

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **MAPPERLEY PLAINS PRIMARY AND NURSERY SCHOOL**

Mapperley Plains, Nottingham

LEA area: Nottinghamshire

Unique reference number: 122525

Headteacher: Mrs Celia Brooks

Lead inspector: Mrs Barbara E Doughty

Dates of inspection: 11<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> April 2005

Inspection number: 267273

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

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## **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	332
School address:	Hazel Grove Mapperley Nottingham Nottinghamshire
Postcode:	NG3 6DN
Telephone number:	0115 9525720
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Jason Slaney
Date of previous inspection:	5 <sup>th</sup> July 1999

## **CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL**

This is a larger than average primary school for pupils aged three to eleven. There are 332 pupils on roll, with a fairly even mix of boys and girls. The school serves a socio-economically advantaged area, with few pupils known to be eligible for free school meals. Attainment on entry to the Nursery class at age three is above average because whilst the majority of children are broadly average attainers, there are very few low attaining children. Fewer pupils than in most other schools have special educational needs. There is only one with a statement of specific special need, but there are four pupils with severe needs including autism, delayed development, and Fragile X. Sixty-three pupils (nineteen per cent) come from ethnic minority backgrounds, mostly White and Black Caribbean and Indian, but only eight are learning to speak English as an additional language. There is before and after-school care offered by an external provider. The school received a School Achievement Award in 2003. Over the past two years, there have been major disruptions to staffing. There are currently five temporary teachers, three of whom are also newly qualified; most are in the Reception classes and Years 1 and 2.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
22261	Mrs Barbara E Doughty	Lead inspector	English as an additional language Science Information and communication technology Religious education
32661	Mr Peter Hopkins	Lay inspector	
24895	Mrs Kath Hurt	Team inspector	The Foundation Stage curriculum English Geography History Music
19120	Mr Derek Pattinson	Team inspector	Special educational needs Mathematics Art and design Design and technology Physical education

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**This is a sound school that gives satisfactory value for money.** However, it is facing considerable upheaval at the moment and senior managers have done well to ensure that pupils achieve satisfactorily and reach above average standards by the time they leave. Pupils enjoy coming to this school and they work hard. The quality of teaching is sound overall, but with some classes doing much better than others. Leadership and management are effective, and coping well with the disruptions.

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

- Children get off to a very good start in the Nursery and pupils achieve well in Years 3 to 6.
- The teaching and learning of mathematics are unsatisfactory in Years 1 and 2, and the needs of the most able children are not met well enough in the Reception Year and Years 1 and 2.
- Standards in reading are well above average because of very effective teaching and learning, but writing, information and communication technology (ICT) and numeracy skills are not used effectively to support work in other subjects.
- Support staff are effectively deployed to help support pupils with special educational needs.
- Pupils have very effective attitudes to learning and their behaviour is very good.
- The head teacher and senior staff know the school well and are dealing successfully with the weaknesses and the disruptions caused by the temporary staffing and accommodation.
- The state and size of the accommodation are poor, but a new school is being built.

The school has made sound progress since its last inspection. Standards by the end of Year 6 have risen faster than nationally and the teaching of religious education, science, and ICT has improved. The most able pupils now achieve well in Years 3 to 6, but not in Years 1 and 2. Insufficient improvement has been made to mathematics in the youngest years, and some subject leaders still do not know their subjects well enough.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

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.*

**Achievement is satisfactory overall.** Children make good progress in the Nursery, but this slows in the Reception Year so that although almost all reach the goals for their age, too few exceed them. It is a similar picture in Years 1 and 2, with underachievement in mathematics and the most able not doing well enough in writing and science. By the end of Year 2, standards are broadly average in writing, mathematics, and science. Pupils achieve well in Years 3 to 6, and in Years 5 and 6 in particular. This means that at the end of the school standards are well above the nationally expected level in English and above it in mathematics, science, ICT, and religious education. Achievement in reading is very good and satisfactory overall in ICT and religious education.

**Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are good.** Attitudes and behaviour are very good and attendance is good.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The quality of education provided by the school is satisfactory overall. Teaching is sound.** Most pupils' learning is satisfactory. It is very good in the Nursery and good in Years 3 to 6 where teachers make good use of assessment information to tailor work for differently attaining pupils. Pupils work well because of this and make good and often very good progress. Whilst teaching is sound overall in Reception to Year 2, the teaching of mathematics in Years 1 and 2 is unsatisfactory and the most able pupils in the Reception Year and Years 1 and 2 are insufficiently challenged. This is because teachers have little regard to what pupils already know and need to learn next. There is over-reliance on worksheets and too much time wasted drawing and colouring pictures. In contrast, pupils with special educational needs are taught well. Support staff have good awareness of what these pupils need to learn next and move them on to the next step at just the right time. Throughout the school, lessons are organised well and behaviour is managed effectively. However, marking is inconsistent in letting pupils know what they do well and how to improve, and there is little promotion of literacy and numeracy, or the use of ICT, in other subjects. The curriculum is satisfactory and enriched very well by clubs, visits and visitors. The school cares for pupils' personal development well, and academic guidance is satisfactory. The school has a satisfactory partnership with parents.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**Leadership and management are satisfactory overall.** Leadership is good and management is satisfactory. The work of the governing body is sound and governors fulfil their duties satisfactorily. The head teacher and the deputies know the school well; even though the member of the senior management team who normally supports teaching in Years 1 and 2 is currently absent from school, the head teacher and her two deputies have continued to tackle the weaknesses in her absence, and improvements are beginning to show. Management systems are well established in Years 3 to 6, but the checking up on pupils' progress is embryonic lower down the school, reducing management to sound overall. Governors are well aware of the schools' strengths and weaknesses and in particular the underachievement of the most able pupils at the end of Year 2. Financial management is good.

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

Pupils are happy and parents are reasonably happy with the school. Pupils talk enthusiastically about what they are learning and they enjoy very good relationships with staff. Parents are generally happy with what the school offers their children, but are concerned, rightly so, about the temporary staffing situation in the Reception Year and Years 1 and 2, and the disruption this causes, in particular to the information they receive about how well their children are doing.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning of mathematics in Years 1 and 2.
- Increase teachers' expectations of what the most able pupils in the Reception Year and Years 1 and 2 can reasonably be expected to achieve.
- Promote writing and mathematics, and use ICT as a tool for learning, more effectively in other subjects.



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

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

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

Achievement is satisfactory overall. It is good in Years 3 to 6 and satisfactory in the Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2. By the end of the school, standards are above average in mathematics and science and well above average in English. Historic underachievement in the Foundation Stage has been successfully dealt with through improved teaching and most of the children now do well enough by the time they start in Year 1. However, the most able pupils do not achieve well enough from the beginning of the Reception Year to the end of Year 2, depressing standards at the end of the Reception Year and Year 2 to average overall. Neither do the average ability Year 1 and 2 pupils do well enough in mathematics, resulting in underachievement in this subject and standards that are not high enough by the time the pupils start in Year 3.

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

- Pupils achieve well in Years 3 to 6 and in Years 5 and 6 in particular.
- Too many pupils in mathematics in Years 1 and 2, and of the most able pupils in the Reception Year and Years 1 and 2, underachieve.
- Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because the work is tailored to their needs and they are supported effectively in lessons.
- Achievement in reading is very good throughout the school, but unsatisfactory in mathematics from the beginning of the Reception Year to the end of Year 2.
- Children get off to a very good start in Nursery and they make very good progress in their personal, social and emotional development in the Nursery and Reception classes.

#### **Commentary**

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	29.3 (26.7)	26.9 (26.8)
Mathematics	29.3 (27.3)	27.0 (26.8)
Science	30.7 (28.9)	28.6 (28.6)

*There were 43 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

1. Over time, the Year 6 test results have risen faster than in most other schools and are now well above the national average in English, mathematics and science. From the start of Year 3 to the end of Year 6, all pupils (including those who are learning English as an additional language and those with special educational needs) make rapid gains in their knowledge, skills and understanding in all three subjects, standards are higher than national expectations, and achievement is good. Pupils achieve particularly well in Years 5 and 6 where the teaching staff are experienced and well established. In addition, the two deputy head teachers support the teaching in these years, resulting in reduced class sizes and more focused teaching groups. By the time they leave the school, most pupils write interesting stories with good regard to the vocabulary they choose. Their mathematical skills are well developed and they work confidently with numbers. In science, many of them can plan and carry out investigations independently and they have a good understanding of how to use knowledge gained from one investigation to plan another. Pupils of all abilities have good ICT skills and particularly good knowledge of the usefulness of ICT outside school. Their religious understanding is good and they not only know facts about major world religions but also have an understanding about how to learn from them and so enhance their own lives.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	17.4 (17.5)	15.8 (15.7)
Writing	15.0 (16.0)	14.6 (14.6)
Mathematics	16.6 (16.7)	16.2 (16.3)

*There were 51 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

2. It is not such a positive picture in the younger classes, however, mainly because of weaknesses in teaching. Although many children leave the Nursery class showing good ability to learn quickly and grasp new ideas willingly and enthusiastically, from then on the learning of the most capable children is not built on as well as it could be. Consequently, by the end of Year 2, although standards are above average in reading, they are similar to those found nationally in writing and mathematics. This is because although most pupils achieve satisfactorily to reach at least the nationally expected level, too many fail to reach the higher level of which they are capable. Standards in ICT are adequate and they meet the expectations of the religious education syllabus. This school's Year 2 writing, reading, and mathematics test results have not kept pace with the national upward trend and have declined over time in all three subjects. It is a similar picture in the Foundation Stage. Although children make good progress in the Nursery class, and very good progress in personal, social and emotional development, too many of them end the Reception Year reaching only average standards overall in communication, literacy, language and mathematics.
3. However, the senior managers have worked hard to support the teaching in these years, and children in the Nursery make exceptionally good progress due to very good teaching in this class. But exceptional circumstances have created a barrier to improvement and have slowed the pace of change in the Reception class and Years 1 and 2 in particular. There has been considerable upheaval caused by staff changes and from classes being housed temporarily in extremely cramped conditions in mobile classrooms in the playground whilst the new school is being built. Causing most disruption, there have been a considerable number of staff leaving and joining the school, as well as numerous long-term absences for the school to contend with. Currently four of the six teachers in the Reception and Years 1 and 2 classes are on short-term temporary contracts; three of the four are newly qualified.
4. Although the senior manager who normally supports teaching and learning in Years 1 and 2 is on maternity leave, the head teacher and deputies have continued to support the teaching in these classes and there are signs of improvement as developments start to bite. Most children in the Reception Year and Years 1 and 2 are now making sound progress and achieving reasonably well in writing and science. For example, in a Year 2 science lesson seen, because the teacher had listened to and acted on very sound advice and guidance from the senior managers, the needs of the most able pupils were met well and the lesson was effective. However, although the learning in the lessons seen was satisfactory, there is still much work to do in mathematics, where the majority of pupils still do not do well enough in relation to their proven capabilities.
5. In contrast, pupils with special educational needs do well as they move through the school. This is because effective leadership supports and guides teaching well. Able and committed teaching assistants give these pupils good support, and effective monitoring systems for checking on pupils' learning and the consistency of their progress are well established. Work is tailored well to their needs and their individual learning targets are referred to constantly during lessons in order to give pupils the best possible chance to succeed.

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

Attendance is good. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils have a positive attitude to school life.
- Very good standards of behaviour support learning well.
- Pupils are confident and willingly take on responsibility.
- The school has good procedures that promote good attendance.

### **Commentary**

6. Pupils like coming to school and enjoy the various aspects of school life. This is expressed in their positive responses to questionnaires, in discussions, and the way in which pupils conduct themselves around the school. They are interested in lessons and have a positive approach to learning. In classes and assemblies they listen carefully to what is said and respond very well to questions or requests for them to participate, for example to sing in assembly. The older pupils contribute to lessons by developing logical questions and ideas that stimulate learning and make lessons interesting. A key element of the school ethos is respect for others and the pupils demonstrate this throughout the school. They are keen to participate in the wide range of extra-curricular activities that is offered by the school.
7. Besides having positive attitudes, pupils' behaviour is very good and this supports learning throughout the school. This is particularly true of the older pupils in Years 3 to 6. Pupils work very well together in teams and support each other in resolving tasks. Pupils have contributed to developing classroom rules and sanctions. This has resulted in very good relationships between pupils and teachers. The school has a strong ethos of good behaviour and respect and this is emphasised to parents in the school brochure. The staff act as positive role models and they promote positive behaviour by praising good achievement and good behaviour. This is supported by the awarding of 'smiley face' stickers which pupils receive for good behaviour or achievement. Teachers are quietly assertive and when there is a need to reprimand a pupil this is done in a positive way. Rarely do teachers raise their voices, leading to a calm atmosphere in the school. This ethos is reinforced throughout the school where pupils help each other and readily praise the good work of their schoolmates. Pupils walk about the school in an orderly way and require little or no supervision. They play well together at lunchtime even though there is limited space for them. Incidents of bullying or racist behaviour are very rare and are dealt with promptly.
8. The school ethos is also about self-confidence and self-esteem. Pupils are encouraged to take responsibility. Some are 'corridor monitors' who check that others are walking about the school in a safe way and that there are no obstructions or coats on the floor. Some of the oldest pupils have responsibility in the playground for looking after the younger children. Pupils are encouraged to play a leading part in assemblies. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 regularly organise assemblies, linked to the theme of the week and act out a story that demonstrates this theme. They run the entire assembly and issue stickers to other children for good behaviour. The pupils do this in a very confident and accomplished way. Other pupils willingly join in when requested. In the classroom, the older pupils are confident when expressing their views, which leads to a mature and constructive atmosphere. The school council is well developed and this also provides pupils with an opportunity to take responsibility and develop confidence.
9. The level of attendance (95.5 per cent) is above the national average. The school actively promotes good attendance. There is a computerised system that tracks attendance and identifies pupils who have a higher than average absence rate. The school then sends letters to

parents to inform them of the situation and seek reasons why. In cases of unauthorised absence parents are contacted by phone.

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

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	4.0	School data	0.5
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.*

10. Punctuality is good; the vast majority of pupils arrive for school on time and only a small number arrive late. There were no exclusions in the last school year.

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

The quality of education provided by the school is satisfactory. It is very good in the Nursery and good in Years 3 to 6. However, there are shortcomings in the Reception Year and Years 1 and 2 that slow progress. Similarly, learning opportunities are good in Nursery, and Years 3 to 6, and satisfactory in the other years. There is a very good range of enrichment activities including after-school clubs, visits and visitors. The school takes good care of the pupils' health, safety and well-being, and its relationship with parents is satisfactory overall.

#### **Teaching and learning**

Teaching and learning are satisfactory, with strengths in the Nursery and Years 3 to 6. Although satisfactory overall in the Reception Year and Years 1 and 2, there are some weaknesses affecting, in particular, achievement in mathematics and the learning of the most able pupils in writing and science. This is because although assessment arrangements are satisfactory overall, teachers in these years do not use the information well enough to tailor work for the most able pupils in writing and science or for the majority of pupils in mathematics.

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

- Teaching is very good in the Nursery class; it is good overall in Years 3 to 6 and in Years 5 and 6 in particular.
- However, in the Reception Year and Years 1 and 2, ineffective use of assessment information, too much drawing and colouring in, some overuse of worksheets and teachers accepting untidy work lower the standards reached by the most able pupils in particular.
- The teaching of mathematics in Years 1 and 2 is unsatisfactory.
- Throughout the school, lessons are generally well prepared, behaviour is managed effectively and relationships are well established.
- Teaching assistants are deployed well to support pupils in the most effective way.
- Throughout the school, there is too little promotion of literacy and mathematical skills in other subjects and ICT is not used as a working tool.
- Marking does not consistently tell pupils what they do well or how to improve their work.

#### **Commentary**

11. From the lessons seen, talking with pupils and teachers and, most importantly, evaluating pupils' achievements now and over time, the teaching at this school is satisfactory overall. However, there are significant differences between year groups. The best teaching is in the Nursery class and Years 5 and 6 where all of the very good lessons seen were; the unsatisfactory ones were in the Reception Year and Years 1 and 2.

## Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 53 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
2 (4%)	5 (9%)	19 (36%)	25 (47%)	2 (4%)	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. Throughout the school teachers and teaching assistants work together very well. They plan the lessons together and consequently they all know what is expected of them. Preparation is meticulous and things are always ready at the start so that little time is wasted. Support staff are deployed where they are most needed and this means that pupils get the support when and in which subjects they particularly need it. Pupils' behaviour is managed well and there are very few disruptions to lesson pace because of this.
13. In the Nursery class, where the quality of teaching is very good, children have exciting things to do that make them want to try out new things. For example, when making a pulley to 'drive' Teddy's car up the slope, groups of children became engrossed in seeing how many cubes they needed to put in the basket to get the car all the way up the slope. They investigated if the smaller cubes moved the car further up the ramp faster than the big ones did. The teacher expertly moved them onto the next step by asking relevant questions such as, "Do you think you are going to use more or less small cubes than you did large ones to get Teddy to the top?" Initially children associated small with less and thought that smaller cubes meant fewer would be needed and were amazed to learn that this was not the case.
14. Similarly, throughout Years 3 to 6 pupils are challenged well and the work is interesting and fine tuned to their different needs. This means that the learning of all groups of pupils – including those with special educational needs – is good, resulting in many pupils reaching the higher level and few failing to reach at least the expected level by the time they leave the school. The teaching in Years 5 and 6 is particularly good. Teachers in these years have a very good rapport with the pupils and because of this pupils work hard to please them. For example, in a Year 5/6 religious education lesson, all pupils participated in practising the art of meditation. Silence engulfed the room as pupils breathed deeply and focused their thoughts on things that calmed them, such as, "I heard the sea against the shore". After that, they were ready for anything and their concentration was amazing as they studied works of art from the National Gallery. They picked out what the paintings portrayed, such as how they depict Christianity through celebration, worship and praise. One pupil confidently remarked, "I think this one (The Holy Trinity) symbolises the wind through its use of colour and pattern", whilst his classmate thought, "No, I think it possibly represents the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit".
15. However, it is not as positive a picture in the Reception Year and Years 1 and 2. In these classes the quality of teaching is inconsistent and although satisfactory overall, it is unsatisfactory in mathematics in Years 1 and 2, and the needs of the most able in all three years are not met well enough. The teachers, most of whom are either temporary, newly qualified, or both, are not used to teaching such able pupils and consequently they aim too low. As a result, they do not expect enough from them, especially the most able. Teachers too readily accept, and sometimes even praise, poor handwriting and untidy presentation. They sometimes tick work that is incorrect, which means that pupils do not know that they have made a mistake. They too often ask pupils to draw pictures before doing their writing, and because of this, there are very few examples of pupils writing for purpose or producing lengthy pieces of writing. Time is also wasted when pupils are asked to colour pictures, again rather than getting on with their writing, and there is too much reliance on worksheets that require minimal effort from the pupils to complete. However, these issues are being tackled by the senior managers and most staff are responding extremely positively to their support and guidance. As a result, things are already starting to improve.

16. Pupils of all ages are not given sufficient opportunity to use writing, mathematical, or ICT skills in other subjects. Whilst pupils are asked to write about events in history and to record their investigations in science, too little regard is given to the skills they have learnt in literacy. Whilst teachers teach ICT skills by asking pupils to, for example, record mathematical data on spreadsheets and word process stories they have written, because there are no computers in classrooms pupils cannot use them to, for example, check spellings or grammar or search for information as and when they need to. Mathematical skills are used in, for example, history and geography, but these are more by accident rather than intention.

### **The curriculum**

The school provides a satisfactory curriculum overall and a good one for children in the Nursery and Years 3 to 6, enriched by a very good provision for extra-curricular opportunities that boost pupils' skills considerably. Resources to support learning are satisfactory. The overcrowded accommodation is poor.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The very wide range of extra activities provided by the school extends pupils' skills and enjoyment considerably.
- Most pupils with special educational needs achieve well because the provision and arrangements for supporting them are good.
- The good provision for developing pupils' personal, social and health education plays a significant part in developing their very good attitudes, behaviour and concern for others.
- The overcrowded accommodation limits pupils' experiences in subjects such physical development.

### **Commentary**

17. The range of activities that the school provides for pupils outside the normal school day has improved and is now very good. Residential, theatre and other visits, and a wide range of clubs and activities like the choir, all make a substantial contribution in extending pupils' skills and enjoyment of the curriculum. The way the school boosts the physical education curriculum, especially given the lack of a sports field and limited playground space, is particularly good. Starting in Year 1, pupils benefit from expert coaching in many sports including football, netball, rugby, cricket, basketball and athletics. The innovative way the school has planned for the time when teachers do their planning means that pupils have access to specialist teaching in music, French and physical education that successfully extend their experiences in these subjects.

18. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good, an improvement since the last inspection. Individual education plans state very clearly what their targets are and how these pupils will be supported. In the Nursery and Years 3 to 6 teachers make good use of these learning plans, adapting the curriculum well so that lesson plans focus strongly on helping pupils work towards their targets. Well-deployed and informed adults give good support, so that these pupils make good progress and often reach the levels expected for their age.

19. Good provision helps pupils achieve very well in their personal, social and health education. There is a carefully planned programme for sex education and raising awareness of the dangers of drug misuse. Visits to places like Stoke Bardolph Education Centre and workshops on themes like 'Let's Talk Rubbish' mean that pupils develop good attitudes to health, safety and pollution issues. The work of the school council, and the many fund-raising activities pupils take part in, ensure that they develop a very good awareness and concern for the needs of others in the wider world. Regular carefully planned discussions in timetabled lessons make a good contribution in helping pupils develop the maturity clearly evident in classes in Years 5 and 6.

20. The transfer of the Nursery and youngest classes from another building to the main site whilst a new school is built has led to significant overcrowding. The Nursery and Reception classes have particularly difficult accommodation in two temporary classrooms sited in a corner of the playground. Staff here do very well in providing a good range of curriculum experiences. They make extremely good and imaginative use of the facilities they have, particularly in extending activities into the outside areas. Nevertheless, they are unable to provide the full range of activities to support children in their physical development. Pupils in other classes have restricted access to the library because sometimes it has to be used as a classroom. The hall and outside areas are too small for physical education activities, particularly for the oldest pupils.

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

The provision of pupils' care, welfare and health and safety is good. The provision of support, advice and guidance based on monitoring is satisfactory. The way the school seeks, values and acts on pupils' views is very good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There are many opportunities for pupil involvement and for pupils to express their views.
- Staff know the pupils well and provide a caring environment.
- The before- and after-school provision supports the parents and enriches the opportunities for pupils well.
- The restricted outdoor facilities limit the opportunities for a range of different activities at break times.

### **Commentary**

21. The opportunities for pupils to express their views and be involved in school life are well embedded. The school council has been in place for several years and forms an important link between the pupils and the teachers. It meets regularly and produces ideas for consideration. It has played a part in deciding playground rules and the introduction of playground equipment. The members of the council take a lead in assemblies and raise issues that have been brought to them by other pupils, for example how to best organise the use of the restricted space in the playground; the council members managed the discussion in which many pupils expressed their views. The school council has visited another school council in order to obtain ideas of good practice. The Year 6 pupils are also encouraged to have an increasing involvement in school life by delivering some assemblies. Pupils are encouraged to debate/discuss school issues such as the need for a pupil suggestion box, and also to link such discussion to values and beliefs. In lessons, the teachers encourage pupils to be confident and express themselves, which supports learning and develops relationships, particularly in the Years 3 to 6 classes.

22. The school has thorough policies and procedures in place that help to ensure a safe environment for the pupils. Staff are well aware of any particular medical or dietary needs of pupils and they have all had training in the use of epipen. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and their integration in the classroom and the playground with the other pupils is well structured. The teachers know the pupils well and have a trusting relationship with them. Humour is often evident and the relationship is caring and relaxed. Pupils are happy to take any problems or concerns to the staff, who deal with issues raised effectively and efficiently.

23. The school has before- and after-school provision that benefits both parents and pupils. Pupils play games or carry out schoolwork and are well supervised. The pupils clearly enjoy being at the club and it is a major benefit to working parents. The school also provides a range of after-school activities such as sports, music, French and chess clubs. These are very popular with pupils, are well attended and provide a good extension to the school curriculum. Sports coaches come from a local sports college and they provide coaching for a range of sports including football and basketball.

24. Whilst the building work for the new school is ongoing, the space for outdoor play is very limited. When all the pupils are outside it is very congested. There is no green space and little opportunity for quiet space, but this should be resolved when the new school is built.

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

The school has satisfactory links with parents. The links with other schools and the community are also satisfactory.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Parents support learning in the school well.
- The constructive links with the local Christian churches are helping to develop pupils' spiritual awareness.
- Many parents feel that they would like more information and better communication about the ongoing progress of their children.
- There are only limited links to places of worship other than Christian ones.

### **Commentary**

25. Parents are supportive of the school and feel that it is well run. Parents of pupils in Years 1 and 2 are encouraged to come into school to help in the classrooms. They help test pupils' knowledge of multiplication tables, listen to reading, and provide general help in the classroom and on school trips. Parents of Reception Year children attend meetings at which the school explains how it teaches literacy and numeracy and how parents can help their children. Parents support class projects such as 'Toys from the past' by sending their old toys to school for the children to look at and discuss. Parents support reading at home, reflected in the very good progress made by pupils in reading. The parent/teacher association is very successful at raising sponsorship from local businesses and providing a significant amount of money for the school.

26. The school has extensive links with the local Christian churches, including Church of England, Salvation Army, and Methodist. Pupils go to visit the churches to learn about the differences between the different churches and the ministers are regular visitors to the school to take assemblies. They engage well with the pupils of all ages and this supports the religious education curriculum and helps spiritual and moral development. However, there is limited contact with other faiths. Although the pupils study other faiths as part of the religious education curriculum, there is no opportunity for the pupils to visit a mosque or a Hindu temple or for representatives of these faiths to play an active part in the school.

27. Parents feel that the school does consult with them on the general issues and they receive regular newsletters; they feel that the communication between themselves and class teachers about the progress of their children could be better. They also feel that the use of homework is inconsistent and the children's personal organisers could be used more effectively. They feel that this hampers their ability to support their children's learning at home. The inspection team found these aspects of the school's work to be satisfactory, but inspectors and school staff acknowledge that more could be done, particularly with so many temporary staff in school at the present time, to keep parents better informed about what is going on.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. Leadership by the head teacher and other key staff is good. The management of the school is satisfactory. Governance is sound and the governing body fulfils its statutory duties fully.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**



- The head teacher is a committed, experienced leader with high aspirations, a clear vision for the school and a determination to improve things.
- Senior managers and key subject leaders are increasingly effective at identifying what works well and what needs doing, but some subject leaders do not yet have the time to find out about what is happening in their subjects.
- The school's strategic planning is rigorous, reflecting the school's aims and values, and is sharply focused on the need to raise standards in the Reception Year and Years 1 and 2.
- Finances are carefully analysed and used appropriately, so the school makes the most of the money it has.
- The governing body is involved in checking aspects of the school's work, but is not yet involved as much as it could be in obtaining by different means first-hand evidence to help shape the school's direction.
- Relationships with parents are not as effective as they could be.

## **Commentary**

28. The head teacher provides caring, purposeful leadership, which is effective in many areas because of her clear vision, commitment and effective delegation. She has clear priorities and has established a rigorous agenda for needed improvement. She has the respect of pupils, parents, staff and the local education authority, who appreciate that she has the personal and professional qualities to effectively lead the school forward to face the considerable challenges involved in moving to a new building. Despite her best efforts to resolve the many problems caused by frequent changes of staff in the Reception classes and Years 1 and 2, she recognises that standards have fallen over time as a direct result of the many changes, and that this has adversely affected the quality of education that the school provides for younger pupils. However, she has the drive, determination and ability to put things right and things are already starting to improve. All staff and governors have been fully consulted to determine and agree the school's priorities for development to ensure that they have clear knowledge and understanding of what the school needs to do to improve. The need for good relationships with parents is given sound emphasis. However, the head teacher has rightly identified that the quality of relationships with them could be better still to help establish the best possible partnership between home and school for the benefit of all pupils.
29. The most important function of the senior managers is to secure the best possible quality of education for all pupils in order to raise standards. The able senior management team is being empowered through training and support to lead the implementation of essential improvements. However, it is not yet fully effective because although the problems caused by staffing issues which has lowered standards by the end of Years 2 are being addressed, systems are embryonic and some still lack sufficient rigour. This is partly because the senior manager who supports teaching in these year groups is currently absent. Although the deputies are keeping a watchful eye on what is happening in Years 1 and 2 and offering some advice and guidance, their expertise is weighted more towards Years 3 to 6 and time is taken trialling new systems and procedures here before introducing them in the younger classes. For example, the thorough tracking of pupils' progress in Years 3 to 6 to enable staff to identify and overcome weaknesses is not yet fully established in the younger classes, making it difficult to pick out precisely where inconsistencies in progress occur and make teachers more accountable for standards and achievement.
30. The quality of subject leadership is unacceptably varied. For example, in literacy and mathematics, lessons and pupils' work are checked regularly for quality, consistency, and compliance with National Curriculum requirements to ensure that the coordinator knows what is happening. However, coordinators are not as effective in some other subjects because they do not yet have the time to monitor pupils' books or lessons regularly enough to enable them to discover what works well and what needs doing.
31. School improvement planning provides a useful and important tool for development, with a clear, measurable agenda for improving achievement, teaching and learning. It is used well to

determine the best use of funds available to the school to support the priorities for school improvement. It is closely linked to the planned provision of training of teachers and support staff, which is given increasing emphasis, and the performance management arrangements, which are embedded in the school's work. Improvement planning builds rigorously on a thorough audit of outcomes from previous year's planning to try to ensure that developments are sustained to help raise standards. However, progress has been limited in the Reception Year and Years 1 and 2 because of the impact caused by frequent staffing changes. This has sometimes necessarily diverted attention from the focus on driving up standards to the need to address urgent short-term issues related to temporary staffing.

32. Outcomes of national tests are rigorously analysed to help identify and overcome weaknesses in pupils' performance. For example, data analysis is used increasingly to identify groups of pupils for additional support to enable teachers to match work precisely to their needs to help them improve more quickly. Data analysis has begun to be used effectively to establish targets in English and mathematics as a means of helping to drive up standards, but the tracking of achievement of individual pupils, embedded in the school's work in Years 3 to 6, is not yet embedded in Years 1 and 2.
33. Regular monitoring of spending patterns helps ensure that finance is used to benefit pupils. Principles of best value are soundly applied, and the governing body is committed to ensuring that all funds are wisely spent. Administrative staff work well to ensure that the school runs smoothly and that day-to-day financial management does not impinge on teaching and learning. As a result, financial control is judged as good.
34. The committed governing body provides sound support for the head teacher and carries out its statutory duties appropriately. All committees are properly structured and have clear terms of reference to ensure that they effectively support the school. Governors are knowledgeable about the school's strengths and some areas where it needs to improve. The governing body increasingly challenges the head teacher and senior management team, such as through reports on progress of school improvement planning. However, it is not yet rigorous enough in checking the school's work and in holding the school to account for what it achieves. For example, there are no formal links with many subjects or classes to help governors acquire knowledge and information from first-hand evidence to help them gain an informed overview of aspects of the school's work. As a result, it is not yet involved as fully as it could be in shaping the school's future direction.

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

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	841,699
Total expenditure	841,814
Expenditure per pupil	2136

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	7273
Balance carried forward to the next	7158

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

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

35. Children enter the Nursery after their third birthday and move into one of the two Reception classes when they are four years old. Standards are lower than reported last time, largely because the three classes have recently suffered a period of extensive disruption to staffing and accommodation. Good leadership has managed these difficult circumstances well. Senior managers have identified the weaknesses in children's achievements and falling standards since the last inspection and have established the right priorities for improvement. Relevant developments, like the more structured approach to teaching literacy and mathematics in the Reception classes, are successfully underway. Although the temporary accommodation is very limiting, the head teacher has ensured that good resources are available.
36. Very good teaching in the Nursery class ensures that children get off to a very good start. Children of all abilities achieve well and sometimes very well here. However, there is a legacy of underachievement in the Foundation Stage, particularly in literacy and mathematics, which has had a detrimental impact on standards by the end of the Reception Year. Standards at the start of Nursery are usually above average because most of the children come in with attainment that is at least average and there are very few with standards below those expected nationally at the age of three. But, whilst the majority of children reach the expected learning goals, too few exceed them in communication, language and literacy and mathematical development by the time they move into Year 1. The current temporary and relatively inexperienced teaching in the Reception classes is well supported; teaching in both classes is satisfactory and there are signs that standards are improving, particularly in the class with the oldest children. Children's achievements are now satisfactory overall, with evidence of good learning in some lessons. Good support means that those children with special educational needs do well. However, the most able children are not always challenged enough in the activities planned for them, and their achievements are not yet as good as they might be.

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

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

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

- Staff have high expectations of their children and provide a very good example and effective routines that give children confidence.
- Good support means that children with special educational needs achieve well.

#### **Commentary**

37. Consistently good teaching in the Reception Year and very good teaching in the Nursery help children achieve very well in their personal and social development, and almost all comfortably exceed the goals in this area of learning. Children gain confidence rapidly because the adults establish very good routines so that children know what to do and behave very well. They develop very good levels of independence. This is particularly noticeable in the sensible and productive way children play in the outside areas, needing little supervision from adults. Children are eager learners because teachers in all the classes provide a very wide and interesting range of experiences from which they choose. The adults provide a good example in their seamless teamwork and well-informed way they work together. This means that children are comfortable and equally happy when working with different adults. Relationships are generally very good so that children play together and respond to adults' requests and instructions very well.
38. The planning and arrangements for supporting children with special educational needs are good. Their needs are identified early and clear targets and strategies agreed. Where learning

support assistants are involved, they are knowledgeable and patient in their support, so that children make good progress in developing skills in such areas as concentration and behaviour.

## **COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- More structure in teaching literacy means that children develop a good knowledge of letter sounds.
- Children develop good levels of enthusiasm and skills in reading.
- Teachers in the Reception classes do not do enough to challenge the most able children.

### **Commentary**

39. There have been good recent improvements in this area of learning, particularly in the emphasis now given to developing children's phonic skills and in the opportunities for writing in all the classes. Teaching and children's achievements are satisfactory overall, and very good in the Nursery. The development of 'writing areas' means that children often choose to write as they play, and show good levels of interest. Successful use of role-play in the Nursery stimulates very good writing experiences like writing a shopping list for Goldilocks. The introduction of regular, carefully planned sessions with an emphasis on developing children's knowledge of letter sounds is beginning to improve their progress in reading and spelling in all classes. These work best when teachers take note of what children can already do, and adapt their plans so that activities move their skills forward. Younger children in the Reception classes, however, sometimes mark time when activities are repeated unnecessarily.
40. Children in the Reception classes securely reach the goals for their age in reading. Their growing phonic skills are beginning to lift standards as children begin to make good progress. Children in the Nursery respond enthusiastically to well-planned activities like going on a 'Bear Hunt'. This generated high levels of interest in a story that children remembered in detail. In the Reception classes there are good opportunities for children to read and discuss books with adults on a regular basis. This good individual teaching successfully develops children's fluency and understanding of what they read. Parents provide good support in encouraging children to read at home. Children in the Reception classes listen excitedly when adults read stories dramatically and effectively stimulate discussion by good use of questions. Because they have listened so well, children are quick and detailed in their descriptions of the characters and events in the story. Occasionally, adults could do more to challenge children, particularly the most able, to have a go at reading labels and captions, rather than reading for them.
41. Although clearly capable, too few children exceed the goals in this area overall, particularly in writing. Children get off to a very good start in the Nursery where there is a good system for checking on children's achievements. Good use of the information this gives means that the teaching plans are adapted very effectively for the different abilities in the class. There are high expectations of the most able, particularly the gifted and talented. Very good support from the teacher as they work on challenging activities helps these children make rapid progress. Whilst teachers in the Reception class have sound systems for checking on the attainments of individual children, these do not give a clear enough overview of how well children are progressing over time. Teachers do not yet use this information well enough in their planning to ensure that activities take enough account of what children can already do and what they need to do next. Activities, particularly in writing, are sometimes too easy for the most able children. Sometimes, drawing activities leave too little time for writing, which slows children's achievements and means that standards are not as high as they should be.

## **MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in mathematical development is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children in the Nursery achieve well because very good teaching means that activities are well planned.
- Children's progress is sometimes slower than it might be in the Reception classes when the activities do not take enough account of their existing skills.

### **Commentary**

42. Children's achievements in their mathematical development and the quality of teaching are satisfactory overall and overall children reach the nationally expected goals by the end of the Reception Year. Challenging activities and effective uses of ongoing activities like counting the birthday candles are features of the very good teaching in the Nursery. Brisk questions like "If I blow one out, how many are left?" are an effective stimulus so children think hard and quickly and develop good counting skills for their age. Teaching has a very good awareness of the different needs of the children. It makes time to provide the extra challenge that particularly able children, such as these, need. For example, making very good use of the outside area and its activities, well-focused interventions by the teacher meant that one very able child had great fun adding three numbers and subtracting amounts from 20 using a large number line. There are equally well-structured daily group activities that are boosting children's mathematics skills significantly.
43. The more structured approach to the teaching for mathematical development is ensuring a faster pace in children's progress in the Reception classes, as shown in the most recent work in their folders. Adults work well together in supporting children using strategies like role-play so that children know what to do when working on activities. The checks on children's attainments and the use of this information are underdeveloped, however. As a result, sometimes, activities are too easy for children. Although they clearly enjoy them, they move on only slowly when activities, like identifying coins, focus on skills they already have. Whilst most children reach the expected levels, too few exceed the goals in this area.

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

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children enjoy their play and persevere well because good planning, use of resources and the accommodation provide a wide range of interesting experiences in all classes.
- Very good teaching in the Nursery means that children's achievements are good.
- Teachers in the Reception classes sometimes take too little account of the more able children's abilities in their planning and interventions.

### **Commentary**

44. Teaching is satisfactory overall, achievement is sound, and nearly all children reach the nationally expected goals by the end of the Reception class; they do particularly well in investigating construction materials. This is because children have access to a wide range of

well-planned activities that challenge them to explore, experiment, and construct. Although the accommodation has limitations, staff use it and the good resources extremely well, creating plenty of opportunities for children to learn about the world around them, both inside and outdoors. The way even the youngest children tackle and persist with tasks like creating a bed for the three bears or a complex model aeroplane using the construction toys is impressive.

45. Teaching in the Nursery is very good. Adults are good at intervening at just the right level as children play to help them move their learning forward whilst not dominating the activity. They are ambitious for the children and their interventions are both fun and challenging. Children respond delightedly when activities capture their excitement, like experimenting with a tray of cubes and a pulley to see how many are needed to haul a teddy up a ramp. The adults' questions provide a good spur so that children are good at predicting and explaining what they see.
46. Teaching is satisfactory in the Reception classes and most children comfortably reach the goals for their age and sometimes exceed them, particularly in construction. The planning for ongoing activities in the Reception classes is sound, but more could be done to ensure that children with different abilities progress as they play. This is at its best when adults know how to intervene effectively, but the more able children sometimes progress more slowly than they might when activities are not pitched at a high enough level.

## **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in physical development is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Good teaching means that despite the restraints of the unsatisfactory accommodation, achievement is sound and standards exceed nationally expectations.
- Unsatisfactory accommodation limits children's opportunities to extend their physical development outdoors.

### **Commentary**

47. In spite of problems presented by the temporary accommodation and unsatisfactory resources, good teaching in this area means that children in all the classes achieve satisfactorily in their physical development. This means that most of them securely reach the goals set for their age and many exceed them; their manipulation skills in particular are good. The many activities set out for them provide good opportunities so they develop very good control and confidence when handling scissors, paintbrushes and other tools and equipment. Although the outdoor space and equipment for climbing are inadequate, teachers make good use of it. Regular opportunities that enable children to practise their skills mean that children in the Nursery develop sound skills in running, climbing and riding wheeled toys. They use the very small space well and bumping into others is rare. Good teaching in activities in the school hall boosts children's skills in the oldest Reception class. They behave very well, listening carefully and responding well to instructions so they make good progress. They move confidently, safely and with good coordination.

## **CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in creative development is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children make good progress when effective adult interventions challenge them to observe carefully and talk about their creations.
- Good opportunities for role-play develop children's imagination soundly.

## Commentary

48. Teaching in this area of learning is satisfactory with some good features, so that children achieve soundly overall and many exceed the goals they are expected to reach by the end of the Reception class. Across all aspects of their creative development children do best when working with adults who offer timely comments and suggestions that help children improve their work. These good interventions prompted children in a Reception class to observe carefully so they noticed the texture on a collection of different fruits. They interpreted it very well in the detailed markings they created on the good quality fruit shapes they made with dough. Sometimes, when working independently, they tend to rush their work and the quality is not as good because not enough is done to remind them as they settle to work to use the skills they have. In each class teachers provide good quality opportunities and props for role-play. Children are good at organising themselves, sharing such roles as Goldilocks and the three bears and playing cooperatively together.

## SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

### ENGLISH

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement is good and standards by the end of the school have improved to well above the national average.
- Pupils achieve very well in reading and develop very good skills by the end of Year 6.
- Good teaching in Years 4, 5 and 6 boosts pupils' progress significantly.
- More able pupils in Years 1 and 2 do not do as well as they might in writing because the work set for them often lacks sufficient challenge.
- Good arrangements for their support mean that pupils with special educational needs do well in English.
- Standards of handwriting and presentation in Years 1 to 4 are unsatisfactory.
- Leaders and managers have a good view of what needs to be done and effective plans for improvement.
- There are too many missed opportunities to promote writing through other subjects.

## Commentary

49. Overall, pupils' achievements are good, but their progress is more rapid in Years 3 to 6 than it is in Years 1 and 2 because of more effective teaching in the older classes, particularly in writing.

50. Throughout the school, pupils do well in reading. Parents support their children well in reading at home and this regular practice helps pupils gain confidence and fluency. Reading has a high profile in lessons. Teachers select interesting texts for their classes to read in literacy lessons. Their good use of probing questions challenges pupils to interpret the text so they learn to describe, explain the hidden meanings and predict what might happen next. Standards in speaking and listening are high and pupils develop as good, articulate speakers with very good comprehension skills through such well-managed discussions. Paired reading sessions are well organised and effective. Teachers establish clear expectations of the skills pupils are to develop so they use their time productively. Pupils clearly enjoy reading the good quality books available in classrooms and are ambitious in their choices.

51. Standards in English in Year 6 have improved since the last inspection and are now well above the national average. This is because teaching in Years 5 and 6 and for the older pupils in Year 4 is good. During the inspection some very good and some excellent lessons were seen. This provides a substantial boost to pupils' achievements, and helps them reach very good standards by the time they leave the school. In these classes, teachers have high expectations of their

pupils so they work very hard in lessons. They have a very good rapport with pupils, and relationships are very good. Interest levels are high because brisk use of time and challenging questions and tasks mean that pupils concentrate extremely well. Pupils' writing develops well because there is a sense of purpose in such tasks as writing to the Prime Minister about third world debt or an account of a visit to the theatre to see *The Witches*. When these teachers mark pupils' work they provide clear comments and targets so that pupils of all abilities know how to improve their work and respond very well.

52. Teaching in Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory overall. Lessons have a good structure and teachers generally manage their pupils well. However, they do not expect enough from their most able pupils, and the work set for these pupils is often not challenging enough. Whilst they are sometimes expected to write more, the features of writing at higher levels are not made clear enough for them when written tasks are set. This means progress is slower than it might be, and too few of the most able pupils reach the higher levels of which they are clearly capable. Teachers often make good use of time at the end of lessons to encourage pupils to check whether their partner has achieved the lesson objectives in their written work. At these times, pupils are good at highlighting the good features, but more could be done to encourage them to check for basic errors like punctuation and sentence structure. When marking pupils' work, teachers could do more to point these out and make sure they are eliminated.
53. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well. Good support often means they reach the levels expected for their age in their English work. Their needs are identified early and clear targets set. Teachers make good use of these when planning lessons so that work is linked closely to targets and adapted well, particularly in Years 5 and 6. Well-deployed learning support assistants provide the extra explanations and support needed so that pupils tackle their work confidently. However, in Years 1 and 2 their role in supporting pupils with behaviour targets during lesson introductions is not always made clear, resulting in these pupils not always concentrating or working hard as they could.
54. Standards of handwriting and presentation are inconsistent throughout the school. They are at their best in Years 5 and 6 where teachers' expectations are high. Pupils learn to write using a neat, joined handwriting style, but in these classes and throughout the school they do not always use it when writing in English and other subjects. Too often, as found in the last inspection, their work is marred by untidy presentation and inconsistently joined writing.
55. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory and overall improvement since the last inspection has been adequate. The subject leader and the senior management team have a very clear view of what needs to be done and have put in place good plans for development. However, the transfer of classes from one site to another, and staff absences that have led to considerable changes in staffing, have hampered the drive for improvement in Years 1 and 2. The system for checking on pupils' achievements is not as effective in these year groups as it is in older classes so that inconsistencies in pupils' progress persist for longer than they might.

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

56. This is unsatisfactory. Pupils sometimes make good use of their reading skills when research tasks are set in subjects like history, sometimes for homework. Older pupils in particular often produce a good bank of relevant information using reference books and the Internet that considerably increases their knowledge and understanding of topics. However, this is not always the case with writing. Recording tasks in subjects like religious education, history and geography often lack sufficient challenge, particularly for most able pupils. An over-emphasis on drawing and colouring activities sometimes limits the opportunities pupils have to develop their writing skills. The school does not have clear enough guidance for this aspect, so that teachers miss opportunities for pupils to use their literacy skills, particularly in writing, in work in other subjects. Not enough is done to promote writing, for instance in the work on display around the school.



## MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Weaknesses in Years 1 and 2 help explain why many pupils do not achieve well enough and why standards are not high enough by the end of Year 2.
- Achievement is good in Years 3 to 6 and because of this most pupils reach standards above the nationally expected level by the end of Year 6.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good in Years 5 and 6, and as a result, standards are high by the time pupils leave the school.
- There are clear plans for the subject's continued improvement.
- The development of mathematics through other subjects is unsatisfactory.

### Commentary

57. Achievement overall is satisfactory. Pupils achieve well in Years 3 to 6 to reach standards that are above the nationally expected level by the time they leave the school, reflecting their attainment at the start of school. Pupils do especially well in Years 5 and 6 because group sizes are smaller, due to the timetabled support of senior staff, which helps meet needs more effectively. In these years in particular, work is usually matched to pupils' precise needs, data from tests is rigorously analysed to help teachers identify and overcome weaknesses, targeted training opportunities are helping to improve the quality of teaching over time, and all strands of the subject are well represented.

58. Standards in mathematics are close to national levels by the end of Year 2. However, pupils' achievements are unsatisfactory because, although no unsatisfactory lessons were seen during the inspection, pupils' work shows that, similar to at the time of the last inspection, teaching is not good enough to enable the most able pupils and many pupils of average ability to make enough progress. For example, in Year 2, work is often unchallenging and sometimes incomplete, with an over-use of worksheets. Marking is sometimes inaccurate, presentation is often untidy, and occasional colouring does not extend mathematical understanding. These weaknesses provide evidence of low teacher expectation, with pupils not being encouraged to take pride in their work and many, especially the more able, not making best possible progress. 'Real-life' mathematical experiences are not used often enough to help pupils appreciate the importance of number in our daily lives and to bring the curriculum to life for them.

59. In contrast, pupils with special educational needs and some less able pupils often make good gains in learning in all years because of the good teaching and support they receive and the regard teaching assistants in particular have to the individual learning targets of each pupil.

60. Teaching is satisfactory overall, but is good in Years 5 and 6, with some very good teaching of the less able pupils seen during the inspection. In a lesson on two-dimensional shapes, the teacher had high expectations and pitched work at appropriately challenging levels. Purposeful questioning developed clear understanding of new knowledge. High levels of enthusiasm from the teacher, good relationships, secure subject knowledge and a brisk pace helped to keep pupils motivated and involved. As a result, pupils put more effort into getting it right. These positive features, many of which were observed in other lessons, help to explain the good attitudes to learning and mostly good behaviour seen during the inspection. Teachers in Years 3 to 6 regularly modify their plans to take account of pupils' precise needs which helps them to make mostly good progress. Many of them use displays well to help pupils develop mathematical language, and give problem solving increasing emphasis as a means of developing understanding. Pupils now have targets on this important aspect to help them understand their own learning needs. The Internet is used well to challenge more able pupils in Years 5 and 6.

61. The subject is soundly led, and although insufficient improvement has been made since the last inspection and some of the weaknesses remain this is largely due to circumstances beyond the control of the school. There are clear plans for the subject's continued development because the regular monitoring of lessons is helping the coordinator identify what works well and what needs doing.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

62. The development of mathematical skills, knowledge and understanding through other subjects is not given enough emphasis. For example, links with ICT, such as to promote data-handling activities, are not given enough attention. Opportunities tend to occur incidentally rather than as a result of systematic planning and, as a result, pupils are not as good as they could be at using mathematics in different situations.

### **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

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

- Pupils achieve well in Years 3 to 6, but the most able pupils in Years 1 and 2 do not do well enough.
- Leadership of the subject is effective, but the systems for monitoring pupils' performance are only applied in Years 3 to 6 and there is little accountability of teachers to move pupils far enough on in Years 1 and 2.
- Insufficient use is made of ICT and investigations are not recorded well enough because of weaknesses in presentation and accuracy; in addition, marking does not tell pupils what they are doing well or how to improve.

#### **Commentary**

63. Achievement and teaching are satisfactory overall and by the time they leave the school, most pupils reach standards that are above the nationally expected level. Most pupils achieve satisfactorily in Years 1 and 2, but standards only reach average levels because the most able pupils do not do well enough and too few of them reach beyond the expected level. Ground is made up in Years 3 to 6 though, where pupils achieve well, particularly in Years 5 and 6, because of good teaching and this means that standards by the end of the school are more akin to those at the start.

64. Over time, the Year 6 test results have risen faster than nationally and last year over two thirds of the pupils at this school reached above the nationally expected level, taking test results to well above the national average. Pupils do well by the end of Year 6 because they are good at planning and carrying out investigations, and drawing conclusions. Unlike those in Years 1 and 2, pupils in Years 3 to 6 have many opportunities to take part in scientific investigations and experiments, such as exploring forces and testing up-thrust and gravity when making parachutes. They use subject language well, which is effectively promoted by the teachers, which means that they explain what they are doing accurately. For example, when Year 6 pupils explained what they knew about different aspects of science, they spoke confidently and articulately about such things as how "a hypothesis is a theory" and how "heat changes the molecular structure of eggs". They related how plants take in carbon dioxide and, through the process of photosynthesis, emit oxygen. They talked about how creatures and plants adapt to suit their environment, such as how because Venus Flytrap plants usually live in poor soil, they have adapted to 'eating' flies and insects in order to get nutrition.

65. Leadership is good because it is visionary and has created effective teaching teams in Years 3 to 6. Management strengths lie in how well senior managers check up on the progress pupils make each year from the end of Year 2 to the end of Year 6, picking up inconsistencies between

year groups and dealing effectively with them either by changing the planning or by improving the teaching. However, they currently make no such checks in Years 1 and 2, reducing management to satisfactory overall. Teaching is not observed or books examined closely enough, and it is not until the end of the Year 2 that weaknesses in teaching and learning are noticed, by which time it is too late to pursue and eradicate them.

66. The most able pupils do not do well enough in Years 1 and 2. This is because teachers have too little regard to what pupils already know and can reasonably be expected to do, and because of this, they aim too low. The work is matched to pupils' ages rather than their abilities and because of this does not move pupils on quickly enough. However, the school's senior managers are aware of this; they are working with the teachers and things are starting to improve. Because of some recent, well-focused staff development, teachers in Years 1 and 2, most of whom are temporary and not used to working with such capable pupils, are much more aware of the higher levels of work these pupils can be expected to attain. For example, during a Year 2 lesson, because the senior managers had been involved in planning the lesson, the most able pupils were challenged well and made good progress in linking cause and effect when making electrical circuits. After some initial work, a group of more able pupils realised, for example, that the more batteries they used, the higher the voltage and therefore the brighter the bulbs lit up and the louder the buzzers sounded. They also went on to discover that when more bulbs and buzzers were added, the lights dimmed and the buzzers became fainter.
67. Throughout the school, there is insufficient use of ICT in science, either to record findings on computer or to measure sound and temperature through data-loggers. Marking is limited to cursory remarks, doing little to help pupils to improve their work and, in Years 1 and 2 in particular, teachers do not make sufficient demands on pupils to write up their investigations neatly, use correct punctuation, or spell accurately, resulting in some untidy and messy work.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Achievement is good in Years 3 to 6 and by the time they leave the school pupils exceed national expectations in most aspects of ICT.
- Pupils have good attitudes to ICT and use computers confidently, but do not make enough use of the school's other ICT equipment and there are some shortfalls in resources.
- ICT is used well to support those pupils with special educational needs.
- The subject is well led and standards in Years 3 to 6 have risen, but the management systems are embryonic and underdeveloped, resulting in standards in Years 1 and 2 standing still for too long.

### **Commentary**

68. Achievement is satisfactory overall. The quality of teaching is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2 and it is good in Years 3 to 6 where pupils achieve well. Consequently, standards are broadly similar to those expected nationally by the end of Year 2 and although there are some minor gaps in their learning, a good number of pupils reach above the nationally expected level by the end of Year 6. This is because of good teaching of computer skills in these years in particular, and pupils' good understanding of communicating using technology. For example, a group of Year 6 pupils talked confidently about how electronic mail is faster than using the postal service and how using mobile phone text messaging is cheap and instant. In a Year 3/4 lesson, pupils explored how newspapers catch the attention of their readers with eye-catching headlines, graphics and photographs. However, the school does not have any data-loggers to record sound and light, and it makes insufficient use of some of its other ICT equipment, including scanners, photocopiers and digital cameras, because teachers are reluctant to let pupils handle these on their own.

69. Nevertheless, pupils of all ages enjoy their work in ICT and talk positively about what they are doing and have done. The subject contributes well to their social development when, for example, pupils work together on computers researching Tudors on the Internet and it also helps their personal development when they put together reports such as those on holiday destinations.
70. The leadership of the subject is good. Standards are as good as they were at the time of the last inspection in Years 1 and 2 and they are better than they were in Years 3 to 6. However, management is only satisfactory because the systems for checking on the quality of teaching and learning and the progress pupils make from year to year are not fully established. Because of this, senior managers cannot be sure of where things are working well and where and precisely what improvements need to be made. However, plans for the new school, due to be completed in April 2006, include up-to-date ICT equipment such as interactive whiteboards and a small suite of computers in every classroom.

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

71. This is unsatisfactory. Although pupils with special educational needs make some good use of the portable laptops to help them with their reading, writing and numeracy work, and to hold their interest and raise their enthusiasm for work, neither they nor their schoolmates use their ICT skills enough as a tool to aid day-to-day learning in other subjects. This is because there is no room for computers in classrooms and the ICT suite has had to be dismantled and divided between two areas. Whilst there are examples during laptop computer lessons of pupils word processing their stories written in literacy and using spreadsheets to record data collected in mathematics, this is usually done as a means to teach computer skills rather than to help pupils with their work in these other subjects. Pupils do not have the opportunity at odd times in the day, to go to the computers when they need to, for example, check spellings or grammar or when they feel that it would be more advantageous to record something using the computer rather than handwrite the information.

### **HUMANITIES**

72. No overall judgements can be made about **history** and **geography** as no lessons were seen during the inspection. Examination of pupils' work folders indicates standards are broadly average, similar to those found when the school was last inspected. Teachers in Years 5 and 6 make good use of the local area for investigation into traffic issues in geography. However, in both subjects pupils sometimes have limited opportunities to extend their understanding and interpretation of topics when written tasks are not adapted sufficiently for pupils with different abilities or there is too much emphasis on drawing and not enough on writing.

### **Religious education**

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Due to good teaching in Years 3 to 6, pupils achieve well by the end of the school to exceed the expectations of the locally agreed subject guidelines.
- There is good provision throughout the school for pupils to learn in particular from religion and develop a good awareness of multicultural issues and commitment to anti-racism.
- Some of the work in Years 1 and 2 is uninspiring with too much drawing and colouring and too little focus on quality writing.
- There is insufficient use of ICT to support work in religious education.
- Improved leadership has increased teachers' enthusiasm for, and expertise in, the subject and brought about some improvements to teaching and achievement in Years 1 and 2, but

embryonic management systems are as yet having insufficient impact on improving things further.

## Commentary

73. Inspired good subject leadership means that religious education has a much greater profile than it had at the last inspection in the school's curriculum. Good advice and well-focused and relevant in-service training have led to satisfactory improvement since the last inspection and teachers being more secure about teaching not only the facts about different world religions, but also about how pupils can learn from their own and the religion of others. Although not reflected in their work, mostly because the demands made on them are not high enough, when engaged in conversation pupils in Year 2 showed good understanding of religious education. They asked each other, for example, such questions as, "Who made God?" and made statements like "I'm a Christian; I believe in God". Similarly, Year 6 pupils talked about how they experience harmony and peace when they learn tolerance and understanding and respect for others' beliefs and traditions. They explained how learning facts about other religions stops them offending others by, for example, offering a ham sandwich to a Jewish classmate, or asking a Sikh what they got for Christmas. Pupils are adamant that they do not want racism in their school and are clear that they will not tolerate it. They have very mature attitudes towards life and a tolerance of how peoples' religious beliefs affect the way they choose to live.
74. Teaching is more successful in Years 3 to 6 than it is in Years 1 and 2. In these older classes, teaching successfully combines liveliness and inspiration with achieving calm and an atmosphere of reverence. In an excellent, extremely well-planned Year 5/6 lesson about Christianity, for example, teaching inspired pupils to think about how artists praise, celebrate, worship and tell stories about religion. By looking at and talking about images of Christianity from the National Gallery, pupils came up with comments like, "The picture of Jesus on the underground symbolises if he was here today, he wouldn't be any different ... he would just blend in" and "I think that the three pictures of the 'The Trinity' possibly represents the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit because they are the main characters of Christianity."
75. However, in the younger classes, the work is less inspiring and the pupils' response to it is less engaged. In these classes, pupils spend too much time drawing pictures and making artefacts such as confetti and designing wedding wrapping paper, using their art and design skills. There is little time left for writing and what they do is not of good enough quality. Teachers too readily accept untidy work and, even worse, often give undeserved praise. There is little emphasis on accurate spelling, putting in full stops and capital letters, and correct sentence structure.
76. In all years, teaching makes little use of pupils' ICT skills to support work in religious education and there are too few opportunities for senior managers or the subject leader to observe teaching or evaluate the quality of teaching, reducing the management of the subject to satisfactory.

## CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

77. These subjects were not a focus of the inspection. As a result, not enough evidence was obtained to judge provision or standards or to make secure judgements about the quality of teaching and learning. This is because only one art and design lesson and three physical education lessons were observed, two of which were led by external providers. No design and technology or **music** lessons were seen. However, all subjects are securely represented in the school's curriculum.
78. **Physical education** is well represented within the school's good curriculum despite the severe limitations of the building which make some aspects of the curriculum difficult to implement. For example, the school is without a sports field, and hall and playground spaces are small, which

makes the teaching of important skills to large groups difficult. However, as part of a Community Sports programme initiative, qualified instructors visit regularly to teach gymnastics and games' skills to all classes, emphasising speed, agility and quickness. The teaching seen was good, with strong emphasis given to the development of key skills, such as using space to good effect and accurate throwing. A good range of extra-curricular activities, such as basketball, cricket, football and tag rugby training, helps to enrich the curriculum.

79. One very good **art and design** lesson in Years 5 and 6 was seen during the inspection, and good quality art and design work is attractively displayed in Years 1 to 4, such as the Tudor gallery in a good link with history. However, little art work is evident in the upper school.
80. No **design and technology** lessons were observed and little work was displayed to help judge standards. However, a scrutiny of the good school portfolio reveals that the subject is securely represented in planning. Pupils' work contained in the portfolio was of a good standard.

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

81. Provision for the subject is well embedded in the school ethos and is well supported throughout the curriculum and school life. Great emphasis is placed upon pupils' personal development and it is a fundamental part of the school ethos and school life. There is a clear policy and action plan that focuses on promoting responsibility and confidence, active citizenship and a healthy lifestyle. This helps pupils become confident and responsible which supports positive attitudes towards learning and develops good relationships between pupils and between pupils and staff. As part of the citizenship programme, pupils raise funds for charities and have recently written letters to the Prime Minister about abolishing third world debt.
82. Pupils go on a wide variety of educational outings that develop citizenship, and residential visits that develop their confidence and social skills. The older pupils have recently worked on a range of ideas that they would like to see in their new school, drawing plans of their ideas and presenting them to the architect. The younger pupils have recently learned how to interpret and express the moods of different types of music.
83. There are good links between the curriculum for personal and social education and the remainder of school life. The principles of responsibility and confidence are evident throughout the school, in assemblies and in the playground.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

### *Inspection judgement*

### *Grade*

<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>4</b>
How inclusive the school is	4
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	4
Value for money provided by the school	4

<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>3</b>
Pupils' achievement	4

<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities (ethos)</b>	<b>3</b>
Attendance	3
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>	<b>4</b>
The quality of teaching	4
How well pupils learn	4
The quality of assessment	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	5
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	4
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	2
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	4
The quality of the school's links with the community	4
The school's links with other schools and colleges	4

<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>4</b>
The governance of the school	4
The leadership of the headteacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	3
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).*