actually discussing their ideas.

44. There are clear signs that the quality of teaching is beginning to improve, as most teaching seen was satisfactory or better. This is due to satisfactory leadership and management and some

good strategies for raising standards. An effective partnership has been established between the coordinator, the new headteacher and the local education authority intensive support team. Together, they have introduced good systems for checking the standards that children achieve so that they are aware of the strengths and weaknesses in teaching and learning. They have identified significant levels of underachievement in all classes in reading and writing through the new systems for tracking children's progress. The information is shared with staff so that they can see which children in their classes are underachieving. Staff have been asked to implement some key strategies to raise standards, such as the group learning targets that have been set in each class to help teachers plan work more effectively. The policy has had some success. In some classes, children have been introduced to the targets so that they know what they need to improve. However, this is inconsistent and most teachers make little use of the targets when they plan their lessons, during the lessons, or when they mark children's work. As a result, too many lessons are not tailored well enough and the pace of learning is too slow for most.

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

45. The range of opportunities for children to develop English skills in other subjects is unsatisfactory. A key factor in children's poor achievement in writing is the lack of occasions for children to write for different purposes. Teachers do not routinely think about how to develop writing skills when planning subjects such as history. As a result, children are provided with worksheets that offer limited opportunities for them to improve or use their writing skills. Speaking and reading opportunities occur incidentally but are not planned for regularly so that many opportunities to develop these key skills are lost.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **unsatisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Achievement is poor and standards are well below average
- The quality of teaching and learning is unsatisfactory
- The curriculum does not meet children's learning needs because work is not pitched at the right level
- The subject leader has workable plans for improvement

### **Commentary**

46. The information collected by the school about children's progress confirms that a significant proportion of children of all abilities are underachieving. A number of children make no, or very little, discernible progress from year to year. Improvement from the time of the last inspection has been poor. However, the rate of progress in years 5 and 6 is beginning to improve.

47. During the inspection, the quality of teaching in lessons observed was never less than satisfactory. Teachers were making a genuine attempt to match work for their children according to their capabilities. Teachers managed their lessons well and children were busy, well behaved and worked hard. Children with special educational needs were generally well supported and sometimes made better progress than other children. However, children's books show that the teaching is generally unimaginative. Children are rarely given the opportunity to investigate numbers or apply their mathematical knowledge and skills in new and challenging ways. Expectations for the presentation of work, the amount of work done and the degree of challenge are too low. Too often children of different abilities are expected to do the same or similar work. The quality of marking does very little to motivate children, raise their expectations or guide them.

48. In recent times the school has had the benefit of support from the local education authority. The subject coordinator has worked closely with local consultants to observe lessons and produce plans for raising attainment. However, the pace of change has been too slow. The coordinator has very clear and practical ideas for improving achievement and with the help of the consultant

has begun to put some of these in place. A very workable target system and the identification of 'focus groups' of underachieving children have the potential to make a significant impact upon achievement. Similarly, the agreed system for recording children's progress should help teachers match work to children's capabilities. The subject coordinator has made a satisfactory start and has a good sense of purpose.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

49. Very few examples are evident of links with other subjects to enhance the teaching of mathematics or of children being given opportunities to apply their mathematics skills in subjects across the curriculum. An exciting exception to this was evident in year 3 when children had used their knowledge of two-dimensional shapes to create self-portraits after the style of Picasso.

## **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Practical approaches are helping to improve children's achievement
- Children enjoy lessons and work well together but younger children need more help in recording their work
- Computers are not used widely enough in science

### **Commentary**

50. The headteacher provides good leadership and management. She has used her considerable expertise in science to bring about improvements to teaching and learning. Although standards are still well below average, because children have a lot of catching up to do, the quality of teaching is now satisfactory, with some good features. New ideas are taught in practical ways and this is helping children to learn the essential skills of science, such as close observation and sharing information. They are now making satisfactory progress in lessons. This was evident in the year 2 class when children thoroughly enjoyed investigating circuits. Using a wide range of bulbs, motors and buzzers, they quickly learned how to complete a circuit and their level of understanding was good. Similarly, year 6 children rose to the challenge of designing 'autogyros' (paper spinners) and experimenting to see which factors kept the gyro in the air for the longest time. Only a few were able to explain the scientific principles involved, however, indicating that children's overall knowledge of forces is limited. The recently introduced programme of work includes a straightforward assessment system and this is helping teachers to identify such gaps in children's learning and to plan accordingly.

51. In years 3 to 6, children are increasingly recording their investigations systematically, using a standard format and including bullet points, tables and charts. This is less evident in the younger classes, where children find difficulty in recording their work. Many do not have the literacy skills to enable them to write detailed accounts and need to use prompt sheets, diagrams and pictures in order to learn and remember scientific vocabulary and to develop their recording skills.

52. There is very little work with computers in science lessons. This means that children miss opportunities to see how ICT can enhance accuracy, for example, through the use of temperature sensors. They rarely word-process their work so miss out on using various formats, drawing tools and graphics. Most graphs they produce are done by hand, leaving the good range of software for this purpose under-used.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children are not taught all they should be so they cannot reach the expected standards
- Weaknesses identified by the last inspection have not been tackled adequately

## Commentary

53. There is hardly any ICT work in children's books. Work saved to their individual folders consists almost entirely of word-processing and graphics. In years 1 and 2, children also learn how to make simple graphs and how to program a floor robot. They make satisfactory progress and, because of the sound teaching and coverage of the curriculum, most reach the levels expected. Children in year 1, for example, are able to 'drag and drop' images across the screen to complete a simple pictogram (a graph made of pictures rather than columns) and are reasonably confident when using computers.
54. The main problem in years 3 to 6 is that children's experiences are not sufficiently wide. They learn how to use a spreadsheet but do not know enough about how a database is constructed. It is not possible for teachers to develop other important aspects of the subject because the school does not have the necessary software or additional resources. This means that children do not build on earlier programming skills to create sequences of instructions, for example, to control traffic-lights. Lack of simple sensing devices, such as thermometers and light meters, means that they miss out on exciting and motivating activities. Teachers do their best but lack expertise in such areas, which means that the teaching and learning in years 3 to 6 is unsatisfactory.
55. Many of the weaknesses identified by the last inspection remain. The school has created an ICT suite and, despite some teething problems that have not yet been overcome, this provides a good resource. Children were making unsatisfactory progress at the time of the last inspection; indeed the report prior to that one had said the same thing. Despite having a large budget surplus, the necessary resources, which are relatively inexpensive, have not been acquired and not enough has been done to ensure children have all the opportunities to which they are entitled. Leadership and management are unsatisfactory. The coordinator knows what needs to be done but has been frustrated in attempting to promote change. Things are looking up, since the appointment of the headteacher, who shares the coordinator's determination to improve provision.

## Information and communication technology across the curriculum

56. Some teachers try to relate ICT work to other subjects but this is hit and miss. Children use the Internet to find information in subjects such as history and geography and word-process accounts, but there is little to be found in children's work that links to English, mathematics and science. Teachers need more guidance in this. For example, a well-planned lesson in year 5, when children were using a design program to plan 'a playground for the local council', could have been more meaningful if they had been asked to re-design their own playground, a topical and pressing issue.

## HUMANITIES

57. During the inspection no lessons in geography and history were seen. As a result it is not possible to make an overall judgement about provision for these subjects. Evidence was gained from talking to children, looking at their work, and studying teachers' planning for lessons and in the longer term.
58. Children say they have few opportunities to study **geography** throughout the school and there is very little work to see in their books. The lack of recorded work indicates that geography is not used well to develop children's literacy and numeracy skills. Planning for lessons shows that the good long-term plans are not being used effectively to provide children with worthwhile experiences. Some recent work shows the potential for raising the status of the subject. Children in year 2 took part in an extremely enjoyable and worthwhile activity led by the new

headteacher. They were delighted to see a set of photographs of a well-known soft toy, Shaun the Sheep, in different locations around the neighbourhood; for example, perched on street signs. They developed geography skills well by going out on a field trip in the local area to search for the missing toy. A map of the route they took is included in the display of the work, which makes good use of digital photography to enhance geographical skills. This exciting activity is not typical of the work found throughout the school.

59. Children's work shows that there were some good opportunities for them to develop literacy skills in **history** this term; for example, year 6 children created a chart showing the reasons for World War 2 and wrote a news report of the Blitz. They used the Internet to research information about the war, but there were missed opportunities for making use of the information they found. The range of opportunities for children to record their ideas is very limited throughout the school and contributes to children's underachievement in writing. In year 3, children's Roman topic books include as many as nineteen worksheets, and this limits the way they develop history skills. The standards of work seen in children's books throughout the school are below those expected for their age. The good long-term plans for developing history skills are generally not translated into worthwhile activities in each class. Nonetheless, children in year 3 were clearly motivated by a lot of the work in history; for example, they enjoyed dressing up in togas, and can reel off the names of Roman Gods with aplomb.

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

It was only possible to observe one religious education lesson during the inspection so it is not possible to make a judgement on the overall provision or the quality of teaching.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children have a reasonable knowledge of key facts but lack understanding of the importance of belief in people's lives

### Commentary

60. From talking to children and looking at their work in books and on display it is clear that they are making reasonable progress. Children in year 2, for example, know that ceremonies such as Christenings and weddings take place in church but they do not know why. They have some recall of being told stories about, for example, Noah's Ark or the Good Samaritan but are unable to re-count the main features. They do not know why people go to Church to celebrate Christmas and cannot name religions other than Christianity. They can, however, explain why some things are special to them and know that some actions are right and others are wrong.

61. Year 6 children show genuine interest in the subject and can recall some facts about religious practices in Christianity and Islam but are unable to explain the significance of these. These older children are fascinated by difficult questions about the meaning and purpose of life but it is clear that they have had very little opportunity to discuss these.

62. There is evidence of some teachers attempting to teach the subject imaginatively. This is especially true in year 3 where children write, for example, job descriptions for Christians, and rules for a new society. In one good lesson, children were motivated to increase their understanding of advent by making a clay candleholder. In general, however, teachers are not taking advantage of the rich opportunities available to them to enliven the children's learning by making links with other subjects.

63. The subject coordinator is introducing some good improvements. She has encouraged teachers to start assessing children's progress and has provided appropriate means of tracking their attainment. She has monitored plans and observed some lessons, as well as setting up new links with some faith communities and strengthening other links. Teachers are more confident and positive about new subject guidelines but little has been done on a whole school basis to evaluate the quality of work children are producing.

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

64. It was not possible to observe any lessons in art and design or in design and technology, so no judgement can be made on overall provision or the quality of teaching. From the evidence of work on display it is clear that many teachers recognise the importance of giving children creative and practical experiences. Too few lessons were observed in physical education and music to evaluate the quality of provision or levels of attainment. Discussions with children and staff showed that these subjects are popular and provide some enrichment activities.
65. Children like **art and design** and are achieving well in some aspects. For example, year 6 children enjoyed experimenting with proportion and movement before attempting their own version of 'Wildly Dancing Children' after the style of Emil Nolde. The teaching staff are proud of the work they do in the subject and benefit from the knowledge and expertise of the subject leader. There are examples of drawing, painting, textile work, collages and three-dimensional sculpture.
66. In **design and technology**, year 1 children make firework designs, year 4 design and sew decorated purses, year 5 make sock 'sea monsters' and year 6 work with wood to design and make shelters. A progression of difficulty and challenge is apparent in these projects as is an increase in expectation for children to plan and evaluate their work.
67. Plans for **physical education** and **music** cover all aspects of the curriculum. Extra-curricular sporting and musical activities have declined recently but fresh impetus is extending opportunities. The new cross country running club is popular and links have been made with the local specialist college to provide tennis coaching and dance tuition. Staff are getting to grips with a new scheme for teaching music and, although not music specialists, they are happy to work with their own classes. Further training is planned when the scheme has bedded in. There are opportunities for learning a musical instrument and five children currently are learning the violin or cello. Take up of tuition is low as some parents find it too costly. Children say they enjoy music and this was evident in their enthusiasm when singing in assemblies. They sang expressively and were sensitive to the meaning of the words.

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

68. No judgement is made about overall provision as no lessons were seen. The school's policy sets out its aims in this area and has some good suggestions about how teachers can help children learn through formal lessons and through day-to-day activities. Some of these ideas are already being taken up, for example, children are learning about citizenship through the activities of the school council. Sex and drugs education are built into the curriculum.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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